A CRITICAL EXPLORATION OF TRAINEE TEACHERS' CONSTRUCTION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL CONTEXT DURING PLACEMENT

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DEDICATION

To Simama, with love, you wanted me to be academically successful. Had you been still in this world, you would have been proud of me!

DECLARATION

I, Meda Charisma THONDEE declare that the thesis

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submitted to the University of Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa, for the degree of Philosophy of Education has not been previously submitted by me for degree purposes at any other University. I further declare that this dissertation is my own work in design and execution, and that all the sources that I have used or quoted therein have been duly acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signed:

Meda Charisma THONDEE
June 2021
Revised version May 2022

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ABSTRACT

The journey of this thesis started when I joined a teacher education institution as lecturer. My sociology background drew me towards the primary school as a placement site as I was enthusiastic about grasping the experiences of trainee teachers while being their teaching practice tutor. The negotiation that the trainee teachers made between what they acquired as theoretical knowledge and the in-situ understandings of the primary school as their future workplace was astounding. It was this first observation which triggered my curiosity to start the study with them as knowers of school contexts while considering their personal assumptions, memories, gaze, and experiences as pivotal lenses. By doing so, their stories, narratives, anecdotes are not just described as personal productions but are expressed as their social constructions situated in time, space, and place.

The temporal element expresses the specific period of teacher training when the data is collected but also when the trainee produces the data. In other words, the data gets constructed in the temporal context which I term placement period. The spatial element refers to the visibility of the trainee teachers as knowers with a voice, who has an empowering presence in the knowledge production process in the sense that their voice demystifies power relationships, ideological structures about teaching and learning practices. Their participation in the study represents a breathing space to divorce themselves from the vernacular of power which might be pejorative to school administrators, mentors, and academics. The study explores those personal accounts as a force which contains a collection of personal and individualized accounts which are attached to memories and experiences of those trainees. Lastly, the notion of place also refers to physical make up of placement sites, i.e., primary schools. With the exceptions of one, all the trainee teachers participating in this study have experienced placement to more than one primary schools during their teacher training periods. This opportunity allowed them to encounter the heterogeneity of school contexts as they learn their craft.

In this study I explore the nature of trainee teachers' construction of primary school context and in doing so trace the cognitive maps of their professional journeys as knowledge producers. By doing so, the study opens avenues on policy decisions and reforms around

teacher training and professionalization a context where teaching is constantly scrutinized and subject to adaptations school contexts. A critical interpretivist outlook is exploited to gauge at the different ways in which trainee teachers construct these contexts while being on placement. Eight participants on primary pre-service training were selected using purposive sampling strategy. The data produced are derived from participatory approaches namely, transect walks, interviews and conversations around collages and photography taken by the participants. To keep the richness and authenticity of the data, the findings were presented thematically and in verbatim as they are narrated by the participants. These themes presented enable the creation of key sociological concepts to explain how construction takes place in this study and finally leads to the thesis building, which aims at scholar contribution in the field of teacher professional socialization and sociology of knowledge.

This thesis consists of ten chapters and is divided into three broad sections. Section one describes the context, background, and rationale of the study (chapter one), followed by a literature review (chapter two), theoretical framework (chapter three) and research methodology (chapter four). Section two unravels the research findings and analysis (chapter five to seven) and finally section three presents the key theorization, thesis building and conclusion (chapter eight to ten).

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

CPE	CERTIFICATE OF PRIMARY EDUCATION
CTL	CONTEXTUAL TEACHING AND LEARNING
GP	GENERAL PURPOSE
HDI	HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX
Interviews	I
IT	INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
MBA	MASTERS IN BUSINESS ADMINSTRATION
MGI	MAHATMA GANDHI INSTITUTE
MIE	MAURITIUS INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
NCF	NATIONAL CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK
NYCS	NINE YEAR CONTINOUS SCHOOLING
PE	PHYSICAL EDUCATION
PSAC	PRIMARY SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT CERTIFICATE
PSC	PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
SCT	SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION THEORY
TDP	TEACHER DIPLOMA PRIMARY
Transects	T
UKZN	UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU NATAL
UOB	UNIVERSITY OF BRIGHTON
UOM	UNIVERSITY OF MAURITIUS
UTM	UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY MAURITIUS

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 MAPPING THE SCENE

This doctoral study is situated in Critical Theory (Murthy & Fleming, 2010; Kellner, 2003; Giroux, 1991; McLaren, 1994) and reflects my sociological background and current position as a teacher educator at the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE). I was always drawn to explore human interactions within specific social structures and institutions through qualitative research. The PhD journey was triggered by my trainee teachers' constant reference on the disparity observed between the theory learnt at the MIE and the school realities they experienced while being on placement. The intensive conversations around the school practicum and issues lived by the latter were reported in the Contextual Teaching and Learning sessions (CTL) organised by the MIE to support trainee teachers during the school placement period. I was a young faculty member immersing in the field of teacher education at that time, and these series of conversations aroused my interest and curiosity to explore the school as a fertile site of investigation. Eventually, I started my search through extensive readings on the ways in which schools and their intricate contexts craft the professional development of trainee teachers as the latter voiced their views on experiences and observations made. The work of Eraut (2004), Davis (2006), Kim (2012) and Connelly and Clandini (1990) inspired me to focus on trainee teachers' experiences within primary school contexts as influencing and shaping the latter's professional development instead of looking directly at the theory-practice gap. I wanted to draw attention to school-based experiences called school placement as a promising site of investigation which furthers initial teacher professional development. The study therefore pays attention to the unravelling of primary school contexts from the subaltern voices of trainee teachers. Their narratives speak of the professional becoming derived from unique lived experiences offered to them through the school placement in time, place and space.

1.2 ORIENTATION

This chapter sets the scene by introducing the context, background, and rationale of this doctoral study. The sections which stick to explain the focus of the study are followed by the key research questions which are used to better gauge the phenomenon in context. Key terms used in this study are explicated to orient the readers on the ways these are used in this study. The broader socio-economic and historical contexts set the tone to capture the inception of MIE as the sole teacher education body evolving in a constantly changing Mauritian education system is set as the background. I then proceed to more detailed explanation of the evolution of teacher education programmes in the primary school setting. The second half of this chapter foregrounds the justification for a study on trainee teachers' construction of primary school context. An outline of the subsequent chapters is also provided, namely the literature review, research methodology, theoretical framework, and data production phases.In this respect, the purpose of this chapter is to facilitate the reader to grasp the intent and positionality of the study.

1.3 THE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

This study is written in the context of initial teacher professional development in a small island state of the Indian Ocean. It takes place primarily through the MIE, which is the sole provider of teacher education programmes in Mauritius. Since its establishment in 1973, the MIE is mandated to develop teacher education programmes, curriculum development and textbook writing as well as training of pre-service and in-service educators from pre-primary, primary to secondary level (MIE strategic plan, 2007). While the institution has trained more than 25000 professionals in the education to date, teacher training programmes for primary remain one of the key mandates of the MIE, with an average of two hundred pre-service teachers of primary level every year enrolled on a Teacher Diploma Primary (TDP) programme which lasts for two years and three months. School placement constitutes of an arrangement which is part of its initial teacher education programme. During that period, trainee teachers are placed in a school for class observation and teaching under the mentorship of a seniorclass teacher

This study takes place in the Republic of Mauritius, located at 2,000 kilometres off the southeast coast of the African continent, east of Madagascar. The republic of Mauritius includes the islands

of Rodrigues, Agalega and St. Brandon under its jurisdiction. They are commonly known as the Mascarene Islands. However, in the present study data are collected only on the Island of Mauritius, which spans over 2040 square kilometres and a heterogenous population approximating 1.25 million, and a density of 631 per kilometre square in 2021 (Statistics Mauritius, 2021).

Figure1.1: Location of Mauritius on the world map

In 1968 the island was declared independent and gained the status of republic twenty-four years later, in 1992. By record, the Dutch were the first to discover the island isolated and devoid of human life in the 17th century. However, the successive colonization of the island by the French (1715-1810) and followed by the British (1810-1968) indelibly marked its present demographic, economic and socio-cultural landscapes. Devoid of an indigenous population, Mauritians have either an African, Indian, Chinese, and European origin which deeply echoed the various flows of immigration caused by slavery, indentured labour, trade, and permanentsettlement on the island (Richards, 2007). To date, the country is known for its striving socio-economic situations, multicultural effervescence and striking landscapes which continue to attract visitors worldwide.

As far as education is concerned, the island state has witnessed a series of changes and struggles to reinforce its education system, thus making it accessible to all segments of the population. Down from historical roots, education was elitist. In 1790, the creation of L'école Centrale which

was later converted into Lycée by General DeCaen was restricted to whites and some privileged coloured (Koodoruth, 2004). Slaves and their children were denied access to any form of formal schooling although some private education ventures were attempted but these did not succeed (Ramdoyal, 1977). A record of slaves being given education remained insignificant in official records. For example, the report of Reverend Lebrun facing violent attacks after setting up a free dayprimary school for slaves and Charles Telfair educating his slaves signalled the sensitivity of rendering education accessible to slaves at that time. Children of Indian immigrants however were faced with a different fate; they were instructed in Baitkas and Madrassas (vernacular schools) and when educational provisions were made for them. It was not with the intention to wilfully educate them but to solve vagrancy and delinquency, which were persistent among Indian youth (Benedict, 1965). As such the Indian labour act had to be revisited and other complications had to be resolved; namely because the question of the vernacular medium of instruction posed a serious problem, and the immediate provision of competent teaching staff was not readily made available. In 1908, the labour Act raised the minimum labour age from 11 to 13. Government schools were run together with aided schools. However, by 1960, the Indian population enrolled for primary schools have raised from 7000 in 1908 to 126, 173. (Mishra, 2009; Teelock, 2004).

The drastic increase was due to economic, political, and symbolic imperatives sought by the mostly Indo-Mauritian segment of the population. For many, education was not only the sole opportunity for social mobility and acceding government jobs but essentially helped to scrap their Coolie (term used for field labourer) and low caste statuses. However, many found in education the entry point to engage in active politics (Ramdoyal, 1977). Morever, education remained inaccessible to many working-class families. It is only with the declaration of free and compulsory primary education in 1977 that both boys and girls were retained longer in the system. Post-colonial Mauritius is recognised as being well-governed with a relatively high Human Development Index (HDI) score[1]. This has been made possible by guaranteeing the right to education and equal opportunities through subsidies and funding aimed at increasing formal school enrolment and retention up to lower secondary level (Richards, 2007). To date the teacher

[1] The HDI (2006) shows that, Mauritius had a gross overall enrolment ratio of 74.5% for primary, secondary, and tertiary education.

pupil ratio stands as 1:21. Reform of the education system in the form of the Nine-Year Continuous Schooling Programme (NYCS) in 2016 has led to a major shift in teaching and learning at the different educational stages, especially the primary school system. The old colonial 6-5-2^2 structure was replaced by a more progressive system of nine years of continuous schooling which led to two major breakthroughs: (i) the introduction of non-core subjects at primary school level; and (ii) the inclusion of remedial and support mechanisms for underachievers in lower primary. These developments not only changed the teaching landscape at primary level but also led to a review of the roles and functions of the General Purpose (GP) teacher in primary schools. They had until then been responsible for teaching all examinable subjects and was considered responsible for the academic performance of the whole class. Indeed, prior to the reform, GP teachers taught English, French, Mathematics, Science and History- Geography as core and considered as requisite subjects which would enable learners to compete for the Certificate of Primary Education and secure a place in star secondary schools. Asian language, Information Technology (IT) and Physical Education (PE) teachers were assigned a secondary role in this system (NCF, 2016).

At present, education in Mauritius is compulsory from the age of five to the age of sixteen. With the introduction of the Nine Year Continuous Basic Education (NYCBE) reform in 2017, emphasis is laid on 21st century skills and competencies of the Mauritian learner and resultantly, the holistic development of the child. To that effect, the teaching of non-core subjects was introduced in primary education, and the Primary School Achievement Certificate (PSAC) has replaced the Certificate of Primary (CPE) which marked the end of six years of primary schooling. The lower primary levels are demarcated by the first three years of primary level while the upper primary levels constitute standards four to six. By the time the research was conducted, the transition towards the NYCBE was in the pipeline.

1.4. THE MAURITIUS INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

As far as teacher education is concerned, the MIE was established in 1973 to offer training and professional development courses to both in-service and pre-service primary and secondary school teachers, facilitators, and inspectors, among other stakeholders. The institute is now also mandated to undertake curriculum development and educational research. The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) as well as primary and secondary school textbooks, learning materials and assessment tools are designed and implemented through the MIE (Strategic plan, 2018). The MIE also enjoys a strategic position in the region in terms of its avenues to offer training and setting relevant curriculum and course development for their initial teacher development in the African region as Mauritius anchors as a giant hub for initial teacher preparation programmes for its potential partners in its surroundings.

The multicultural and multilingual environments as well as swiftness to engage in innovation and change have allowed the country to rapidly expand its training potential and keep abreast to national and international responses in the field. As the main public service provider of teacher education in Mauritius, the institute collaborates and partners from foreign and local educational institutions like the University of Brighton, UK (UoB), University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa (UKZN), University of Mauritius (UoM), University of Technology (UTM), and the Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education (MGI). In April 2018, the MIE was declared a degree awarding institution given its longstanding contribution to teacher education. It trains more than 3500 teachers each year (L' Express, 2017).

The MIE is the sole teacher training institution in the Republic of Mauritius, it is a parastatal body operating under the aegis of the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology (MoETEST). The latter is responsible for the recruitment and deployment of teachers in schools across the country. Another institution, the Service Diocésain de L'Éducation Catholique (SeDEC), responsible for the management of educational establishments falling in the purview of the Catholic Diocese, recruits its pool of preservice teachers to work in its primary schools (SeDEC, 2022). The MIE train teachers recruited from both institutions and offers relevant pre-service and in-service professional development courses at pre-primary, primary and secondary level. As far as the primary education context is concerned, the MIE offers a teacher diploma which span over two years and three months. Upon recruitment, the MoETEST

and SeDEC sends the preservice teachers to MIE, which takes charge of preparing the trainees to teach in different types of primary schools, namely star, average and Zone d'Education Prioritaire (ZEP) schools.

1.5 PRIMARY EDUCATION IN MAURITIUS

The primary schooling system includes six years of culminating education leading to the PSAC examinations which give pupils exiting the primary access to secondary schooling. The change in curriculum and educational policy led to the promulgation of the organisation and conduct of the PSAC assessments and transitional arrangements as from January 2017 (Government Notices No. 227 and 228, 2015). As at March 2020, the total primary school population aged five to twelve years stood as 82,514, and a teaching staff representing an increase of 4.7% compared to the previous year, stood at 5,903. The promotion of pupils from one grade to the next is automatic. The curriculum comprises of examinable core subjects (English, French, Math, Science, History & Geography and Asian languages/ Arabic/Mauritian Creole), and non-examinable non-core subjects (Physical Education, Civic and Values Education, IT Skills, Communication Skills, and the Arts including Music, Dance, Painting, and Drama).

While the former curriculum emphasised on academic performance[2], the proposed outcome of the new educational reform stressed on doing away with some of the pressure of national standardised examinations at the end of primary[3] and introduced alternate forms of assessment, namely the school-based assessment (SBA) and continuous assessment (CA). Both SBA and CA enable teachers to cater for differentiated learning needs of their pupils and track their progress and overall development needs (MIE, 2016).

The academic structure of a primary school in Mauritius is governed by a hierarchy which includes

[2] The 6-5-2 school structure refers to successful completion of six years of primary, five years of lower secondary and two years of upper secondary. Each milestone is denoted by passing a national examination. Successful exit from primary to lower secondary results in competition to access to one of the star or elite regional colleges. This is followed by five years of preparation to get obtain a Cambridge School Certificate and in the final years, students compete for a Cambridge Higher School Certificate under a laureate scheme. With the introduction of nine-year schooling, this examination takes place after reaching grade 10. Star schools are to be converted into academies, thus changing the perspectives of teachers and parents in terms of competing for much-coveted seats in secondary school.

[3] The CPE and PSAC examinations are organised, conducted, and assessed by the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate (MES). With the introduction of the nine-year continuous schooling, the school-based assessment and continuous assessment are included through the year for all grades.

the inspectorate who oversees the smooth running of the academic affairs of the school by paying regular visits to teaching staff and monitors the smooth enactment of the curriculum. Such an exercise is facilitated by zoning of government schools across the island: Zone 1 refers to Port Louis-North regions; followed by zone 2, Plaine Wilhems-East; zone three, Lower Plaine Wilhems and zone four, South and Quatre Bornes-West. The four zones are managed by zone directors who are accountable to the MoETEST. Each school is managed by a headmaster. In the absence of the latter, a deputy headmaster or senior teacher may be appointed for the same task. The teaching staff includes the primary school educators who teach all core subjects, the Asian Language educators who are trained to teach both Asian languages and core subjects, and the Holistic educators who teach non-core subjects. In most primary schools, Support teachers have been recruited to offer support to the class teachers in varied manner, namely for remedial learning and assistance to pupils with learning difficulties. The trainee teachers are not officially allowed to teach as full-fledged educators but are given complete access to the classrooms during their placement period for observation and teaching practice. The SeDEC (primary school run by the Roman Catholic Diocese) has a similar structure but has some freedom to decentralize its curriculum at the level of the 46 primary schools operating under its management. Their programme makes provision for the inclusion of catechism, moral values, and relevant co-curricular activities in parallel with the national curriculum, as well as the continuous professional development of its staff. Figure 1.2 is an example of a primary school organigram illustrating the structure of its administrative and academic operations.

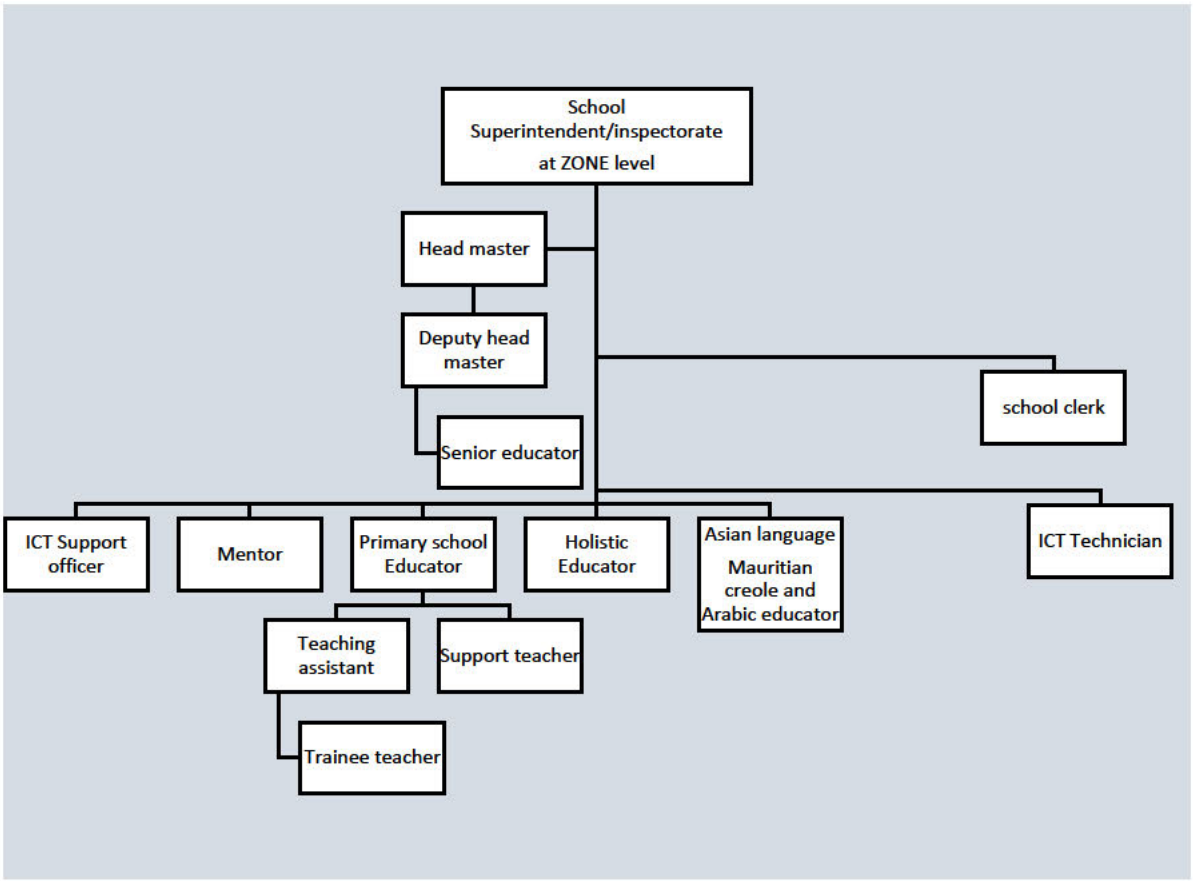

Figure 1.2 The primary school organigram in Mauritius

1.5.1 Types of primary schools in Mauritius

Primary education stands as one of the four main sectors of the schooling system in Mauritius. In 1977, free education was promoted as an equal right to this date. Also referred to as government schools, state primary schools follow a rather British model where wearing of uniforms is compulsory with a highly academic competitive examination setting governed by the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate (MES) after completion of six years cycle. All the state primary schools remain co-educational where the medium of instruction remains English and/or French. Schools are clustered in four zones and admission to schools is dependent on the residential address (also known as catchment areas) of each pupil. The demarcations of types of primary schools based on catchment areas are delimited by the geographical location of each school. For instance, the zoning of ZEP schools known for an underperforming academic record tend to be situated in poverty-stricken areas where failure rates are high, while high achieving schools have the tendency to attract pupils from more privileged socio-economic backgrounds. The

appellation of ZEP, average or star schools is dependent on the Primary School Achievement Certificate (PSAC) result outcomes at the end of each year, rendered public on the ministry's website.

Deployment of teachers to posting at school, however, remains an independent decision of the ministry who manages, controls, and supervises transfers of the teaching staff it recruits. By practice, teachers are rotated to another primary school after a maximum of six years' service. Thus, a teacher recruited by the ministry is under the obligation to service in any type of school and through their MIE training, they are exposed to a variety of school climate and cultures during their placement period. The ministry has an added advantage in the selection of trainee teachers being placed to either ZEP, average or star schools, and usually, placement is based on the following criteria: distance travelled between trainee teachers' residence and school to be posted, the demand and supply of the school, school composition and availability of staff to support trainee teachers, among others. In some cases, the trainee teacher may request for a school of his or her choice for placement. Upon finalisation of placement, the MIE, through its primary section, channels the trainee teachers to their respective school sites.

1.6 THE BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Teacher training and certification are mandatory to teach across all primary grades and levels in Mauritius. Most of the courses offered by the MIE are on a once-off basis with the possibility of top up. For instance, the Teacher Diploma Primary (TDP) programme, a pre-service course for primary school teachers recruited by the Public Service Commission (PSC), is the entry point to teach at primary level. Certified trainees, who become full-fledged teachers, may eventually opt for a bachelor's in education (Parsooramen, 2006). The MIE focuses on professionalisation of teachers through lifelong learning and continuous professional development through formal programmes as well as workshops, such as for the enactment of the NCF which is conducted as part of curriculum planning and training (Strategic plan 2018). Moreover, programmes offered at the MIE are constantly evolving through regular reviews in line with educational changes (Mudho, 1993). However, little research has been conducted on teachers' work and professional socialisation which is important to inform policy and educational reforms (MIE Strategic plan,

2007).

Teacher training of primary school teachers, both, in-service and pre-service, remain one of the responsibilities and directives of the MIE since its inception. Over the years, the nature of initial teacher training in the primary sector has evolved and changes made were in line withvarious educational reforms proposed and implemented. In the Teacher Diploma programme, school placement aimed at being an essentially vocational, thus, contributing to the professionalisation and acculturation of the trainee teacher to his future workplace. The placement process involves attachment to a primary school or series of primary schools over the two-year training while being under the supervision of a MIE teaching practice tutor and a school mentor.

In terms of broader professional experiences, the initial teacher training programme of the MIE offers trainee teachers of primary the opportunities to socialise in their prospective workplace as they learn to co-operate, co-teach, co-plan and take initiatives while being on placement period. In some cases, trainee teachers can be placed in more than one school during that period and are thus able to have a broader experience of school life as a future primary school teacher. This implies abetter understanding of the integration of theory into practice, developing inquiry and inquisitiveness while working with a diversity of learners and the ability to develop skills and competencies which further inform professionalism expected from them. Given the significance of school placement in bridging the gap between theory-based and practice-based learning, the programme also acknowledges the relevance of acclimatisation to school contexts as part of the pre-service teacher training endeavour.

It is observed that school placement foregrounded disruptions and dissonance as well. For the trainee teachers experiencing practice during placement give rise to debunking knowledge, beliefs, and assumptions about teaching, learning, learners, parents, the neighbourhoods, the school as an institution and social organisation. This disruption was often documented during the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) sessions organised by the MIE to provide a platform for the trainee teachers to share and voice out their experiences about placement while also supporting them to complete their School Based experience (SBE) tasks. The constant

interrogations underlying practice shared during the CTL sessions gave rise to the present study (Mariaye, Mahadeo-Doorgakant, Naeck, Ramasawmy, Thondee, 2012).

Far from limiting knowledge production in a traditional manner, this study therefore showcases the realities of primary school as workplace realities and resonate with other trainee teachers in similar experiences. This calls for a systematic to understanding of initial teacher training which requires trainee teachers to go out of the confines of the theories taught and begin to construct the notions of schools and their contexts, their influence and expectations of the work situations while learning to teach. The focus on school contexts as indicative of new knowledges about schools as workplace, schools as learning and teaching hubs are further emphasized to capture what trainee teachers look for as they start a professional journey. The study also researches what they think and live by during their preparation, what they learn in placement, what they build about school and teaching, and learning allows a comprehensive understanding of initial teacher development programmes in context.

1.6.1 The Teacher Diploma Primary programme: then and now

The Teacher Diploma Primary (TDP) Programme of the MIE has been designed to cater for the needs of learners - pupils aged six to eleven - moving from pre-primary to primary or elementary level. At present the programme has been reviewed and crafted to meet the demands of the Nine-Year Continuous Schooling project of the MoETEST. During the time of the data production, the implantation of that reform was under construction and trainees involved in the study were transiting from the old programme structure which trained only General Purpose teachers (trainees who were enlisted to teach core examinable subjects at primary, namely English, French, Mathematics,Science, History and Geography) and Asian language teachers (previously known as oriental languages, these include Tamil, Hindi, Marathi, Urdu, Modern Chinese and Catechism). With the reform enlistment of three new categories of teachers were included, namely, the Mauritian Creole and Arabic teachers, the Holistic teachers, teaching non-core subjects and the Support teachers, catering for remedial needs of learners from a difficult background.

In view of developing and sharpening the trainee teachers' skills and competencies to teach in primary, the programme has always focused on promoting necessary teaching dispositions and aptitudes among its trainees during their training. To sharpen teaching skills, didactical components, assessments and evaluation and pedagogy were designed to meet the needs of those embarking on the profession. The programme also ensured they had the required tools to develop unique skills which would benefit them at both personal and professional levels while committing themselves to the profession and indirectly serving the community.

1.6.2 The School Based Experience (SBE)

As part of the TDP programme, the practicum or School based Experience (SBE) stands as a core component. Trainees are firstly sent on immersion[4] at school for a period of time once they are recruited by the Public Service Commission (PSC) and are able to acclimatise themselves to the school context as their future workplace. During that period, they are expected to make observation prior to formal training at the MIE. When they start their courses, trainee teachers are sent to school once a week as part of the School Based Experience (SBE) and are required to complete a SBE professional file divided into specific tasks spanned over their two-year training. In between semesters, trainee teachers are attached to their respective school placement sites throughout the week for teaching practice visits and assessment. A school, the trainee teachers are attached to a classteacher who may also act as the school mentor. To support the trainee teachers during their school placement, the TDP programme made provision for a collegial platform for support, known as the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL).

1.6.3 The Contextual Teaching and learning (CTL) platform.

[4] Under the TDP programme, Immersion is the first stage of the placement, whereby trainees are sent at school for class observation. The aim was to help them acquaint themselves with the school context prior to formal training. The School based experience (SBE) I and II follows afterwards where they are placed while being on formal training. SBE I and SBE II denote the different phases of the placement and are linked to the types of tasks they are required to complete related to their professional practice at school.

The CTL emerged following an institutional workshop in 2009, as a response to the need for increasing practicum in the theory laden MIE course (Mariaye et al., 2012). As such, one third of the teacher education courses at MIE accounts for the total credits awarded in any of its programme. While the programme was developed by the institution on that matter, little is stipulated on the nature and structure of practicum components and the TDP programme was used as a test case in 2010 when the latter programme was under review. Restructuring of the practicum along the guiding philosophy that theory and practice should be more integrated, a third space was initiated in the form of the CTL (Mariaye, et al., 2012). The platform was created with the aim of making both trainee teachers and their teaching practice tutors revisit school experiences. A series of tasks was created to facilitate dialogue and reflection between peers and their tutorson several aspects dealing with the initiation to teaching at primary. The discussion included several issues pertaining to the school context, enactment of the curriculum, teaching, learning, and learning needs of pupils among others.

Acting principally as a third space, the CTL referred to seminar sessions organised on a fortnight basis with a group of approximately twelve trainee teachers and their respective MIE teaching practice tutors (usually three tutors per group). The overarching philosophy guiding the CTL is read as the integration of an open pedagogy which welcomed dialogue andreflection as well as authentic interrogation around practice was shared. The aim was to firstly, provide trainee teachers a platform to discuss their concerns arising out of their schoolplacement experiences and, secondly be offered necessary guidance and support while they complete their SBE tasks. The various discussions and questioning posed by trainee teachers on the dissonance and disruptions experienced while being on school placement triggered the germinal ideas of the present study.

1.7 THE FOCUS OF THE STUDY

Far from being a solitary act, teaching remains complex and dynamic (Hiebert, Gallimore, and Stigler, 2002), and as the sole provider of preservice teacher training, the MIE has the imperative to gather sufficient knowledge to understand and research on how trainees think and live by

their professional preparation through school placement. The study therefore considers that trainee teachers of primary hold the continuous discourse on the disconnection that they feel and experience during their training theoretically and contextually through the SBE or placement period because, they begin to construct the notions of schools and its contexts by these experiences they live by. These influence their expectations of the work situations, and constructions of teaching and learning among other things also trigger their professional development and professional knowledge base.

For an institution like the MIE, with a long-standing reputation for professionalizing teachers and stakeholders in the Education sector, focusing on constructions of primary school context opens on avenues to knowledge which essentialize on the practicum component as a core aspect of its training and professional development. In this respect, the study highlights preservice teacher training of primary in Mauritius as a case. For teacher educators like me, this study gives way to systematic understanding of placement experiences as learning hubs. The study aims at helping us to explore and rethink practice, and eventually allows us as curriculum developers and educational researchers to better plan relevant curriculum of teacher development. The study analyses what trainee teachers build about the school, teaching and learning, interactions with stakeholders and spaces to better gauge at the ways these constructions which make up the primary school context forge professional development of Mauritian trainee teachers of primary.

The target group of primary school trainee teachers were selected from a pool of General-Purpose teachers in the TDP programme given that they teach the examinable and core subjects of English, French, Mathematics, History and Geography, and Science. Placement refers to the period during which the trainee teacher is engaged in teaching practicum while being on the Teacher Diploma Primary at the MIE. More details on placement are provided later in this chapter. School context refers to the collections of relationships and practices, services and support systems, technology, architectures, and spaces around and about the primary school which make up the experiences of primary school trainee teachers while they are in the phase of learning to teach Thrupp and Lupton (2011). At that stage, the trainee teachers are not recognised as full-fledged teachers by the MoETEST but are provided with a monthly stipend

during that period.

1.8.1 The notion of school context in this study

As a point of departure, trainee teachers experience immersion in a primary school as the siteof their professional socialisation and the testing ground for teaching and learning. The idea of school context is coined as it encapsulates the idea of the primary school entity in its broader socio-economic, pedagogical, and cultural environment. Taking from Gu & Johanssen (2013), the primary school context in this study is characterized as a dynamic system which influences and crafts the affective, social, behavioural, and academic dimensions of teaching and learning. In this study a geographical mapping of the school context as places and spaces which are enmeshed with the school physical layout are considered. These include people, relationships, buildings and spaces. Through placement, trainee teaches also learn to be part of the school's ecosystem (Abma, Lips & Schrijver, 2020; Johannesen, 2012) and are in a better position to interpret the school's organisational practices (Hargreaves, 1993; Boyd, 1992).

The school context constitutes the surrounding neighbourhood, the services provided by the school, the key influencers of academic performance and the teachers' work. Ultimately, these reflect the ways in which the school functions and guide its day-to-day operations (Bascia & Hargreaves, 2014; Akey, 2006). Comprehensive knowledge of the constituent parts of the primary school context through personal constructions helps trainee teachers to better understand their craft and explore avenues to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Consequently, knowledge of the school context is constructed in this study throughthe lived experiences of trainee teachers during school placement. Taken from seminal research (Boyd, 1992; Firestone 1984), the notions of school context are linked to factors which have strong influences on the school, and which define its different facets. These comprises of both material and immaterial aspects, school climates and cultures and social dimensions which define the life of the school, namely, (formal and informal) relationships and interactions with groups and individuals contained in the day to day running. A thorough understanding of the concept is detailed in chapter two.

1.8.2 Construction of school context as the phenomenon in this study

The notion of construction is understood as being highly complex, fluid, progressive and subjective in nature. Based on this understanding, the study recognises that trainee teachers' construction of school context forms part of their personal knowledge which they eventually display during professional practice which grows as they move from one stage of their practicum to the next. These constructions eventually make up their tacit knowledge, *a priori* or explicit knowledge,*posteriori* knowledge, propositional knowledge, procedural knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and knowledge of technology, among others. Although I do not explicitly venture into these forms of knowledge, I acknowledge their relevance in explaining the potential means through which trainee teachers' constructions are made within the specific time and space of their professional development before they become full-fledged teachers (Arvaja, 2005; Virkkula & Nikula, T, 2010).

In line with the above, chapter three employs the Social Construction Theory (SCT) to explain the construction of those trainee teachers in this study. As a point of departure, several thinkers in the field offer solid understanding on the concept of construction as knowledge production namely, Hacking's (1999) whose three dimensions of knowledge construction - namely, nominalism, stability and contingency - partly considered in this study as I explain how trainee teachers come up with certain constructs. However, by converging towards a sociological outlook, Bernstein's pedagogic device (2001) is also considered to explain how trainees build their knowledge of school context. Bernstein's pedagogic device refers to the relay of procedures which convert intellectual, practical, expressive, official, unofficial and local forms of knowledge into pedagogic communication (Singh, 2002) for transmission and acquisition. The pedagogic device is usually expressed in three hierarchically interrelated rules, i.e., the distributive, recontextualising and evaluative rules, each deriving from the former through power relationships to form pedagogic identities, pedagogic discourse and pedagogic practices (Bernstein, 1996). Such a proposition causes this study to consider the field of pedagogic device (Bernstein, 2001) which is materialised as schools, the MIE as a teacher education institution, and curriculum units or the parent ministry which may maintain, contest or challenge the pedagogical device itself. This view does not depart from Bourdieu's Field of power acting as a

social space where conflict and competition co-exist and struggle. The inhabitants shape the field through authority and power which, in turn, influence the distribution of resources, labour and information vertically and horizontally (Bourdieu, 1997) within the professional socialisation process.

1.8.3 'Placement' in this study

Within the placement period, a trainee is initially immersed in the school context and postedat a school for observation (I henceforth use three concepts which I have conceptualised in this study; namely, the term **acquaintance stage** to demarcate this period from the rest of the placement period); the second stage starts with the period called the SBE, namely a *one day-per week* school placement in parallel with their course –that deals with more theoretical aspects – at the MIE (the term **sandwich stage** is used to refer to this placement phase); and, finally, the teaching practice period where the trainee isofficially allowed to experiment, present lessons and teach, prepare assessments and evaluate learners under the supervision of a mentor (the term **native versus estranged stage** is coined to represent this period). The latter period ends when the trainee successfully exits professional training and is ready to be posted in a primary school as a full-fledged teacher (refer to chapter 8 and 9 for further explication). The data were produced at that stage and rely on the retrospective element. Consequently, placement in this study is conceived of as a liminal (Turner, 1969; Wels et al., 2015) period for the trainee teacher which is marked by the process of learning to teach and professional socialisation, as well as preparation to start as a qualified beginner teacher.

1.9 THE RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Like any workplace, the school remains a professional organisation. It is necessary for trainee teachers to smoothly transit from the theoretical baggage acquired to their immersion into practicum. Over the years, I observed that trainee teachers have frequently been baffled by the fact that what they learnt as content and pedagogy prior to placement appeared to become doubtful, irrelevant, or difficult to implement. Drastic changes in primary school teachers' roles, status and functions brought about by education reforms, curriculum development and continuously changing expectations and public articulations around the teaching profession,

render it more complex to explore the gap between the theory learned at the MIE and the professional experience in a real school situation. It is against this background that this study explores what trainee teachers construct as school context during placement to assist them to conceptualise the primary school as a professional learning site and a workplace. It should be noted that the school context is considered as multi-layered and complex. In this respect, a critical-interpretivist lens is used to unlock trainee teachers' construction of primary school context as power, uncertainty, contestations, and representations which are defined through the intellectual, ideological and historical contexts. Constructs of school context by trainee teachers reflect teaching and learning contexts, school hierarchies, collegial contexts, support contexts, affective and relational contexts, intellectual contexts, physical contexts, and pedagogical contexts which are explicated in chapter nine.

1.10 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The study is described as a qualitative study with the following aim and objectives:

1.10.1 The aim of the study.

The aim of this study is to explore the ways in which trainee teachers of primary construct notions of school context as they enter school placement during their preservice teacher training course at the MIE. The research findings focus on using the Social Construction Theory (SCT) as a theoretical strand to unlock the nature of construction patterns about school contexts arising from preservice trainee teachers on school placement. For that purpose, the SCT is used as a theoretical lens to assist data collection and analysis. The conclusions derived from the findings allow the thesis-building which explains constructions in the form of several key concepts and eventually a theoretical explanation while extending the existing knowledge prevailing within the scope of SCT. The study also draws extensively from a sociological standpoint while capturing those constructions contained in the conversations, observations and assumptions made by trainee teachers' voices. By exploring, trainee teachers' construction, this study also opens to the latter's voices as instruments of power rendered visible and contribute to better understand the school placement as a liminal space where power and subjugation is constantly contested and redefined.

1.10.2 The objectives of the study

The main objectives of this study are to (i) explore the ways in which trainee teachers construct notions of school context while being on school placement, through relationships, people, places, buildings and spaces; (ii) provide an in-depth conceptual explanation of these constructions arising during the school placement period, while taking into account the contingent elements influencing the trainee teachers' construction patterns and (iii) explain the nature of those constructions as part of the singular lived experiences of the trainee teachers. The study also seeks to understand how the singularities voiced out in isolation may also form an assemblage of common experiences emerging from these constructions about primary school contexts.

1.10.2.1 The specific research questions for this study are as follows:

Research question 1:
What knowledge do trainee teachers construct about context during placement?
Research question 2:
How do trainee teachers construct context knowledge during placement?
Research question 3
Why do trainee teachers construct context knowledge during placement in the way that they do?

The specific research questions highlight placement as the site of knowledge production in order to gain insight into participants' construction of the school contexts and the way they perceive, represent and experience them while being on professional placement. To answer these three research questions, I opted to use a critical interpretivist stance. The critical interpretivist aims at introspecting into the daily lives and encounters of participants without intruding into their authenticity of their mundane activities (Pozzebon, 2004). While attempting to understand the phenomenon under study, opportunities to unlock the constructions of detailed, situated and empirical interpretations of school context are sought. The analysis remains reflective in nature and aims at disrupting the broader assumptions of the school as an organisation of power and control (refer to chapter four). The Social Construction Theory complements as the theoretical lens in the analysis of findings from the field. My data sources to answer these questions consisted of seven trainee teachers, transect maps, conversations and photographs taken by and with the participants. The site of knowledge construction was primarily the primary schools in which the participants were offered placement. I also used a short oral biographical text provided

by each participant to gain insight into their individual profile and professional background. This data helped to establish the links with the contingent factors that influenced their construction of school context. A short narrative episodic interview was conducted prior to the transect walks and a timeline of each participant's journey as a trainee teacher was drawn. Maps or an itinerary of the site(s) were produced by the participants themselves, some of which were done prior to the visit, while others were produced as we walked through the site (see chapter four). These sources were related to my conceptual model as each participant started from what was known to them and moved to what was completely unknown or hidden to/by them during the knowledge generation process.

The first specific research question is addressed as the critical 'what' question and constitute the findings detailed in chapters five, six and seven. Data driven analysis derived from the field made up the bulk of data which unlocks what is constructed as school context. The emerging themes are then reconfigured as key concepts in chapter eight. The second specific research question is dealt in chapter eight and offers insight into the ways in which construction takes place. Four main concepts are developed to illustrate how trainee teachers construct school context. The different concepts emerging from the transects, conversations and narratives of the trainees are made in retrospection and helped to dig deeper into what makes trainees think the way they do; and how they come to construct a particular event, concept, issue, place, space, practice, and people under the circumstances encountered during their placement. The temporality and spatiality of the construct are discussed and various pointers like memory, their affective experiences, their teacher gaze, and their assumptions contained in their narratives helped to answer this critical sub-question.

The last specific research question which addresses the 'why' is contained in chapter nine and ten. In order to capture the emerging theorisation on the nature of trainee teachers' construction of school context, it is layered in terms of (i) contextual, (ii) methodological and (iii) theoretical explanations which clarify the nature of trainee teachers' construction of school context in the act of ***Witnessing,*** which makes up the thesis statement, theoretical explanation or public text of this study (chapter ten).

1.11 Selection of participants

Trainee teachers in the primary school context were the primary source of data for this study. A non-representative, purposive sample was optimised, and the aim was to gather in-depth and meaningful data which will allow me to answer the how and why questions (Baker & Gill, 2020; Edwards, 2012; Mason, 2010). Seven participants were chosen from the same cohort of trainee teachers on teaching practice. I supervised two of them, while the other five were under the supervision of other MIE tutors. The participants were placed in four different primary schools. Kyle and Kiara[5] were placed in a government school situated in the heart of a well-frequented urban area. Kyle lives in the locality, while Kiara is of Rodriguan origin and rented a house located behind the school compound. At the time I was negotiating her participation, she wished to move to Rodrigues Island or to be placed in another school in the same town for her next placement (SBE II). However, she ended up doing all her SBE II in the same school. While the participants had never officially taught before coming to the MIE, most of them were indirectly related to teaching. The other five participants come from both rural and urban areas. Tabitha was on placement in a Bureau Education Catholic[6] (BEC) now renamed as a primary school run under SeDEC and at the time of participating in the study, she was on maternity leave. Her colleague, Bella, joined teaching after working for several years in the hotel industry and public relations in the private sector.Archie was placed in rural schools, he shifted from a government post he was occupying to join the profession. Boaz and Tasha hailed from an urban area and were placed in a school not far from their residences. Tasha topped in the TDP course and was completing an MBA at the time of the data collection while Boaz was the oldest trainee teacher but had some experience of working in schools. The selection of trainees was based on their availability and willingness to participate in the study while their profile was scrutinised in terms of their heterogeneity, prior professional exposure to teaching and rich personal journeys as people entering the profession.

1.12 METHODOLOGY

[5] Pseudonyms were used for the purpose of this study. The real names of the participants were kept confidential.

[6] See explanation in section 1.4. SeDEC schools are run and administered by the Diocese of the Roman Catholic church.

I employed a qualitative research approach with data collected in both the immediate setting and retrospectively and a transect method was employed (see chapter four). The data production process was divided into three major phases: the pre-walk, the during-walk and the post-walk. A narrative-episodic interview was conducted during the pre-walk phase. The pure narrative interview, first developed by Schütz (1987), was used as a substitute for the semi-structured interview as it enabled comprehensive understanding of the participants' experiences as trainee teachers. The narrative-episodic interview was used as an initiating tool to sketch the participants' biographical details on their pathway to becoming a teacher. The interview was structured around extempore narrative which shaped into a consistent story of all relevant events and issues, foregrounding their constructions of school context from the beginning to its end (Flick, 2009). However, I chose episodic rather than pure narrative interviewing to gain knowledge of the events experienced by the participants (Flick,2007) with a view to facilitating the presentation of their experiences as topical domains for which the narratives were required.

In the during-walk phase, I chose the transect walk instrument because it fits well into the agenda of critical interpretive research. It is a dynamic and innovative way to recreate participatory techniques that is gaining traction in empirical studies in Mauritius as it combines observation and interview techniques and allows authentic data to emerge, while foregrounding participants' agency and voice in a setting where power relations matter. Participants are treated as *knowers.* This instrument enables observation and interview techniques to be used at the same time. A transect walk schedule was devised to: (i) explore what knowledge trainee teachers have about context and (ii) unlock trainees' representations of knowledge of context (through their perceived, conceived and lived experiences during placement). The post-walk phase consisted of a short conversation of around 35 minutes withfive participants, with each giving their views on their learning/teaching curve during school placement. Creative representations were optimised, namely, pictures, collage, drawing andmetaphors produced by the participants.

1.13 THE CONCEPTUAL MODEL OPTIMISED TO EXPLICATE THE CONSTRUCTION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL CONTEXT IN THIS STUDY

The conceptual model I chose as a lens for the study is based on adaptations from an ecological approach and the inclusion of the Social Construction Theory to gain deeper insights into the phenomenon. The theoretical model was used to generate and analyse data, but it is also further developed as a heuristic tool to explain the phenomenon, which is the nature of construction of school context. The evolution of the model as a theoretical model can be seen in chapter nine.

1.14 ORGANISATION OF THIS THESIS

This study is presented in ten chapters and is organised in three sections. Section one consists of chapter one to chapter four. Section two regroups the findings and level one analysis which is contained in chapter five to seven. Finally, section three consists of the theorisation and thesis building contained in chapter eight, nine and ten. Figure 1.2 (see on the next page) showcases the organisation of the thesis as building blocks. Section one forms the foundations for section two to emerge, i.e., the data production phase and level one analysis. That third section presents the theorisation and thesis building chapters. The figure below describes the organisation of this thesis.

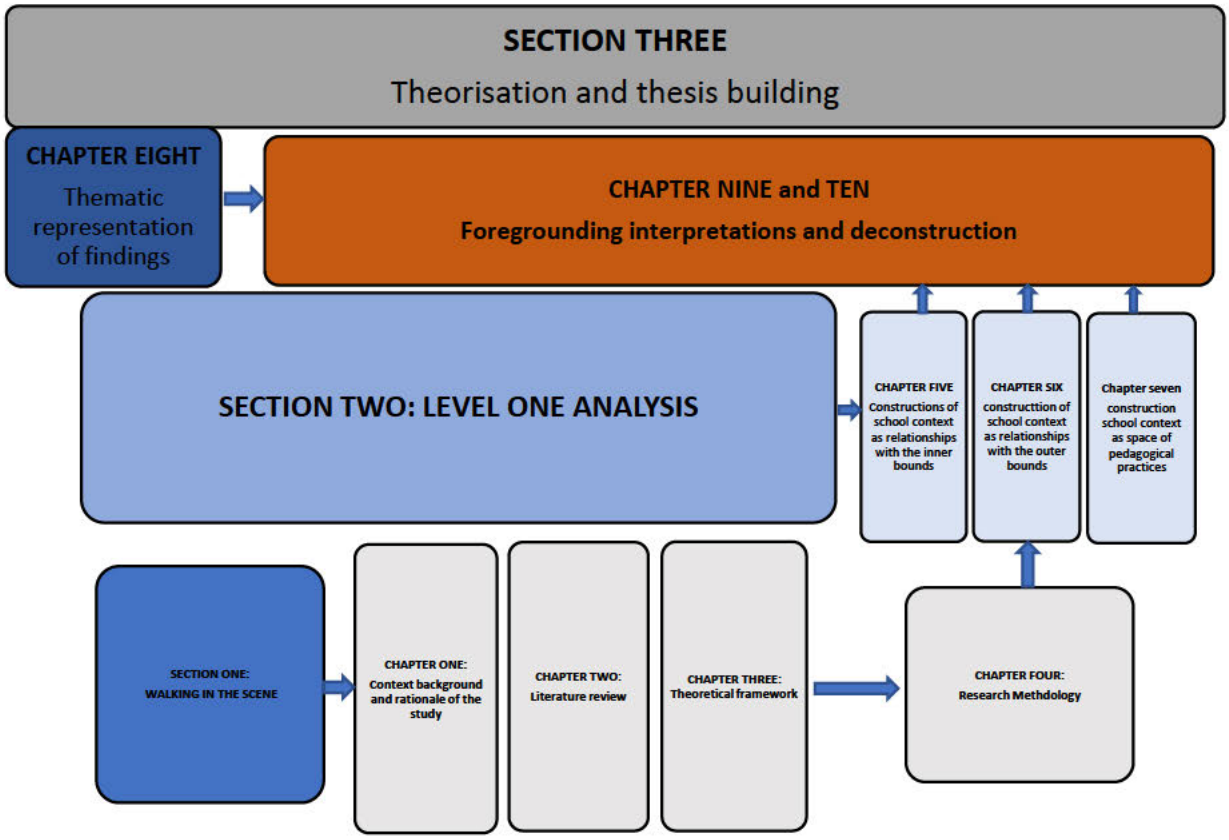

Figure 1.3: Organisation of the thesis.

Chapter one foregrounds the setting and scope of the study while expanding the contextual, methodological and theoretical boundaries. Trainee teachers' socialisation and notions of acclimatisation to school as workplace are captured and retained. Chapter two details trainee teachers' experiences of what it means to 'learn to teach' at school. Several initial teacher training contexts and placement models are highlighted, and these are juxtaposed with the MIE model. The literature also extends to the role of the primary schools as placement sites which produce unique experiences and act as spaces for trainee teachers to be socially professionalised

Chapter three introduces the Social Construction Theory as a temporary lens to assist data collection and assesses its potential to explore constructions of school contexts. This legitimises the entrance to the field and constructions made by the trainees acting as pseudo-insiders of the elements of primary school contexts. linked to this theory, key concepts like socio-materiality, gaze, emotions and memory act as contributing elements of social constructions and are addressed in this study. The chapter also highlights the use of ecological understanding of the site of teachers' professional life (Costigan, 2014) into their professional becoming while trainee teachers learn, unlearn and relearn through constructions of constituent parts of the school context. The adapted ecological model taken from Johri and Lefebvre explicates these as complex spaces which are perceived, conceived, and lived (Lefebvre, 1974). This is further elaborated through the social construction theory which is merged with the school ecological model borrowed from Bronfenbrenner's ecological framework (date). I proceed by referring to constructs of the theoretical model for level two analysis. Influenced by thinkers like Steets (2016); Berger and Luckmann (1965), Hacking (1999) and Gergen (2010), social construction theory is preferred as it captures the personal,autobiographical, and meaning making by trainee teachers. Chapter four allows the reader to walk in the field. It presents an overview of the research design, data collection instruments,data sources and selection of participants. The data production phases are detailed and the features of the transect walk as a method are scrutinised.

Chapters five and six analyse the data in terms of construction of school context as relationships with teachers, pupils, parents, and people termed auxiliaries. These chapters are significant as

they orient the reader towards the entry point of trainee teachers' construction of school context. Some take a personal and nurturing route to enter school contexts while others use previous professional compasses to step into their new workplace/workspace. Chapter seven continues with the analysis and unravels the complexity of trainee teachers' constructions of school contexts as spaces where antagonism and resentment are felt. Chapter eight introduces the level two analysis and is clustered in themes which deal with *how* questions. This chapter also denotes the shift to the data production phase. The themes developed add to how construction of reality takes place andprepare the reader for the thesis chapter. Finally, chapters nine and ten present the thesis of this dissertation and answer the *why* question. The theoretical model presented in chapter three is reframed in terms of a theoretical concept which unlocks the nature of constructionby trainee teachers in this study. The conclusion is presented in the form of an epilogue and sums up the thesis and its outcome.

1.15 SYNTHESIS OF THE CHAPTER

This introductory chapter outlined this study on the nature of trainee teachers' construction of school context while they are immersed in teaching. The background context and rationale for the study is explicated. The chapter also highlights the literature review, conceptual framework, and methodology elaborated on the pre-field experiences as well as the data collected and analysed. Finally, a synopsis of the thesis was presented.

The following chapter presents a literature review on preservice teachers' professional socialisation in context.

CHAPTER TWO
PRESERVICE TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL SOCIALISATION IN CONTEXT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented the general orientation of the study. In this chapter, an in-depth understanding of how teachers of primary are produced and professionally developed during the school placement period is foregrounded. School placement constitutes the physical site where this study takes place, hence, the necessity for a comprehensive review of it as a site for the induction and informal learning of teachers during their initial teacher professional development. In doing so, the chapter also analyses the notions of the school context as a visible attribute for professional socialisation and informal knowledge acquisition on (views, assumptions and expectations about teaching) and of (lived experiences as trainee teachers on the job training) the teaching profession occurring during the placement period.

In this study, school placement is broadly understood as the overall in-situ (on-site) experience that prepares trainee teachers for permanent posting following completion of their initial teacher

professional development. Usually referred to as School-Based Experience (Bristol, 2018; Manyard, 2000) or Teaching Practice (Caires, Almeida & Vieira, 2012) in various educational plans and educational research, school placement acts as a window to the school and classroom life (Hayes, 2003). It is also described as a complex cognitive engagement (Charalambous, 2008), which represents the trainee teachers' emotional journey (Goode & Ibett, 2013; Hayes, 2003) as they immerse themselves in the process of learning to teach and interact with other actors embedded in the school context as part of their professional socialisation.

The placement phase is a significant component during training because it enables trainee teachers to explore their capabilities and talents for the teaching profession (Tynan & McLain, 2019; Korthagen, 2017). It also helps them understand and explore the practicalities of becoming a teacher (Strom & Martin, 2019; Mitka & Gates, 2010; Goodson, 2003) and their engagement and interactions with stakeholders and third parties (Du Plessis, Marais, Van Schalkwyk & Weeks, 2010; Brofenbrenner, 2000) evolving in the school context. Placement also denotes trainee teachers' professional experiences as they cope with the emotional demands (Alves, et al., 2019; Mansfield & Beltman, 2019; Bullock, 2013), the relational, practical, pedagogical, and the technical challenges placed on them (Knight, 2013; Graham & Roberts, 2007; Hodkinson, 2005; Fuller et al., 2016; Johnston, 2010; Hargreaves, 2001; Ferrier-Kerr, 2009; Hascher et.al., 2004) as they immerse themselves in a future teaching workforce. Also documented as a complex ecology where trainee teachers can understand and explore their multiple professional roles, school placement is recognised in this study as a space of contestation (Aydarova & Berliner, 2018; Clayton, 2018; Walsh, 2016) that illustrates dissonance (Behizadeh, Thomas & Behm Cross, 2019; Zengaro & Zengaro, 2017), control and power (Greenwood, Gercama, Lynch, More, Mankhwazi, Mbukwa & Bedford, 2020; Pike, 2010; Ghallagher, 2009). In this respect, the complexity of school placement as a site for professional socialisation and informal learning is captured to prepare the reader for a better understanding of what trainee teachers construct as school context during placement (see chapter 5 to 7) and how they come up with certain constructions about school contexts during that phase (chapter 8).

2.2 ORIENTATION

This chapter presents a review of the literature on school placement as a space for initial teacher

professionalisation and informal learning within specific school contexts. This review therefore describes what trainee teachers learn about their future profession, namely their roles, assumptions about teaching and learning and getting to know about what it means to teach in different school contexts which are usually explicated as school and management structures, types of teachers and school leadership, instructional styles and pedagogy, knowledge of the curriculum and the enactment of its contents shaping trainee teachers' ideas and knowledge. This chapter also sets to explain how teachers are produced in higher teacher education in selected countries, namely France, China, South Africa, UK and Sri Lanka. The focus is made on these countries as they provide professional contexts and school placement models comparable to some extent to the MIE's initial teacher professional development programmes on offer. Moreover, these illustrate the informal ways in which knowledge about becoming a teacher are acquired during the placement period.

The literature also signposts schools as placement sites which produce unique experiences and act as spaces for trainee teachers to be socially professionalised. In this respect, relationships and interactions as well as incidental learning through those interactions in context are highlighted as significant. The review includes the analysis of the roles and functions of school placement, the expectations of trainee teachers about placement experiences, and how the latter articulate what they actually end up enacting based on their observations and experiments while being on school-based professional practice. These literatures are also juxtaposed with school placement provisions for trainee teachers at the MIE.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section provides an understanding of school placement for this study and includes an overview of school placement structures in initial teacher education in some parts of the world. The second section follows with a critical review of the literature on school placement as a phenomenon in initial teacher education. The final section discusses school placement as a site for informal learning and construction of school context. This section lays the groundwork for the development of both conceptual and theoretical lenses which are discussed in chapter three.

2.3 PLACEMENT PROGRAMMES AND EXPERIENCES IN PRESERVICE TEACHER TRAINING

2.3.1 Placement in Initial Teacher Education programmes in some parts of the world

Preservice teacher development programmes vary from context to context, and placement outcomes are defined in those programmes as addressing educational issues in school context (McCormack & O' Flaherty, 2010); practice-based experiences and teacher leadership (Craft, 2000); teacher becoming (Whiting, Whitty, Menter, Black, Hordern, Parfitt, & Sorensen, 2018); development of dispositions about teaching and learning (Mueller & Hindin, 2011; Gisky, 2000); and preparation for instruction (Richards and Farrell 2005). Some teacher training models showcase these issues when addressing placement programmes. Most of these stress on the bridging of the theory-practice gap (Brower & Korthagen, 2015; Cabaroglu, 2014) although the trainee teachers' placement experiences do not sufficiently capture the pedagogical needs of teachers in time and space (Mitka & Gates, 2010). Six models of initial teacher development programmes are briefly presented in this section and the different features juxtaposed with the MIE model on pertinent issues related to school placement in educational research. The main motive is to highlight how placement models in teacher training programmes of primary have a strong implication on deliverables of trainee teachers when they are posted to school during placement.

2.3.1.1 Snapshot of school placement in the Chinese Initial Teacher Training (ITT)

China has spawned extensive theory and practice in its preservice teacher education programmes in normal universities which are responsible for the training of preservice teachers. The school placement and teaching practice component remain consistent with the country's national curriculum (Lui, Lui, Wang, 2015) and the component includes a professional probation in school sites near the university, 6-8 weeks of educational practice in school site and 2 weeks of peer micro teaching on campus (Kiggundu, 2007; Xiaoduan, 2001). Studies on the active roles of preservice teachers during that phase are criticized (Silva, Farias & Mesquita, 2021; Burke, Cowell, R, & Osta, 2008). The need for inclusion of transformative practices, making schools as collaborative platforms for pedagogical innovations and optimal use of resources as well as encouraging team teaching and classroom observation are highlighted (Sethunga, Wijesundrera & Karunanayake, 2016).

The MIE placement model (see description provided in chapter 1 under 1.5.2) mirrors some of the features of the Chinese model in terms of its consistency and effort to expose its trainees to relevant pedagogical content knowledge but also expose them to school realities in order to acquaint them with authentic professional experiences as they observe and trial out the pedagogical and didactic skills learnt. However, the same discourse prevails on the ways in which trainee teachers are subject to some resistance when it comes to pedagogical transformation and innovations in their classroom. The rigidity in instructional skills is always questioned by the latter once they start observing and teaching (Payneeandy, Auckloo & Mosaheb, 2017), hence, leading to the latter's continuous discontent on the widening theory-practice gap they observed and experienced during placement (La Velle, 2019; Korthagen, 2007).

2.3.1.2 Snapshot of school placement in the South African ITT

In South African context, the school placement fosters professional development both formally and informally (Reddy, Menkveld and Bitzer, 2008). This placement model is similar to the MIE model in terms of inclusion of mentors and teaching practice tutors as key actors supporting and monitoring the trainee teachers outside the formal training context. However, the period for placement varies from context to context, from programme to programme. Although the placement period is scattered throughout the MIE programme, School placement in South African context is conducted in one block period of six weeks and starts from year one of the teacher training programme (Reddy, Menkveld and Bitzer, 2008). This component also includes teaching practice methodology and seminars. This implies classroom observation under a school mentor and university staff, as well as completion of teaching practice, deployment of planning, instructional skills and co-curricular activities, and reflective writing among others (Ntsaluba & Chireshe, 2013; Heeralal & Bayaga, 2011).

2.3.1.3 Snapshot of school placement in the Sri Lankan ITT

In Sri Lankan context, the disproportionate ratio between theory and practice is signalled more virulently, although there are four institutions which offer a comprehensive preservice teacher training programme for teacher professional development (Sethunga, Wijesundrera, Karunanayake, 2016). Unlike what is proposed at MIE, trainee teachers are offered internship in different schools during their placement period so that they learn about the nature of teaching

and learning in varied school contexts (Sujeewa, Polgampala, Shen, Huang, 2016). While this possibility is not discarded, it does not feature as an official feature of the TDP programme set by MIE when deployment of trainee teachers is made for school placement (see chapter 1, section 1.6.3).

2.3.1.4 Snapshot of school placement in the French ITT

The French model is similar to the Mauritian context as teachers are recruited at national level by the central government (see chapter 1 section 1.5.2). Posting is based on the equitable distribution between schools, regions and teachers. The training offered has long been modelled by 'sandwich training' in the Ecoles normales (Cornu, 2015) and later by the Instituts Universitaires de Formation de Maitres (IUFM) for primary teachers. Likewise, the theory and practice are strongly articulated (Lapostolle & Chevallier, 2009). As far as the school placement is concerned, it is organised in several stages, namely, the 'accompanied practice', where the student teachers or trainee teachers are mentored by a teacher in the classroom; the following year, the trainee teacher moves to 'full responsibility practice', where they are given the responsibility of a class and have teaching practice periods. Lapostolle & Chevallier (2009) discuss that during that period, they are also given opportunity to reflect and analyse their professional practice occurring at schools in 'practice analysis seminars. This model acknowledges reflexive spaces for trainee teachers to find a support and realise that their experiences are not isolated cases. Likewise, the CTL sessions offered by MIE (refer to chapter 1 section 1.5.3) as a platform allow them to reflect on their experiences and share the dissonance and disruptions which occur during that phase of their training (Mariaye et al., 2012).

2.3.1.5 Snapshot on school placement in Britain's ITT

The British ITT model is distinct to the other models discussed above. Over 30.000 individuals are trained annually. The ITT options follow several routes, namely school-based training and the higher education-led training. In both routes, the school placement component is compulsory, Trainee teachers are expected to be exposed to at least two schools (Kessler & Heron, 2004) for an award of qualified teacher status (QTS). Certain prerequisites qualifying potential trainee teachers for the course is an GCSE[7] in Maths and English as well acquisition of professional skills

[7] The General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) is the examination set by Cambridge in June every year. It is

in literacy and numeracy prior to the course (Martinez, 2010). In comparison to the MIE model, recruitment of trainee teachers of primary requires a minimum entry requirement set by the Pay Research Bureau (PRB). As far as placement is concerned, the British model offers similar experiences to the trainee teachers as the MIE model. School placement offers opportunities for focused activities like classroom observation and teaching, as well as involvement in the school life.

2.3.1.6 Why school placement matters during ITT

These training contexts showcase some similarities to the initial teacher training programme offered by the MIE although most of these programmes stretch to three-four years while the MIE course is offered at Diploma level. The placement component, irrespective of its variety, however, remains one of the most reliable aspects of the course as it carries as much weight as foreign programmes described earlier. All the aspects referred in those programmes are consistent with the school-based experience offered by the MIE to preservice teachers of primary. The different programmes which have been described depict the significance of school placement in the realization of the theory-practice gap; they allow the trainee teachers to introspect on their values, attitudes, expectations and voice out their dissatisfactions with what they learn during training based on what they observe and experience as trainee teachers during placement. In this respect, the structure of placement as professional sites for ITT is deemed significant and worth researched as a site for professionalizing preservice teachers. The following section extends the idea of school placement as enablers of professional knowledge and experiences.

2.3.2 Analysis of preservice teachers' professional knowledge and experiences during placement

Insights of professional knowledge taking place during school placement confirm schools as unique sites which breed contextual social interactions, professional socialization, and professional development. However, research on preservice teacher training during that period is given less visibility as compared to in-service teacher education programmes (Heeralal & Bayaga, 2011). Existing research foregrounds on formal learning experiences and professional

comparable to the Cambridge School Certificate (SC).

knowledge acquisition rather than informal aspects of teacher training. Some of these feature: (i) trainees' ability to successfully teach pupils in real-life contexts (Johnston, 2010; Florian & Rouse, 2009; Florian et.al., 2010; Gutstein, 2018); (ii) the practical skills affecting classroom practices (Mukeredzi & Mandrona, 2013; Sime & Priestley, 2005, Boz & Boz, 2006); (iii) how trainee teachers familiarise themselves with the place and various teacher spaces (Toom et al, 2017; Tuitt et al., 2009); (iv) how they learn to cope with the job (Tang, 2003); and (v) how trainees acclimatise to in-school duties (Darling-Hammond, 2006; 2013).

Such contextual understanding of the school placement extends to formal training and the context in which it operates through exposure to practice-based knowledge about the profession. Firstly, existing literature analyses the school as a workplace where the trainee teachers use knowledge resources through participation and active engagement in complex teaching roles and contexts (Thomson & Hanley, 2017; Maxwell, 2014). Second, in a process of their professional becoming, trainee teachers move away from an inherent institutional biography or *apprenticeship by observation* (Britzman, 1986; Lortie, 1975) to grasp other knowledge forms with constitute a more emotionally charged and negotiated form of knowledge (Costigan, 2014). This process entails the re-evaluation of practices or beliefs and assumptions (Blakemore, 1998). Consequently, the pertinence of pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1984), personal knowledge (Polanyi, 1958), knowledge of work context (Eraut, 1998), knowledge and use of technology or Technological Pedagogical content knowledge (TPCK) as explicated by Mishra & Koehler (2006), and professional knowledge (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996) become more apparent. These allow the trainee to learn about the inside and outside worlds which make up the school realities. Finally, these elements help the trainee to develop an understanding of initial teacher training as the complex process(es) of professionalising teaching.

Probing further along these lines, school placement opens up to development of several forms of teacher knowledge,hence, leading to the construction of work context. Hence, the prominence of studies over the trainee teacher's acquisition of content knowledge (Ball, Thames, & Phelps, 2008; Bailey, Curtis, & Nunan, 2001; Shulman, 1986; Shulman, 1987; Freeman & Johnson,1998), craft knowledge (Grimmett & Mackinnon, 1992), internalisation of the process of learning in the classroom (Margolinas et al., 2005), and the theory-practice gap (Ben-Peretz, Gottlieb, & Gideon,

2018; Laursen, 2015; Carr, 1995; Hirst, 1990; Kreymer-Hayon & Fessler, 1991) are observed . Some perspectives also focus on the requisite knowledge base for teaching, which either gives rise to or is guided by policy initiatives, leading to a formal outlook on 'what teachers should know and be able to do'. Such a knowledge base also fuels the discourse around professionalising (Malm, 2009; Weidman, Twale & Stein, 2001), teaching through certification, accountability, accreditation and performance assessment. The same stream explores the potential of *formal teacher knowledge* which stresses a process-product orientation where a distinctive knowledge base is deemed crucial for effective teaching and learning outcomes - as explicated in the work of Gage (2009) and Berliner (1991, 2000).

A second orientation aims on practically oriented knowledge and the outcome of training. It focuses on the question: 'What do teachers know?' as a result of their accumulated experience which is conceptualised as what teachers bring to their work and their understanding of it. Schön's reflective practitioner fits into this perspective (1987). This question is answered by means of an examination of students' learning styles, interests, needs, strengths, and difficulties as well as their understanding of the repertoire of instructional techniques and classroom management skills. Elbaz (1993) proposes five areas, namely, the self, milieu, subject matter, curriculum development and instruction and three ways of representation: 1. Rules of practice, 2. Practical principles, and 3. Images (metaphoric statements) to capture teachers' knowledge. Within the same tradition, Connelly and Clandinin (1992) also focus on the domain of practical knowledge based on past experiences which account for a person's prior knowledge that is carved out and shaped by situations, thus introducing contextual factors which are constructed and reconstructed as the protagonist (here trainee teachers) lives out his/her stories and retells and relives them through reflection. A person's body, mind and context make up their own professional experience. This school of thought employs a more retrospective method to generate data about teachers' knowledge. Images, stories, narratives, narrative unity and embodied knowledge are used to organise and re-organise the coalescence of the personal, private and professional experience of the person (Rusznyak, 2011; Mtika, 2011) and unveil expressions of practice and perspectives of new experiences. This corresponds to making the human body the locus of interactions in their environment (Johnson, 1989).

A third strand explores the complexity of 'knowledge essential for teaching', which could hintat the ontology of teacher knowledge during placement. Shulman (1986) laid the foundation for exploring the 'content, character and sources for a knowledge base for teaching'. In developing Pedagogical-Content Knowledge, Shulman (1986) establishes the categories of knowledge required to understand how trainee teachers learn to teach the subjects that they already know or are in the process of acquiring. He focused on what teachers ought to know and beable to know as a result of training, experience and reflection but failed to query 'what they should know to be effective or successful'.

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999, 1993), on the other hand, move away from the technical model by reflecting on the participatory role of the trainee teacher in the creation and use ofknowledge during in-situ training. Their contribution blends action research with Schön's knowledge-in-action and reflective practice to explain the kind of knowledge base required to understand 'what produces knowledge about teachers and teaching'. While both interrogate teachers as producers of knowledge, they also explore how they construct it and what roles they play in its formulation. Trainee teachers are embodied as both producers consumers[4] of knowledge during their practice by developing theories to 'interpret, understand and eventually transform the social life of schools.'

Studies which have a lesser focus on theoretical positionings also focus on the transposition of propositional knowledge and taught competencies, hence focusing on the integration theory and practice and student teachers' experiences while being exposed to classroom and school realities (Kiggundu, 2007). These also include student teachers' judgement of the quality of teacher training programmes (Nancy, 2007; Huber & Hunchings, 2005); the needs, expectations, experiential difficulty, and resistance of the latter about their teaching practice experiences (Sternberg, 2008; Drent & Meelissen, 2008). Moreover, the adequacy of preservice teachers in terms of their ability to diligently grasp and display pedagogical skills (Paul, 2004) and desired teacher characteristics are foregrounded. Preservice teachers' survivability during their placement (Drent & Meelissen, 2008) as well as burdening them with non-instructional and administrative duties (Leach, 2005) and recognition of their socio-emotional needs are cited but not dealt in greater depth.

However, placement experiences documented in the literature above remains focused on the formal learning and professional development of trainee teachers. The informal learning occurring during school placement among trainee teachers also needs special attention. The role of school placement sites as repertoires for informal learning and spaces of professional socialisation is worth scrutiny. In this respect the next section probes into the roles and functions of the primary school as site of professional socialization during ITT.

2.4 ANALYSIS OF SCHOOL PLACEMENT AS PROFESSIONAL SOCIALISATION IN INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING

2.4.1 The roles and functions of school placement in Initial Teacher Training

A snapshot of school placement in relation to initial teacher training programmes highlights the following roles and functions. Placement is read as learning communities which prepares trainee teachers for empathetic and collaborative practices (Hegger et al., 2018). These include the attitudes, skills and knowledge required for inter-professional collaboration (Ekornes, 2015; Wilson, Walsh & Kirby, 2007). Placement is also defined as the site of professional acculturation (Dewhurst, Ronksley-Pavia, & Pendergast, 2020; Bamber, Bullivant, Clark, & Lundie, 2019; Caires & Almeida, 2012) and socialisation of the trainee teacher, and has the distinctive feature of sharpening trainees' professional skills and linguistic capital (Discoll, Rowe & Thomae, 2004) to enable them to learn to teach languages or specific subject matter. The literature also documents trainees' emerging professional identities, the positive impacts of teaching in-situ, and third parties' conflicting messages on how content or subject matter should be taught (Dolan, Hancock & Wareing, 2015). Finally, immersion in teaching through placement opens the discussion on bridging the gap between theory taught in the teaching institutions and the application of new pedagogical approaches during school practicum (Dickerson et al., 2018). However, the dissonances observed and experienced by trainee teachers are also evident in many instances. These are usually documented as school pressures (Hayes, 2003; Troman & Woods, 2001), the classroom culture (Flores & Day, 2006), feeling of dependency and insecurity (Fullan, 1998; Pendergast, Garvis & Keogh, 2011) given the provisional nature of the latter's positions at school during placement as well as the lack of alternatives to instructional skills are foregrounded. The sub sections which follow expand and elaborate on the above to explicate school placement as a space where the trainee teachers socialise and informally learn about their roles and are exposed

to the ways their professional identity is crafted during that period.

2.4.2 Placement as the site for professional socialisation and acculturation

The notion of school placement as the site for professional socialisation and acculturation only recently gained traction in educational research (Bamber et al., 2019). It is understood as enabling trainee teachers to experience school as their future workplace (Costigan, 2014) by learning about the existing professional agreement between teachers and their pupils, as well as acquiring skills and competencies to deal with school stakeholders (Dolan et al., 2015).In short, school placement enables the professional socialisation of neophytes through observation, interaction, craft practice and experimentation while acquiring, in selective fashion, the beliefs, attitudes and values, skills, knowledge, and ways of life established in the professional culture (Zhixin Su, 1990).

The first mention of teacher professionalisation as socialisation can be traced back to Lacey's work (1977a; 2011b) though the experiential processes of training remained unexplored (Grenfell, 1997). Indeed, seminal works on teacher professional socialisation only focused on: (i) the social origins, attitudes and values of teaching as a workforce (Boyan, 1966; Charters, 1963), (ii) characterisation of teaching as an occupation (Becker, 1952), (iii) teacher behaviour (Ingersoll & Perda, 2008; Lortie, 1969), and (iii) teacher satisfaction (Medley & Mitzel,1963). There was little coverage of initial teacher education in these early works (Grenfell, 1997, p. 288) although professional socialisation was studied in medicine (Hughes, Jewson & Unwin, 2013;Hall, 1958; Hammond & Kern, 2013), dentistry (Ondrack, 1975; Fischer, 1960), law (Lortie, 1975, Thielens, 1965), business management (Schein, 1967), and nursing (Coe, 1965;Kramer, 1968; Psathas, 1968; Simpson, 1967). The focus at that time was on the broad experiences of trainee teachers (Hagger & McIntyre, 2006; Wragg, 1984) during their training.

Although the pertinence of a more contextual facet to teacher education was raised, the literature shows that studies on initial teacher education remained unfocussed (Brown & McNamara, 2005; McNamara, Roberts, Basit, & Brown, 2002), utilitarian (Adler, 2008; Adler & Adler, 1991), devoid of strong epistemological foundations (Shulman, 1986) and were termed as

pre-paradigmatic (Pope, 1993). Hargreaves (1993) and Lawlor (1990) started to espouse a more school-based teacher training and investigated the personal and context dependent elements besides the acquisition of technical skills. Studies on the professional socialisation of trainee teachers primarily focussed on teachers' moral socialisation and resulted in changes in pre-conceived notions of the nature of the teaching profession and schooling, and the purpose of education as they internalised core values, beliefs, attitudes and prescribed behaviour during their training (Su, 1990).

School placement is also explicated as professionalising trainee teachers by exposing them to contextual knowledge and debunking their previous ideas about teaching (Gleeson, Sugrue & O'Flaherty, 2017). The trainee teacher's professional socialisation through school placement also accounts for the dependency and insecurity he/she confronts during initial teacher training. Among other things, this is due to the pressure of school and classroom cultures, feelings of dependence arising from their trainee positions, the way they view their relationship with their tutors, and a lack of theoretical and practical alternatives to teaching methods used in practice (Gomez, et al, 2000; Wilson & L'Anson, 2006). School placement is also cited as offering an opportunity for reflection that is important during apprenticeship (Filippidi, Fotopoulou, & Raikou, 2019). Experiencing a real-life school environment and cultures (Zhu, 2017; Forghani-Arani, 2012; Fotopoulou & Ifanti, 2017) shape trainees' professional identity (Zhao, Meyers & Meyers, 2009; Meyer, 2009; Yuan & Lee, 2016) and act as professional learning communities (Heggen, Raaen & Thorsen, 2018) which are otherwise unavailable during their training. This latter view is further addressed in the next section

2.4.3 Placement as enabling collaborative practices

As professional learning communities, schools are regarded as integral to teacher education as they prepare trainee teachers for collaborative practices (Macken, MacPhail & Calderon, 2020; Sorensen, 2014; Gardiner & Robinson, 2009). This implies that trainees are able to inculcate the expected attitudes, skills and knowledge for inter-professional collaboration (Wilson et al., 2007); cultivate a relationship with schools as communities of practice (Wenger, 1998; Young & Macphail, 2016); nurture cooperation—among teachers, mentors and school leaders (Rajuan,

Beijaard & Verloop, 2007; Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace & Thomas, 2006; Jaspers, Meijer, Prins & Wubbels, 2014); embrace team teaching (Murata, 2002); and share roles and responsibilities (Hall, Draper, Smith, & Bullough Jr, 2008) as well as learn to lead in situations arising from their practice (Hulsbos, Evers & Kessels, 2016; Imsen, 2004).

The literature on the role of placement in promoting collaborative practices also underscores the school as facilitating the professional development of the entire school community (Heggen, Raaen & Thorsen, 2018; Cherian, 2007) given that the cooperation extends beyond the confines of teacher training institutions (Clarke & Mcphie, 2016; Korthagen, 2010; Heinz, 2013; Zeichner, 2010).The school is, thus, also understood as a community of professional learning which allows teachers, administrators, mentors, caretakers and pupils to support the professional development of the trainee teachers who engage with them (Heggen et al., 2018; Wenger, 1998). Indeed, the web of collaborative practices allows trainee teachers to learn their roles and responsibilities through enhancement of specific knowledge and skills (Aberg, 1999); to interact and engage in meaningful activities beyond the classroom (Caires et al., 2012; Awaya, McEwan, Heyler, Linsky, Lum & Wakukawa, 2003); and to enjoy a supportive work climate which fosters professional growth (Hulsbos et al., 2016; Graham, 2006).

2.4.4 Placement as the site for learning to teach

Empirically recognised in teacher education as a site of learning (Hollins et al., 2014; Dolan et al., 2016), placement enhances the professionalisation of teaching and makes it more accountable. This is because teacher competencies are developed through a measurable and examinable practicum (Ashby, Hobson, Tracey, Malderez, Tomlinson, Roper & Healy, 2008). The discourse on learning to teach through placement during initial teacher education programmes is twofold. The first regards school placement as an opportunity for trainee teachers to identify challenges between theory and practice. This helps them to question the relevance of their own assessment of training which they conceptualise as too theoretical in nature when they are exposed to the practical and experiential aspects of teacher development (Dolan, Hobson, Tracey, Malderez, Tomlinson, Roper & Healy, 2016; Darling-Hammond, Hyler & Gardner, 2017). The second perspective scrutinises professional development as synchronous. Both content knowledge and contextual realities are part of a process which embodies the phronesis or practical wisdom which

is achieved through extended practice. This includes continuous evolution, dialogue and reflection embedded in teacher education programmes (Dorner & Káplár-Kodácsy, 2020; Hobson et al., 2009; Smith, & Lev-Ari, 2005).

Moreover, In tracing the role of placement as the site of learning to teach, the literature highlights severalaspects, namely, trainees finding opportunities to learn and teach empirically (Raikou, 2019; Filippidi et.al., 2019; Cranton, 2001a, 2002b); the school as a workplace context (Endedijik & Bronkhorst, 2014; Feiman- Nemser, 2001; Eraut, 2004); and the social processes of knowledge making (Geer, 1966; Shulman, 2005) including individual experiences, negotiations, classroom interactions, meaning making (Forquin, 1983; Cosin et al., 1971) and teaching processes while learning to teach (Yang, Tian, Qin , Xiang-Yang & Tie-Yan, 2018). This process where the trainee teacher learns knowledge of his/her craft also defines his/her ability to bargain for control (Cornbleth, 2018; Woods, 1985) while engaging inclassroom interactions, conversing with pupils and managing the behaviour patterns which emerge. It leads to a continual process of accommodation to strangeness (Schutz, 1964) where the trainees are confronted by the unexpected, authentic realities which transgress their own worldview of school as they lived it years back as pupils. The climate and culture expressed in feelings, traditions, rites and rituals, symbols and practices are disruptors which impact the trainee's learning while on placement (Corten & Dronkers, 2006; Coleman, 2000). School placement thus plays an important role in their initial concrete teaching experiences and conveys implicit knowledge making which goes beyond observation (Lortie, 1975) or transference of theories acquired from training. It provides space for familiarisation with the school's *oikos*, that is, the dwelling place of its occupants and the field where trainee teachers learn the trade of their profession.

2.4.5 Placement as the site tracing the memory and emotional journey in teacher apprenticeship

Emotions plays a vital part in knowledge and meaning making (Buchanan, Prescott, Schuck, Aubusson, Burke, & Louviere, 2013; Shuck, Rocco & Albornoz, 2013; Goldie, 2013; Dirkx, 2008) and teaching practice at school comprises of an emotional load (refer to chapter three). Emotions add to those experiences that originate in social relationships and are socially constructed (Gordon 1981). While an alternative approach may refer to psychological, biological or physiological factors, the constructionist view of emotions, also called the "interactional" model

(Hochschild 1983, p. 211) or the "culture-specific" position (Scheff 1983, p. 334), assume that the organic component in emotion is a vague and indeterminate arousal, which must be given meaning through socially guided interpretation (Fisher &Chon, 1989). Given that emotions are described as being socially constructed attributes of an experience in a specific context - and here reference to Durkheim's view that emotions are socially caused in both his works *The elementary forms of religious life* (1953) and *The division of labour* (1953) are used as references - school placement therefore arouses nostalgia in the trainee teacher who was once a pupil in a similar setup. Such understanding acknowledges trainee teachers' cognitive and affective ways of making sense of the school landscape while experiencing it as a workplace (Costigan, 2018). The emotions involved in tracing trainees' experiences and professional learning during placement also represent their self-contained and authentic feelings about themselves. These include their interpersonal relationships, as well as familial and cultural practices as a human experience which is embedded in socio-cultural contexts (McLure, 2010; Cushman, 2008; Burkitt, 1991).

In relation to memory, literature posit that the school is not just a workspace but also a memory space. It refers to what Conway (2015) termed as the 'remembered reality' of individuals (p. 1377) and offers a potential lens to understand the scope of experiences which influence teaching and learning, and the choices teachers make. Also referred to as autobiographical memory (Baddeley, 2012), such remembered events define that aspect of the self which constitute the person's life narratives. Research on such autobiographical memory include cues such as objects, affect, activity or people may be used to recall events, while milestones - like when started schooling, academic performance, certification – helped to the formation of the life scripts of the narrator (Haught, Nardi, and Walls, 2016). These include remembering recent events as well as the reminiscence of life events (Rubin, Berntsen & Hutson, 2009). Some of the major components of memory include narrative - oral or verbal; imagery - visual, lived events - and emotions -triggers which elicit positive or negative responses to an event – which help transit from one landmark of experiences to the next (Rubin, 1996). It is also noted that details of memories may be imperfect and lack accuracy, but purposeful invention is unlikely. These two aspects are further discussed in chapter three and will be read and understood under the constructionist perspectives.

2.4.6 Placement in the social ecology of practice

The notion of school placement as constituting the social ecology of practice suggests that trainee teachers are enmeshed in progressive and mutual accommodations which are kaleidoscopic, and which tacitly indicates the storying of their own trainee teacher selves (Kelly, 1963). This also qualifies their experiences within that ecological space as changing, dynamic and difficult to measure (Philips & Burbules, 2000; Davis, 2008; Johnson,2008) because it is denoted by a system of complex embedded relationships. Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1979) is perhaps more explicit regarding how individuals interact in the complexity contained in the physical and material aspects (Costigan, 2014; Huang et al., 2013; Darmody & Smyth, 2012) of the school ecology. The patterns of activities, roles and interpersonal relationships the trainee teacher experiences within that space are bi-directional, whereby the individual both influences and is influenced by the system which includes pupils, teachers, parents, mediators, the administration, and the surrounding community.

Moreover, interactions and dynamics between different actors can potentially influence the school ecology and significantly modify trainee teachers' assumptions, beliefs and experiences. For example, parental expectations, and learners' academic and extracurricularsuccess directly or indirectly influence the school climate and school practices. The pressure to produce good academic results may lead to fear of failure, which constitutes direct impactwhile expectations regarding classroom behaviours, and the pressure on teachers to complete the syllabus represent indirect consequences. The school culture, events, contingencies, decisions and policies which are beyond the individual's control and influence also exert pressure. Finally, the temporal element constitutes the spatial component of that ecology and influences the way the trainee internalises practice over time.

From the above, it can be deduced that placement opportunities within ITT programmes of primary allows the trainee teacher to garner professional knowledge in both formal and informal ways. In fact, the informal knowledge which embeds the latter's socialisation in their future workplace informs on formal practices and calls for an in-depth understanding of the daily operations of the school. Idiosyncratic observations and experiences during placement render the complexity of teaching visible and propels trainee teacher to pay special attention to the

school context, from where they are also able to grasp the fundamentals of their practice. The section which follows distil the concept of school context in education research and adds to its relevance in understanding occurrences of professional socialisation and informal learning during placement.

2.5 THE IMPORTANCE OF SCHOOL CONTEXT IN PROFESSIONAL SOCIALISATION AND INFORMAL LEARNING.

2.5.1 Definition and broad overview from the literature

Research where school context is foregrounded dates from the 1980's (Barnes, 1989; Cole & Griffin, 1987; Firestone, 1984) but is further explicated by Boyd (1992) who describes it as contextual factors or in terms of the interrelatedness and interdependence of all facets of the school. This includes the school environment which is informed by (i) the ecology (referring to the material and physical aspects of the school); (ii) the milieu (referring to the social dimensions created by characteristics of groups of people); (iii) the culture (referring to the social dimensions created by belief system, values, cognitive structures and meaning) and; (iv) the Social system (referring to the social dimensions created by the relationships of people and groups). The diagram below illustrates these different dimensions of the school context. Taken from Figure 2.1 below, notions of the school context call for attention to the institutional character of the school, that is, the conditions which are created and sustained to make the school (Smey-Richman, 1991).

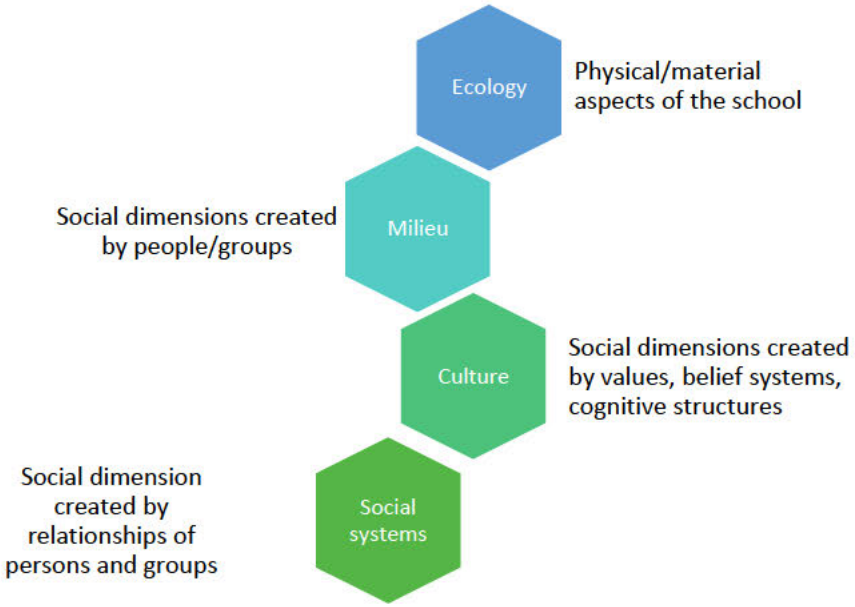

Figure 2.1 Illustration of the school context as described by Boyd (1992)

The multiple character of the school context is emphasised in those four dimensions. Firstly, school context through the ecology can be understood as a set of 'local conditions' and the 'interrelated conditions in which something exists or occurs' (Corbett, Dawson and Firestone, 1984) and which is captured by indicators like the availability of resources, use of educational knowledge, norms, goals and availability of incentives and disincentives, and rates of turnover. The milieu includes variables like the school composition, the personal characteristics of the school, its performance; family background, the personal characteristics and social behaviour of children; dropout rates, factors which puts learners at risk of academic failure and underachievement make up the different dimensions of the school context (Barnes, 1989).

The culture of the school in turn embraces what makes the school life and captures the formal and informal sides of the school as a social organization (Schein, 1985). It also features the observed behavioural regularities when people interact, use language, perform rituals around deference and demeanour and create relationships between persons and groups (Barnes, 1989). Notions around the philosophy guiding the school's policy; dominant norms espoused by newcomers; and norms which evolve in working groups makes up the school performance; feelings conveyed by the physical layouts are amalgamed with the informal rules of the game which act as the rope a newcomer must learn to become an accepted member integrating the school. Hyvonen (2011) furthers this idea by illustrating how the physical layout, like playful learning environments constructed in schoolyards change the feel of the school and guide the practices also infused in the attitude, behaviour, and academic achievement of the school (Akey, 2006).

The social systems favour the dynamic dimension of the school context, that is, the human interaction emerging, and relationships forged from the daily operations of the school as social organization. These may be in the form of supervisory support, time pressure, relations to parents and autonomy (Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2008); professional teaching conditions (Oakes, 1989); interaction between teachers and learners, teacher leadership roles and initiatives; curriculum driven activities, breeding friendship, social integration and integrated teaching and learning activities (Hyvonen, 2011). This also includes supportive relationships with teachers; clear, high, and consistent behavioural and academic expectations and high-quality instruction

and pedagogy (Akey, 2006).

The conception of school context as varied, dynamic, and complex leads to the conclusion that several elements and indicators are to be considered in this study. This also conveys that educational research have here-marked key aspects of school organization as informing professional practices and socialization of newcomers in the profession. The next section follows similar argumentations and captures some models which extend the idea of school context during placement in educational research.

2.5.2 Models for understanding school contexts during school placement

School contexts showcase the organizational structures of schools and ease an understanding of the qualities and characteristics of school life (Pickeral, Evans, Hughes & Hutchison, 2009). These can be in terms of their impact on leaners' academic success (Hatte, 2010; Voight, Austin, & Hanson, 2013); teachers' and learners' emotional safety and wellness (Haar, Nielsen, Hansen, & Jakobsen, 2005; Russ et al., 2007), teacher commitment (Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2011), teacher efficacy (Guo & Higgens-D'Allessandro, 2011), teachers' professional learning (Cochran Smith and Lytle; Little, 1993), micro-political practices and power relations within schools (Ball, 1987) deviance (Cohen & Freiberg, 2013), school leadership (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson and Wahlstrom, 2004) and school reform or change (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010; Hargreaves and Shirley, 2009). However, there is no single framework which can capture the multiple factors and attributes which describe school context. Some selected frameworks taken from Bascia (2014) are detailed below to describe what school context may represent for a trainee teacher.

2.5.2.1 The school climate framework

The school climate is understood as school factors which influence and shape school experiences. In most educational research, school climate is clustered in four categories, namely: (i) school safety, (ii) interpersonal relationships, (iii) teaching and learning practices, and (iv) the school's organizational structures (McCabe, Michelli, & Pickeral, 2009; Pickeral, Evans, Hughes & Hutchison, 2009). These are detailed in the diagram below.

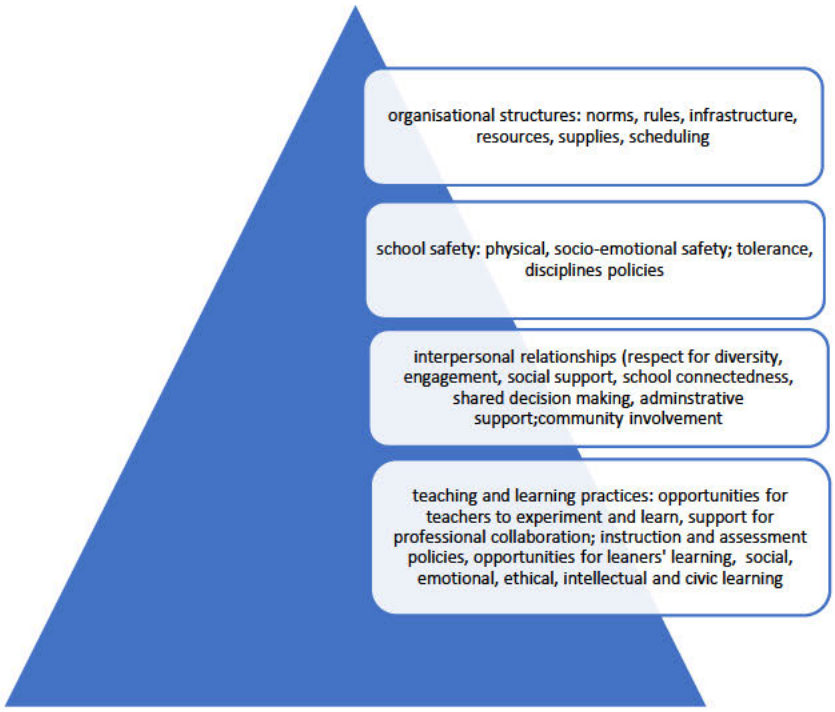

Figure 2.2 A school climate framework based on a collection of readings.

Both the material and immaterial conditions of what constitutes school life are detailed and conceptualize the school context. Thus, reflecting the interactivity of the tangible (material aspects like infrastructure, resources, supplies, policies, and safety measures) with the intangible (norms, mores, traditions, values, relationships, support, processes, and practices), relationships and support systems inform on those practices and conditions which make the school context.

2.5.2.2 The process and context framework

This framework furthers the school climate model and favours an understanding of school context in terms of process indicators which focus on the daily operation of the school, namely the quality of teaching and learning (Kim, 2012), relationships (Mitchell, Bradshaw & Leaf, 2010), the quality of resources, people and classroom factors shaping the school's daily activities. Such definitions also inform on the factors contributing to teacher-student relationships, like teacher fairness and respect (D'Alessandro & Sakwarawid, 2011), teacher leadership and professional teaching conditions (Bascia & Rottmann, 2011), the presence or absence of resources like for e.g., non-teaching time, which makes cultural norms like collegiality (Oakes, 1989). This model also considers how structures inform and interact with the school culture to give the school its identity. For instance, the rigour of classroom practices and assessment mechanisms informs commitment to learning, learners' self-efficacy and motivation for academic excellence (Shanker,

2014).

2.5.2.3 The school context model

This model describes schools as dynamic systems and denotes learning and responsiveness of teachers and other adults as undeniable processes which qualify school as learning sites. Three groups of actors are identified and conceptualized as interrelated subsystems constituting of leaders, teachers and learners engaged in deep learning and achievement (Deakin et. al., 2013). The operating environment within classrooms and schools allows the display of teachers' professional learning capacities (professional work commitment and classroom practices), while school leaders influence learners' engagement and attainment patterns (Day &Leith, 2007; Cohen & Hill,2001). This is further explained by Talbert and McLaughlin (1993) by referring to school contexts as sites which influence teaching and learning. Represented by a nested model which constitutes the classroom, the teacher community, the school practices, and the external community. While Deakin et al. (2013) recognize the link between the home and the school, Talbert and McLauchlin (1999) features parental engagement in their children's education, the community in which learners come from; their economic conditions and values espoused; the curriculum standards and expectations vis a vis academic success; their Socio-Economic Situations, and factors present in that external environment which help foster support, care, and resilience (Bryan, 2005; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). This model also suggests that the school practices are deeply affected by contributing elements outside its physical boundaries.

These models highlight that school context may be conceptualised in terms of indicators (Scheerens, 2011; Boyd, 1992) meant at describing the school characteristics which contribute to analysing both formal and informal practices during ITT. Classroom features for instance, describe the pedagogy as well as teacher-pupil relationships or disciplinary strategies. Teacher communities give way for consideration of professional learning and development communities, teacher-teacher relationships, and teacher autonomy while considering the school management and leadership, enactment of educational policies, curricular and extracurricular activities.

Taken the above it is also worth noting that conceptions of school context are not limited to geographical location alone but is constructed as a complex space where there are interactions,

performance, personalities, kinds of challenges they will face while managing children, rites, and rituals of the schools. The literature allows probe school context as an ecology, and anything that disturbs it, disturbs the smooth running of the school. While knowledge (CK, PCK and TPCK) are important features to initial teacher professional development, but it still is limited because it does not capture the ways in which professional socialisation evolves in the tacit, intuitive and informal spaces embedding the school placement. In fact, school placement is read as a space where trainee teachers learn to work. School context reinforces the idea of diversity in practice by highlighting features like geography and demography (school composition), socio-economic diversity of neighbourhood; school practices and performances, leadership and collegial bonds which are significant for pre-service teachers during their training.

From this backdrop, ideas of school context not only breed in informality but also inform the trainee teacher on his future professional life. What follows addresses this gap and looks at professional socialisation in the process of constructing school context which spans from school structures and their management structures; school leaders' performance, types of teachers; the diversity of pedagogies and the enactment of the curriculum; human interactions through the school; and official and unofficial exchanges which pervade as part of the trainee teachers' placement experiences.

2.6 Synthesis of the chapter

This chapter presented a literature review on school placement as a site for initial teacher education and ultimately a platform for informal learning and professional socialisation. It also showcased the possibilities of memories and the emotional journeys of teachers within the school context. Placement is also documented as an ecology of practice which encompasses the interactions of actors in a complex web of interactions within the material and immaterial aspects of the school. Likewise, this chapter offers an understanding of the school context as making up that ecology of practice in which professional socialisation is possible. The chapter concludes that a critical exploration of the school context offers possibilities to understand professional socialisation through informal learning during ITT. It also addressed the scope for research

contribution in the field initial teacher training where little is said on the role of placement and informality of professional socialisation.

The following chapter explores a revised version of the social construction theory as a theoretical lens for this study.

CHAPTER THREE
THEORETICAL REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL LENS OF THE STUDY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

While the previous chapter focused on the literature on school placement as a site of professional development, it also hinted at theoretical concepts which could be used to delve into this phenomenon. This chapter explores the Social Construction Theory (SCT) as a theoretical lens to decipher trainee teachers' knowledge construction of school context in this study. The previous chapter briefly described the role of placement in ITT as well as illustrates in conceptual manner the meaning of school context. Two main gaps are identified through the literature, namely (i) school placement offers scope for professional socialization through informal learning during initial teacher training and (ii) construction of school context is contained in the autobiographical memories which unfolds on what it means to be in the teaching profession. These identified gaps also respond to the recurrent discourse of a theory-practice, showcase how school placement acts as an extension of the formal training during ITT. In this respect, the avenue of using this theory as a potential theoretical framework is explicated and extended, namely, through socio-materiality (Johri, 2011) - which discusses the entanglement of the social and the physical in understanding professional practice – the

role of emotions (Hochschild, 1976; Durkheim, 1951), and memory in social construction as well as the role of teacher's gaze in the form of contemplation and reflexivity.

3.2 ORIENTATION

The SCT allows the interaction of these concepts to support the empirical design, and data production and analysis. The chapter begins with an overview of SCT as a lens to explore construction processes during fieldwork and its strengths and weaknesses. The potential of SCT to unlock meaning and ease interpretation of data produced in the field is then discussed. The SCT is also used to explore the ways in which trainee teachers represent and conceptualise knowledge of school context during their apprenticeship period at school. Thisis because the theory comes from a sociological tradition and easily captures observations, interactions and lived experiences. Finally, the conceptual lens that supported data collection and interpretation derived from SCT is represented and explained.

3.3 THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION THEORY IN SOCIAL RESEARCH

I selected SCT as it has been successfully employed to interpret social reality in numerous studies across the social sciences. Social construction theory was defined and further conceptualised by constructionists like Berger and Luckmann (1967), Hacking (1999) and De Beauvoir (1949). In educational research, it has been used to explain the process and relational quality of knowledge in professional practice,especially in the field of social work productive practices (Parton, 2003). It has also been employed to assess the sociological construct of environments (Burningham & Cooper, 1999) and the processes and practices of heterosexuality in primary schools (Spengen, 2014); evaluate constructs around disadvantaged and deficit students (Swanson, 2006); and explain school readiness (Shallwani, 2009). Such research resulted in further studies that enable an understanding of people in their social worlds. In this study, the social construction of schoolcontext is primarily described as a form of knowledge production of the school in exploring the professional becoming of trainee teachers.

3.4 EXPLORING CONSTRUCTION OF SCHOOL CONTEXT AS KNOWLEDGE CONSTRUCTION

Knowledge construction is difficult to define as its meaning is broad and complex in nature.

The basic definition of the concept in sociological research summarises *knowledge construction* as the process of creation, institutionalisation and propagation of knowledge through active engagement with others and their surroundings (Chang, 2018, 2015; Berger& Luckmann, 1967; Gergen, 1995). This implies that knowledge construction is social and evolves in social interactions and active exploration of one's professional space through professional enculturation and socialisation (Korhonen, 2001; Hammer & Collins, 2002; Yanov, 2004; Paraponaris & Sigal, 2015). Knowledge construction is also defined as experiential and contextual with a theoretical importance (Yanow, 2004) which delineates its value and relevance through the phenomenological, reflective and lived experiences of people (Storr, 2010: Schutz, 1970) given that knowledge is a two-way process. In other words,knowledge construction refers to the process by which the individual learns, shares, and interprets his/her social surroundings through interaction with others in a specific setting. This process favours externalisation and institutionalisation of one's own subjective realities given the specific environment (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Scardamalia, 2006). In the presentstudy, the construction of school context as knowledge construction is therefore understoodas a social action (Farell & Holkner, 2002) which is diffused (Barab, Hay, Barnett, & Keating, 2000), and situated, and which emphasises the role of human social relationships andinteractions (Storr, 2010) within a specific social context (Wenger, 1998; Chang, 2015).

3.5 CONCEPTUALISATION OF THE SCT IN ACADEMIC DISCOURSE

Also known as social constructionism[5] or the social construction of reality, this theory posits that human existence results from social and interpersonal influences on both individual and communal life (Galbin, 2014). The concept is not to be confused with social constructivism (Sismondo, 1993) as some studies confuse the two (Floridi, 2016a, 2011b). The major guiding principles underlying the theory are that it focuses on artefacts such as lesson plans, buildings, classrooms and routines which are created through social interactions, and the individual learning which emerges from them. By rejecting positivistic approaches to knowledge, SCT focuses on reflexivity, and adopts a critical stance towards power and dominance which are deemed to reinforce the interests of certain social groups. It postulates that knowledge is never static and does not have a universal value but offers space for the possible. This means that the construction of reality is not the result of individual rationality but is a consequence

of cultural conventions (McNamee & Hosking, 2012).

Likewise, in this study, the use of social construction does not imply proving or persuading the exactitudes of what happened or *of what is* out there but results from dialogues that are shaped by the events, experiences, andobservations made during the placement period. The theory focuses on a fluid and dynamic approach, fostering dialogue and widening possibilities for understanding, and promotes theintegration of the individual's personal outlook.

[5] The majority of educational studies favour the term *social constructionism.* However, I chose to use *Social Construction Theory* as it orients the reader towards a sociological understanding of the framework.

According to SCT, the social world is the result of a historical process of interactions and negotiations among social groups. Consequently, making knowledge as historically situated and culturally embedded, through values and practices, and meaning is therefore socially constructed via coordinated human encounters and interactions. Finally, this theory considers that knowledge production is crystallised through language, that is through linguistic, discursive, symbolic and reflexive practices (Cojocaru & Bragaru, 2012).

Usually designated as a theoretical movement, the SCT offers alternative philosophical assumptions about the construction of reality and knowledge production. It also moves beyond rationalism and empiricism by placing knowledge within the process of social interchange (Gergen, 1985). This is in line with the Sociology of Knowledge, which refers to the relations between human thought and the social context within which it arises. The theory engages in the *narrative of progress* as it invites an intelligibility which is historical, temporal, spatial and contextual in nature. Moreover, the significance of reflexivity in stimulating knowledge production in contributing to social transformation through generative theories is also considered. This opens up alternative and expressive ways of producing and presenting knowledge in the form of narratives, social poetics, images and videos (Watkins, Mohr, & Kelly, 2011).

3.6 THE ASSUMPTIONS UNDERPINNING SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION THEORY

Emanating from the interpretive social sciences, the SCT is principally concerned with describing the process by which people describe, explain and account for the world in which they live (Cheung, 1997). Knowledge construction constitutes social inventions in the form of beliefs which people hold about the world and reality is thus constructed based on people's definition of events, daily life experiences and occurrences. Discourse is thus an important artefact since knowledge develops and evolves through interaction and communication. This makes discourse and interaction a social phenomenon where the reality is invented, context bound, evolving and intersubjective in nature. Knowledge exists in its historical (we learn from the past) and cultural contexts (knowledge construction is situated) and is reflexive (self-

criticality and the ability to learn from the past and act for the present) in nature. It is social processes which eventually maintain that knowledge as reality (Springham, 2016).

The SCT brings together the philosophical and cultural movement can be traced back to Socrates' description of knowledge as perception of reality *because reality does not exist per se* but remains mere constructions which are made up of different versions that are shared and represented in narrative forms. That reality relies on the reciprocal, the rhetorical and the reified nature as the knowledge moves from one group to the next. In other words, realityis not essence, but the externalisation of that construction as derived from the figment of human imagination (Burr, 2003). An example of socially constructed knowledge is Marx's description of the "false consciousness" of the proletariat who, despite being oppressed andalienated, remain compliant. Mead's (1934) naïve realism and, later, social relativism also underscores this point of view.

3.7 ESPOUSING SCT IN THIS STUDY

In this section, I analyse the different ways in which the discourse around the SCT is tailored and conceptualised in educational research. The theoretical contributions and relevance of some social theorists are considered. In its broadest sense, 'construction' is viewed as socially crafted and layered in the intersubjective realities of the trainee teachers who make meaning of the professional world while being immersed in their respective school contexts as workplaces. Consequently, construction of school contexts and their realities are pictured as always fluid and dynamic (Gergen & Gergen, 2012), interactive, collaborative and shared (Hugh, 2015). The discussion that follows is organised in three sections/parts, namely, (i) the representations and classifications in knowledge construction, (ii) the means of knowledge construction, and finally, (iii) patterns of knowledge construction (Chang, 2018).

3.8 THE REPRESENTATIONS AND CLASSIFICATIONS IN KNOWLEDGE CONSTRUCTION

Drawing on from the perspective that *construction* is a theoretical concept denoted as socially organised knowledge based on human interpretation and understanding which are historically

and culturally bounded. When the popularisation of a Sociology of Education started to gain some popularity in the late 1950s research in areas like the social context of education started to be mapped out. Structural contingencies and influencers like social class,the economy, the occupational structure, and the family were foregrounded. Social construction within the context of education then started to constitute the conscious and unconscious choices about a series of aspects affecting school life, namely, (i) teaching and learning, (ii) achievement patterns, (iii) school organisations and structures, (iv) policy makingand the school's micro politics, and (v) leadership. Over time, sociological research evolved, and emergent researchable patterns took shape to conceptualise the construction processes. These were defined and appropriated by diverse sociological paradigms as social facts or idealtypes to study success and failure, teachers' work and professionalism, recruitment and retention of teachers and the school climate and culture. Terms like equality of opportunity, pupils' subculture, teacher burn out, conceptions of social class and schooling becamemeasurable variables which were analysed and theorised. In the process, the image of schools was also constructed as systems as easily identified as mental asylums and/or prisons, and a deficit understanding of the 'below average child' as a typically working-class phenomenon was usually used to explain or justify the presence of dropouts in the public education system.

3.8.1 Knowledge codes and knowledge stratification

Further examination of construction patterns calls for a closer reading of Bernstein's classification of knowledge (Singh, 2002) as the translation of knowledge into pedagogic communication which he describes as the rules via which knowledge is converted into classroom talk, and curricular and other means of pedagogical transmission which generate power and control. In more generic terms, these constitute knowledge codes and knowledge stratification which are explicitly contained in the pedagogy and teaching styles, and the learner's intellectual status, and subject and career perspectives (Young, 1979, p. 33). Knowledge construction via teaching and learning is also understood as the formation of new concepts (Aalast, 2009), where learners manage their learning by forming their own personal theories and ideas (Chang, 2018; Zhang et al., 2007) while engaging with others. These foreground the construction of relationships with people and places as one's sharing of one's own personal experiences, engagement in social activities and connecting with others'

knowledge through interactive and social relationships within specific contexts (Gash, 2015). Knowledge construction can also be said to constitute (i) the diffusion of ideas between parties (Barab et al., 2000); (ii) collaborative engagement (Lave & Wenger, 1990); (iii) networks in the forms of nodes connecting, influencing and stimulating shared personal knowledges (Hiebert & Carpenter, 1992); (iv) social action where people generate, mediate, negotiate and trade knowledge (Farell & Holkner, 2002); and (v) socially connected people with their external socio-cultural contexts (Risner, 2000; Berger & Luckmann, 1967). The SCT asserts that knowledge construction is discursive and interactive (Oeberst, Halatchliyski, Kimmerle, & Cress, 2014), interpretive, shared, and community bound (Stahl, Cress, Law, & Ludvigsen, 2014). However, the literature does not clarify the nature of these constructions, but only elaborates on the ways in which they take place.

3.8.2 Construction of reality versus 'reality'

The idea of social construction within the Sociology of Knowledge also takes on four distinct uses which distinguish reality (objective-material reality) from 'reality' (subjective, based on people's beliefs and assumptions about the world). Social construction includes the interplay of actors and institutions, and these include knowledge, methodologies, fields, habits and regulative ideals. Moreover, constructions imply theories and accounts built on structures like data bases and observations, material interventions, artefacts in the laboratory and objects of thought or representations. According to Berger and Luckmann (1991), 'reality' is simply a representation of the real based on one's own subjective understanding and lived experiences of the world.

Building on the work of Schutz and Husserl (1970), Berger and Luckmann (1991) explain the construction of 'reality' in terms of two processes, namely, (i) institutionalisation and (ii) legitimisation. The first comprises routines, things which come with habituation, habits and traditions, and which are common to all human behaviours. When these habituations are recognised through interactions with different types of actors, this leads to the conception of institutions, which are also defined as an objective fact by the authors. The background of routines also represents a category of constrained behaviours through momentum and sanctions (or simply socialisation) to ensure continuity and discourage any lapse from

expected behaviour. This is in line with Hacking's (1991) notion of knowledge construction through what he terms as *Stability*. Institutions are human products, and they exist because of our knowledge of them. Construction processes using institutionalisation imply accretions and accounts through a process of active movements and they are goal oriented. concept of the social construction of power illustrates this. Power exists because it is socially constructed and is a function of everyone's beliefs about it. Those in positions of power feel that they exercise authority over others because they have followers or people who believe in them (Barnes, 1988). The second process refers to confirmed knowledge produced through enculturation, literature, science, the media, religion and social roles, and intellectual and cultural disclosures. The social construction of sex and gender clearly depicts the influence of legitimisation. Sex and gender roles have a social history, are reinforced by social knowledge and are legitimised by connections with other social institutions. Furthermore, the deconstruction of these constructs as objective realities under the following set of formulae were used to question and debunk such premises:

- To construct (a specific reality), knowledge of something must produce behaviours which prevent others from acting as if that something does not exist.

- There is a need for reasonable common knowledge of that reality to be able to construct as such.

- Finally, there needs to be a method of transmission of (reality), making its conception fixed, meaningful and ubiquitous to the community. It simply exists asit is.

For instance, both gender and emotions are institutions as they are represented as social objects and social realities. However, they exist and are real because society is forced to take them into account when dealing with others on a daily basis. They have a history and structures which create both constraints and resources that compel people to accept that social reality. In similar vein, the assumptions guiding construction in this study consider the above with caution and acknowledge that construction of school context is historical, subjective, power-laden and context dependent. It also follows Hacking's second and third prepositions that constructions take place by *Contingency and Nominalism*.

3.9 PATTERNS OF SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION IN EDUCATION.

In line with Chang's Social Construction model (2018) social construction is explored in the context of teaching and learning and is described in terms of specific patterns of knowledge constructs. Epistemologically, the patterns of knowledge constructs used do not seek to foreground theoretical complexity but locate social construction as a concept which is expressed in the form of interrogations, subjectivities, representations and discourses[6] rather than refutation of the social world (Demeritt, 2002).

The first exemplar taken from Chang (2018) describes knowledge construction throughspecific patterns, namely (i) radiation, (ii) circulation, (iii) simulation, (iv) socialisation, and (v) contextualisation. The author describes knowledge construction as a process where knowledge is created, institutionalised and publicised, thereby transforming tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge (Chang, 2018. p. 2). In this situation, actors become active knowledge explorers and, as such, construction requires active engagement and interaction with others and their surroundings. This results in the following assumptions about knowledge construction:

- Human relations and social connections with others help promote knowledge creation, sharing and acquisition (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Farell & Holkner, 2002) and each individual becomes a carrier of knowledge which is socially connected.
- Knowledge construction implies that people develop social relationships through social interaction and integration with one another. In this sense, knowledge construction can be complex and understood in terms of a spiralling process.
- The individual's own knowledge construction is described as woven and intertwined in the self, society, body, and memory (Chang, 2018).

[6] While in the literature the term refers to discourse constructionism where language plays a major role, in thisstudy I take on board voices as significantly influencing the constructions of trainee teachers rather than analysing their discourses.

Based on such assumptions, the four patterns model describes knowledge construction and posits that **radiation** is the knowledge form which is learned through sharing and proliferationin public. Chang (2018) uses the example of public calligraphers sharing their skills with otherswhile referring to the activity as a communicative hub with experts, novices, and non-expertcalligraphers and the public. Those with the ability would be involved in the calligraphy whilethose without it (bystanders) would observe, watch, and learn from the expert. Over time the activity was further popularised and attracted tourists and outsiders, thus transforming the space (a public park) into a learning site which propagated social connections and human relationships. The knowledge construction in this situation is expressed through radiation from a small group (insiders, experts) to the wider community (lay people, learners, passers-by, tourists, strangers).

The second pattern is **circulation** that involves the acquisition of knowledge through interaction with multiple dimensions. This could take the form of touring/sightseeing around a particular physical setting which is unknown to others. Each spot and specific spaces will contain specific knowledge bases which give access to a detailed interpretation of the life of the place or site. In short, this pattern of knowledge construction is rendered visible by circulating around the different places and spaces.

The third pattern is **simulation** that consists of a knowledge construction process which is analogous and is processed through observation, imitation and adaptation. In short, behaviour is modelled by others in their daily lives. It refers to the observations, imitation andadaptation we make with regard to people we encounter walking on the street, for instance.A catwalk could best explain simulation as it captures how knowledge of walking in a specificmanner is observed, tried and adapted until new knowledge is internalised and produced. The same applies to choir singers who learn to model their behaviour to offer a performance.In relation to this study, simulation refers to sharing knowledge with others. An example of this pattern of knowledge construction is the relationship between the trainee and the mentor or teaching practice tutor. Observation of the mentor while the latter is at work dealing with administrative issues, marking scripts and teaching in class can be part of initiating knowledge on the procedures and current practices

expected in the teaching profession The trainee will then attempt to replicate, try out, adjust and adapt to different situations based on what he/she was exposed to through mentoring. Communication is also essential in the gradual and progressive knowledge constructs.

Socialisation is another important pattern of social construction. It emphasises how people are involved, moulded and changed (Chang, 2018) in response to new sociocultural contexts.The school is viewed as a workplace with a culture and climate of its own and trainees need to learn new social rules and roles, mores and norms to be able to move from being an outsider to being considered as an insider. Socialisation therefore refers to the way the trainee constructs knowledge of school context by absorbing, adapting, accepting and displaying the values and beliefs expected of him/her, or by resisting the established structure imposed on any member. The patterns of construction discussed above are both consciously and unconsciously internalised. The constructions which emerge may thus be the result of the types of interactions the trainee teacher is exposed to through daily school realities.

Finally, Chang (2018) identified **contextualisation** as another pattern of social construction. Contextualisation refers to the process whereby one gains new knowledge by setting this knowledge in its authentic context. The focus is on the creation of new knowledge from practical work and turning it into explicit and codified knowledge which can be shared with a wider community. Examples of this pattern of knowledge construction can be observed in theway teachers translate and execute policies, or how trainees read, internalise and apply theories in their classroom/school practicum.

3.10 REPRESENTATIONS OF SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION

Representations of social construction in this section are regarded as the vehicles of social construction. These are depicted as the communicative forms shaping constructions which emerge during an interaction (Hershkowitz, Schwarz & Dreyfus, 2001). These can be in verbal/written form (narratives, talk, conversation, dialogue and speeches); non-verbal form(gestures, smiles, frowns and mannerisms); and visual form (pictures, collage and drawings);or take the form of analogies and metaphors.

3.10.1 The verbal/written forms of social construction

Three main types of dialogue which are drawn from the work of Schwarz, Dreyfus and Hershkowitz (2004) are employed in this study: (i) grounding dialogue, (ii) critical dialogue, and (iii) reflective dialogue. The first refers to one person presenting information and all the recipients sharing that information in the form of common knowledge. The second form offers scope for recipients to understand, accommodate, and challenge one another's divergent views and develop new ideas around what they were exposed to. Finally, the last form refers to lessons learnt from experiences. This form of dialogue opens doors forconstruction of knowledge through re-thinking, unlearning and re-learning with a perspective of changing and improving. Chang (2018) argues that different dialogues play diverse roles in knowledge construction. Some provide space for the sharing of knowledge; others facilitate knowledge creation or assist re-evaluation and re-interpretation of common knowledge in a different manner. In this study, dialogue is used as a lens to capture trainee teachers' constructions of school context during placement.

3.11 EXPLANATIONS OF THEORIES LINKED TO SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION DURING SCHOOL PLACEMENT

Bearing in mind that this study primarily focuses on school context, the notions of place and space are foregrounded as descriptors in the trainee teachers' construction during their placement. The main explication is derived from an ecological baseline and the concept of socio-materiality is favoured. The second aspect constitutes the notion of teacher gaze as it acknowledges questions of power, subjectivity, voice and the enactment of the trainee teachers' agency during that phase of their training. The third and fourth aspects include emotions and memory as tracing segments of realities which are lived and encountered in time and space, and which builds up the personal knowledge and professional autobiography of the trainee teacher. Finally, these aspects are utilized to support the conceptual lens of the study.

3.11.1 Socio-materiality informing placement as a site of knowledge construction

Drawing on the idea of the politics of ecology, socio-materiality is a concept which describes the fussiness of human agency, intensities and activities because of the interactions of humans with both human and non-human things (Fenwick & Landri, 2012; Fenwick et al., 2015). These include interactions with food, buildings, sources of power, infrastructure and people (Bennett, 2010; Jensen, 2010, p. 5). As far as educational research is concerned, materiality is treated as things and subsumed by human intentions, design and drive. A textbook, for instance, may be regarded as a mere object of instruction while it is a force to describe specific pedagogical activities and sequences, and the ways in which it redirects curriculum practices across time and space, limit teachers' autonomy, and affects parental engagement and the timetable (Fenwick et al., 2011). Moreover, materiality recognizes material things as performative when these interact with other things, people or forces withinthe social structure. The ways in which a new leadership regime influences or changes the work pattern of an entire school illustrates the fluidity of such a process.

Socio-materiality is also closely linked to the idea of spatiality and in this respect, space is not captured as something fixed with static objects under study but is continuously changing through a dynamic multiplicity of simultaneous practices. Similar to Urry's (2007) (im)mobilities paradigm, such a materialist posture to describe the nature of space is understood as the hybrid, the turbulent and entangled (Anderson & Wylie, 2009; Anderson, 2009). This demarcates the concept of space as place as it is designated as a theoretical tool for analysis. In other words, space is not considered as an object of study but is optimised toraise questions on what knowledge counts, where and how that knowledge emerges in different time-space, how subjectivities are negotiated through movement and locations, and, finally, how learning is enmeshed in the process of making those spaces. For instance, instead of looking at classroom space as merely infrastructure, in terms of its design and its utility, the theory opens up the ways in which the classroom becomes a learning space, and how it enables, disables, blocks or inhibits learning. It might also look at ways in which the classroom space creates inequalities, or exclusion and limits possibilities for new pedagogiesand knowledges.

3.11.2 The use of the teacher gaze in construction processes

The notion of gaze is in line with a Foucauldian and feminist viewpoint where powerrelationships, voice and critical interpretation of the school and its system of operation are foregrounded. From the first perspective, gaze is referred as the disciplinary gaze (Foucault, 1975), described as surveillance which aims to regulate and control pupils' behaviour. The gaze is therefore linked to the power relationships present in social and institutional relationships (DeLeon & Daniels, 2011), and also contributes to teacher labelling and stereotyping learners (Raible & Irizarry, 2010).

For feminists, gaze captures subversive discourses and acts as a form of praxis (Dillabough, 2012; Thomas, et al., 2005), debunks power relationships and constructions of gender (Blaise, 2012), and reviews social relations and institutional barriers (Webber, 2006; Hogan & Daniell, 2012). Documented as the teachergaze, the process of gazing also calls for the construction of assessment (Hill, 2002), and teaching and learning in the real world through observation, conversations, and interactions between teachers and their pupils (McIntyre et al., 2020). They are also able to move from the known to the unknown spheres of school realities as they witness interactions through teaching, pupils, and leadership, and embrace the idea of being a teacher (Ho et al., 2015), thus foregrounding the teacher as the dynamic agent on site. Thus, trainee teachers' gaze involves noticing classroom management (Stahnke & Blömeke, 2021), understanding and experiencing surveillance and monitoring (Raible & Irizarry, 2015), and evolving as critical agents of change during placement.

The above notions explain that the trainee teacher is positioned as a rational being, a subjective being, a transcendent body, an antagonistic subject, a reflective and reflexive practitioner, an insider, a stranger, and as real, or imaginary, among others. Given such complexity, trainee teachers also carry their subjectivities which are unlocked through (i) thereflective practitioner (Schön, 1987; Loughran, 1991; Clandinin & Clandinin, 2010) thatconsciously reflects on actions following an event or incident. In doing so, the gaze captures that reflexive outlook which premises both reflection on action and on self in action. This implies Aristotle's Phronesis (Eikeland, 2008) as well as Freire's praxis (Glass, 2001) which constitute interrogation of beliefs, assumptions, attitudes, prejudices, and inferences which inform practice. Finally, the trainee teacher is positioned as a critical practitioner

who is calledon to interrogate the critical discourses, and political, ideological and social processes whichframe teachers' work (Kincheloe, 1999; Carr & Kemmis, 1986). The aim is thus to expose issues of power relations, discriminatory practices, and patterns of inequality, victimisation and marginalisation.

The gaze also indicates that trainee teachers are complex and diverse as they optimise placement to understand their practice. They can be projected as transcendent bodies who step back and occupy a neutral position in order to analyse self, others, and their own practicewith the intention of improvement (i.e., they take an independent position) (Atkinson, 2006). Secondly, they can be antagonistic subjects (Mouffe & Laclau, 2001) given that the subject's self may only exist in conflictual positions of ideological practices (Althusser, 1964; Pecheux,1982). Hence, the subjects do not emerge because they are rational but because they are constructed ideologically and discursively (Foucault, 1972), which frames their existence as social beings.

Finally, the gaze can be analysed as discourse in line with Lacan's (1979a; 1979b; 1977) theoryof the imaginary, symbolic and real. The *Imaginary* aspects represent the superficial and deceptive aspect, what one emulates as the desired, what is in the unknown, usually prior tothe experience. The symbolic in turn is related to what signifies or identifies with the subjectbut is not the subject him/herself. Another perspective is Saussure's notions of the symbolicand signifiers. The symbolic is visible through identification processes or signifiers – certificates, attendance, pupils' record books, or symbolic orders (ideological and political – e.g., language, authority, regulatory bodies). The real or the brute reality, however, refers to the absolute definitions of teaching, and classroom events in which the objective position of the trainee teacher is sought and located (lived experiences). For instance, when the traineeteacher begins to teach, the narratives of their first contact with a classroom, the first teaching experiences based on events, and what they observe, see, and practice are essentialelements of that gaze in construction. It follows those actions and decisions made, such as the choices that trainee teachers have, the way they negotiate their space in the classroom or inside the school; what it means to teach effectively, how they make sense of who is the successful teacher reveal the interplay of the imaginary, symbolic and real during placement.The real is elusive of the disruptions contained in the experiences; it sometimes destroys

the fantasy of the imagined. It also represents the disruptions and dissonances faced by the trainee teacher.

3.11.3 The role of emotion in social construction

The most plausible understanding of using emotion as one vector of social construction is to trace it back from the work of Emile Durkheim (1955) and Hochschild (1983). In the constructionist worldview, any human emotion originates in social relationships and most of the experiences we attribute to such are socially constructed (Gordon, 1981). As briefly discussed in chapter two (pp. 38-39), the same view is denoted as the 'interactional model' by Hochschild (1983, p 211) and as the 'culture specific' position by (Scheff, 1983, p 334). Far from the psychological, biological and physiological approaches which acknowledge that emotions originate entirely from the organisms, the Social Construction Theory expands on the social element of emotions as finding ways to suppress or elicit biological impulses.

For constructionists, emotions make us human and define our everyday experiences as they contribute to conflicts, social movement,and social change. Moreover, they are often used by humans to create, monitor, and preserve social bonds, and are the most substantial way to capture human interactions (Von Scheve, 2012). Emotions, therefore, refer to the integration of the feelings, affects, and moods of the trainee teachers while they walked through their placement experiences. Emotions imply the interactive, subjective experiences and individual behaviour which contribute to the emergence of social bonds and relationships (Von Scheve, 2012). This suggests that an emotion is considered as a performance because it is not stable (Butler, 1991), but is mostly contingent to situations, circumstances, events, and the people one interacts with. Emotion is also displayed as a façade which one projects, and which is dictated by a given situation. In short, emotions are embedded in the enactment of a role impersonated by the individual within a given setting (Goffman, 1959). This also implies thata change in setting affects people's emotional state and impacts on the way they construct reality. In other words, it can be argued that emotions are regulated and calibrated according to the culture, norms, values, social practices, and traditions contained in a particular environment.

Durkheim foregrounded similar ideas and explained that emotions cannot determine arousal unless there are socially guided interpretations. Although his views on the role of emotion in the social construction process involves symbolic interaction, his appreciation is set on the distinct parameters which are worth noting. Firstly, he saw emotions as playing a central role in the making of social solidarity and maintenance of the individual, which in turn helps understand emotions as important sociological variables. Second, in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life,* he underlines the origins of human society, which is sui-generis, and largely different from animal life. The collective consciousness which coerces the individual to conform to norms, values, ideas and traditions not only constrains but also allows the latter to bond with group.

These, for Durkheim, are only possible if they are experienced emotionally. He uses the case of the Australian Aboriginals and totem worship as a frame of reference to showcase collective effervescence derived from excitement during their rituals (1961, p 249). Durkheim explained that for the worshipper, the totem is a representation and an image which is common to the group and associated with the collective. Hence, the experiences derived from the worship of the totem represent emotions which are sustained and revived as a collective sentiment. For him, emotions are interpreted dyadically though group interaction which can support 'feeling rules' (Hochschild, 1983) on given situations. One key example in his work of the operation of such feeling rule is his analysis of the funeral rites of Australian aborigines which results in renewal of social solidarity rather than eliciting a specific feeling.

In the same vein, when scrutinising 'suicide' one can easily decipher the ways in which emotions are used as processes of socially elicited feelings of sadness and anger. In Egoistic suicide for instance, the individual's lack of integration into the social group result from detachment to the collective. Those who cling to life irrespective of their adversities are more likely to do so because they abide to socially constructed emotions which create a sense of obligation. For instance, reverence - which is an expression of a socially constructed emotion - may serve as a barrier over sadness – which stands as an organically induced emotion - felt for the demise of a loved one. Rituals related to

mourning in turn is structured by the collective. In short, Durkheim proposed that emotions are socially caused and are linked to a wide range of social events and experiences found in the whole rather than the parts.

Hochschild (1983) in turn explained in the interactionist model, that social factors and social influences affect the experiences linked to a specific set of emotions. Emotion is an awareness of the following elements: (i) appraisal of a situations, (ii) changes in bodily sensations, (iii) display of expressive gestures, and (iv) the cultural label applied to the first three. For her, emotions function as a sense that help individuals to decipher their own realities. She extends her views on the socially constructed nature of emotions, explains that emotions have turned into a commodity which can be sold as part of their labour. The labour market imposes on workers to demonstrate sincerity, authenticity and care while earning a living. She terms this emotional style in the workplace which is part of the service as the *emotional labour* and *emotion management*. She argues that this act of getting in touch with or the thing one manage, into an emotion can be done in two ways, namely through (i) surface acting – what one formally learns during training – which are the conscious outward expression of an emotion in the service provided in order to change our real feelings; and (ii) deep acting -when feelings are changed from inside-out-by changing our bodily state. Distribution of emotions along both surface and deep acting occurs in our daily life. In private setting the expressions are referred by Hochschild as *emotion management* while in more formal, public settings, these are termed as *emotional labour*.

She nonetheless has a similar take as Durkheim, on the role of emotions as being social when she refers to them as *rules*. When we often appear amused, happy, content or sad, we follow certain expression rules. If we try to appear amused, happy or sad given a specific setting, we follow *feeling rules* which are appropriate to the setting, like for example, a funeral or a wedding. These, she, recalls are zoning regulations which carries, inspect and assess our emotional display, whether appropriate or not, for that given context. Prompts in the form of socially ascribed roles live out those *feeling rules* and manage the required emotions. Moreover, the stronger the bonding with the group, the more the emotions will work, for instance, in a wedding, parents, the priest and relatives may impose certain emotional obligations on the bride and groom displaying certain

emotions. Finally feeling rules are also seen as social exchange between individuals in what Hochschild term as *emotion lines*. These are established zones which mark off the degree of appropriateness of a feeling, like for e.g., anger lines, love lines or jealousy lines which signals the demarcations of the appropriate from the inappropriate. These emotion lines, however, are not objective, but vary from societies to societies, families to families and individuals to individuals. Yet, the most salient observation to be made from her contribution to emotion as a socially constructed phenomenon, result in the fact that individuals' emotional experiences are controlled by the social structures and social world they live in. Following the above arguments, this study takes on emotions as a significant aspect of social construction of a given set of events or experiences.

3.11.4 The role of memory in social construction

In chapter two, the role of memory is highlighted (see chapter two, p 39) given its pertinence in social constructionism. Memory reflects the revival of the past, in the present and the reflection of the future from that past. Imbued in early sociological discourse, Memory work in sociology can be traced from Durkheim but more significantly in Halbwachs' *collective memories* in the 1980s and Schwartz's *commemoration* in the 1990s. Symbols like official texts, buildings, monuments and memorials are commemorative elements which allows the individual to reconstruct the past in the present. Usually signposted in studies which focus on 'trauma', 'lost' or 'difficult pasts', using memory can ostensibly shapes the way reality is constructed (Packard, 2009).

Some classical works where memory is exploited in sociological discourse refer to (i) *The elementary Forms of Religious Life* (Durkheim, 1912), usually termed as the foundation for the sociology of memory; (ii) Mannheim's *generation* (1923) whereby the relationship between generations and memory, namely, historical events, had a distinct sociological significance; (iii) Mead also emphasised on the past as a tool to address contemporary issues and dilemmas. He referred to a more presentist approach to memory in *the philosophy of the present* (1932); (iv) Nietzsche's influential arguments on the balance of memory and forgetting in *Ultimately meditations* (1874) and (v) Halbwach's *Collective Memory* (1992), argued that remembering is more social than psychological given that memories are formed in social contexts, namely the family, religions and

social classes. The latter theorist has paved the way for the sociology of memory which is optimised for a thorough understanding in knowledge construction.

These conceptual understanding of memory by the seminal sociological thoughts is extended in the work of Denis and Dlamini (2015) who describe it as part of the active process of reconstructing through remembering and representing the past as either a private memory (that is, at individual level) or public memory (that is, at social and cultural levels). Public memory at social level implies social interactions which help make memory a social construction of reality. Memory is embedded in the collective identity of the social group andits communicative processes allow the transmission of norms, create and reinforce social bonds, and sustain social organisations (Olick, 2008; Hallwachs, 1992). At the cultural level, memory is defined as a hermeneutical activity (Schwartz, 2007; Casey, 2009; Assmann 2010) which is explained in the form of commemoration or remembering historical events. In similar vein, memory embodies the deepest and most fundamental values of a social group which renders the past immanent in the present (Savage,2012; Assmann, 2010).

Memory is used as a construct of social reality which activates the ability to recall, reminisce, remember and recollect. Each of these terms has a specific meaning which throws light on the way in which memory impacts on the construction process of school context. Memory functions as a trigger for trainee teachers to review their assumptions as well as construct school context in specific situations. It becomes a yardstick whereby trainee teachers can measure their construction of school context. Recall is the simple action of retrieving a piece of information, while reminiscence implies nostalgia and arousal of certain feelings attached to situations, events, places and circumstances from which information is derived. Recollection is indicative of the process of selecting, organising, or omitting particular information, or an event or account. This definition, which is in line with the work of Amin and Govinden (2012) is used in this study to refer to memory as a process of recollection with the ability to unlock the trainee teachers' personal and professional life histories (Samuel, 2015) while they construct the school context during placement. Remembrance suggests commemoration of an event in the past when it is retrieved for a purpose and shared in the present moment. The nuances in the meanings of these terms bring out the varied

yet subtleways in which memories of the past play a salient role in the construction process (Mc Clelland, 2010), whereby trainee teachers recollect specific past experiences, ideas, artefacts, or knowledge of people to enter the school as a known space.

As a constituent part in social construction, memory is therefore included as a construct to understand social reality. In most memory works within the field of sociology, emphasis is laid on the impersonal, collective and normative aspects contained in the processes and social contexts of remembering (Zerubavel, 1996). These are manifested in what is termed as the social sites of memory, namely stories, photographs, archaeological ruins, calendars and document. Building on the canons of sociological thoughts, more recent studies extend their focus on the social aspects of individual and collective memory, and cultural attitudes towards memory (Jedlowski, 2001). These form the basis of understanding individual and collective identities, formation and sustenance of social ties, and the reconstruction of the architecture of society (Olick and Robbins, 1998; Assmann, 1992).

In this respect, the present study uses memory to understand the perceived and lived experiences of trainee teachers during placement with the intention to unlock deeper meanings which may at first appear personal, but which have a more collective denotation when trying to explain the 'how' and why' question of this study.

3.12 THE PROPOSED THEORETICAL LENS IN THIS STUDY

The theoretical model guiding and shaping the study's empirical design, data collection and analysis follows some constructive dimensions taken from the SCT to situate the findings of this study within the existing scholarly discourse. Second, the theoretical lens aims at generating coherent explanations which are both theoretically succinct and contextually relevant. Thirdly and more importantly, the theory will be used to guide the construction of new knowledges for contextually, methodologically and theoretically innovative and creative outcomes. Finally, the theory assists in the diffusion of the results by providing a structure to the study. Thus, the SCT as a theoretical lens supports the research design, data generation/production and analysis of this study.

The proposed theoretic is inspired from the varied constructionist views and attempts to combine significant elements from the SCT. Thus, the temporary theoretical lens considers time, space and experiences embedded in the placement experiences as the trainee teacher constructs school context. The construction processes take place in time and space. The temporal element is described by the placement period which is divided into the contemplation stage whereby the trainee teacher's prior beliefs, assumptions, and existing learner knowledge of the primary school is tapped to construct school context. During this stage, the construction made suggests that the trainee teacher imagines school placement using his/her preconceptions and childhood memories or experiences as a parent as a reference. This may suggest a naive view of the school as a site of professional development and a future workplace. The second stage is the enactive stage where the trainee teacher is more involved in the affairs of the school and slowly becomes acclimatised to the placement site as a known space. Construction of school context may involve the deconstruction of certain preconceived notions about teaching in general as well as personal interpretations based on own experiences. Finally, the reflexive stage indicates that the trainee teacher is fully immersed in placement, has almost gone native and enjoys complete familiarity with the school context. At that stage, construction is expressed in a more reflexive manner and the trainee teacher's construction depicts voice and agency (Johri, 2011).

3.13 SYNTHESIS OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter explored theoretical concepts with a view to better grasping the nature of trainee teachers' construction of school context. While embracing the SCT as a theoretical lens, the model devised seeks to capture the essence of construction based on a diversity of constructs and concepts developed around knowledge construction. Placement signals a particular social reality which is constructed as per the perceived, conceived and lived experiences of trainee teachers. The model embeds notions of school ecology, the relativist nature of social construction of reality and its diverse elements, namely, interactions and relationships with people and spaces, pedagogical practices, and enactment of power. The model supports data collection and analysis. Its significance is assessed through the data collection phase and, ultimately, the relevance of the different components, namely, the way it captures construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction, is scrutinized in the thesis chapter.

The following chapter presents the research methodology which emanates from the current theoretical model.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter three discussed the theoretical framework that was used to generate and analyse empirical data for the purpose of theorisation. Derived from the SCT, the study aims at presenting conceptual and theoretical clarity while critically interpret trainee teachers' construction of school context during their placement in primary schools.

The present chapter offers an appraisal of the research paradigm and approach which is used for this study and presents a comprehensive description of the methodology, namely, the research strategy, data production tools and instruments, the different sources of data, selection of participants and ethical issues. Situated in the critical interpretivist paradigm, this study sought to unlock trainee teachers' constructions of detailed and situated empirical interpretations of the primary school context while being on placement. The interpretations also foreground trainee teachers' reflections which reveal and disrupt assumptions and certainties that reinforce the status quo (Doolin & McLeod, 2005) of the primary school organisation while considering broader notions of power and control during that phase of professional development. The aim is to not merely describe the phenomenon but also present an explanation of the layered realities which justify what trainee teachers construct as school context, how they develop such constructions and why they do so during the placement period. This is followed by a detailed report of the methodology which also includes the mode of enquiry, fieldwork procedures and the knowledge production processes. Finally, the chapter examines the ethical considerations employed in this study, as well as describe the ways in which authenticity, and trustworthiness are accounted, and discusses the ways in which the data is presented and analysed.

4.2 ORIENTATION

This study is situated within the critical interpretivist stance which explains the phenomenon and is divided into six sections. The first section describes the study's research design, the ontology, and epistemology detailing the phenomenon under study. Section two explains the research paradigm and research approach. Section three details the methodological stance of the study, followed by a discussion on the tools and methods piloted and used to produce data. The transect walk, episodic interviews and visual data production as well as their validation are discussed in this section. The fourth section presents the knowledge production site (the primary schools) and the selection of the knowledge producers (the participants). The fifth section deals with gatekeeping issues and the ethical dimensions of the study. The final section discusses the ways in which the data produced is presented and analysed.

4.3 THE RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design refers to the structure of a study (Bentouhami, et al., 2021; Das, 2016) and acts as the conceptual blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data (Acktar, 2016; Ahuja, 2010). It describes the overall strategy opted in view of collecting data which effectively addresses the research problem in a logical manner.

4.3.1 Explanatory research design

As discussed in chapter two, little is researched on the ways in which constructions of school context offers ground for informal learning and professional socialization during initial teacher training. In this respect, an explanatory research design is espoused. The study aims at specific and in-depth explanations of the phenomenon while answering the 'how' and 'why' factors. At the same time, the study carries a set of concepts which guide and facilitate the researcher (Acktar, 2016) to uncover the multiple realities and different layers of meaning of the phenomenon in question. The choice for an explanatory research design is also motivated by the fact that it eases theory building (Swedberg, 2020).

4.3.2 The research paradigm

A research paradigm is used to describe the researcher's worldview (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). The research paradigm espoused foregrounds a critical interpretivist posture (Pozzebon, 2004) and involves the use of meaning-oriented methods with the intention of unlocking knowledge production through the participants' subjectivities during interaction and dialogue. This was a relevant choice for this study that aimed to capture the participants' thoughts, ideas and voice about their social realities, and the meaning they derive from these realities while they immerse and engaging into teaching as their profession. In the process, the study also critiques the power and subjugation emerging from the fieldwork. The diagram which follows describes the ways in which the critical interpretivist outlook is used in this study.

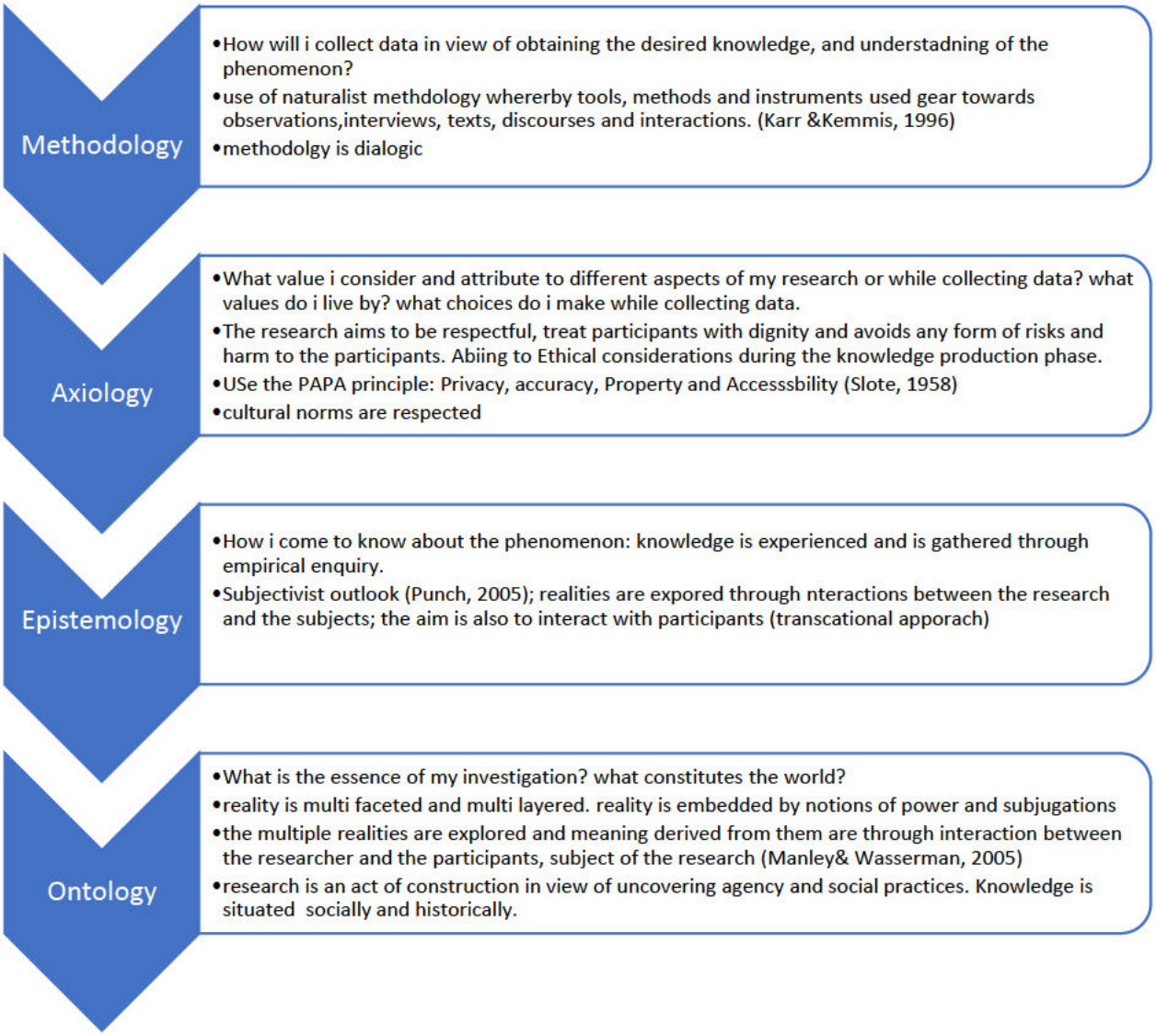

Figure 4.1. The paradigm used in this study.

4.3.2.1 The Ontological and epistemological orientation of the study

The study is guided by an ontological, epistemological and methodological stance which are qualitative in nature. The nature of the research questions and the phenomenon requires in-depth explorations and explanations of individuals in an authentic setting in time and space (Cresswell, 1998). In terms of ontology, the reality is regarded as multifaced and multilayered with issues of power and control. The participants are drawn from different contexts and profiles and the meaning and interpretations they derived during the knowledge production phase demand for a variety of tools and techniques of data generation. As a critical interpretivist, my professional roles as teaching practice tutor, lecturer and social scientist allowed me to take from those multiple perspectives while analysing the ways school context was constructed. In short, the researcher takes a subjectivist epistemological stance while the participants are looked at as knowledge producers. Sources of data, tools and methods also seek to garner data which are participatory in nature, and which unlock the multiple realities which are constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed.

The methods used for data production have, at their base, assumptions about the nature of knowledge and the manner in which I can best explore the trainee teachers' construction patterns and processes. Drawing on Pozzebon (2003a, 2004b),four criteria for exploring critical interpretivism in this study are retained; authenticity, plausibility, criticality and reflexivity as illustrated in the figure 4.1.

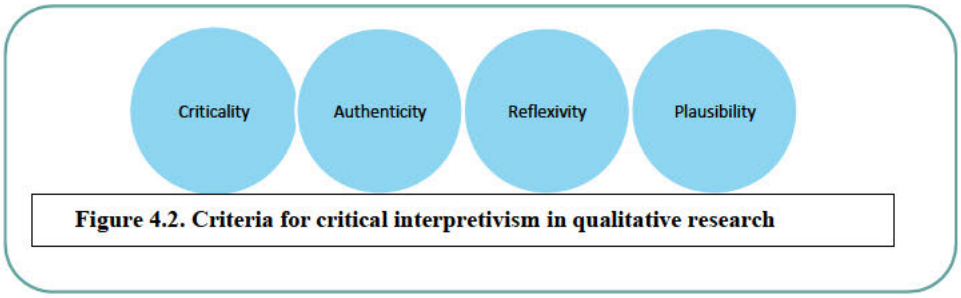

Figure 4.2. Criteria for critical interpretivism in qualitative research

The first criterion, criticality, is concerned with the conduct of fieldwork which relied on in-depth data collection processes and methods. The presence of the researcher also signalled that she has sufficient empirical material which captured the genuine experiences of the participants while writing their accounts and narratives. In-depth interviews were conductedin two instances, one

before and one after the transect walks, followed by observation in thefield. The data produced were both aural and visual in nature. Several sources ranging from the participants' conversations to pictures, collages, dialogues, and write ups were usedto recreate an authentic account of what constituted school context and the nature of its construction by trainee teachers on placement. I used all these creative sources which represented the placement experiences as a site for the construction of school context as a whole. The data analysis presented as the key findings under emerging themes is discussed in chapters five to seven and the abstraction of key concepts emerging from the findings is discussed in detail in chapters eight and nine.

The second criterion, plausibility, concerns the write up stage (Schultze, 2000) and refers to the ability to showcase a singular contribution to my readership by highlighting the distinctive features of the findings (Walsham & Sahay, 1999). This involves (i) making sense of the data by clustering them thematically and linking them with the existing literature and scholarshipin the field; and (ii) conversion of these themes into concepts which aim to fill the gaps in theliterature. Level two analysis in chapter eight and level three analysis in chapters nine and tenpresents the theorisation of the key findings and the development of the conceptual model which depicts the placement experiences in teacher education programmes. In this respect, the study extends the scholarly contributions in the field by offering conceptual novelty and empirical relevance. The criterion 'authenticity' refers to reconsidering taken-for-granted assumptions, beliefs and perspectives through novel ways of thinking. Authenticity highlighted thought-provoking understandings of social realities based on multiple worldviews, which can be in contradiction with one another, which are subjective, and whichquestion own assumptions. As such, this criterion assists the examination of differences and carves out spaces for reflection in order to allow new possibilities to emerge. Based on this criterion, the participants' voices are often presented in juxtaposition or in concordance withone another so as to represent the complexity of those voices.

Finally, reflexivity is included as part of the research processes. Reflexivity is difficult to definein simple terms. I draw on Corlett and Marvin (2018), Archer (2007) and Holmes (2010), Marton (2013a; 1994b), Hardy et al. (2001) and Bourdieu (2004) to explain how reflexivity was used in this study.

Firstly, reflexivity is understood as a way of seeing and representing the data.

4.3.2.2 The Research approach

The study adopts a qualitative research approach and uses a critical interpretive empirical lens to unlock the phenomenon. The qualitative research approach allows nuanced understanding and insights to be gleaned from a few participants (Thompson et al.,2019; Rheinhardt et al., 2018; Miriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mama et al., 2014; Leavy, 2011). I interrogate and explore placement as a site ofinformal learning and professional socialisation and development, in view of providing an in-depth understanding of the ways in which a small group of trainee teachers construct meaning about primary school contexts prior to their posting as full-fledged primary teachers. In this respect, the focus of the study is to critically explore the nature of trainee teachers' construction of primary school context during placement.

4.4 THE RESEARCH STRATEGY

4.4.1 Case study methodology

This study is a case study (Flyvbjerg, 2011, 2006; Yin, 2005a, 2003b; Benbasat et al. 1987;). The case study method was selected because it enables holistic, in-depth investigation of a phenomenon (Feagin, Orum, & Sjoberg, 1991). Since my research probes the voices and perspectives of the participants in the current context of school placement, the case study isdesigned to capture the voices of people in relationships with one another and describe places, spaces and boundaries which are embedded. In-depth interviews as well as transect tools were employed to generate rich and authentic data. Seven participants placed in four schools were designated as trainee teachers who gave a comprehensive account of their lived experiences during school placement and revealed their personal constructions of school context as they practiced teaching as part of their training. Figure 4.3 illustrates the case study strategy and design used in this study.

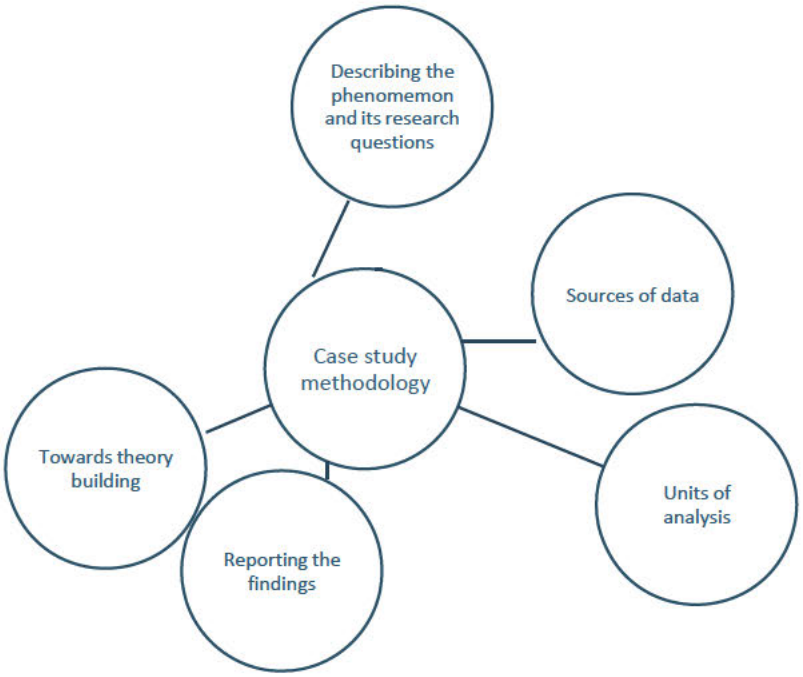

Figure 4.3: Diagrammatic representation of the case study approach

The case study method aims to provide an in-depth description of trainee teachers' construction of school context during their professional placement. This implies optimising their experiences which are narrated and revived by them in order to gather data that is intensive and specific, bounded and temporal (Flyvbjerg, 2001). The research questions discussed in chapter one aimed to uncover the nature of construction of school context and trigger the how and why questions in the process. Maps, pictures, drawings, artefacts and the presence of people during transect walks triggered the emergence of enriching data (see section 4.5). To remain faithful to the critical interpretivist paradigm, a participatory approach to data collection was privileged. Multiple sources allowed for data triangulation while aiming at establishing meaning and depth as well as guaranteeing the study's authenticity and trustworthiness (McGloin, 2008; Brown, 2008).

The methodological triangulation consisted of a pilot study to validate one of my instrumentswhich was used for the first time in educational research in Mauritius, namely, the transect walk approach. Seven participants were identified using purposive sampling (Kothari, 2004). In this type of sampling, deliberate choice of the sample is based on specific purposes and is representative of

the trainee teachers of primary on a preservice course at the MIE. Choice of selection is based on appropriateness of the sample to scrutinize the field. The participants were offered the opportunity to participate in the study, but the researcher stopped at 7 participants who would contribute as information-rich cases (Etikan, 2016). In view of setting out deep insights into the construction of school context, selection of samples was also set to deeper insights of the phenomenon. Of the 7 participants, 2 were my teaching practice trainee teachers while the other 5 were contacted based on their availability and their personal and professional profile (see section 4.7).

4.5 THE KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION PROCESS: PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF FIELDWORK

Figure 4.4 visually represents my entry to the field, which is also termed the knowledge (data) production site. The data production process was divided into three major phases; thepre-walk, the during-walk and the post-walk. The significance of each tool and instrument used to collect data in a systematic and chronological manner is explained. The biographical sketches followed by the transect walk (which merged interviews and participant observation) and post-walk interviews are also discussed.

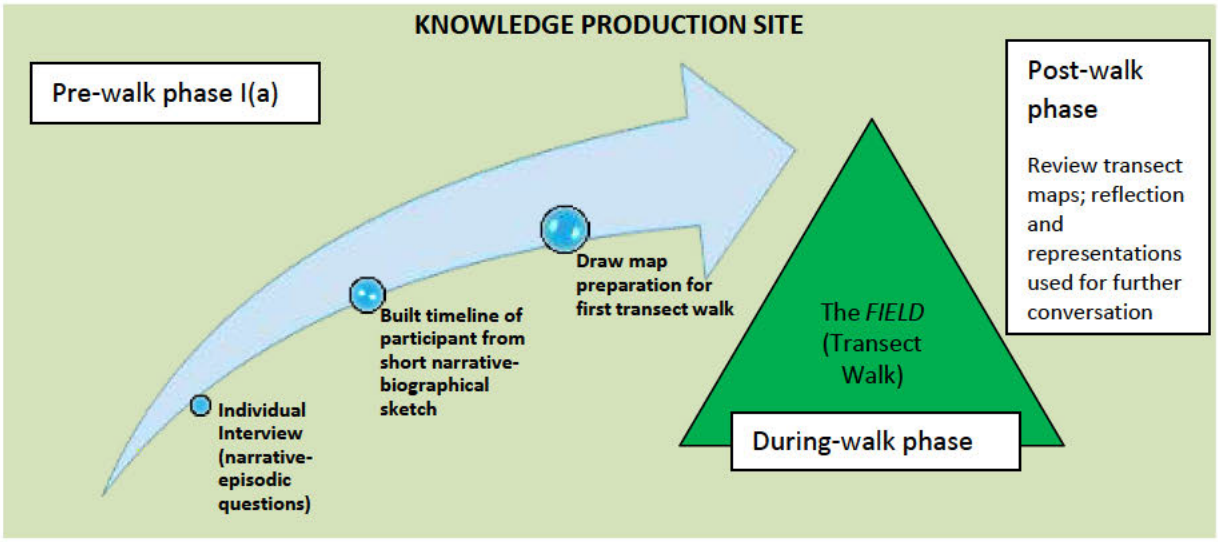

Figure 4.4: Visual description of my initial entry to the field

The individual interviews conducted prior to the transect walks aimed to unlock the knowledge construction that the participants were cataloguing as their perceived (assumptions and beliefs), conceived (how they read it from an outsider/stranger to the school context) and lived experiences (while being acclimatised and becoming native to the school context) during placement. A narrative interview was employed to enable probing of the participants' construction patterns. In the process, I was able to unlock the power relations embedded in the construction of school context while *being at* school and *in school*during placement (refer to chapters eight and nine). The interviews were conducted in three instances with each participant. They took place both inside the school premises and at the participants' residences or a venue of their choice. The interview is also termed the pre-walkinterview because it was conducted before the first transect walk. A second interview (the post-walk interview) was carried out with the participants after their transect walks. This acted as a cross-check and extension of the data previously generated from the participants.This exercise also deepened my critical understanding of specific aspects of school context under construction such as leadership style, spaces which resonate power relationships, and control and monitoring, among other things.

4.6 ENTERING THE FIELD: THE PRE-WALK, DURING-WALK AND POST WALK PHASES

4.6.1 Biographical sketches: narratives through episodic interviews

The pre-walk interview unlocked the participants' personal and professional journeys and favoured the narrative-episodic mode of interviewing. The narrative interview, first developed by Schutze (1987) and adapted by Flick (2009), was used as a substitute for the semi-structured interview as it considered and included the participants' experiences. In the current study, this element was captured as an initiating tool to develop a biographical sketchof the participant's pathway leading to his/her teacher becoming and to relate to the ways he/she would construct school context afterwards. The table below provides a comprehensive analysis of the narrative and episodic interviews used in the pre-walk phase based on Flick's methods for collecting verbal data. Several criteria were considered while using this tool; namely the interviewee's subjectivity, the presence of the researcher to probe for depth, and the general organisation and application of the interview questions during fieldwork. Table 4.1 describes the ways in which those criteria were adapted and used during fieldwork.

Narrative as data			
Criteria	**Pure narrative interviews**	**Episodic interviews**	**How I interviewed my participants in this study**
Ingenuousness of the interviewee's subjectivity achieved by:	Non-influencing narratives oncestarted	Narratives of meaningful experiences Selection made by the interviewee	The participant as knower I compiled the narration of their experiences to build their professional timeline and journey. Probing often done to introspect further on certain sequences oftheir timelines although participants chose what to admit in the first place as trustworthy data.
Structuring and deepening the issue achieved by:	Generative narrative questions Part of narrative questioning at theend	Connection of narratives and Argumentation Suggestion of concrete situations to be recounted	Focus on open interaction with participant, the participant as theoretician. Use the narrator's representations and anecdotes, critical incidents as prompts and triggers to deepen the narratives.

	Balancing		Exploring metaphor at the endand asking participant to explicate – a final word to wind up the interview.
Contribution to the general development of using verbal data (interview) as a method	Localisation of structuring the interview at the beginning and theend Exploring narrativesas research instrument systematically	Systematic connection between narratives and argumentation as data sorts Purposive generative narrative questions	Sequencing developed using purposive generative narrative questions – the narratives become a research instrument to organise the data into a meaningful whole.
Domain of application	Biographical courses	Change, routines and situations in everyday life	Explorative analysis of each biography by understanding theways trainee teachers/participants construct own routines and situations.
Problem in conducting this method	Extremely unilateral interview situation Problem of thenarrator Problematic zugzwangs[7]	Explication of the principle Handling the interview guide	Follow the interview schedule – moderating exercise significant incase of deviation but remain semi-structured as probing is allowed and critical situations explored further. Conversation- led which sometimes led to digression.
Limitations of this method	Supposed analogyof experience and narrative Reducing the object to what can be recounted	Limitation of everyday knowledge	The narrative is context boundand construction value laden. The public versus the private talks of the participant to be accounted for. The tape recorder intrudes. Sometimes rely on filednotes as more pertinent data is garnered after the recorder is switched off and participant decides *to add to* what *has been said*.

Table 4.1: Compilation of features of using narrative as data – adapted from Flick, 2009, p. 177

The interview was structured around extempore narrative which shapes into a consistent story of all relevant events and issues foregrounding the participants' knowledge of the school context from the beginning of their placement to the end (Flick, 2009, p. 177). However, I chose episodic rather than narrative interviewing (Flick, 2007b) with a view to facilitating the presentation of their initial teaching experiences by using topical domains for which the narrative is required. These topical domains consisted of questions which allowed me to draw their timeline and obtain the requisite insight to sketch their biographies. These questions were founded on the following premises put forward by Hermanns (1995): firstly, a '*how everything started*' account where the starting point is to ask them about 'who they are personally and professionally' as they journey towards teaching. A timeline was developed based on the trainee teachers' personal sketch. I also asked them about the kind of learner they were to foreground the discussion on context. The second premise was to highlight *how things developed* and it included their motivation for joining the profession as well as their first steps into formal training and their initial placement experiences. A list of themes and episodic questions was created to stimulate the interviewee's response. Some of these questions also acted as prompts and probing elements which prompted continuation of the narrative.

Finally, the *what became* element was captured by asking the participants to describe themselves at the time of the interview using a metaphor to represent their learning experiences as they reflected on their trainee experiences during placement. This question was important given that it allowed the interviewee to act as a theoretician of his/her own narrative.

[7] A term usually used in a Chess game which refers to a situation where every move is disadvantageous. One is then compelled to formulate precise and detailed plans and a well-calculated series of moves that minimise harm. In this study, conducting an interview where narratives are required, may open room for interactive compulsion to contribute to the data and thus influence its validity.

The participants were encouraged to voice their interpretations through a collage, artefact drawing or metaphor (Schnick et al., 2010; Stylianou et al., 2013; Thatcher et al., 2016; Stark & Hoffman, 2019). Three of the participants chose representations for this last interview while the rest preferred reflections and conversations over the whole data collection experience. The flexibility of choosing their medium of expression aimed to allow them to unlock their own voice and reflexion in the process. The exercise was successful as it enabled me to further probe the ways they construct school contexts individually. Not imposing my views on the whole exercise led to a balance of power in the relationship I shared as a researcher with the participants during fieldwork. Completion of this exercise signalled data saturation and allowed me to exit the field.

The data sources for the individual interviews consisted of the trainees themselves who were the main sources of information. Pictures taken during the transect walks and the maps drawn by participants were used at this level to gain insight into the conversations and dialogues emerging from the field. They took pictures themselves or directed me to take pictures of places, sites and things they wanted to talk about in addition to the maps they drafted as the itinerary. The transect map was reviewed after each walk with the participant, whenever he/she referred to new sites and spaces which were evocative of his/her trainee teacher experiences. Such spontaneity unlocked reflexive and authentic accounts and critical incidents which were meaningful to them during placement. My field notes complemented the audio recorded conversations with the participants, and the drawings and pictures they produced to construct and deconstruct certain aspects of school context.

4.6.2 The Transect walk method[8] (the walk-talk approach)

The second instrument to generate data was a transect walk (Rojas et.al., 2021; Wegerif, 2019; Uddin et.al., 2019; Hammerson & Morrison, 2015; Mallick, 2014; Shepard, 2011; Massey, 2005). I choose this instrument because it fitted well with the study's agenda and its epistemology. It is a dynamic and innovative way to recreate participatory techniques (World Bank, 2008). Also known as the walk where both participant and researcher are involved,

transect walks are formally guided by a map (Hammerson & Morrison, 2015). The tool was adapted to the study and context, and eventually drafted either solely by the participants or in collaboration with the researcher. The mapping process structured the walk within the prescribed time provided by the gatekeeper. Participants are encouraged to use the map as a trigger as well as for visual archiving of the sites of data production. Decisions on the choice of spaces are left to the participants as they direct the walk. The researcher used her observation schedule to record observations and key information pertaining to the field while the participant led the walk. The conversation is audio recorded and the participant opts to take pictures of spaces he/she decides are pertinent. The map acted as a visual tract which facilitated questions pertaining to the sites they opted for as well as orienting the researcher to probe for further data (Lorenzo & Motau, 2014; Dongre, Deshmukh & Garg, 2009; FAO, 2003).

However, the sequencing of the map was not constant for all participants. Some strictly followed the map's itinerary while a few chose to construct the map as they walked along. Two participants had to change the sequence and trajectory of their maps at the end of the walk as they had deviated from their original plans. The transect method also offered scope for observation and conversations to occur in a more fluid and natural manner when the map was drafted after the walk. In the second transect, the trainees were more at ease and preferred to 'go with flow' although they told me that they had already conducted a mental walk before we started the exercise.

As a research instrument, the transect walk method was devised to (i) explore what knowledge trainee teachers have about school context and, (ii) unlock trainees' representations of knowledge of school context through their perceived, conceived and lived experiences during placement. I favoured the use of personal stories (Goodson & Sikes, 2016; Goodson, 2012) based on the participants' accounts of events – memories, descriptions and formulations gathered during this phase. The maps drawn by the participants and the pictures taken acted as triggers to unlock a multiplicity of truths during the walk-talk. The reflexive element was also captured as the participants could reflect on their *deja-vu* or the known

about primary schools to unlock their constructions of the school context. The perceived refers to what they imagined as school contexts based on their beliefs,assumptions, past experiences as learners; the conceived refers to what they crafted about school context, and the lived refers to what they experienced during placement. Reflecting on these three dimensions captured their personal knowledge which was also deconstructedand reconstructed through placement.

The displacement from one site to the other captured a recollection of events, dialogue and conversations, as well as experiences that the participants had during placement. I clustered them into key themes which are explicated in chapter seven. The biographical sketch was in turn used as emotive notes as it unlocked the reflective stance of each participant's construction of school context as we walked into specific moments of their apprenticeship. Their biographical sketch was tallied with the data produced during the walks. The transect walk method in this study offered the potential to garner methodological notes[9] and provided sufficient insight to enable comparison with my theoretical framework and build my own theoretical notes[10].

4.6.2.1 Validation of the transect walk: The Pilot study

A pilot study was conducted on the MIE premises to validate and check the parameters for authenticity and trustworthiness of the transect walk. The procedures, time and different aspects with regard to the strengths and weaknesses of this method were tested. This exercise which was conducted with a colleague, enabled me to crosscheck my own objectivity during the conversation. There was a danger that I would construct as I walked and conversed with the participants. To prevent this, I restricted all conversations with the participant to what he/she chose as being relevant.

[8] See annexed a consolidated document on the transect walk method (TWM) as used in this study

However, I kept separate reflective logs containing my personal views on the walks. I highlighted and marked the site in different colours as they were indicative of similarity and outliers in the different transects. Clarifications were made with the participants and the transect map was collectively reviewed and further detailed bythe participants. Nevertheless, I was most comfortable not being in the position of the knower but as the one gaining insight into the phenomenon. Intrusions were initially highlighted in the pilot as people and passer-by would stop to inquire on what we were doing; I took note of this and eventually intruders like administrators and janitors 'joining' during the transect walks were noted during the actual fieldwork as they would eventually change the turn of the conversation and triggered altered data from the field. While in the pilot, intruders were highlighted as disrupting the data, during the fieldwork, sometimes the intruders enabled the unravelling of unsaid and had strong impressions of the participants at the time the data was produced. On one end, the intruders gave additional insights and deepened understanding of the data reaching theoretical saturation. On the other end, however, too much 'unwanted' presence also acted as a hindrance for some participants to freely voice their opinions and they acknowledged that more could have been said without reservation if some of these 'intruders' had not been around at the time of the transect. See annexed a sample of my field notes.

The pilot exercise allowed me to reframe my questions and I deemed it necessary to engage in a conversation with the participants after the transect walk to cross check and give them a chance to further voice their personal feelings and additional views. I also noted that, to do justice to the data produced during the walk, it was important that I sharpen my observation skills while conversing with participants. It is very easy to miss vital data if one is not paying attention to details.

[9] Methodological notes refer to any auxiliary data taken from the field in relation to the transect in view of refining the tool as one goes along. Participants are briefed and as the walk starts, several factors are taken into account by the researcher in evaluating the tool and the data gathered. See Annexure 10 for details on the transect as a research instrument for qualitative research.

[10] The theoretical notes refer to field notes that I took during and shortly after the data collection process until

I thus decided to optimise the useof a camera and take pictures as we walked through the different sites, spaces and places identified by the participants. These pictures, directed by the participants or at times taken by them, were used both as triggers to extend data production as well as to minimise my ownbias while producing the data. For instance, the pictures offered opportunities to deepen the data.

4.6.3 Post-Walk Interviews

The post-walk interview was conducted with three participants for the purpose of capturing contradictions, consensus, ironies and the unexpected while deepening insight into the data produced during the transect. The post-walk interview also allowed me to iterate on the data and to uncover the participants' reflexive stances. In the process, participants provided checks and balances on their own views previously discussed during the pre-walk and walk-talk interviews. Figure 4.5 illustrates the ways in which the episodic interviews, transects and post-walk interviews facilitated analysis.

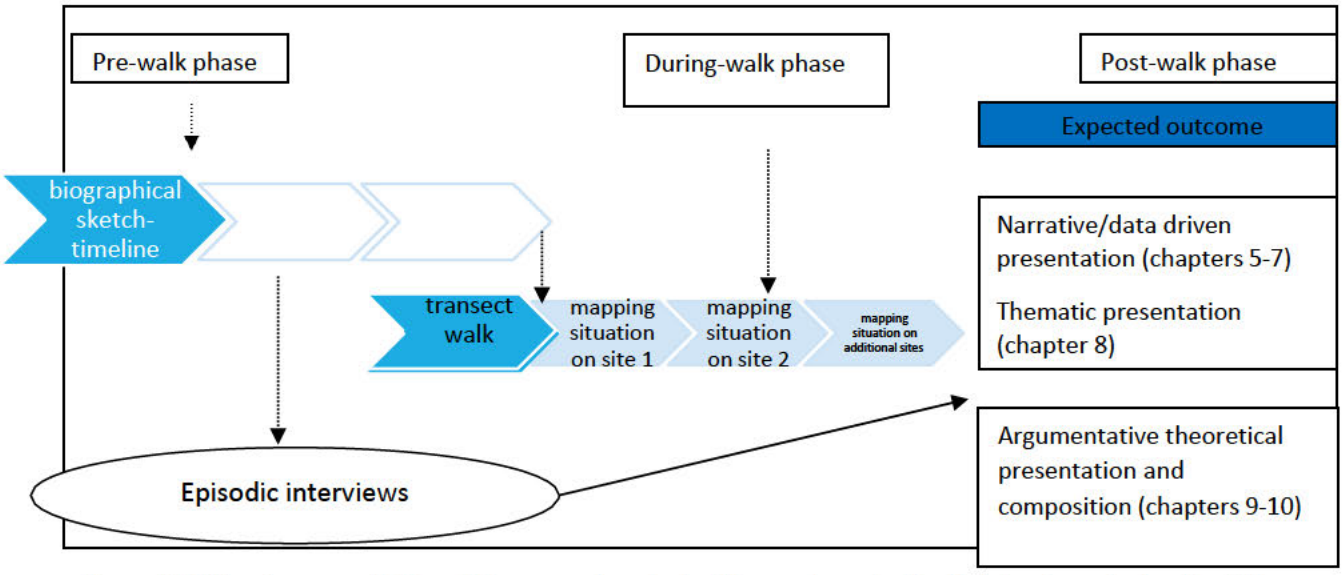

Figure 4.5: Visual representation of the use and analysis of transects and episodic interviews during the data production phase

Figure 4.5 describes the use of the transect walk during the data production phase. The episodic interviews preceded the transect and acted as an initial encounter with the participant. At this stage, a decision was taken on whether the participants wanted to go

further in the research process and a briefing was provided in this regard. As we started with the transect walks, the participants were asked to draw their maps or lead the walk. They decided whether they wanted to meet again for another transect. After completion of the transects, the participants were asked to take part in a post-walk, discursive conversation that allowed each participant to reconfigure and negotiate their individual opinions. Their subjective experiences were thus further captured by allowing them to represent their own stance through a picture, an artefact, a metaphor, a drawing or a collage. Each participant was also invited to choose a particular set of pictures and a map, which they discussed in detail with me. The modes of garnering knowledge from them were non-directive (Levy, 2006a, 2007b; Rogers, 2014) which led to narrative-descriptive arguments (Thorne, 2016; Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005; Jones, 2004).

The participants' accounts of events, memories, descriptions and construction/formulations were gathered during the three phases. The transect maps drawn by the participants and the pictures taken acted as triggers to unlock a multiplicity of truths during the conversations. Displacement from one site to another also captured recollections of events, dialogue, conversations, and the experiences of each participant as they learn to teach. The data was filtered and clustered into themes. A biographical sketch in the form of emotive notes was used to unlock the reflective stance of each participant's construction of context as *they walk* into specific moments of their apprenticeship. The transect walks offered the potential to garner methodological notes and to provide insights to enable comparison with the theoretical model as well as build my own theoretical notes (see annexure 3).

4.7 THE KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION SITES (SAMPLE SPACE)

The study was initiated in four primary schools where the participants were posted as trainee teachers. In line with the requirements of the TDP at the MIE, trainee teachers are sent on immersion in the first six months of their training to familiarise themselves with the school culture and climate. They were mainly asked to observe classes conducted by their assigned mentors. Following the school placement, trainees returned to the MIE for theory-based learning. They returned to placement once a week during the remaining one-and-a-half years

of teacher training and went back full time to school during their inter-semester breaks. This generally comprises approximately six weeks of full-time posting.

The data was generated in retrospect and placement counted from the time the participants were on teaching practice until they exited the training as qualitied primary school teachers. Only three participants did not change their School Based Experiences (SBE). Although constant reference was made to the practicum experiences, all transect walks were conducted in the school where the participants had their SBE. The primary school was thus the main context for this study, although the trajectory of the field differed in each case. Theschools constituted both government and Roman Catholic managed institutions and are situated in rural and urban regions. It should be noted that the schools were not initially sampled by their institutional and geographical categories but happened to be stratified by their institutional identity, geographical location, academic goodwill and level of popularity among their prospective clientele, i.e., pupils.

School A where two female participants, Bella and Tabitha, were placed is a high achieving school situated in an upper middle-class neighbourhood, with competition for enrolment throughout the year. Parents frequently seek to transfer their wards from their current school to this one, and teachers work effortlessly. They have a heavy work schedule; conversations among colleagues are always formal and austere; and parents pay frequent visits to teachers and administrators to enquire about the performance of their wards throughout the day. This school has two gates and access beyond the second gate is controlled.

School B is situated in the same region as School A but does not share the same pupil population, as it is mostly comprised of pupils from the suburbs and *cités* dwellers. Performance is average although the school has the latest educational amenities and instructional technology. School B is in the same neighbourhood as another primary school which is adjacent to School B. Interestingly, t0hese schools do not have pupils with similar profiles as the neighbouring school has better annual performance than School B. Participants

Kyle and Kiara were placed in School B.

School C is also situated in an urban area. It has a diverse pupil composition but remains an average school. It is in the same neighbourhood as another school which is, in reality, a physical extension of School C since, at one point in time, the school was overcrowded, and a second location was required. Consequently, the schools share the same name but are termed C1 and C2. They are on the same plot of land and are separated by a pathway. However, their entrances are in opposite directions and each school has its own yard and playground. Teachers from both schools have a strong collegial relationship and often use recess time to meet, discuss and spend quality time together. Boaz and Tasha were placed inSchool C. Like Kyle, Boaz was an alumnus of this school and also had his immersion in the school.

School D is situated in a rural area and Archie was placed there for his teaching practice. The school is denoted ZEP and is mainly attended by children from disadvantaged backgrounds with a difficult family history. However, when fieldwork started in the school, the participant explained that it had undergone a complete renovation and had the latest technology and infrastructure. At first glance, School D does not look like a ZEP school as all the required amenities are available. As per the participant, the school was renovated as a prototype school. It includes a beautiful yard and a huge playground, and its pre-primary block which is situated within the school compound, is well designed and learner centred. All the classrooms are ventilated and secured.

4.8 SELECTION OF THE PARTICIPANTS (sample)

The participants were the prime knowledge producers in this study (Yilmaz, 2013; Tsoukas, 2009) as they constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed primary school contexts. I referred to Flick's (2009) sampling strategies to select my participants (see Table 4.2) to ensure that authenticity was achieved throughout the data production process towards the data analysis.

Type: PURPOSIVE SAMPLING **(Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p. 45 in Flick,2009)**		
While collecting data	**While interpreting data**	**While presenting data**
CASES **purposive sampling** (people - primary school trainee teachers whose profile are diverse. They did not enter the field at the same time) Breadth required	**Material sampling** (which one to transcribe and analyse) or sampling within the material (which one to be selected within the text/part of the text for interpretation) Depth required Participants proceeded to transect walks and post-walk interviews To ensure depth, a minimum of two walks was planned per Participant	**Presentational sampling** (what parts of text or cases best demonstrate my findings) Representing the data in thematic mode
Episodic interview conducted with each participant	The transects are designed, executed. The plans are modified/redesigned. Only one transect was required in the case of two participants, while one participant made three transects.	Thematic composition of the data set Theoretical composition of the data Thesis composition
Data saturation phase: Sampling stops with theoretical saturation		Data reduction phase
Production phase	**Ground analysis**	**Thesis building**

Table 4.2: The selection and engagement of my participants as I progressed from ground analysis to theory-driven analysis[11]

Two participants were selected from a pool of trainee teachers from my own teaching practice while the other five were chosen from a group of trainees of the same cohort but under the supervision of other MIE tutors. The two participants who were under my supervision joined the Teacher Diploma Primary Cohort 2011-2014.

Two participants hailed from rural areas while two are from an upper middle-class residential area.I also had one participant from Rodrigues Island, whose residence was located behind the school she had been allocated for placement. At the time I was negotiating her participation,she wished to move to Rodrigues Island or another school in the same town for her next placement (SBE II).

11 Adapted from Flick (2007)

However, she ended up doing her SBE II in the same school. The remainingtwo participants lived in the suburbs and were well acquainted with the lives of children living there. While the participants had never officially taught before coming to the MIE, most were indirectly involved in the education sector as they had either undergone other teacher training or had been acting as private coaches and tutors. Two of the participants were pregnant at the time they agreed to participate in the study.

4.9 ACCESS AND GATEKEEPING

While gatekeeping was easily granted at local level, I had to postpone my entry to the field because the ethical clearance at the level of UKZN was delayed by almost one year. In the process, I lost two participants who declined to participate due to their unavailability. Access to the field was negotiated at different levels. The first level was informal negotiationswith the headmasters to access the school compound, after which a letter setting out the motivation for the study was sent to the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, and the Bureau Education Catholic (now SEDEC) through the MIE. In both instances, the directorate responded positively to my request to conduct the transect walks within a periodof six months, starting in November 2013.

However, entry to each school was negotiated with the school administrators as permission to conduct the study was granted on condition that my presence and intervention as researcher did not disrupt the school routine. Nevertheless,access to the identified schools was easy and the administrators were willing to contribute as much as they could to the smooth running of the fieldwork. Most of the transect walks wereconducted on Saturdays and after 3.30 pm on school days in order not to disrupt learners andteachers during working hours. However, there were few instances where transect walks andepisodic interviews were undertaken during the Asian Language classes, when the participants were usually free, or during recess time following permission from the headmasters (Appendices 4 and 5, letter of acceptance). I ensured that my presence in the school was not too visible; this was easy as in some cases I was recognised as the MIE teachingpractice tutor by some members of staff. I decided, as a matter of convenience, to keep the gender of the head of the school neutral by consistently using the

term Headmaster whenevermention of them was made by the trainee teachers.

4.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations were important during data production processes, fieldwork, analysis and reporting of the findings. Prior to commencement of fieldwork, informed consent was obtained from the participants and the MIE, and ethical clearance was sought and obtained from UKZN.

On agreeing to take part in the study, the participants were briefed about the study and an informed consent form was signed (see Appendix 6, informed consent). The form clearly stated the study's aims and objectives, the recording processes and the manipulation of the data gathered. The participants were also informed that they could produce pictures, photographs, drawings and write-ups to represent their views. All the interviews and transectwalks were audio tape recorded and consent was obtained each time data was produced. Informed consent referred to confidentiality, protection of the participants, permission to audio tape and use of the conversation in this study. The photographs taken protect the schools' identity, and their clientele and staff. Participants were made aware of the voluntarynature of their contribution and that they could withdraw from the study at any time withoutany consequences.

The headmasters were informed beforehand, and each transect walk and episodic interviews took place with their permission. Some trainees asked me to take pictures of specific spaces and locations at the school and this was done with the prior permission of the administrators. To protect their identity, the participants were asked to choose a pseudonym. All the pictures taken during the transect walks were screened to ensure that no person, object or signs, couldbe identified which could harm the school, the participants or the learners. Although the visualmaterial added insight to the data when the participants looked at it after the transect walk, some of the pictures were not used because they allowed for easy identification of the participants and the school where they were placed.

The audio recording and transcripts (which was in verbatim in either Mauritian creole, French or English see appendix 11a) were sent to the participants for member-checking and they were encouraged to make changes, and correct ambiguities and misunderstandings. The researcher allowed the participants to choose the language they wanted to engage in during both interviews and transects to ensure they were at ease during the fieldwork. Given the multilingual context in which this study was taking place, Mauritian creole, French and English were commonly spoken languages by the participants. By giving them the choice to speak in the language they are most comfortable in, increased their willingness to stay until the end of the fieldwork as well as feeling at ease to speak out. At the same time, the authenticity of data was sought and was reached when this opportunity was provided to them. Data which they were deemed too sensitive was removed. The participants were receptive to the questions asked and felt free to ask for clarification. They stayed the course until the end of the fieldwork. In selecting and adapting the data production tools and instruments, I was sensitive to ensuring trustworthiness and authenticity throughout the process. The transcripts were screened by participants, and I ensured that their voice was heard by opting for active listening techniques. The study's findingsas well as any future publications arising from the study will be made available to the participants and the gatekeepers.

4.10.1 Authenticity and trustworthiness

Issues of reliability and validity, which are dominant in quantitative research, are not equally imperative across the various qualitative methodologies; as such, their evaluation is generally quite different (Altheide & Johnson, 2011; Bernard, 1988; Kirk & Miller, 1986) and often relies primarily on the participants' own formulations and constructions of reality which are checked against those of other similarly situated informants. In this study trustworthiness, authenticity, transparency, credibility, reflexivity and generativity were used to promote the rigour of the data produced during fieldwork. The figure below explains how these components were used in data production and analysis.

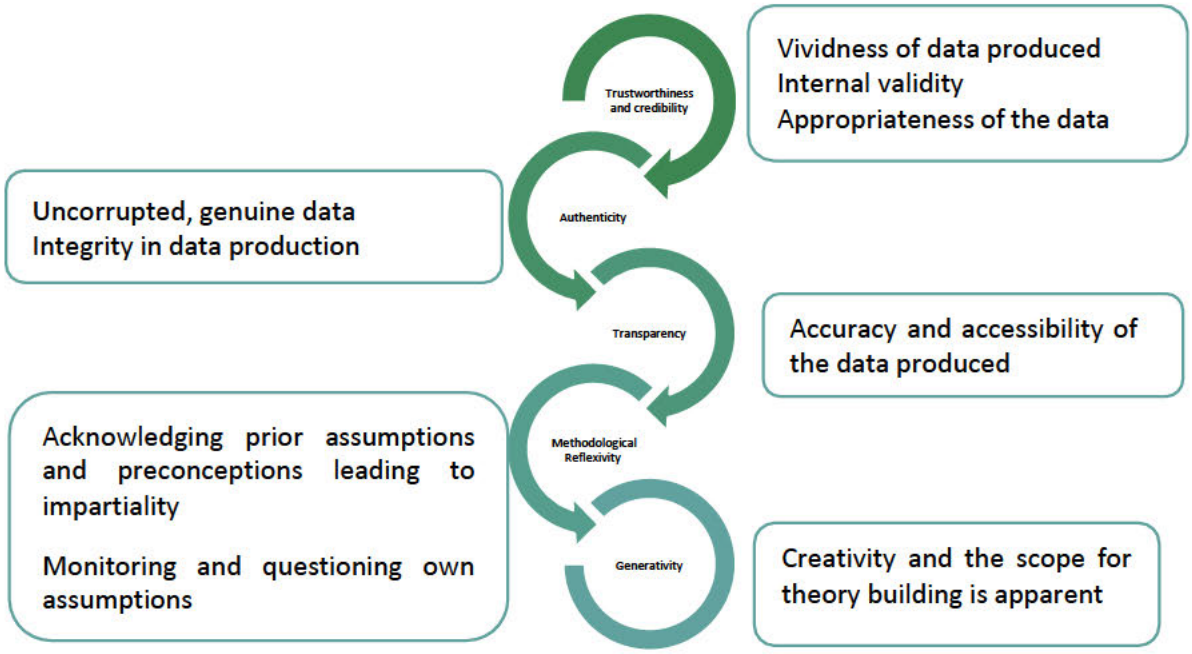

Figure 4.6: The components of validity and reliability in this study

The study focused on an authentic outlook of the reality presented to me as a researcher. As explained earlier in this chapter, transcribed versions (in Mauritian Creole, French and English 11a, 11b and 11c) of the individual interviews were sent back to the participants for member checking, thus ensuring internal validity. These recursive checks also captured the consistency of the participants' views and the integrity of truths. Adequate descriptions (Silverman, 1985;) representing many layers of diverse realities, as well as many informal observations (Kirk & Miller, 1986) were used as and when applicable. The transect walk for instance, was made according to the pace, willingness and satisfaction of the participants. As Seale et.al. (2003) points out, "The rigor is more analytic than technical, and this may be deceptively captivating for the enthusiastic but untrained" (p. 581).

4.11 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The data is analysed thematically and contains extracts of data sets which are further scrutinised and juxtaposed with the literature review presented in chapter two (see chapters eight), followed by a thesis chapter which review the initial theoretical model and bridges the theoretical gap. In short,the reporting covers the (i) description of the data (level one analysis), (ii) thematic representation of the data (level two analysis) and (iii) the thesis (theory building).

The presentation of the findings and analysis was divided into (i) categorisation, (ii) unitising the data, (iii) finding the relationship, (iv) framing themes, and (v) producing the thesis. the data produced was presented in both narrative forms and vignettes (see chapters five toseven) which captured the main findings which are further developed into theoretical concepts in chapter eight. The participants' personal and professional trajectories prior to teacher training and their own assumptions about school placement before their immersion were captured (See Annexure 12). The data analysis phase involves converting field data intoan informative form. In this study the analysis is organised in three main legs. The first leg consists of transcription of relevant data to answer the critical research questions. The raw data sets were transcribed in the original language used by the participants and translated in English. Most participants used either Mauritian Creole or French, except for Tasha who preferred to converse in English. In the second leg, the data was coded and classified according to key themes which are clustered into selected cases to unlock what participants constructed as school context while on placement. The adapted theoretical model assists at this stage. Chapters five to seven offer grounds for the theoretical argumentation and textual composition of the thesis which starts from chapter eight. The third leg consists of in-depth data interpretation where a new theorisation is presented to explain the nature of trainee teachers' construction of primary school context. The thesis is thus oriented towards a socio-constructivism model of knowledge construction. I adopt the role of dialectician in interpreting the findings through the process of filtering (Chowdhury, 2015).

4.12 SYNTHESIS OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter detailed the research methodology employed to conduct the study. In line with the critical interpretivist tradition, a case study was chosen to allow for introspective and retrospective elements which further captured elements of power, subjugation and voice in its authentic set up. Participatory tools and instruments served to probe and interrogate the nature of knowledge produced in the field. Interviews followed by transect walks - which embed both conversational interviews and covert observation - were used as critical research tools. The participants were selected as theoretical sampling to increase the likelihood of generating in-depth data which would offer greater potential for theory development. Moreover, the ethical dimensions discussed in this chapter extended the ways in which critical interpretivist imperatives were exploited in the data collection processes.

The next chapter refers to the presentation of findings derived from the data collected from the field. The key research findings are detailed and answers the first two sub research questions 'What trainee teachers construct as school context' and 'how they do so' during school placement. Chapters six and seven extend those findings and showcase constructions of school context in terms of relationships and power spaces to detail the material and immaterial components of school contexts in a salient manner. It is worth noting that trainee teachers' constructions are largely derived from the informal rather than formal aspects of their professional learning.

CHAPTER FIVE

TRAINEE TEACHERS' CONSTRUCTION OF SCHOOL CONTEXT AS A WEB OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE INNER BOUNDS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter discussed the research methodology and preparations for fieldwork. This chapter delves into the ways in which the primary school context is constructed as a web of relationships by the participants. The primarily focus of these trainee teachers is on teachers and pupils with whom they interacted during their placement period. By constructing these relationships as part of the school context, the trainee teachers illustrate teacher professionalism in both their formal and informal work context.

5.2 ORIENTATION

This chapter is divided into two sections which focus on constructions of relationships with teachers and construction of relationships with pupils, respectively. In the first section, the analysis is oriented towards the ways in which trainee teachers construct the relationships with primary school teachers who act as supportive professionals. The notion of support refers to the assistance given to trainee teachers as they learn their professional roles and duties. Support is also understood as the positive interactions which developed on a personal as well as a professional level as the trainees started their professional development within the primary school as a workspace. Moreover, the trainee teachers constructed the schoolteachers as social friends when their encounters with the latter involved sharing, bonding, and socialising as part of their professional experiences. However, they observed that, in a professional setting, resentment and mistrust are also apparent given certain circumstances. The data presented below, which is primarily taken from the school transect walks and interviews[12] illustrate the constructions of the trainees' relationships with teachers.

The second section focuses on the trainee teachers' relationships with pupils in the primary schools as they build their relationships with them. The data shows that trainee teachers drewon the pupils' personal backgrounds, neighbourhoods and their socio-economic-situations (SES) to construct them as learners. As such, assumptions, speculation and comparisons become the basis on which the trainee teachers construct their relationships with pupils constituting the primary school context. Some snapshots of these relationships and the ways in which pupils are portrayed by trainee teachers are used to illustrate the constructions of them made during placement.

5.3 CONSTRUCTION OF TEACHERS AS SUPPORTIVE PROFESSIONALS AND SOCIAL FRIENDS

Positive interactions with schoolteachers were experienced on the trainee teachers' first school day. Archie explained that the welcome he received was indicative of the warmth and friendliness among staff members.

> **…**as soon as I joined for my school placement, I was welcomed and (*I*) easily integrated with the staff. The teachers there are friendly, and we worked as a team…we never felt as being trainees … we also have quality time as staff members, we [referring to both teacher and trainees] brought our foodstuff and cooked lunch for the whole school staff. It was gratifying, and this helped us draw closer to each other…and when we needed help with our assignments and portfolio tasks, the teachers would provide support; they even give us tips for our teaching practice classes. (Archie, T)

Archie's placement experiences indicate that, in his case, a warm welcome and sociability eased the process of settling down and enabled trainees to easily integrate with the school community. This experience also indicates that unexpected and atypical educational activities,like cooking and sharing food among staff members, help to create a collegial space which encourages the successful integration of newcomers in the profession. Archie also saw teachers in his school as aides who willingly assist trainees in their academic aspirations and professional development.

[12] After each citation or extract, the source of the data is indicated as **T** for transect walks, and **I** for interviews

Kyle expressed similar feelings with regard to his first encounters with schoolteachers during placement. He described the first contact as welcoming and easy going.

> I remember that when I joined, on the first day the head mistress attached me to the standard-two teacher. That teacher was very sweet, she welcomed me in her class, I was not unwanted at all, although it was exams time. But it took me some time to befriend her though, but I did not experience any form of cold shoulders there although we trainees were made aware by the MIE that some teachers might not be happy to see us attached to their classes for observation. Indeed, she integrated me fast into her routines and even invited me to distribute the examination papers and help her with marking … I must say even the pupils played in the game, they made me feel very visible, would come to me for every insignificant matter. It was a nice feeling after all. (Kyle I)

Kyle constructs the class teacher acted as a social friend, who was spontaneously cordial, friendly and cooperative as he joined her class for observation. He felt like a co-teacher as the schoolteacher quickly allowed him into the routines of the class on that day and shared her teacher space with him. Kyle also hints at the ways in which such collegial support positively affects the professional development of trainee teachers. He also explains that while he had expected a cold shoulder or reservations about sharing the class with a newcomer, the class teacher enabled his visibility in class by involving him in her class routine.

Furthermore, the warm atmosphere generated by the other schoolteachers' positive behaviour and attitudes towards trainees led the trainee teachers to review the assumptions generated at the MIE, namely, that schoolteachers might be less likely to cooperate and support trainees during placement. Kyle's reconstruction of schoolteachers as social friends and professional support through collegial ties were progressively internalised and contributed to the trainee teachers' adjustment to daily classroom routines and practices.

However, the warmth generated by the schoolteacher did not automatically allow Kyle to befriend her as a close acquaintance since, while the trainee teacher constructs his relationships with the schoolteacher as collegial, it still contained some formality and professional boundaries. Both Kyle and Archie construct schoolteachers as supportive becausethey assist trainee teachers in preparing for their certification and acknowledged them as future colleagues. Therefore,

developing bonds with trainee teachers is normalised as the latter are recognised as young professionals learning the craft and consequently, the supportoffered is voluntary.

The trainee teachers also stated that such support is not restricted to trainee teachers and schoolteachers who work in the same school. As seen in the extract below, Archie explains that the support provided by schoolteachers extended beyond the confines of the school where he was placed.

> We (trainee teachers) were close with the colleagues there…even in the other primary school (referring to a primary school located some 300 metres away where at some point the pupils and teachers were relocated when their school was under renovation). We still stay in touch with the colleagues there. We keep in touch because that school over there is a star school, they deal with another level of pupils. We make sure we know what they are doing, how they teach these kids, how they deal with maintaining performance and extracurricular activities. They are experienced and we draw from them. Together, we organised small essay writing and drawing competitions in that school. I personally keep in touch and constantly contact them sometimes through Facebook, or whenever we meet for lunch. We come here during recess and meet up in small groups of two, three teachers and we talk. (Archie, T)

As a trainee teacher, he witnessed a unique situation where the pupils and teaching staff were physically displaced due to the renovation of his school and this allowed him to develop further collegial bonds and enjoy the support of the teachers. He constructs this relationship as outgoing as well as useful because the teachers there worked with primary school learnerswho are high academic achievers. Archie views bonding with the teachers as advantageous because it helped him to further his professional pathways as he could better understand howto work with mixed ability learners. Archie therefore keeps in touch with these teachers using certain informal platforms such as Facebook or continues to meet them over lunch outside the school to sustain collegiality.

While the school is defined as the first space that generates collegial bonding and professional socialisation, Kyle explains that the informality surpasses the school boundaries when the school is recreated as an informal space where professional bonding and collegiality materialise.

> At the end of the year, one teacher was getting married and the whole staff members contributed to celebrate that event and the janitor cooked chicken curry and *puri*[13] in the school kitchen and everybody enjoyed the meal. Sometimes when the staff planned something they would wait for Wednesday, because the trainees would come on that day and this made us feel that we were part of the staff. We were never strangers here. The strong bonding also shows up when teachers must fight for a common issue and I witnessed the sit-in and saw how all the colleagues cooperated. (Kyle, T)

Kyle notes that diverse instances lead to the strengthening of collegial bonds and informal ties, be it a social activity like a party to celebrate a colleague's wedding or the solidarity which emanates from a need to fight for a common cause; hence, the sit-in. The display of such collegial bonds during placement allows trainee teachers like Kyle to construct their relationships with teachers as familial and cooperative.

5.3.2 Construction of teachers as untrustworthy and indifferent

However, the study also revealed that the collegial relationship among teachers does not prevail in all circumstances. Support is, for instance, non-existent in affairs directly linked to their professional interests. Kyle observed that the competitive spirit that prevailed in relation to the allocation of upper grade classes at the beginning of the year gave rise to mistrust andindifference among the teaching staff. This is because teachers can benefit from extra 'perks'such as fee payable private tuition when they teach these grades.

> Most of them (referring to teachers) compete to get grade five and six classes at the beginning of the year. This is because if they get upper classes, they would be able to gain extras with private tuition. (Kyle, T)

Private tuition is rampant in Mauritius, especially for pupils who are preparing for national examinations. Kyle is referring to provision of private tuition[14] for pupils who sit for the competitive national examinations at the end of the six-year primary school cycle in order to secure a place in a secondary school. This fee payable service is lucrative, and many teachers compete to teach upper classes for that reason. In Kyle's case, the construction of teacher support is eventually seen as ephemeral because it only pertains to certain situations. This explains why he was careful when

relating to colleagues as well as differentiating between them and (real) friends. To explain his posture, Kyle referred to an incident he witnessedduring placement.

> You know *miss* [while conversing with me], colleagues are always colleagues, not friends. You know miss, I figured this out when I started working [in a private company], but the same applies here. Once, a teacher whose class was next to mine had a violent dispute with a parent. In fact, the parent in question was extremely rude and vulgar. I could not do anything; I was not even aware what to do. I thought the other colleagues will offer support at that moment, no one came out to help her and she was in tears, I felt very bad for her on that day. I could see she needed help but her close friends who were always with her did not intervene, very sad. Afterwards she asked for a transfer and she left for another school. This incident has marked me, I know I can never trust anyone… (Kyle, T)

The violent altercation that occurred in Kyle's presence causes him to deduce that certain situations do not automatically generate support and solidarity. Kyle realised that the concept of the teacher as a social friend is restricted to socialising and appears to be irrelevant in times of distress. In his case, teachers are depicted as untrustworthy when they disengage from colleagues experiencing difficulties at work. Kyle's construction of the teacher-teacher relationship foregrounds indifference and mistrust as cohabiting with collegiality and support. Instances described in the extract which follows substantiate his view.

> …at times I keep my distance to even colleagues who are very close to me, it happened to me that I experienced situations when my close colleague was untrustworthy. He informed the employer that I was going for an interview and the next day, the boss called me at his office to ask me what I have decided about the job. I was shocked, I never thought he would gossip. Then, there was that teacher who was being mocked every day because he had an issue with a pupil, they (teachers) would scoff and laugh behind his back, although they would be cordial with him… (Kyle, I)

In the above extract, gossip and the lack of support for colleagues in moments of need indicatethat friendliness and collegiality are suspended when it comes to handling one's own professional matters.

[13] An Indian flour-based bread which is usually deep fried, and which is served with a variety of vegetables andcurry. Indo-Mauritians usually serve *puris* on special occasions like weddings and religious functions.

[14] Teachers of primary teaching upper grades usually provide tuition privately after school as additional income.

In comparing the collegial relationship in his previous work experience with the current teaching context, Kyle's construction of mistrust is reinforced. He concludes that colleagues cannot be friends when it comes to work related matters and they cannot be trusted. His construct illustrates that professional/collegial relationships fluctuate from beingwarm and friendly to being cold and impersonal depending on the circumstances.

In contrast to Archie's and Kyle's placement experiences, Bella felt intimidated by the teaching staff's attitudes towards trainee teachers in the primary school where she was placed. In the extract below, she explains that trainee teachers were often perceived as outsiders and intruders. Her recollection of the of lack of collegiality during her first few months in the school contrasted with her immersion in another primary school prior to placement.

> …in the other school, we were put at the centre, on the very first day itself. We got a proper introduction; the headmaster told the pupils we were 'TEACHERS'. We had a tour as if we were guests of honour. We felt at home and when pupils see us on the playground, they would greet us as if we were new teachers and would also make us visit the place. The same thing happens when we were sent for the CPE remedial project. We were again put at the centre and pupils were asked to remember our names as Miss Bella, etc. (Bella I)

Bella's construction of teachers is closely linked to the way she experiences collegial bonds as a trainee teacher. Given her exposure to a warm and friendly atmosphere in a previous primary school, she was able to compare that experience with the ways trainee teachers were made invisible and how the lack of a proper introduction reinforced the indifference felt by trainee teachers.

> Over here, it is not really that, we were not introduced, we had to go towards the teachers on our own. When some teachers saw us, we were different from them, we were trainees who only come once a week. (Bella, T)

Although teachers are not directly referred to in this extract, Bella extrapolates from this incident to explain how the presence/absence of formal acknowledgement changes the ways in which teachers relate to newcomers. Bella's anecdotes on both schools hint that formal

presentation helps to establish relationships with both the personnel and the pupils. However, in the second school where she was placed for a longer period, she clearly explained that she was not visible as a trainee teacher. Consequently, she was not acknowledged as being part of the teaching team but rather considered as an outsider who came once a week. The frequency of her presence at school, namely being on placement once a week, as well as the lack of a proper formal introduction worked against her during the initial placement period.

> Once the headmaster has told us to do him a favour to go and pass on a memo in each class, I was not very keen on doing it in the beginning because I was thinking, I don't know anyone, and then, when we were going from class to class, the teachers thought we were attendants (janitors) who have come to pass on the memo. We even received a frown. Indeed, at the beginning it was not easy at all… (Bella, T)

The lack of bonding that Bella experienced is apparent in the above extract. A lack of knowledge of who the trainee teachers were led to assumptions that she was a janitor, making Bella feel belittled. In her case, it shows that teachers set clear boundaries while interacting with non-teaching staff, which in turn reveals that the professional relationships in that school are defined according to a hierarchy. The frown directed at Bella may be indicative that she was indeed disturbing the teacher. The lack of a proper introduction caused Bella to construct relationships with teachers in her school as cold and unwelcoming, and as segregating newcomers, causing estrangement. The data also hints at the headmaster's failure to create a collegial atmosphere for newcomers in the school. In other words, trainee teachers may be considered as outsiders and strangers who are at school but do not constitute the normal staff.

5.3.3 Wrapping up trainee teachers' construction of relationships with teachers

This section illustrates that the trainees' construction of the relationship with teachers during placement are based on their preconceptions about their first encounters with teachers in a professional relationship. Some of them were able to debunk their expectations and experiences of this relationship as they were immersed in school placement and developed collegial and friendly relations with the teachers. It was also shown that these relationships are not constantly positive or negative but fluctuate as the situation, context and setting change. For instance, Kyle constructs that friendliness and socialising emerge from time to time but do not automatically guarantee trust and complete support among teachers. He also realizes that although the warmth was felt at first sight, collegial relationships end when it comes to professional affairs like coping with unruly parents.

Based on his experiences and observations, Kyle noted that, like in other professional contexts, the school creates the space for variations in relationships with teachers. Bella's placement experiences contrasts with Archie's and Kyle's who offer a powerful construct of collegiality as the primary school context is explored. In Bella's case the insider-outsider relationships were strongly felt on first contact, while she referred to her initial trainee teacher experience in terms of making her visible although she was not a full-fledged teacher. In the current school, however, she constructed cold relationships that arise when the trainee teacher or newcomer is not formally introduced to the staff. Kyle and Archie have contrasting experiences and explain that acknowledging them as trainees also meant recognising them.

Thus, the trainee teachers' experiences enable them to construct teachers as either supportive and collegial, or as indifferent and untrustworthy, depending on the nature of the interactions that arise as they forge relationships with the schoolteachers in the school. While bonding tends to occur in some settings, a lack of sharing and support is apparent where one deals with parents or competes for a better class.

5.4 TRAINEE TEACHERS' CONSTRUCTION OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH PUPILS

Primary school pupils constitute another key/significant group of people with whom trainee teachers forge a relationship. This section focuses on the ways constructions of pupils as part of school context are drawn from the pupils' personal backgrounds, neighbourhoods and SES. As such, assumptions, speculation, and comparisons are used by trainee teachers to construct pupils as part of the school context. Some snapshots of the trainee teachers' observations and experiences with pupils during placement are used to showcase those constructions.

5.4.1 Constructing pupils as needing mending and fixing.

Tabitha, who was immersed in a school located in a poor socio-economic zone, narrates herfirst encounter with pupils as disconcerting, leading her to construct pupils as lacking.

> My first placement happened in a school which was not officially a ZEP school, but I must say it was equal to ZEP. These kids come from those *hot*[15] areas, where parents were separated. Some children would come to school without lunch or something to eat, I was shocked to see that facet of school. When I was a pupil, it was never that way. It is 26 years now, but I still remember how different it was. My classmates and I had our well-prepared lunch, we had our stationary, we were taken care of as kids for school day, we had all the requisites. Here (referring to the school), they come and there is no pencil, no copybook, no food, the uniform is dirty, one button is missing here and there… Even the parents look dirty, not well groomed. They look like vagabonds and they use foul language. It was terrible to witness this. (Tabitha, I)

Tabitha compares her own learning experiences and uses her home background as a yardstickto construct pupils in the school where she was placed. She states that material deprivation, irresponsible parents and unsafe neighbourhoods trigger instability in the school climate which she equates to a ZEP context. Moreover, the contrast between her own learning experiences in primary school and that of the pupils in the first school where she was placedmakes her assume that lacking food, school materials and hygiene signify parental disengagement and lack of interest in their children's schooling. Tabitha deduces that those children hail from 'hot' areas because of the problematic and materially deprived conditions they project at school. Her assumption that the pupils lacked learning readiness and credentials makes her construct them as needing fixing. By stating that the school can be considered as a ZEP school, she displays her assumption that the pupils define the school as their home realities translate to and determine the school climate.

[15] A colloquial term used to refer to high risk, unsafe and poverty-stricken neighbourhoods with high rates of crime, unemployment, domestic violence and illegal activities. The local police also use this term to refer to these areas.

> Well in the first school, for instance, I was concerned by the lack of tidiness, kids having no pencils and lack of proper management of personal belongings, if you give them a pencil, they can't keep it. They are always daydreaming, they always looked worried. I often saw them pensive and as soon as the bell ring, they would leave they personal belongings behind when they leave school. (Tabitha, I)

While Tabitha also expresses concern about the learners' neglected appearance, this extract reveals that her constructs are based on the assumption that children with problems at home are not able to handle themselves. Consequently, she decided to develop life skills, which she observed to be lacking among those pupils.

> Well, I decided to bring in some human values and life skills besides the academic stuff. I teach them how to keep themselves clean, very simple things which will help them to assimilate, like how to keep their nails clean… I insisted that all of them keep a napkin in front of them when they eat, and I insisted all the time. That was not academic, it was not meant to be done but I felt the necessity to do it with them at that time, although I was placed for only one month in that school. It was important for me to do it, becauseI do the same when I eat, since I was a kid… sometimes kids are like that when they eat they just happen to put their bread on their desk, their hands get dirty, they don't have anything to wipe them. So, I decided to insist on that and I do it as well to set the example. I treated them like I was helping my own kids. … (Tabitha I)

Her caring approach demonstrates that trainee teachers may need to adopt a helpful attitude towards their pupils when the need arises. Tabitha's actions also suggest that she believes she is able to fix what she feels is missing in terms of life skills among the pupils in the schools where she was placed. However, Tabitha's notion of learners in ZEP schools as lacking is indicative of the pejorative gaze on pupils from deprived areas or pupils whose realities do not match the trainee teacher's own home background and daily reality. Care is deployed not because it emerges naturally as Tabitha's pedagogical disposition at that time, but because she feels the need to address or fix something that she suspects is lacking. For instance, she emphasised that basic routines like proper hygiene, self-care or life skills are things she wouldconsider for her own

children because she uses memories of her own upbringing as a yardstick to assert that these precede academic considerations. Such an observation also signalsTabitha's construction of her leaners as lacking and consequently facing hindrances in their academic learning experiences.

5.4.2 The construction of pupils as pathological and negligent

Kyle and Kiara make similar observations. Both construct pupils in the school where they were placed as negligent and careless. They also assume that such behaviour is due to the children's low socio-economic status. Both trainees referred to the fact that children regularly leave their personal belongings behind in the rush to leave school. In explaining the reason for such behaviour, Kiara assumes that the pupils face personal problems.

> This is something normal miss (referring to school jackets still hanging on the knob), very common actually, especially when the holidays are nearing. We do collect some many [jackets] every day. They just leave it and go, and no one comes to ask for them. Parents never ask. Come with me, I will show you that box near the kitchen, there are many more jackets of the kids stored there. These are never collected, no one would come to ask for it, it has been like this in this school for years now. (Kyle T)
>
> …This book is left here on the table, it is something I have observed in this school, the pupils are negligent, as if they don't care, it seems someone has left his French textbook before heading for his holidays [Kiara laughs looking at the book]. Those kids they have problems, they are often daydreaming, their minds are somewhere else, so I am not all shocked to see them leaving things behind. They always do, and no one will come to school to claim it. (Kiara, T)

Both trainees refer to the learners' sloppiness while handling their personal belongings to confirm their constructions as well as the lack of follow up by parents who do not claim the lost items. For them, such behaviour is indicative of the pupils' difficult home backgrounds and lack of parental guidance. Kyle and Kiara referred to this as 'habitual' among children in their school, and seem to be complacent because the pupils' behaviour with regard to handling personal belongings matches the trainee teachers' expectations of them. Kiara extends her construction by assuming that such behaviour may be a consequence of the pupils' difficult daily realities, giving rise to pensive behaviour and negligence.

5.4.3 The construction of pupils as recalcitrant

The views shared by Kyle and Kiara based on their experiences and observation of pupils in their school are similar to Tasha's personal experiences with her pupils. However, Tasha's construction of pupils as undisciplined and unruly is based on her interaction with them. The extract illustrates how Tasha refers to pupils' home background as the cause of such behaviour.

> I think everything starts with the child's background. When I get to know of those pupils' background I understood what was going on. Some hail from those areas where they are well versed with drugs, the parents of some of them here are drug addicts or are jailed because of drug trafficking. I can perfectly understand why sometimes they behave in a peculiar manner, why they have a hot temperament, they have a difficult time at home… (Tasha I)

Tasha's construction of the pupils' misbehaviour at school betrays her belief that the home background defines the pupils' behaviour. According to her, unstable home backgrounds and criminogenic neighbourhoods directly influence their behaviour patterns and interactions in school. Tasha thus constructs the pupils' poor academic life based on the assumption that their childhood must be difficult and problematic. Such a construction also highlights the fact that trainee teachers like Tasha expect that pupils from difficult home backgrounds will be ill-disciplined and misbehave.

> Yeah sometimes I feel that way, like you have been put in a zoo with tigers, and you are asked to fight and escape yourself. Try to be wise, how will you tame those tigers? This is how I felt. (Charisma: so, the tigers were pupils?). Yeah, kind of, because sometimes I, as I told you earlier, pupils nowadays are not pupils that there were long ago. On, I do not know they are really, other, it is another kind of panic with them. But it is not, it is not easy sometimes… (Tasha, I)

By casting a pathological gaze on the pupils, Tasha again constructs the learners in her schoolas children who need help, and she thus conceives her future role as someone who must intervene to 'tame' and fix pupils. She compares her own experiences as a learner to differentiate herself from them. Moreover, she highlights that these pupils need special treatment and sets them apart from the rest of the learners. Tasha's construction of pupils inthis situation is a deficit view of learners from criminogenic neighborhoods and unstable families. As seen in Tabitha's case,

this might eventually trickle down to labelling the whole school as low achieving or underperforming. Instead of questioning her own assumptions, sheuses a gaze to construct pupils as *dysfunctional* and unable to *achieve academically* because they are on social welfare (or the social security register), are visited by psychologists, and their parents are drug addicts with criminal records.

It can be observed that, for the trainee teachers, fixing these types of pupils is normalised. Byusing the phrase 'tame those tigers' Tasha also shows that she constructs her pupils as beingin need of discipline because she does not recognise them as normal learners (who hail froma similar background to hers) to whom she can relate. Tasha also explains that unmanageablechildren need to be tamed. As a trainee teacher, reference to her preconceived idea of learners sharing similar values regarding academic achievement as hers is deconstructed. This explains why she is uncomfortable with the pupils she works with.

Kiara provides a similar construction of pupils but hers is contingent on her neighbour's understanding of children in the school where she was about to be placed.

> I asked a neighbour (referring to a pupil who was attending the school) if it was a good school, if the children were good kids. But she replied that the kids there were bad, bad, bad, bad. This started to give me an idea, a hint. And it is true that there are many kids who are, how to say, a little disturbed in the school, given that they come from the *cite*s and those neighborhoods where there are a lot of bad influences, and this is reflected in their school life. Apart from that, everything went well. (Kiara, T)

Thus, construction of pupils does not only stem from teachers, but also from third parties who attend the same school. The information given to Kiara shapes the constructions she eventually makes about ill-discipline and misbehavior. Like the other trainee teachers in this study, she uses the pupils' personal background as a yardstick to explain their behaviour. Kylereveals the same kind of reflection as he constructs learners in his school.

When that school was closed in that *cité*, I think you must be aware of the profile of those pupils there. They come from poor families, parents do not have time for their kids, neglect them, there are kids who become alcoholics at a very young age, some smoke. There were the standard six kids who brought cigarettes and alcohol, they would drink over there (pointing to a remote corner inside the school compound). One of them even brought pornographic films and showed his friends using his mobile phone. These types of pupils have led to the deterioration of this school… I can hardly say if it is a school. Teachers do not get any contact with parents over there, no, no, no, the pupils don't have manners, they have no respect for teachers but over here the teacher know how to tame them. But let me tell you, the school has deteriorated because of them, I was in that school in the late 1990s, and there is a world of difference then and now, the pupils have damaged that school, yeah pupils from that school, they did it. Yeah, the parents too… (Kyle, T)

Kyle's construction of pupils as delinquents is also based on both knowledge of their neighbourhood as well as his own experiences of being a learner in the same school, more than a decade earlier. Once again, the criminogenic nature of the pupils' neighbourhood is used as an identity marker of people who encourage delinquency. The presence of these learners is also perceived as having a negative impact on the school climate and pupils' academic disposition. In this respect, Kyle constructs the school context as a site which is a snapshot of the deviant or criminal way of life prevailing in the pupil's home and neighbourhood. He also refers to these children's vulnerability to substance abuse and crime.For Kyle, the spot appropriated by a specific group of pupils signals the creation of a deviant group with a subculture which is worsening the school's image. Kyle presumes that the changein the school's composition, through the inclusion of pupils from other catchment areas, has led to its deterioration. While the trainees tend to refer to children as learners, they also labelthem unruly due to their difficult home background. Kyle also highlights that these children should be tamed.

…boys are turbulent, very much, I don't think it would have been for, well as compared to a female teacher, since I am a male teacher I could control them, but still it was not easy for me as well, I had to shout a lot, I even use the stick, even we should not use it. You know, they don't listen at all, they just won't, when you talk with them nicely, they think you are too soft. If youjust shout and don't give them that small thrashing, well, sadly, we had to doit just to make them respect the teacher. Else they won't be scared at all. (Kyle, T)

In the above extract, Kyle pinpoints the need to discipline pupils, given their background. He also points out that a female teacher would not be able to manage these pupils and, thus, dismisses the idea that a female teacher can be a figure of authority and control and deal effectively with so-called difficult classes. Discipline matters more in that case and when possible, sanctions are acceptable. In doing so, Kyle is constructing the teacher-pupil relationship as authoritarian. In this extract, Kyle constructs a (masculine) military approach to control rowdy pupils as, according to him, a more (feminine) nurturing approach will automatically be read as weakness. For Kyle, it is important for the teacher to be in control in these situations. In doing so, he is constructing the teacher in charge of an unruly class as someone who has a grip on the class and is forceful in his undertakings. The following incident highlights Kyle's construction of pupils as inconsiderate towards their teachers and ill-disciplined.

> … Once I replaced in his class and I borrowed a test paper from another class teacher…so I told the pupils that we will continue the next day and I kept the book in the drawer in the teacher's desk. There was no key for that drawer. When I came back the next day, the book had disappeared. Miss, I was panicked, I borrowed that book and the teacher gave it to me with so much trust, what do I do? I took so much pain to do something for those kids, you know as a trainee … I did that with all my heart and see, they hid that book. I was angry at that moment and I was told by pupils in the class that it was that pupil with a cardiac problem who hid that book… I wanted to yell at him, but I asked him to get that book several times and he finally went out, got the book and gave it back to me. I did not do anything to him. I resumed my class after that, but it was a bad experience for me. [Kyle, T]

This extract foregrounds the ways in which trainee teachers construct and interpret the behaviour of pupils based on classroom interactions with them. It showcases Kyle's construction of a pupil as ill-disciplined due to his failure to reciprocate the effort deployed inhis favour. The repeater class and the learner's resistance to study leads to a construction of unruly pupils as inconsiderate and failing to appreciate the academic support provided by theteacher. Lack of consideration for the teacher is regarded as a lack of respect and failure to cooperate. Although Kyle's anger may be justified, he fails to read the action of the pupil as unwillingness to study. Kyle's intervention demonstrates his readiness to change this and, when encountering a first

obstacle, his focus in on the act instead of the cause of that act. This indicates that trainee teachers like Kyle do not use the learnings from formal professional development at the MIE to solve behaviour issues in the classroom during placement. Instead,Kyle is pragmatic. He does what he feels is appropriate to support his learners. He draws on his knowledge of the pupils as difficult and unruly to guide his conduct towards them and thus maintains an authoritative approach in his dealings. His account of a second critical incident in the same class supports this view.

> … I was replacing the repeater class and there was that kid from SOS village, well miss, I don't think a female teacher would have been able to deal with him. I told him to stay quiet but to no avail. He was playing with a pencil, a pen, he had removed the port and was flinging this to his classmates. I told him, hey you don't do that, stop it, but he continued. And then while he was persisting, he tossed that pen which fell on me. Miss, I had a ruler in my hand at that moment, and I did not think. I thrashed him so much that he cried and fell asleep after that. When he woke up, he told me he will bring his mom and I told him to bring his mom, dad, police or whatever. Miss, this is unacceptable, how come a pupil pays so much disrespect to a teacher, there is no manners at all. You will not agree with me but for me it was intolerable and believe me even after that his behavior has not changed at all. He continued with such silly things in class and he never brought his parents to meet me as well. (Kyle T)

Kyle speaks of a pupil who lives in a residence for children with a history of abuse and neglect commonly known as the SOS village. The reference to *SOS* already signals a pejorative gaze on the child which may in turn explain the treatment inflicted on the pupil following the incident. Kyle's story is another example of how trainee teachers respond with corporal punishment because they believe these pupils need to be fixed given that they are non- compliant and overtly disobedient in class. It also signals constructions of classroom interactions between teacher and pupils that lead to physical and emotional violence and intimidation. The adult teacher's authority is overtly contested, and the confrontation ends with the pupil being thrashed to restore Kyle's authority as the trainee teacher in charge of the class. He expects pupils to respect him as the teacher and comply with his orders, not defyhis authority. This incident showcases instances where the power relationship between the trainee teacher and

the pupil is put to test by the latter and how corporal punishment is constructed by the trainee as a means of restoring that power although it also signals a lack of control of the situation.

5.4.4 The construction of pupils as *learners*

As we move to the construction of pupils as learners in the classroom, it is noted that the trainee teachers use their observations as well as teaching experiences to construct the waysin which pupils learn, and how teachers manage their classes as well as classroom dynamics. While the learning process is not overtly discussed, trainees take note of teachers' stances towards pupils in class; hence the term pupil as learners being in italics. For instance, Boaz constructs pedagogical choices informed by teaching practice and his own interaction with a large class.

> …If I have twenty-four pupils in my class, I cannot upset twenty-two just because the remaining two are underperforming. Well, let us take it that way, let's say one day a terrorist in a plane with two hundred people is planning to crash on a town of fifty thousand people. Well, I guess the government will have to take the bold decision of sacrificing the two hundred in the plane and save the lives of the fifty thousand in the town. Well, I use this principle in my class, not to say that I neglect some, but I must make sure the whole class benefits. (Boaz, I)

Boaz constructs his teaching experience with a class of pupils as a collective body. In explainingthat the majority cannot be sacrificed for a few underperforming students, Boaz uses the metaphor of a terrorist to explain a teacher-centred pedagogy of the learning experiences within the classroom. In doing so, he is also constructing the experience of teaching large groups and how in the process he makes choices although he is conscious that he has to caterfor all the pupils.

> But when there is a group work, I do cluster them, but it is cumbersome, and there is tracking here, how you manage classes, how you execute the lesson, and I have to make sure I complete what I had planned for the day… as if I was managing class the whole day, I know that there is something missing, but I was concerned with the authority (administration). This is disturbing me, we did a two-year training and somewhat could not put this in practice… (Boaz, I)

Boaz's teaching experiences led him to construct teaching as the ability to reach out to each learner but it also signals that he is at the same time focused on his teaching competencies that implies inability to manage big classes and keep up with the daily timetable. He also acknowledges that his decisions clash with what he has learned regarding inclusive and learner-centred pedagogy. This clearly demonstrates that, Boaz's pedagogical choices reveal the gap between the theory learned at the MIE and its implementation during placement.

> I know that I am not doing what I should be but I also know why I am doing what I am doing now (referring to the way he is teaching). While I was on trial teaching, I tried to put everything in practice, and I realised after some time that I had to postpone everything, I started doing some orals, and I was aware that I was shouting too much with the kids. It was simple stuffs, and I could see that it impacted on the kids, and it impacted negatively on my teaching. I went home a little disappointed after that. (Boaz I)

The schism between theory and practice leads to dissatisfaction and annoyance. Interaction with pupils in the classroom is therefore also constructed as a space where the trainee teacherbecomes aware of his limitations in terms of executing lessons, as well as controlling and managing pupils. Kiara's constructions of the classroom dynamics go to another extreme given that she focuses on pupils who are difficult to manage and require more attention in a different form. She focuses on the rowdiness of pupils in her classes. The two pictures describe constructions of learners and certain pedagogical practices which were apparent in her school. In the first picture, she uses her umbrella to show me the seat of one of her learners with whom she had a difficult time during her placement. Her views areas follows:

Figure 5.1(a): On misbehaving pupil

This one (pinpointing at the seat where this pupil usually sits) troubled me a lot. He was always disturbing the class, I hadto shout at him all thetime. I will never forget this pupil. He made a strong impression on my placement experiences while I was in this class. (Kiara, T)

Like Boaz, Kiara uses shouting as a control mechanism. Difficult learners are constructed as those who require shouting at and who are a nuisance to the teacher. Their presence as disturbing the class makes an impression on the trainee teacher because they challenge his/her resilience to teach in such classroom contexts. In the second picture, Kiara introducesa new trigger, namely, the teacher's ruler, which she constructs as an instructional device as she assumes that the class teacher might be using it as pointer when using the board during lessons. However, Kiara's silence and evasion when referring to the presence of the ruler might also suggest that it is used to sanction pupils during lessons in this classroom.

Figure 5.2 (b): On '*an old instructional* device'

You know, I have no idea what this ruler is doing here. I guess the class teacher uses it from timeto time to point at the board, to make sure pupils can follow the class. But I do not usuallyuse it. It is just here on the teacher's table and itmust be serving some purpose as an old instructional device. (Kiara, T)

5.4.5 Wrapping up trainee teachers' construction of pupils

This section showed that trainee teachers draw on pupils' personal appearance and social geographies to construct them as ill-disciplined, recalcitrant and needing fixing, as they interact with trainee teachers in class. The trainee teachers make assumptions about and speculate on acceptable behaviour patterns based on their own memories as pupils. For instance, Kyle and Tabitha constantly cite themselves as examples as they construct pupils asbeing deficit or lacking a proper start for academic success. Reference is made to low socio- economic status to construct ill-discipline and pupils' misbehaviour. Both Tasha and Kyle blamed pupils' academic inadequacies on their home environment and family background. By doing so, they construct pupils from economically disadvantaged homes as incapable and potential failures. Finally, the trainee teachers construct classroom practices which depict their pedagogical choices. They also emphasise that managing learners in conflictual interactions requires drastic measures which include thrashing and shouting or avoidance tominimise the risk of violent confrontations. Finally, the constructions signal that mismanagement of classes and inability to control pupils do not indicate a lacuna in the trainee teachers' communication skills but are due to the theory/practice schism which prevails when they attempt to trial what they learn during professional training.

5.5 Synthesis of the chapter

This chapter depicted the ways in which trainee teachers construct the school context as relationships which are forged with both teachers and pupils during their immersion in professional practice. These relationships vary from collegial to friendly, supportive, professional, untrustworthy and indifferent. Relationships with pupils also depict the ways their social backgrounds define them as recalcitrant, pathological and lacking. Ill-discipline and lack of control are further dynamics that impact the construction of relationships with pupils.

The following chapter addresses the construction of the school context as relationships forged and experienced with people in the primary school's outer bounds. These constitute parents and people from the local community surrounding the primary school.

CHAPTER SIX
TRAINEE TEACHERS' CONSTRUCTION OF SCHOOL CONTEXT AS A WEB OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE OUTER BOUNDS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter described the trainee teachers' constructions of school context in termsof relationships forged with teachers and pupils during placement. It showed that trainee teachers draw on their interactions and exposure during placement to construct the relationships with teachers and pupils as constituting the primary school context. This chapter illustrates constructions of primary school context as a web of relationships beyond the confines of the school compound. The outer bounds as it is termed in this study consists of the local community and the environment surrounding the school. Trainee teachers extend their construction of the school context as a web of relationships based on their observation and interactions with people in the peripheral and outer boundaries of the school.

6.2 ORIENTATION

This chapter is divided into three main sections and focuses on the analysis of findings which showcase constructions of relationships with parents, and constructions of the police and health care officers as key stakeholders who contribute to school activities and routines. The third category of people who make up the school context are canteen vendors, street vendorsand shopkeepers who, while standing on the school periphery, influence its culture and climate. The different actors who are constructed by trainee teachers are illustrated in Figure 6.1 below.

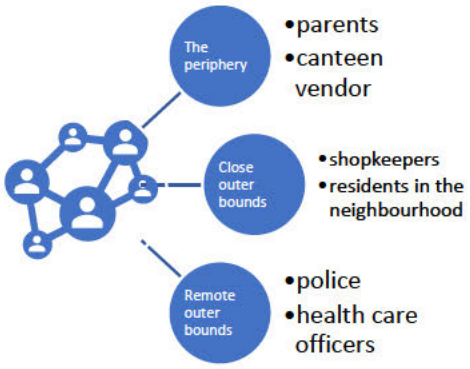

Figure 6.1: People in the outer boundaries of the primary school context

6.3 THE CONSTRUCTION OF SCHOOL CONTEXT IN TERMS OF RAPPORT WITH PARENTS

Trainee teachers construct parents' interactions with teachers, other parents and school administrators as comprising the primary school context. The data derived from the transect walks and interviews revealed that the parents' strong presence inside the school enables them to exert considerable control over teachers' work, which is a potential source ofdisturbance and an intrusion into the academic life of the school. The trainee teachers construct parents as surveillants and pressure groups who stand at the periphery between theschool's inner and outer bounds. They are often constructed as a privileged group with vestedinterest in the affairs of the school.

6.3.1 The construction of parents as watchers

The first set of data reveals parents as constantly scrutinising the teachers' movement. The temporal element in the extracts which follow are important indicators of what is constructed about teachers and their practice. For instance, Bella explains that the drop off and pickup times are optimised by parents to obtain information on teachers and interpret teachers' behaviours based on what they observe from afar. Moreover, the ease of the parents' movement inside the school results in the construction of parents as nosy and deploying solidarity among themselves when assessing teachers' relationships with and behaviourtowards pupils.

> Parents are always nosy; they are constantly on our back and even have inside information on teachers. They see all our moves; because for a long time, the back gate giving way to the stadium was left open and they would come and sit nearby and observe us. This usually happened sometime in the afternoon, five to ten minutes before the bell rang. At that time, teachers usually make the kids line up to leave the class in order as the bell rings. This gives us the opportunity to speak to each other while we make the kids wait for the bell. Well, the parents waiting over there could see teachers chatting and they interpret this wrongly, saying, Teachers X and Y gossip, they talk too much, they are carefree, they are not serious. (Bella, T)

Bella constructs parents as spies who are constantly scanning teachers' movement because of their overwhelming presence inside the school. Her account creates the impression that teachers in this school face constant pressure to exhibit their best appearance, behaviour and

attitudes towards learners. Parents in this school have strong opinions informed by their own views on how teachers ought to act. Parents are also constructed as intervening on behalf of their children and other parents when they consider that teachers are mismanaging pupils. Inthe extract below, Bella explains parents' biased judgement of teachers' actions.

> If a teacher shouts or scolds a pupil for misbehaviour, any parent witnessing that incident may report to the child's parent without trying to find out why the incident happened. In that way, teachers here (referring to the school where she is placed) are always careful. (Bella, T)

Bella's observation enables her to construct parents as spying on teachers in whose hands they leave their children. Her portrayal of parents suggests that the latter intrude and hold strong opinions about what teachers ought to do when pupils are in their care. Parents position themselves as informants and control what teachers ought to do while carrying out their professional duties. Parents are also constructed as colonisers of specific school spacesgiven that they are usually spotted in strategic places and are spying on teachers. In schools where there is pressure to achieve high levels of academic achievement, parents query, monitor and control teachers' work and classroom performance. Their constant nit-picking is further described by Bella whose position as a bystander in one of those spaces enables her to make such constructions of parents.

> Now that the back gate is closed to the public, parents stay over here (referring to the front gate); they cannot trespass the entrance of the second gate[16]. We heard many things outside over there, near the gate. In the beginning, they were not aware that we were teachers; they thought that we were parents, people who came in and out of the school. This is because we were new to the school. We would stand right there with parents during the assembly, especially when we were late, in that space between the first and second gate. … There are conversations about teachers, what they do in class, how they teach, if they are on time with the syllabus. They criticise teachers even if their kids are not working with the latter, there is considerable gossiping, they are most of the time overwhelming to teachers and are very child centric. (Bella T)

Bella's observation is indicative of how parents relate to primary school teachers. To start with, they share information on teachers through direct observation, witnessing and gossiping at specific times of the day when they meet. This suggests that, in her case, parents have their own mechanisms to gather information despite efforts to limit their mobility inside the school. Indeed, the boundary limiting access is redefined by parents as an information gathering space among themselves. Bella witnesses the way parents work together to feed one another information on what happens in the classroom. Waiting within the parents' boundaries enables Bella to witness their expectations of teachers' behaviour towards their wards and she constructs them as opinionated.

Consequently, Bella gains insight on the way parents conceive and interpret how teachers ought to teach, perform in class, and deal with their learners. She uses the term 'overwhelming' to suggest that parents' relationship with teachers is based on scrutiny and monitoring of their ability to promote academic success. This indicates that parents have expectations and assumptions about teachers as professionals. As shown in the above extract, parents' interference in teachers' professional affairs whenever they have the opportunity to do so, makes Bella assume that providing information about teachers and having an opinion on what the teachers ought to be doing during school hours is habitual among parents.

> Over there, they talked among themselves, they usually say, 'this teacher, that teacher has already reached at that stage, the other one is not doing anything.' But this was not the case at all … this is their mentality. But that teacher works well but works differently. For them, all the teachers must work in the same way. No one has the right to do things differently, and then they usually come … to the headmaster to say, 'This teacher is not good, I want to change my son to the other stream, because he studies hard. Now he does not want to come to school,' things like that… (Bella, T)

[16] In Bella's school, there are two gates. The main gate gives access to a small corridor leading to a second gate, which allows access to the school compound. Visitors cannot enter the second gate without permission and while dropping off their wards, parents and responsible parties' access is restricted within the confines of the first gate and the corridor.

Although there is no indication of where parents get their information, Bella's experiences suggest that parents in this school monitor their children's work and compare teachers' teaching practices across streams. Her construction of parents as surveillants not only signalstheir ability to circulate and share updated news, events and incidents about teachers insidethe school but also describes them as imposing strong exigencies on teachers. These instancescause Bella to construct teachers working in her school as cautious and conscious since they are constantly under strong parental gaze. Bella also constructs physical spaces or boundaries which parents sometimes appropriate or trespass to stay informed about the affairs of the school. Physical spaces like entry points to the school and open spaces often act as meeting points for parents, thereby opening opportunities for them to share information and generate feedback on what is going on in the school.

Kiara, who was often mistaken for a parent since she used to stand in those parents' zones, shares a similar story.

> Once, I was waiting at the gate, the parents were also there, and together with the other trainee, we were mistaken as one of them (parents). I was pregnant at that time, so they could not figure out that I was a trainee teacher. Over there I could hear them speak about teachers, their own concerns about performance and all. I did not expect how they feel about us. Parents have high demands and they exaggerate as well. (Kiara I)

This experience allowed Kiara to construct that parents' high demands and expectations shape teachers' practice and rapport with pupils in class. She learns about the parents' misconceptions and misinterpretations of the classroom pedagogy used by some teachers. Their gaze as trainee teachers allows them to construct parents as disruptors and intruders as well as monitors of teachers' work and behaviour. In Bella's case, parents may act as strongpressure groups and invade the teachers' workspace. This also hints of power relations whichare not regarded as problematic by the administration. The fact that parents can go directly to class to meet the teachers adds considerable pressure and creates tension for the teacher,leading to interruptions in the classroom.

> Err, parents (laugh) parents are cases, they become a little bit not manageable at times. … They quarrel for nothing. Like, if you say something to the child, 'do not do that', the next day you see the parents who come, who say, 'you have said this to my son, you have said that to my daughter.' (Bella, T)

Bella creates an impression of the exigencies of parents through their conversations, attitudes, and behaviour while they interact with teachers and other parents. In this sense, the parents are always present, monitor teachers' work and are continuously gossiping aboutthem. Parents are constructed as prying, quarrelsome, disturbing the work of teachers and misjudging their teaching capabilities. Sometimes, there is direct confrontation with the teacher triggered by opinions formed on the quality of teaching while gathering news and information on what is going on in specific classes. Another mechanism involves memos sent to the teacher as reminders. As noted in Tabitha's account below, parents closely monitortheir children's informal and routine activities in the school.

> …However, the parents monitor their kids very much here. They are very much making follow up. But many are not, as if, from low-income families, somehow middle class. So, everyone dresses up and come to look at the stuff. Even if you have not arranged a pupil's bag, they come to tell you, 'my pupil has not received that; my child has not got this in his bag. He has left that at school, you need to' ... they send memos, etc., long memos which tell you to look after the bags. As if they tell you all the things that comes to their mind. They really keep track… (Tabitha, T)

Tabitha observes that parents also chose to confront teachers in a subtler manner while indicating that their presence in her school is overwhelming. They are too committed to their children's academic success and tend to be over caring. Memos become another medium of communication which illustrate parents' constant presence.

6.3.2 The construction of parents as violent

The trainee teachers note that some parents quarrel with the teacher and even petition against them when they deem it necessary. Boaz constructs parents resorting to aggressive means to resolve conflicts with teachers as contributing to teachers' despair in his school. Thefollowing extract describes an incident where a pupil was the source of the tension betweenparents and teachers.

> And one day, a parent came at school and was looking for that teacher to beat up a newly appointed teacher [the teacher in question was overzealous in class]. That was because that teacher has shouted too much at the child; he was saying his child got beaten up. Fortunately, the other colleagues had discreetly called that teacher and told him to hold on for some time and not to come to school immediately. They tried to calm the parent, make him understand. When the parent was gone, they called him to come over to work. But while the teacher was at school, other parents started to make a fuss. That was not motivating at all. Well sometimes, teachers are in a situation of despair, but it depends on the context, it depends on the class with whom you get to work, on the situation… (Boaz T)

Boaz witnesses far more brutal parental intervention than Bella. This incident not only causeshim to construct parents as violent and disturbing the teacher's work but also demonstrates a lack of consideration and misinterpretation of the teacher's effort. In this case, the altercation caused by one teacher affects the whole teaching staff. Moreover, as per Boaz's anecdote, it can be deduced that while he regards the teacher's approach as strict and enthusiastic, he downplays the fact that the ill-disciplined pupil was brutalised in the process. He constructs teacher-parent relationships as leading to teacher despair in such situations, which eventually affects the mood, motivation, and willingness of the teacher concerned to continue to work normally. Teachers' and parents' expectations regarding what is best for pupils often differ, leading to considerable misunderstanding and conflict.

> Well parents, they are not bad, but at times, they are aggressive. Once, they came to school and wanted to beat up a teacher, because that teacher has beaten up their child. They were very aggressive, they would never turn up when it has to do with academic progress of their children, but when the child makes a small complaint against the teacher, they come right away for a fight. They stand in front of the school gate ready to fight, they started shouting they were like a mob and we were scared... Well, after that the teacher chooses not to do anything, they (teachers in the school) are scared,they don't shout, do not try to say anything to correct the child's behaviour.The parent will not understand that the teacher is trying to help the child. (Tasha, I)

Tasha constructs parents as violent due to frequent incidents of parental aggression towards teachers and their eagerness to start a fight at school. Such violence impacts on pedagogy given that the teacher would rather play a low profile and find ways to avoid a confrontation.Tasha explains that in her school, teachers do not retaliate but their fear of violent confrontations compels them not to be forceful with their pupils. Her construction of parentsas violent is also equated with the fact that most of them come from low socio-economic backgrounds. She highlights structural issues outside people's control, like poverty, as the root cause of such rowdy behaviour.

> Well, with parents, the relation is very formal, but I regret to say, parents are sometimes illiterate, yeah, they must be illiterate to behave that way, miss. Parents tend to side with their kids, they never blame their children…If the pupil goes home and said that he was beaten up, the parent will come to school and make a fuss, without wanting to know the reason behind. But I must say, most of them understand but some are hot heads, they are unstable. Once, a parent [barged into class to fight] but her kid was really at fault, a problem case in class, he was scolded by the teacher. He started crying and he went and told his mom he was beaten up by the teacher. That teacher was insulted so much that she started crying and she could not bear that insult, and keep working with that class. She asked for a transfer and went away. (Kyle T)

In the above extract, Kyle highlights not only the despair experienced by the teacher but alsoconstructs the parent in the same way pupils are constructed by teachers. He uses his own bias and assumptions

to construct parents in a stereotypical manner. Kyle also dissociates himself socially from the pupil and his parents as the relationship is tense and problematic. The anecdote also indicates that the teacher uses avoidance, for example, by asking to be transferred to another primary school when the tension caused by such altercations becomesunbearable.

> …. There are some who even, we are not going to criticise the parents, well, even the housewives, even those who do not how to read [illiterate], they come and they quarrel, because well, the pupil, I don't know, has not done, or has said something. I don't know but they come and quarrel for everything. Sometimes, they come … sometimes it is really disturbing. … They could have gone to the headmaster first and then the headmaster would talk to the teacher. Like that, there will not be any polemic. I think there should have been that kind of status [protocol] instead of the parents coming directly to talk to the teacher or come and say things because this disrupts a little. Because after that, when the teacher goes back in the class, I can see that the facial expression is a little changed. Or this should happen in the afternoon, to talk with the teacher after school is over, it would have been better. [Bella T]

Similar to Kyle, Bella constructs illiterate parents as troublemakers for no reason. She also highlights that direct confrontation with teachers could be avoided if parents were not allowed easy access to teachers. The lack of a strict protocol allows unnecessary confrontations between teachers and parents. By observing such incidents, she constructs that such interference disrupts teachers' work and undermines their morale. Kyle draws froma similar incident to construct parents as disturbing teachers emotionally.

> … a teacher who had a class next to the one I was attached to, had a problem with a parent because of a pupil. The latter told his parent that he does not want to come to school anymore. When the parent inquired with the child there was no response. The parent wrote a lengthy letter to the teacher explaining his teaching method was not correct and appropriate given that his child was, how to say, oppressed and unwilling to come to school. That parent did not even know the real reason why the child was refusing to go to school, he blamed the teacher. Consequently, that teacher was so stressed, and he told me that he will wait to complete five years of service and then will shift to another job in the civil service. He was baffled and disappointed when that happened. I was thinking what I would do if this happened to me? Well, I don't think I will quit, it is not in my habit to quit. I will face it anyway. I prepare myself for these possibilities instead, I must face it when it comes. (Kyle, T)

During Kyle's placement, he learnt through a conversation with teachers, that parents pressurise teachers and even compel them to change their job. This causes him to construct the teacher-parent relationship as taxing and demotivating. While the previous extract illustrates verbal altercations, the current one highlights the effects of written communicationwhich demoralises the teacher. Parents are also constructed as supporting their children against teachers when they feel the latter are not effective. Kyle learns from this incident thathe needs to be prepared for such an eventuality as he constructs parents as having high expectations that cause them to be prejudiced, causing stress that ultimately affects teachers' mental health.

6.3.3 The construction of parents as manipulative

Bella describes tensions in her school and constructs parents as manipulating and influencing decisions on pupil enrolment. Parents are also constructed as stringent and competitive whenit comes to securing a place for their children. Bella explains that parents who live outside the school's catchment area are always on the lookout for vacant places in star schools.

> Many (parents) want their kids to be in that school and there are some who are in the first standard. If there is a pupil who has left in another class, some parents know, they hear that there is one child who has left, who has moved abroad, etc. Then they start meeting the headmaster to ask that their son/daughter get in. Even if their kids are in standard four, they would come and inquire. It happens all the time. They really want their kids to be admitted in that school even if they do not fall in the catchment area. Sometimes we take, because we do not have enough pupils (enrolled), well they start to take from a little far as well. But wherever they are, they would come, sometimes they come from, I see the addresses which are far, but they nonetheless come. They want to come to that school... (Bella, T)

This extract shows that parents in Bella's school pay close attention to their children's overall learning experiences. She pinpoints this as being more the habit of middle-class parents than lower-income families. Such exchanges and conversations among parents cause her to associate certain behaviours with parents' mind-sets based on the latter's social class. She constructs parents as demanding even in affairs that go beyond pedagogy. Indeed, in following up the ways in which parents lobby for a place in her school, Bella constructs themas exerting pressure to ensure the wellbeing of their child in their absence when the child is in the custody of the teacher. She understands that both schooled and unschooled parents have similar agendas, but they do not convey them in the same manner. This explains why some resort to confrontation and are more violent in their approach than others. Bella constructs parents as making choices while calculating the benefits.

> Well, that is the reason I do not know what to do. I ended up deducing based on the observation I made... Today's parents are educated, and they are aware of the importance of a proper education for their children... well I mean those who have a modest lifestyle and social class, also want their kids to achieve academically. I think this is happening everywhere else in Mauritius, many of them are like that. Well, they will first try all the best options; some resort to private fee payable schools, or those primary schools which are renowned – the high performing schools. There are many schools in the vicinity which are high performing. There are at least three of them in this catchment area. Now parents can afford extra transport costs, like paid vans to drop and pick up their children at school. The distance is not a problem anymore. In consequence, many parents do not opt for this school anymore, the school composition has decreased as parents are choosing those star schools. [Boaz T]

Boaz draws a similar conclusion to Bella as he explains how parents make choices when theyare educated and economically well off. He constructs parents by assuming that, when they can afford to choose costlier options, they become more demanding. In this manner, the choice of a school due to proximity is no longer the criterion for admission and this has affected the population of the school where he was placed and even led to a drastic change in its composition.

This section illustrates the relationship between teachers and parents as closely derived from classroom rapport which involves pupils. It also signals parents' interference which Bella perceives as nosiness; Kyle constructs as problematic; Boaz describes as creating despair; and Tasha sees as dangerous. However, two anecdotes, one from Tabitha and the other from Kiara, illustrate that parents' are more concerned about their children's welfare and have higher expectations, but have less trust in what happens in the classroom, thus putting extrapressure on the teacher and the school. In these cases, the trainees feel that parents tend tointerfere so much because they are over caring and emotionally invested in their children's academic success.

6.4 CONSTRUCTING RELATIONSHIPS WITH AUXILIARIES

While the trainee teachers construct the interaction with parents as taxing, they describe their relationship with auxiliaries as convivial and collaborative. They identify auxiliaries as the people and specific offices surrounding the primary school's space that impact its daily operations. These include shopkeepers, canteen owners, and police or medical officers. Theirpresence as part of the school context also signals that they enter into formal and informal relationships with the school. They are termed auxiliaries because they are not directly linkedto the affairs of the school at first glance but are significant in influencing school life, and hence, contribute to the making of the school context.

6.4.1 The construction of canteen owners as convivial

Every primary school makes provision for a canteen which sells food items to both staff and pupils. The trainee teachers noted that canteen owners share a special role and relationship with school staff and pupils as they represent conviviality and safety. Archie constructs the canteen owner as ensuring the health and safety of her customers.

> … the canteen, it is managed by a lady who lives in the vicinity. Well, as you can see, this canteen is quite beautiful, and it is well maintained and clean inside. But right now, it is not opened. But the only one thing, it is a little dark inside, can't see from outside. The canteen is adjacent to the school kitchen. There are no soft drinks, no Pepsi, but she prepares fried noodles, fried rice, juice, she also sells teaching materials and stationary. And she managed like that without any problem. Kids bring their food, but some also buy from her. She can sell some 50 plates of fried noodles and rice per day. We don't get food poisoning problem here. I come here quite often, to buy juice, sometimes in the afternoon, during break time. I also take some fried snacks like dholl buns, samosas. We (trainees) take some of these, share and eat them in the staff room. (Archie, T)

The canteen owner in Archie's school is constructed as being part of the school setting although her relationship remains business oriented. The description highlights that the service provided promotes health and safety and indirectly serves to bond colleagues who, like Archie, share the food in the staff room during their break.

Bella offers different insights on the running of the canteen and the ways it operates in the following extract:

> Well in the canteen, there is absolutely nothing good there, but when the pupils say this is for the teacher, the snack turns good suddenly, the roti is tasty but when the kids buy it for themselves, it is not the same at all. I had that experience. I once bought one roti in the morning and shortly after that I told a pupil to get another one for me. The taste was not same as the first one, there was not enough curry inside the first one and the taste was way different. I think the teachers on the canteen committee should take this on board. But they do not eat from the canteen and they are not aware of what is being sold. At the same time, although there is a canteen committee, it is the headmaster who has the last word; he does not listen to his staff. But one thing to note, the people in the canteen are friendly, nice people. We share good relationships. If we take a bottle of water and we are short of cash, they tell us to give when we come next time, not to trouble ourselves. (Bella T)

The canteen service in Bella's school offers different treatment to pupils and teachers. She highlights the double standards when food is sold to pupils as compared to teachers. The fact that teachers do not consume food from the canteen gives more leeway to the owner to 'trick' pupils. In contrast to Bella's case, in Archie's school, the principal users of the canteen are teachers. He highlights the fact that the canteen must be hygienic and provide healthy food for the children. In his school, it seems that the canteen is more visible and active because it not only promotes conviviality and sharing among trainees, but also help them to feel less stressed.

However, while the canteen can signal conviviality, it can also be detached or rendered invisible from the affairs of the school. Kyle, Kiara, Tasha and Boaz made no mention of the canteen. Bella explains that the canteen is separate from school affairs although the staff havea say through the canteen committee. Though the presence of a canteen in the school signalsaffordable food items, it is not very important because the school is in an urban area and is surrounded by supermarkets and food stores.

6.4.2 The construction of relationships inside street corner shops/grocery stores as refuges

Shops and supermarkets are active zones where people interact with one another. Parents, teachers, and pupils can meet and interact in this informal space that operates in the school surroundings and it is often constructed as an escape from a difficult school day. Bella explains that, in her case, the mini supermarket which sells a variety of candies and snacks acted as a safety valve. She describes her experiences as follows:

> Well, this mini supermarket is just outside the school and this is the place where we buy all our small snacks and crackers. It is the nearest place to the school where we can get things; it is very convenient because we can take our time when we come here, we are never in a hurry. We take all the time in the world when we come here, we buy biscuits and the things we buy to eat give a hint on the mood of the day. When we are happy, in good mood, we buy chocolates, biscuits but when the day is gloomy, we just grab something like a cheese stick just for the sake of buying something. But there, we sneak to go there, it is like a secret way out of the school, we just take the back door and without anyone seeing, we rush to the mini supermarket. This is also our secret meeting place, the place we meet to gossip, chat, and hide. No one can hear us and no one see us. Sometimes we meet teachers who buy their groceries, and they say hello. The owner knows the time we come, a little accomplice as well. (Bella T)

Bella constructs the mini supermarket as a space where she can relax and escape from the authoritarian gaze of the headmaster in her school. It is a place where she can interact with other trainee teachers to vent their frustration and recount their placement experiences. The things they buy also express their feelings. This construction of the mini supermarket indicatesthat the trainee teachers develop mechanisms to build resilience against control and surveillance and also feel the need to refuel in a more convivial space when they feel tense and under pressure.

6.4.3 The construction of the relationship with the police as the guardians of safety at school

Kyle constructs the police as being significantly linked to the smooth running of the school. Initially he constructs the police in terms of their expected role, namely, to ensure the securityof the compound and road safety for users at the start and end of the school day.

> This police station has a close relationship with our school, well as you see the school keys are kept in the police station after school is over. Well on Tuesdays and Thursdays, the other days there is tuition, and the caretaker will stay until 5 pm to 5.15 pm. He is given a stipend for staying a little longer, so once he has made sure the school is empty, he will close all the doors, close the gate and keep the keys in the police station. He makes an entry in the book there for the time he drops and picks the keys. He takes the keys early in the morning. That's the responsibility of the police because there is no guard for the school. Moreover, there are two police officers who comes here in the morning and sometimes before school break. They help pupils, parents and teachers cross the street over there, on the main road where the traffic is dense. They ensure road safety and also stay close to the school and control the gate because a pupil can just come out from the school and an accident can happen. Therefore, the gate is always closed. Parents come inside and take their children, same for those who use the van. (Kyle T)

The presence of police is constructed by Kyle as a sign of regulation as well as supporting the school to prevent accidents and harm. Furthermore, he points to the significance of the relationship between the police and the school as primarily ensuring the safety of the schoolas a guard would. The police extend the services of the school by safeguarding each pupil's safety beyond the school gate. In the second instance, Kyle takes up the question of mediation and conflict resolution between teachers and parents when a problem cannot besolved at school level. He constructs the police as supporting teachers and intervening to prevent harm:

> I also observed once during my SBE, a parent had a problem with a teacher, and they came for a complaint over here in that police station. Well, how to put it, sometimes, parents are unruly, and it happened quite often during my SBE that…a child was ill-disciplined in class, and at times he is scolded which caused the conflict between the parent and the teacher, and both filed their complaint in that police station. (Kyle, T)

In this case, the presence of the police signals conflict and altercations between parents and teachers. It also depicts that, in Kyle's school, there is tension between parents and teachers.He thus further constructs the police as mediators that favour teachers involved in conflictualrelationships with parents:

> There was another instance, I don't have the full detail, but one teacher filed a complaint against a group of parents because those parents threatened him. There is no mediation, the police know the parents as well, because some of them already have police cases, so when the teacher comes for a complaint or if the parents come to file a case against the teacher, the police try to mediate these they dissuade them from filing cases. The police will tell the parent that they are not allowed to enter the school premises without permission or that they cannot come and try to fight inside the school. They know how to deal with those unruly parents because the police know them well. You know miss, those parents are difficult, they are unstable and use foul language, it is not easy to deal with them. (Kyle, T)

For Kyle, the police act as neutralisers of conflict which results from altercations between parents and school staff. Furthermore, he constructs parents as deviant or criminals, as he found out from the police that some parents have criminal records. Police officers are constructed as helpers who reinforce the school rules by going as far as rebuking parents and restricting access to the school compound. The police are thus presented as an authority overand above the individual. In neutralising dissonance between the two parties, the police as mediators ensure that any emerging conflict is resolved. Kyle's views suggest that the police play a primary role in ensuring the smooth running of daily school activities.

The police also help to evaluate parents. This view is highlighted by Archie who claims that the police play a meaningful role in dealing with difficult parents.

> In my teaching experience, the police are extremely meaningful. Sometimes you have learners who are hot heads. Why are they that way? This is because of their social environment. They come from difficult homes where family members are drug addicts or alcoholics and when they come to school, they do not work and these parents come to us, blaming us for the failure of their children and they will start abusing us. Sometimes we call the police to intervene. Unfortunately, sometimes the police will not come, they will ask us to try to calm down the parent. I had a case where the parent was a difficult one. He got into the staff room and started abusing teachers. Because I know how the system works, I called the police information room (also known as IR) to report the complaint. A team was quickly sent to attend my request through the Division Support Unit (DSU). (The DSU is a special unit of the police force patrolling specific areas). (Archie T)

For Archie, the police restore the peace and resolve conflicts caused by parents. The presenceof the police indicates that, had it not been for their intervention, the school may be a dangerous workplace given the profile of parents who confront the teachers. From Archie's experience, it is assumed that teachers who are affiliated with the police are more likely to optimise their support in times of need. As an ex-police officer, Archie was able to access thesystem and use his influence to make the police intervene in the difficult situation caused byan abusive parent. Archie explains that the police are allies to the school as officers often protect the personnel:

> Once there was a teacher who, while driving into the school compound collided with a pupil. The child was unscathed, but the teacher broke his leg. The bike had no insurance and the registration for the vehicle was due. The case was not reported because I knew the police officer, there was a cover up. (Archie T)

The teacher was an irresponsible driver, but Archie intervened to help. The police who were supposed to take the defaulter to task were cooperative because of the influence of the trainee teacher. It can be deduced that the cover up was endorsed through the intervention of the trainee who used his previous identity as a police officer to ask for 'help' for the teacher.In that sense, the police are constructed as a helper that assists the school in critical situationseven though safety was compromised.

6.4.3.2 The construction of the police as a participant in the school's curricular activities

The police are often optimised as a pedagogical resource in primary school contexts. They are sometimes called upon to act as resource persons in specific areas such as road safety and protocols regarding the national flag. Archie constructs the police as agents who extend learning in his school.

> Well, the police are also called at the school as resource persons. For instance, for the road safety day, the police could be called (to talk about road safety). It is very rare to have someone, but I used my influence as ex-police officer to ask somebody to come and intervene for some 10 minutes. Both teachers and pupils learned from this, I think this was more useful for teachers as many did not know certain issues related to road safety themselves. I also asked a friend from the Special Mobile Force (a special unit equivalent to the military) to come and talk on the Mauritian flag one day before independence* when I saw that both teachers and pupils were not knowledgeable of the flag protocol, nor do they have respect for the national anthem during morning assemblies. (Archie T)
>
> *Referring to Mauritian Republic Day

For Archie, the police can be optimised for pedagogical purposes as well as to reinforce valueslike patriotism and in areas where they are more knowledgeable than teachers. He used his contacts to enable police intervention since the school was not fully equipped to impart the requisite knowledge to pupils. The police were regarded as a specialised agency that extended learning possibilities beyond the classroom. Archie extrapolates from the teachers' feedbackthat they also learnt from that experience. He thus constructs the police as knowledgeable agents that can inform and educate both teachers and pupils. He perceives the presence of the police as being more fruitful in inculcating the right values and knowledge.

6.4.4. Constructing the health care officers as dispensing care

In contrast to the police, people dispensing services at the area Health Care Centre are constructed as nurturing service providers. Two trainee teachers indicated the usefulness of the area Health Centre and its prominence in the outer bounds of the school context. Kyle argued that this service is central to the smooth running of the school in the sense that it served the school almost every day.

Kyle constructs the service provided by nursing officers in the health care centre as significantly linked to the smooth running of the school, especially in dealing with casualties among pupils. Health and safety are an inherent part of pupils' school life as follow ups regarding routine check-ups and vaccinations where their general health issues are easily tracked. Moreover, Kyle feels that the placement of the health care centre helps teachers andadministrators in treating injured pupils. The significant role of the area Health Care Centre and the people operating it means that Kyle links it with the safety of the pupils in his school. He observes and experiences the relationship between the school and the nursing officers asefficient in dealing with casualties among pupils. The presence and proximity of the area Health Centre and its services indicate child welfare matters. By extending its services to theschool, people working in the centre are in constant collaboration and synergy with the school. Kyle constructs through his placement experiences, that the school not only deals in purely pedagogical enterprises but also caters for the wellbeing of its clientele. By linking the area Health Centre to the school context, Kyle recognises that the school facilitates outreachto pupils as it regularly offers its service to the school for health and safety issues.

On the other hand, Kiara, explained that this service suited her as she was pregnant at that time and it was easy for her to go for her medical check-ups without wasting time travelling.

> This health centre has a close connection with the school. Well, if while playing, a pupil falls and get hurt, they are sent here in an emergency. If they are sick… usually they (pupils) also do certain vaccinations and medical check-up, so the nurses from the health centres usually come to have follow up with the kids. When the pupils would have to take the *six-dots* vaccination, usually they do that when they are in CPE, so this is done by a nurse who works in this health centre. They would come over to the school premises. I think this is a good initiative from the government to establish this health centre over here, especially because of its proximity to this school. It is frequent to see kids getting hurt. I remember when I was studying here, kids would get hurt and in emergency cases, teachers cannot … bring those kids to the hospital nor could they wait for parents to come fetch them. This health centre solves that problem, the kids are sent there for first aid, and the child is given priority over all the patients waiting there, even when there are long queues. (Kyle T)

Kiara acknowledges that the Health Centre is a crucial part of the school despite being outsidethe compound. She reveals that it not only offers health services to pupils but also to teachers. Her personal experiences indirectly capture the link between the Health Centre and the school. Being pregnant at the time of her placement, her routine prenatal check-ups were facilitated, and she observes the frequency of pupils visiting the centre for first aid.

> Once I had a strong fever, 39.7 degree Celsius. I was brought here and later transferred to hospital. I came here so many times during my regular maternity check-ups. I was granted permission for that. I would leave school, walk a little and have my check-up and vaccination done and then I would come back to school (Kiara was pregnant during her placement) … and yeah kids go there when they get hurt while playing during recess, the two school attendants would take them there. I used to meet them there while I was myself on treatment. I would see the school janitor, accompanying either one who has bleeding knees, or another with a broken arm. (Kiara, T)

Given the gravity of the injuries experienced by pupils while playing in the school yard or roaming around the school compound during recess, this extract points to a lack of safety inside the school. Kiara gained insight into play time in the school. During her placement, shecame to understand that injuries and bruises are common and, had it not been for theproximity of the area Health Centre, school staff would have been responsible for providing first aid to pupils and staff. Her description also points to the multifaceted functions of the centre in dispensing its service to both

teachers like Kiara, who was pregnant and pupils whosuffer frequent accidents during recreation or during the course of the school day. It is thus understood that the different auxiliaries operating in the remote outer bound areas of the school, are significantly functional to the school and the insiders, namely teachers and pupils.

6.5 Synthesis of the chapter

This chapter illustrated that, trainee teachers construct the school context as relationships made up of a complex web which extends to the outer bounds of the school premises. In doing so, they extrapolated from relationships with people who were outsiders but who exerted more power than insiders. They are designated as parents and other auxiliaries whohave a strong presence in the day-to-day affairs of the school as a workplace. They explicate that the support and facilitation are not always visible. Some trainee teachers also construct the relationship as overbearing. For example, the teacher-parent relationship is constructed as conflictual, intruding and controlling. The violence and frequent fights witnessed by some trainees caused them to construct parents as troublemakers and dangerous, and as causing teacher despair. Parental gaze and constant interference in the teachers' work in class are also constructed as signaling the overwhelming expectations of teachers. The trainee teachers concluded that parents act as agents of control of the teaching workforce and that,while maintaining a strong relationship with them was important, it was very stressful for teachers.

Finally, this chapter explored the relationship with auxiliaries situated in the outer bounds ofthe school. The trainees construct auxiliaries as constituent parts of the school context that are physically located at the periphery of the school. They are constructed as offering convivial and supportive spaces to teachers. Auxiliaries are constructed as ensuring the smooth functioning of the school as an educational institution. They also affect the organisational aspects of the school and act as a pedagogical resource from time to time. From the trainee teachers' constructions, it can be deduced that those auxiliaries act as professional allies.

The following chapter examines another set of constructions in describing the primary school context in terms of places and spaces which are visibly antagonistic, patronising and ironic.

CHAPTER SEVEN

TRAINEE TEACHERS' CONSTRUCTION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL CONTEXT AS SPACES OF PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICE

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter foregrounded school context as constituting a web of relationships with people situated in the outer bounds of the school. In this chapter, the construction of primary school context is defined in terms of spaces of pedagogical practice, namely, school assembly, recreational spaces and leadership spaces where power is exercised, and resentments are experienced. These spaces are constructed as breeding control, dissonance and conflict. Trainee teachers refer to the physical, intellectual, and emotional elements embedding these spaces while referring to places like classrooms, playgrounds, the hallway, school gates and things, events, incidents and routines like the school assembly, overseeing pupils during recess, or replacing classes. They formulate these constructions based on their observation and experiences during their placement period. The trainee teachers also refer to the ways dissent and resistance are used to reverse control within those spaces, but few references aremade to the positive emotional experiences these spaces provide.

7.2 ORIENTATION

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first discusses spaces where power is exercisedto control and monitor staff; the second section examines the ways in which innovation in the classroom is resisted, contained, and internalised by teachers and pupils alike; and the third section foregrounds the physical sites as spaces which distill restriction of movement but also construction of safety. The chapter also reveals how resistance is used to counter the ambivalence created by excessive control.

7.3 THE CONSTRUCTION OF SCHOOL ASSEMBLIES

7.3.1 School assembly as a 'power space'

The school assembly is constructed by trainee teachers as staging and enacting strong power relationships. It is one of the most important daily routines of any primary school given that it signals that the school has started its business and gathers the whole school population for the start of the school programme for a day kick start. The findings reveal that the school assembly

is not merely a routine activity where pupils are called to order at the beginning ofthe school day but is also an interesting platform which reveals power, visibility and leadership skills. Usually represented by white semicircles on the tarred area in front of the headmaster's office in Mauritius, the assembly space represents the authority of the headmaster over teachers, and of teachers over pupils. The trainee teachers construct the interaction during the morning assembly as an essential aspect of school life and observe thatheadmasters primarily lead and monopolise that space as a power space to signal the (in)visibility of newcomers.

In Bella's experience, the school assembly is a space where trainee teachers are officially acknowledged as newcomers. In other words, the school assembly initiates the trainee teacher into the teaching community. Conversely, at the school where she did her placementand teaching practice, there was no proper introduction. Bella recounts that the lack of an official introduction and recognition during the morning assembly impacted negatively on the movement and presence of trainee teachers inside the school as from the lectern, the head teacher can control such presence and movement. She also hints that this is poor leadership on the part of the headmaster.

> Over here, it is not like really that. We were not introduced; we had to go towards the teachers on our own. We did not receive any official introduction, and many did not know who we were really. But then it was, those who knew, some teachers saw us, as if, trainee, trainee, trainee itself. As if, we were not teachers at all, only trainees who come once a week. Yet, we did not really bother. (Bella, T)

Her exposure to two different school contexts, besides the one she was placed in for teaching practice, allowed her to construct the school assembly by means of comparison and explain that at the specific moment that it is operational, it has the power to officiate access to the school

> In school A, the headmaster put me at the heart of the school activities, we [referring to other trainees together with her] were put in the middle of the school compound and we were properly introduced by him. He told the pupils, 'she is a new teacher.' He made us walk around during the school assembly, as if we were guests of honour. We moved everywhere, it was good, he made us feel good. The pupils see you in the playground, 'Miss you are new, come we shall make you visit this and that.' They are used to that, I think. (Bella, I)

community.

As a power space, the school assembly also controls the trainee teacher's access inside the school as part of the teaching staff to other actors, namely, pupils and parents. As previously highlighted by Bella, the lack of official recognition renders access and acceptance difficult as the trainee teachers feel rejected by the teaching staff. Bella's exposure to two different schools enables her to compare how her visibility through the school assembly determines the attitude of other staff members in recognising her as one of them. Denial of access to themorning assembly is read by Bella as rejection by the headmaster, which has a ripple effect on how teachers, non-teachers and pupils perceive trainees who start their training in the school.

> …But at one moment, I think there was the need to go and pass on a memo, I don't know, something like that. He (the headmaster) had told us to do him a favour to go and pass on that. I was not very keen on doing it in the beginning because I was thinking, I don't know anyone, and then, when we were going from class to class, they (teachers) thought, they even thought that we were attendants (janitors) who have come to pass on the memo. We even received a frown (for disturbing the class). Indeed, in the beginning it was not easy at all, not at all … during the first week, it was like that, like, they made us feel that we were some burden every day. We felt like we were in excess or spares and that we were doing nothing good. (Bella, T)

Bella also refers to her invisibility as a trigger for disaffection among the teaching staff. The lack of acknowledgement in the school assembly has a ripple effect on the presence of the trainee teacher everywhere else in the school. In Bella's case, a vertical hierarchy was well established and there was a shared attitude with regard to her estrangement to some extent.Besides the silence concerning her presence in the school by the headmaster, nonverbal cues,like a frown, caused her to construct such

estrangement from the teaching community. In many instances, trainee teachers conveyed that their visibility or invisibility has a strong effect on their inclusion and acceptance within the teaching community. Trainee teachers also become conscious of this feeling when they are recognised when joining the school for placement and as the staff make them feel part of the school staff.

> On the first day itself I was standing with the other teachers and I told the headmaster that I was a pupil in that school. And when the assembly started, I was introduced, and she told the pupils 'this is my Kyle, a new teacher, who was an ex-pupil in this school, if you (referring to pupils) work well, succeed, you will also be like him, standing here in this assembly.' Miss, I felt a great sense of accomplishment, you know I am very attached to this school, and when the headmaster introduced me like that, I felt so important and proud. I could see how the pupils were looking at me. I never felt like a stranger, it was like returning home indeed… (Kyle T)

Unlike Bella, Kyle constructs the school assembly as the site where his hard work andeducational achievement are acknowledged and used as a referent for the pupils. The schoolassembly allows for the trainee to be recognised as part of the school community and enablesthe newcomer to bond with the existing members.

> Each time I stood there with other teachers, I was reminded that I am considered as one of them. I could see no difference in the way pupils looked at me and the others, I was a teacher, I was part of that family and I felt comfortable (Boaz T).

Boaz's construction of the school assembly illustrates how the presence of the trainee teacherin that space helps promotes him as a teacher and he uses the pupils' gaze to refer to that instance as a personal achievement. He explained that in sharing that space with the other teachers and the headmaster, despite being a routine activity, the morning assembly signifiedthat he was part of the team and thus he felt that even the pupils would regard him as a teacher.

7.3.2 School assembly as sharing space

Both Boaz and Kyle expressed that being part of the group of teachers during the assembly was sufficient to acknowledge them as members of the teaching staff and they referred to thepupils' gaze as a form of acceptance of the same authority teachers in their school enjoyed. Bella, who initially referred to the school assembly as an intimidating power space, also notesthat the school assembly allowed teachers to share and claim their knowledge and competencies. She referred to a situation when she was asked to conduct a morning assemblywith the pupils.

> …Some time back the headmaster requested if I could do something for the pupils during the school assembly. Teachers were usually called to do that, and this time, I was a little shocked, but he told me to participate. So, I did what I am good at. I put in some animation and engaged the whole school. It was a total success; I did an interactive activity with the pupils. The whole staff congratulated me throughout the day whenever they would meet me in the school. This incident also helped in making me more noticeable. I think it [the way she animated the session] was kind of unusual here. (Bella T)

In Bella's construction, pupils' recognition of the teacher as a knowing subject calls for enactment. She constructs the school assembly as diffusing the teacher's authority and knowledge. While this might gain her some visibility and acknowledgement by the staff, she also experiences a sense of achievement while displaying her talents. From her short anecdote, it can be deduced that she constructs the school assembly as not only sanctioning people but also assisting their integration in the school workspace. It is a sharing space whichgenerates the trainee teachers' visibility inside the school. Moreover, Bella constructs that, asshe enters that space, novelty in terms of pedagogical approach is not obfuscated, thereby resulting in recognition of her ingenuity and competencies. Although Bella was not properly introduced, through the school assembly, she could eventually assert herself as a member ofthe school community.

7.3.3 School assembly as correcting transgressions

Conversely, *transgressions* which were closely monitored and pinpointed in public during the school assembly, helped Bella construct how power interplay further alienated the trainee teachers from the school community.

> I was late, in the sense that the assembly had already started when I made my entry to the school compound. He saw me from his lectern. He started making some nasty comments on the lateness of teachers and trainee teachers. I felt humiliated as if I got caught in some crime, and from then I would prefer to mix with the crowd of parents who would wait in a corner near the first gate or I will try to hide myself in that corner [referring to the corridor leading to the school compound] rather than 'showing up late.' I learnt my lesson and don't want to be cornered again. (Bella T)

The morning assembly is also used to correct ill-discipline and by referring to Bella as the culprit, the headmaster overtly communicates his disapproval of what he claims to be transgressive behaviour by staff members. While this might be constructed an attempt to regulate work behaviour, the manner in which the reprimand was made clearly antagonised Bella. It appears that, the school assembly is exploited as a space which generates and sustainspower to control relationships along the school hierarchy. The incident caused Bella to construct the headmaster's leadership as antagonistic.

Archie saw the school assembly as a space to identify and address misconduct, albeit at another level. In his case, he was concerned by the lack of knowledge on allegiance to the flagduring the national anthem.

> … I can observe so much ill-discipline among pupils today. When I was here for training, a day before the Republic Day, I called a friend who was posted at the Special Mobile Force[17] (SMF) to make a short intervention on the importance of the Mauritian flag during the rehearsal for the protocol ceremony. Many teachers do not have knowledge. I have seen this ill-discipline is even so obvious among teachers. During the morning assembly while singing the national anthem, I could see that many teachers are not respecting this hymn. They walk, they talk with each other, they move here and there, they sing the way they want. The national anthem is like a prayer to our motherland. If we do not respect it, how can we inculcate that respect for the country to our kids? Our flag on that day was torn and the policeman told the headmaster that it is an offence and they changed it afterwards. Sometimes we are not aware. Most people do not care, we just get in our classroom and teach, we do not even check the flag. (Archie T)

His construction of the morning assembly revolved around the lack of patriotism witnessed among teachers which he regarded as disrespect and ill-discipline since they talk while the national anthem is being played. As a future teacher, Archie was especially concerned that the pupils would imitate such behaviour and show indifference to the flag and its symbolismwith patriotism. Such feelings also convey an ideological insinuation that teachers serve as agents of national pride. It can therefore be inferred that Archie' sentiments are deeply rooted in patriotism and national pride, and he felt strongly that the school should inculcate that feeling

in pupils. The morning assembly was thus constructed not only as an academic instrument but as a tool to transmit a strong nationalist consciousness. Indeed, what he witnesses in the school assembly causes Archie to surmise that teachers do not respect the flag and the anthem due to a lack of knowledge and indifference. Like him, Kyle, Bella and Boaz use the school assembly to construct the power and authority imposed on staff and to address transgressions in professional practice.

7.4 SPACES FAVOURING RESISTANCE TO PEDAGOGICAL CHANGE AND INNOVATION

The trainee teachers observed that teachers in their schools confronted resistance when they attempted to introduce innovative practices. Specific sites were identified as favouring certain practices which promoted resistance to change. The trainee teachers entering those spaces concluded that these encourage controlling behaviour which gave rise to fear, stress and estrangement from the school community. For instance, Bella observed that, in contrast to the other school where she was initially placed, teachers in her school worked under constant pressure and were always accountable to the management and parents. Consequently, they were on permanent alert. They feared management, were always stressed about meeting deadlines, and often felt they were under persistent surveillance. This influenced their decisions and choices of the type of pedagogical practices to use in their classes. While the trainee teachers were keen to try out innovative practices, this was often resisted by the classteacher. The classroom was constructed as the main space of resistance to innovation.

> I can see that although the teachers want to make the effort to change a little, say, doing something new, but most things remain basic, and even us, in the classes in which I was, when teaching certain classes, the teachers said things like, 'no, we cannot do that like that because the children won't understand'. They do not give you the chance. Some were not willing; they read our lesson plan completely to know, well for me, they read my lesson plan fully to know what I was about to do. (Bella, I)

[17] The SMF is a special unit of the Mauritius Police Force which is responsible for the military aspects of the force and is actively involved in disaster risk management and the President's security.

As seen in Bella's account, the class teacher's reticence interfered with the trainee teachers' willingness to test their lessons. There was strong fear of compromising the routine, resulting in screening of trainee teachers' lesson plans, and convincing or even coercing them to change their strategies. The way Bella describes access to teaching signals a strong element of power.She uses the term 'going according to the plan' to refer to rules which not only seem to be prescribed but are followed rigidly by the teaching staff. She also acknowledges that, although there is willingness to innovate, it does not necessarily lead to change as the teachers are less likely to take risks in their class. Bella also experiences a lack of trust given that her lesson plans are scrutinised and controlled prior to delivery.

In the following extract, she describes an incident when she was dissuaded from using an interactive white board as support for class instructions.

> Then, if I am using *Sankore*, they'll say, 'Don't use *Sankore* because the children will ask for it again and I won't be able to do it.' So, I told myself, 'why not for once?' I told them, 'but I will show you how to use the *Sankore*, we switch on, it is easy, everything is in there,' but they say, 'no, no don't do that, no need to bring pictures in the class, nothing. Because...do normal teaching…' I can say that they follow the rules closely, as in a plan. You need to be like that, like that. Some teachers do innovate but this is piecemeal. I have seen that they do things like *Sankore* they do a lot of things, they find a lot of things to do but the big majority would stay in their little world. The teaching stays the same. (Bella I)

Her anecdote conveys that teachers find it more convenient to stay 'safe' within their comfort zone and do not want to go the extra mile to learn new strategies. By emphasising that trainees should stick to 'normal teaching' teachers contain the fear that trainee teachers maythreaten the so-called stability pupils are familiar with. They thus resist change and pedagogical innovation. From this episode, Bella constructs teachers' resistance resulting from fear of novelty and their lack of confidence to sustain the practice in the absence of thetrainee teacher. However, in the extract below she notes that, with a smaller class, teachers are more open to innovative practices even if they lack logistical support and resources.

> In relation to school A, which is a small school, they do not have the means. They do not have *sankore* in all the classes, they have only had *sankore* in two classes, but they are willing to do things. The teachers would make poems; they would do a lot of small things. I have seen that in the morning, every morning, the children would come, they take a book, the older ones, the Standard[18] Six would take a book and the smaller ones would sit around them as they read the book. As if the pedagogy is by the children themselves.The children are very active. (Bella, T)

Bella compares the two schools where she was placed and constructs the ways in which the pedagogy evolves. From her current school, she deduces that teachers' inflexibility and resistance to change their practices results from the school's intellectual climate, where innovation, divergent thinking and pedagogical success are never exploited although the opportunities are available if teachers use their agency. Bella constructs that teaching space as a power space. She deduces that although there are external factors like rules andregulations and parental pressure, teachers' mind-set also matters when it comes to changingand innovating practice. She constructs the different mind-sets which prevail in relation to the use of new technological tools and interactive strategies for pedagogical ends. For instance, in School A, learners play an active role in co-teaching others and sharing knowledge with their younger schoolmates. Bella assumes that the openness to empower learners to take charge of their learning experiences is based on collaboration and trust among staff members and parents.

According to Bella, this co-sharing of knowledge also signals less control and fewer restrictionson teachers' decisions and choice. In the absence of a collaborative culture, innovation and change are not possible even if resources are available. The question of leadership and the toxicity of the school's intellectual climate are explicitly defined as a control mechanism whichresults in reticence to try alternative teaching approaches.

[18] At the time of data production, the term standard rather than grade was used. Standard one is equivalent to Grade one in the current system.

> Over here the headmaster has given too much freedom to parents. They have the right to meet teachers and question them without the consent of management. They know when teachers go out and when they come in, what they do, they even know the colour of our clothes, how many times they are absent during the year. Teachers are closely watched. Once one parent asked me why his son has not come first in the examination. I think the pupil did not score A+ in one subject and we were asked to give clarification. I think this should be dealt by the headmaster, but nothing. (Tabitha, T)

Similarly, Tabitha said that she observed much surveillance and pressure on teachers to ensure that pupils performed well academically. This led to teachers being confined to employing conventional pedagogies. In her case, she notes that parents' constantinterventions and the headmaster's apathy exerted pressure on teachers.

Tabitha explained that pressure exerted on teachers is both internal, usually expressed in the autocratic leadership of the headmaster, and external, in the form of parental interference. These in turn influence classroom pedagogy and determine the teachers' choices. In her school, Tabitha observes that teachers are constantly held accountable and receive little support from the headmaster to deal with the exigencies imposed by parents. The resistance from both parties is difficult to deal with.

7.5 TOXIC LEADERSHIP AS BLOCKING THE TEACHER SPACE AND AGENCY.

The tension and constant pressure observed by Tabitha results from the headmaster's autocratic leadership style in the exercise of his duties. She feels that some flexibility in the treatment of teachers could improve working relationships which they perceive as toxic. The trainee teachers observe and construct that toxic leadership affects the ways in which the teaching space is defined and made accessible to them during placement. In the extracts which follow, they highlight how the head teacher's monopoly of decision-making constrained teachers' decisions regarding teaching and their classroom practices. This extends to trainee teachers on teaching practice in the school.

> That is why there is so much absenteeism among staff; they do not agree with his ways of doing things, the way he manages the school. Many perceive him as toxic, because he is harsh, and teachers feel they are under constant pressure. I feel he is doing his job, but some flexibility is required to boost the morale of the personnel. (Tabitha T)

Tabitha constructs how teachers' morale and motivation are affected by the head teacher'slack of flexibility and collaboration. She constructs that the constant pressure exerted on teachers creates tension and demotivates them, leading to absenteeism as a form of silent dissent. She adds that more flexibility would result in less discontent among staff members.This could reduce the work pressure and extremely high expectations of parents. The inflexible approach adopted also impacts on the trainee teachers who attempt to implementnew strategies learnt at the MIE. Their teaching opportunities are constrained by the schoolhierarchy which fluctuates with the leadership style.

> Well, the hierarchy is very rigid, the headmaster will never say we are teachers, he does not even use that term teacher. Right now, we are called helpers, he uses his authority, he says 'his school'. It is him managing it. In other words, we do not have anything to say, we have no voice, even as trainees we cannot voice our opinions. We are compelled to stay in the classes allocated to us and, we have no rights or say, we don't have the right to have colleagues, we have no right over anything, we are compelled to stay like this… (Bella T)

Bella constructs the headmaster's leadership as rigid, authoritarian, and controlling. Based onher account, this denies trainee teachers the same privileges and status as teachers working in the school as he defines trainee teachers as helpers and impose strict guidelines to controlthem. Bella's observation causes her to define such limitations as constraining trainee teachers' professional learning experiences. However, she also explains that, sometimes, shechose to reverse the headmaster's authoritarianism by manipulating these restrictions to her own advantage.

> …but when it comes to teaching, those replacements which they make us do, helps me learn how to teach, a lot indeed. I was able to test many things I learned, the pupils were my guinea pigs**,** I could pilot many things in class through replacement and it worked. This was because there were some classes where I was more friendly, and the class teachers were so rigid, and I adopted a more friendly approach. And when the class teacher was usually more casual, I used a stricter approach with the class to be able to cope. I tried classroom management strategies which I learned at MIE. One is using countdown to calm the pupils and the second I started giving them responsibilities to divert their energy levels. Both work with them. Yep, I change their seating arrangement and grouping from time to time. I even push all the tables, make them sit on a mat. At first, they were reticent, they told me, Miss we are sitting on the floor, why do we need to do that but once we start with the class, they find it funny and captivating. But it did make a lot of mess but once the class starts everything settled down and I was able to do my maths class on Area. (Bella, T)

Bella explains how she negotiates to create a space to teach where the pupils play a significant part in the classroom pedagogy she tries out during her placement. By calling them her guinea pigs, she constructs herself as in a phase of learning to teach and at the same time, her construction of her pupils indicates that they acknowledged the novelty she introduced in class. Instead of seeing replacement as constraining her professional learning, she optimised that space to try out what she learned at the MIE in the absence of prescribed teaching spaces allocated to her as a trainee teacher. In this situation, Bella uses that very space to contest and subvert the limitations imposed on her by the headmaster. By defying the headmaster, she overtly voices her disapproval of conventional pedagogies. This not only hints at how newcomers are controlled and prevented from bringing about change and introducing innovative pedagogies, but also offers insights into the ways in which trainee teachers are ableto reverse control mechanisms to build resilience and agency despite the headmaster's disapproval. It also illustrates that the teaching space can be reclaimed to counter toxic leadership.

> The headmaster was not approving, he felt I was disturbing everything. When I took the kids outside for maths classes, he said I was playing games. Tt was not the case at all. I was teaching mathematics differently, he never approved that. He said pupils cannot be taken out of their classes whenever mathematics was taught. I told him, on the timetable, it was noted that they were supposed to be doing Physical Education (PE), and they usually don't do PE, so I was doing both maths and PE differently. He was not agreeable, he disapproved of the introduction of new strategies. For him, when we are asked to replace, we are supposed to just sit, give some classwork, and correct these. But I can't. I always find something new, new teaching strategies I find on the Internet. Sometimes I make them think by themselves, and they figure out in class their own strategies to do multiplication tables, or measure lengths of certain objects. I then guide them through the activity. (Bella T)

In the above extract, Bella indicates that rigid leadership blocks innovation and heightens the possibility of tension. Although the headmaster quashes all innovation, she uses her agency to contest such control. It is also noted that the trainee teacher does so by constantly finding ways to fit the tasks to the situation. Bella also acknowledges that her flexibility in teaching through innovative and differentiated strategies empowers pupils as they learn. While her actions might be construed as defiant, she justifies her decisions by pointing to the successfulend results with her learners. Her intervention reinforces the way she constructs her teachingroles as a becoming teacher. The extract also reveals that the trainee teacher constructs antagonistic practices and attempts to counter them when they occur.

7.6. SPACES DISPLAYING RULE IMPOSITION AND RULE REVERSAL

Head teachers' leadership is constructed as control aimed at restricting the movement of newcomers to the school. The trainee teachers refer to the attendance and movement registers as artefacts which are located in spaces which trigger the imposition of rules. They also learn that when these are not validated by the teachers who reverse those rules, it nullifies them.

> That first meeting looked positive, he was saying we are future teachers but there were certain rules and regulations to follow in the school. He told us that we need to record our time in and time out in the movement book. We thought we had to signal our entry and exit each time we left the school and then some teachers told us not to do that. They told us it was not actually the case, when we must go out, there was no need to do that. They told us to stop messing the work. Well, that was what they told us. (Bella T)

Bella constructs regulation of teachers' movement as a form of control utilised by the headmaster to monitor them inside the school. She learns from teachers that such rules mustbe ignored because they are constraining and unnecessary. She also realised that the headmaster creates his own rules to restrict teachers' movement as a mechanism to restrict their freedom and autonomy. In another instance, she highlights that teachers in the school have a formal relationship with the headmaster because they perceive him as controlling andauthoritarian. Bella recounts that attempts to impose certain rules on newcomers were not approved and implemented by teachers.

In more obvious situations, like handling their formal daily duties, complaints by teachers are described as opposing the headmaster in order to prevent the imposition of abusive regulations. Through these complaints, Bella infers that teachers in her school resist the headmaster's leadership. As seen in the extract below, she also learns how to counter his authoritarianism.

> Since I started my placement here, I was told by the teachers to be careful with the headmaster. Well, they do not gossip, but they told me if I know how to handle my responsibilities, I will not have problems with him. He willbe correct with me. Well, indeed, he was nice to us at the beginning but when he saw that we had a team, we bonded, he started being unpleasant. He doesnot like it when there are groupings. He … does not like it when teachers are grouping and talking. He will check them from the first floor so that they scatter, don't club together. It was as if his gaze could strike you even when he was up there. This is not a good thing. But this year, he has started changing a little bit; that's because he got a lot of problems with teachers who made complaints to higher authorities. (Bella, T)

In the first instance, the teachers warned Bella to be careful in her dealings with the headmaster and she became aware that his attitude changed due to several complaints. She also constructs toxicity as the negation of emotional bonding among teachers and staff. In the following extract, Bella explains how the head teacher exerted control when she started to share a collaborative relationship with the class teacher. Replacement is not only seen as an imposition on Bella who is looked down upon as filling the gap in the class; she also constructs replacement as a mechanism to prevent her from collaborating with the class teacher.

> Well, he knows that the class teacher to whom I am attached, and I collaborate well. And all the time, he would ask her to replace classes while I stay in her class, but I prefer to go instead because I know she is more accountable to her class. It is unfair for her to miss her own class and replace in other classes. So, I always go instead, and the head teacher knows that and now he is sending me for a full week on replacement. We have already prepared the lessons together for the whole week, including the ones I had to trial, but I had to replace. Some teachers have observed this, and they told me that this replacement is done on purpose because the headmaster figured out that the class teacher and I are too bonded, and he was trying to create conflict between the two of you. I told them not to worry, we have also figured out his tricks to divide us and we will not let him prevail. (Bella T)

Bella therefore perceives that bonding among teachers is not welcome and is seen as a kind of threat to rules set by the headmaster. Strategies, some obvious and some subtle, are usedto separate teachers who tend to team up and bond. Bella's experience caused her to conclude that the divide and rule strategy, like telling the permanent teacher to replace classes, is used to create conflictual relationships while the trainee will be in charge. However,some teachers, as well as Bella, downplay such strategies and avoid conflict by reversing the situation. Bella deduces that control is exerted not only by means of formal, official mechanisms; she also constructs spaces of control and imposition in the headmaster's distribution of tasks and duties. Such situations cause her to construct control as a potential source of conflict among teachers as well as opening space for dissonance and contradictionswith respect to the imposition of rules and responses to replacement schedules enforced on the teachers and trainee teachers in the school.

The following section describes the construction of physical spaces as mechanisms to control teaching and learning.

7.7 THE CONSTRUCTION OF INFRASTRUCTURE

7.7.1 Physical spaces as controlling movement

Trainee teachers refer to the physical climate or school infrastructure as important spaces which control movement and restrict freedom. Classrooms, and the staffroom, school kitchen, playground, and school compound with facilities like kiosks, sheds, staircases, pathways, andthe school stadium are designated by the trainees as a control space. Both Bella and Tabitha construct control mechanisms as embedded within the infrastructural arrangements which constrain the movement and activities of both teachers and pupils. While the pupils' movement is controlled by restricting playground access, the teachers are required to controlthe pupils' safety and cater for their wellbeing. These routine tasks add to the teachers' accountability and responsibilities. They also restrict their willingness and disposition to take pedagogy to another creative level as they cannot optimise the playground in the way they want for movement activities.

> As you can see the playground is asphalted and I mentioned this in my SBE task two when I wrote my teacher portfolio. There is no green corner, no football pitch and these kids are deprived of outdoor activities for six years of their lives. Even if the playground were small, let us say a small square over there, it would have been interesting but even that we do not have. Well, the kids are deprived of certain games and activities because of that. Some play volleyball but they do not know how to keep a ball, they do not know how to play. We have many casualties during recess, it is extraordinary the number of children getting hurt on this asphalted ground. I handle at least two to three casualties every Monday because of that. Well, another problem is the scorching sun, the ground gets hot, there are no trees and no shade. The kids get tired easily while playing in that sun. They become sleepy when we have classes in the afternoon (Tabitha T)

Tabitha described the lack of proper amenities for pupils to play during recess. She constructs infrastructure and physical spaces such as playgrounds and shady spaces as anthropomorphising control of pupils' movement (like running and playing in the recreationalspaces). The school in question uses a large, asphalted ground also known as *the stadium* as aplayground during recess. Tabitha highlights that the playground is problematic and observed that this has strong pedagogical implications for pupils. The playground is constructed as constraining children from enjoying decent play time and she also notes that the space defeatspedagogical purposes as it deprives pupils of the right to enjoy play while studying in this establishment. All the pupils converge on the only 'play spot', resulting in daily casualties, underscoring the fact that teachers must be available to monitor pupils' physical movement. Bella, who a trainee in the same school, further describes the ways this space controls movement and affects classroom pedagogies.

> … so the headmaster gave orders not to let children run during recess, not to let them play and hurt themselves because this affects them when they resume class in the afternoon. They can't concentrate, they are too tired and drained. We also are careful when we plan outdoor games and activities for the kids, we do not let them run during those activities to minimise the risk of casualties. (Bella T)

Bella emphasised that pupils were encouraged not to run around during recess because they would consume too much energy, and this would affect their concentration during afternoon classes. From the trainee teachers' descriptions, it appears that playgrounds are not automatically constructed as recreational spaces. Freedom and opportunities to play are restrained in order to focus the pupils' attention on academic performance. Given that the playground is asphalt, the teachers abide by these decisions in order to avoid casualties. Interestingly, Bella explained that the spot was frequently occupied by parents who sit and observe *teaching and learning* processes (see chapter five). Such infrastructure thus also offers space for an inversion of roles as well as exerting pressure on teachers in their practice.

7.7.2 The classroom as a restricted zone

The classroom is indicated as a space that is usually reserved for teaching staff and their pupils.As insiders, trainee teachers also construct the classroom as a space of control and authority on the part of the teacher in charge. While some trainee teachers experienced the warmth ofsharing that space with the class teacher, others explained that their physical presence was questioned by both teachers and pupils, which eventually estranged them.

> This is the class in which I did my first, no, no it was my second teaching practice. But this is my first classroom, I remember the first time, the teacher was there, she was sitting there at her desk and she asked me to sit next to her, she made me at ease. I wanted to hide myself in a corner, but the class teacher told me to come near her. She told a pupil to bring that chair over there and put it next to hers. In this way, I was sharing the teacher's desk right from the beginning. It continued that way until the end of my training in that school. (Kiara T)

Kiara refers to her first classroom experiences as serving distinct roles and functions. The intervention of the classroom teacher reinforced Kiara's presence as equal to hers in front of the pupils. Although she understands that she is a stranger, she observes that the teacher took charge of the situation and gave her an equal share of her teacher space. She extends her construction of control by referring to the way learners are seated.

> The set up did not change, it stayed the same as when I was there, but the furniture has moved. Well, the teacher's desk is still in the place it used to be, nothing much, even the classroom set up has remained unchanged. Well, she has kept her teaching aids and I used the same ones. The teacher was also a trainee at MIE, she kept using the same teaching aids all the time. (Kiara T)

She also constructs the teacher's control of the pupils through the adoption of specific seating arrangements. Kiara constructed her own presence in that classroom as a guest. She was comfortable following the current practice of the teacher in charge simply because the latter was an ex-MIE trainee. The pedagogical approaches used in that class did not seem tobe transformed in any way by Kiara's presence as she acknowledged herself as the guest whoknows all the boundaries of her new space. By using the same teaching aids and by not

changing teaching strategies or methods, Kiara is implicitly keeping the teacher's authority intact. The element of control within teaching and learning is expressed in the way teachers manage their pupils through classroom seating arrangements.

> As you can see this classroom has the same set up as in Standard 1. I remember this class did not have any teacher; they were initially made to sit in groups but the teacher who came as replacement changed the set up in row formation to prevent the children from chatting. (Kiara T)

It can be deduced that the classroom is constructed by Kiara as a space where the teacher displays and maintains her authority and has control and surveillance over the pupils. Kyle constructs the element of control in relation to discipline and sanctions to redirect pupils' behaviour. He recounted several anecdotes in relation to a room, including the following:

> This place was once a toilet and it was then converted into a room, but I do not really remember this place as being a toilet. When I was a pupil here, I was told that this is the dark room and if a pupil is misbehaving the janitor, Mr B. would send him there. We were extremely scared of this place and we have always associated it with Mr B. Mow it is an Asian Language classroom. Indeed, we have very few students, only two or three at most four would opt for this Asian Language; hence, the reason the class is conducted there. (Kyle T)

Based on this experience, Kyle constructs that fear is used to control pupils' behaviour and both the janitor and the dark room were used as triggers to regulate the behaviour of pupils at that time. The reconverted classroom enabled Kyle to construct this specific room as revolving around experiences over time and space: The fact that it was once a detention room for misbehaving pupils stands out in Kyle's childhood memories as a pupil. His construction ofthe reconverted space fluctuates as the purpose of the physical space changes and in light ofhis own posture and experiences as a trainee teacher. Kyle constructs this space in more positive terms.

Charisma: … well what do you think of this classroom, would you like to teach in such a classroom?

Kyle: You know what, yes, I would love to, indeed yes miss, I would love to have this as MY class.

Charisma: Why, tell me!

Kyle: Oh yeah miss, to start with I would be having very few pupils and I would own this place, this would be my classroom, no intimidation, no interference, nothing. I would have loved having such a classroom to work in. I would be in charge, in control of my classroom. That is an ideal classroom, miss, few pupils, freedom to teach the way I want to and no one on my back… (Kyle, T)

During the conversation, Kyle explains that the reconverted space is no longer a space of fear and control, but it breaks control of the teacher's work. In this extract, he infers that infrastructure affects the ways in which movement and teaching practices are monitored. By being detached from the other classroom areas, Kyle feels that he would have been in a privileged position because he will be in control of his class and better manage his personal space. In short, Kyle asserts in the above vignette that the purpose changes the feel of the place. Instead of being under the scrutiny of staff, he would be cut off from the gaze of the rest of the school. Although the space is still an enclosed one, Kyle asserts that it symbolises freedom and control of his teaching practices.

7.7.3 The classroom as an emotional safe space

The idea of teacher responsibility and ethical duty constructed as part of ensuring her learners' safety is further expounded by Tabitha. In the extract below, she refers to the pupils' difficult backgrounds as a reason for her to be mindful towards them. Her narration is based on classroom observation while working with them and, similar to Kyle, she infers that her construction of pupilsis contingent on their home backgrounds. She feels accountable to the pupils and her own construction of pupils also allows her to construct teachers as deploying care and offering emotionalsafety.

> Sometimes you will see those kids just sitting in class lost in their thoughts, some have left behind their pencil cases and personal belongings when they leave for home… When I saw all these things in front of me, I was moved. When I get in there (referring to the school) I forget all contexts, the training everything. You don't know how the parent is managing, trying to make the child come to school. I don't think I can put the blame on the parent or on the class teacher. Once the pupils are in my hands, even for a short period of time, it is my responsibility to shape them to make them able bodies. There are many prostitutes who send their kids to school. I have nothing to do with that, my task is to work. I have done much in terms of values and teaching them basic skills like eating healthy food, washing hands before eating, adopting cleanliness. These are things which should be taught at home, but I do it. It was important to make them learn these things first (Tabitha, T).

Although the previous chapter (see chapter five) highlights her assumption that these children need 'fixing'; the above extract also demonstrates that Tabitha is deeply empathetic, and her caring attitude is genuine. This gave rise to strong emotions around the use of classroom time to inculcate values and basic life skills which they might have missed at home. In other words, Tabitha is indirectly constructing the classroom as a space where emotional safety and care can be provided to children living in a different reality at home. The classroom is explored as a space to share values, wellbeing, and care.

Kyle feels that it is very important to create a safe space because during school hours when the pupils are in the custody of the teacher, they are accountable for anything that happens to them.

> Sometimes it happens, that its already 3.30 pm and no one came to pick up the child, I think his van left him. I had to stay until the parent comes. He came quite late as well. So, this incident made me realise that it is a major responsibility when you have a kid with you. I cannot leave a child like that. It was just me and the caretaker on that day, waiting for the parent. I was annoyed but at the same time I could not let the child alone. I will never be able to do that. (Kyle, T)

Kyle refers to this incident to construct the teacher as a guardian of safety but also realised that as a future teacher he must shoulder responsibility for each pupil and ensure they are safe before going off duty. He constructs the notion of safety as part of the teacher's ethical duty. While the school is constructed as a safe space when it is active, it might represent

danger if the pupil is left unattended to. In Kyle's case, this incident heightened his awareness of the need to ensure pupils' safety inside the school.

7.7.4 The classroom as a violent space

The classroom can also be a violent space where the teacher exercises power and control in an authoritarian manner. Some cues which might signal this are explained below. Tasha explained that the classroom can be a violent space.

> It was very harsh working with them (referring to the pupils in question), it would have been impossible for me at that time to deal with them, Yeah, I couldn't control them, neither me nor my colleague who was there. It was like a nightmare going back there each day. The children, I do not know what they were actually…we could not describe them. And I would very much like you go visit that class. They are in standard five now. We were getting a very harsh time working in that class. Very harsh time. They quarrelled, could smash each other's face like nothing. It was very difficult. And this was the worst experience I had in that school. Other classes were OK, there are certain pupils who are not good but, but I'm referring to the standard four class because that was the class, we were supposed to be attached but we couldn't. I had to shift because I was kind of learning nothing there. Only trying to be the mediator between pupils. (Tasha, I)

Tasha is faced with the dilemma of classroom control and management. This 'nightmare' is explained in terms of her inability to cope with undisciplined behaviour and consequently, to shift to a safer classroom. In major contrast to Tabitha's experience, Tasha constructs her pupils as unmanageable and violent. Her description hints that the construction of safety, whether physical or emotional, is also indicative of the teacher authority which is deployed in the class. Tasha recognises that neither she nor the class teacher could handle the pupils because she did not expect to witness this during training, nor was she equipped to exert classroom control at the time. The classroom can also be a site of physical violence among pupils and lack of control can aggravate the situation.

7.8 THE CONSTRUCTION OF SAFETY SPACES

7.8.1 Control and surveillant versus safety spaces

Most school premises have concrete walls, cameras and classroom doors and windows secured with burglar bars. While some trainee teachers in this study reacted to the presence of burglar bars as creating an atmosphere of enclosure and prisons, they soon changed their views after immersion in the school. Most regarded them as important safety measures which work in the best interests of pupils and staff.

> …those burglar bars, well I think it is a good thing. When I was a pupil here, there was one classmate who while playing fell on this side towards the door. His hands passed through the glass and he got a deep cut. He had to be taken to the hospital. Now with such measures, kids will not get hurt like this anymore, it protects them from harm (Kyle, T)
>
> …you see those handrails and the protection bars over there, well I remember these so well. When I was a kid I was running down the stairs and some kid pushed me, I rolled and fell but thankfully I was not hurt that much, just some bruises, but it could have been fatal for me. Now I see that they have put those mini gates on those stairs it is a good thing, no kids will fall like I did once… (Boaz, T)

These extracts refer to memories of trainee teachers that revealed the importance of safety measures like burglar bars which form part of the physical infrastructure of the school. They draw on their own experiences as pupils to explain how certain spaces inside the school could cause physical harm to pupils. While gates are described as safeguards of the pupils during school hours, further safety mechanisms to decrease the likelihood of accidents and unpleasant incidents remind the trainee teachers that schools can be dangerous places, suggesting the need for preventive measures.

7.8.2 School gates as safety and contested spaces

The school gates are often constructed as another important movement space by trainees. Bella and Kyle made frequent mention of activities near the front gate which was strategic in helping to control unauthorised access to the school. Bella's school has two gates which were separated by a short corridor. Parents could not enter the second gate in the morning and therefore they would have to wait in the space between the gates. This space was also used by parents to keep a tab on what was happening in the school (see chapter six) and keeping them enclosed within that space enables control of parents' access to the school premises. Bella witnessed strong symbolic violence and understood how inside information about classroom practices was passed from one parent to the next:

> I was waiting with them (parents). It was my first day and I had to wait for the second gate to be opened. No one paid attention to me, they must have thought I was also a parent. There were so many gossips, well news about what was going on in their children's class. They inquired about everything, transfer of pupils, the syllabus, the assessment. I felt, wow, those parents are well informed. I think they are themselves in that competition mode (referring to the pressure placed on pupils to excel academically), there is that strong academic stress which could be felt. I felt strange, it was violent.I was shocked they knew so much - how many times teachers go to the toilet per day, if they are on time with the syllabus, etc… (Bella T)

The physical layout to access the school is constructed as a safety mechanism against unruly parents or excessive intrusion at different times of the day. At the same time, being part of the crowd enabled Bella to identify alternate forms of control exercised by parents of teachers' work and general movement. Bella constructs that space as a violent one given that it was stressful and she could sense the constant pressure on teachers. The trainee teachers also noted that not controlling access through the main gate might be dangerous to the teachers.

> Parents can barge in any time of the day and come directly to the classrooms. Stories of parents barging in the classroom without the headmaster's knowledge are common. Safety measures in that case are subtler, the presence of CCTV surveillance, the strategic position of the headmaster's office, usually most visitors taking the main gate must pass by the headmaster's office before they can access the classrooms, and entry in visitors' books are some of the mechanisms witnessed. (Kyle T)

Kyle explains that police are always posted at the front gate to ensure a smooth start to the school day. They ensure pupils' security and help with the traffic flow which is dense before the start of school. While in Bella's case the front gate is constructed as accessible for gossip and surveillance of the teachers' work, in Kyle's case the school gate offers opportunities for physical violence inflicted on teachers and intrusion without permission. To counter this the gate represents limitation of access and enables the administrator to more effectively control visitors' presence inside the school premises and ensure the safety of its staff. In this manner, the school is constructed as a private space to which access is limited. The entrance is also constructed as a violent space where teachers need to be protected.

In short, the main entrance is constructed as harbouring both violence and safety depending on who is in focus. The presence of police triggers construction of children's safety while they access the school. Otherwise, the presence of the police is indicative of the need to avoid violent altercations between parents and the staff. The entrance gate acts as a major control of parents' movement inside the school, but it also signals the interactions and altercations they generate in that specific space. Finally, the findings suggest that the construct around space is not fixed but fluid and contingent on time, circumstances, and people.

7.9 Synthesis of the chapter

The findings presented in this chapter demonstrate that the spaces mentioned by the trainee teachers are defined through a subjective yet authentic set of experiences and observations. An insider perspective allowed them to construct notions of space as fluid, contingent on their own perceptions, emotions and experiences as trainee teachers rather than focusing on the outside appearance the school projects. While constructing these spaces as school context, it is clear that the spaces by themselves do not hold any value and meaning unless people enact and use them. The anecdotes captured in this chapter show that these spaceshold no meaning on their own but only come to life when actors start interacting within them. The nature of the interaction also signals power relationships and the degree of antagonism experienced. The same spaces can hold alternative meaning for these actors atdifferent points in time. For instance, the classroom is constructed as a space where there isresistance to change, where the trainee teacher claims his/her autonomy by taking initiativesto innovate, and as a violent or unsafe space. The colonisation of specific spaces at specific time of the day by actors (parents) illustrates the pressure placed on teachers to be always perform well. In short, this chapter discussed how the different spaces of pedagogical practice define the school context as an ecosystem where antagonism, resentment, and resistance are formed. Positive aspects like safety and positive emotions while engaging withpupils in class were also highlighted.

The next chapter shifts to the thematic representation of the findings (level two analysis) and foregrounds the emergence of key concepts which explicate how trainee teachers construct school context during placement.

SECTION THREE
The post walk phase

Theorisation and Thesis building

CHAPTER EIGHT

THEMATIC REPRESENTATION OF CONSTRUCTION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL CONTEXT

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous three chapters explored the ways in which primary school contexts are constructed as constituting people and places by trainee teachers. Level one analysis brought out what trainee teachers construct as school context, namely, interactions and relationships with people - both in the inner and outer bounds of the school compound, as well as the construction of spaces and places. The chapters which follow critically assess the key findings and propose emerging concepts which I term as 'constructs' in this chapter. These aim to explain the construction processes in this study. This chapter focuses on thesis building and theoretical concepts developed from the main analysis.

8.2 ORIENTATION

Four themes which emerged from data production and that were identified in the previous chapters are discussed in this chapter. These constructs are understood as embedding the trainee teachers' consciousness and interpretations as they enter school placement. In other words, these themes are drawn from the participants' own imagination or perceptions of primary schools prior to placement as well as their lived experiences during placement. Consequently, the construction of the social reality of primary school context is understood as an expression of ideas and views based on experiences which are shaped, transformed and communicated in a tangible (visible) and sharable (communicative) manner. Memory is scrutinised as the first theme which emerged from the analysis, followed by emotions, observation and assumptions. The chapter closes with a synthesis of the discussion on these themes as theoretical concepts, explicating how the construction of school context takes place in this study. These theoretical concepts are also examined in juxtaposition to the literature review (chapter two) and the theoretical framework discussed in chapter three. The constructs emerging from the analysis also uncover the dynamic nature of construction processes as part of the trainee teachers' professional development when being placed.

8.3 EMERGENT THEMES AND CONSTRUCTS FROM THE FINDINGS

8.3.1 Memories driving the constructions of school contexts

Central to this study, the use of memory in the construction process is one of the main themes that emerge. The data presented in chapters five to seven show that trainee teachers relied on their past experiences to construct their understanding of the constituent parts of the primary school context. It was noted that trainee teachers first used their memories to capture what was known and habitual, and later moved to what was contested about school context at the time of data collection. The conception of the known space in this study signals that the trainee teachers' physical presence in a primary school is sufficient to revive specific childhood memories of their schooling, irrespective of whether the placement site is familiar (known to them as a pupil orparent) or unfamiliar (completely unknown space) to them. The image of the school, as well as experiences of teaching and learning, enjoying childhood and playing with peers were engraved on their memories, thereby leading to the conception that the primary school was a known space.

The works of Denis & Marschall (2015) and Debus (2010), reveals that, during the process of using memories to unlock certain realities, the exactitude of the lived experience is not a prerequisite as the individual can rely on what closely resembles that experience. The resemblance then gives rise to representations or patterns associated with the memory-trace of the experience in question and underpins variations in construction patterns. In other words, the memory's variability underpins elements of authentic, multiple, and fluid perspectives of the past which foreground the construction process (Hamilton, 2002). The memory trace, that I call a signifier in this study, indicates the specific field it is used in totrigger and assist the evocation of these past lived experiences during placement. The field can be the school itself, its compound, or the neighbourhood and its constituent parts; or it can be restricted to more intimate spaces like classrooms, school kitchens, the school toilet, a pathway; or even artefacts and objects which act as triggers during the construction process.

The analysis revealed that the signifiers led to narrations of the trainee teachers' personal memories. For instance, Kyle and Boaz often retrieved from their past experiences as learners

as they delved into the construction process. Their constructions were drawn from their familiarity with the physical setting given that they were learners in the same schools more than a decade ago. Boaz is less nostalgic and engaged in recall and recollection. On the other hand, Kyle used the school site as a signifier, and this gave way to remembrance and reminiscence. Kyle's narrative of his first day at the school was based on the reminiscence of how he was valued as a role model having graduated from an ex-pupil to a teacher (refer to chapter five). He constantly used his experience as a learner as his point of departure to construct what he observed in his current school professional landscape. The triggers he referred to consisted of people, classrooms, the school kitchen, and specific places (supermarkets, the health centre and police station) surrounding the school compound.

On the other hand, Boaz recalled only a few cues from the past to unfold powerful contextualized responses which were directly linked to the way he had internalised the school context while learning to teach. For instance, he constructed pupils' safety by recalling how his classmate fell from the stairs after being pushed by friends or the (mis)use of a specific recreational space which was initially meant for playing table tennis. Moreover, both trainees' personal and intimate knowledge was unlocked by their affective bond with the place which was once their primary school. This also explains how the element of memory significantly influenced the trainee teachers' present as well as determined their placement experiences. Tabitha and Kiara quickly navigated childhood memories but did not rely on these throughout their constructions of the school context. Rather, their observations focused on collective memories of being pupils at a specific point in time.

To better capture memory as the building block for the construction of school context in this study, four signifiers are used to capture how the trainee teachers recall, recollect, reminisce and remember. Those signifiers are classified as (i) the resilient and emblematic, (ii) the transactive (iii) the communicative and, (iv) the autobiographical and cultural. These terms are used in this study to critically analyse the different ways in which the trainee teachers' personal and collective experiences lead to their construction of the school context. The resilient signifier is apparent in this study through the retrospective element to construct a

narrative of the past, triggering the recall of practices, routines, and learning experiences during placement. The emblematic signifier (Stern, 2021), on the other hand, refers to the symbolic as embodied in texts, architecture, physical spaces, rites, routines, celebrations, objects and artefacts which the trainee teachers use as a trigger to remember both individual and collective experiences during placement. Nodes in the recollection and remembrance process are captured in Kyle and Boaz's anecdotes.

This type of memory can equally contain iconic elements whereby the visual stimuli or visual representation like a classroom, or a spotin the playground like the table tennis court, may act as the main register which is retained by the trainee teachers as they make their constructions. For instance, during the transect walk, physical spaces like classrooms, the school kitchens, and school toilets communicated the degree of collegiality, danger and threats, and the learning experiences as well as feelingsof strangeness and familiarity to the trainees. Routines, like being given the responsibility to keep order and attend the school assembly, were remembered as being either empowering or antagonistic. The communicative signifier, in turn, refers to the transmission of knowledgethat relies on orality and anecdotes.

In the current study, the trainee teachers' construction of pupils, teaching, school practices and the neighbourhood were also influenced by their exposure to events and experiences as pupils attending the school in which they were placed as trainee teachers. As children who happened to share that specific space at that point in time, and now as trainee teachers on training, memories influenced the ways in which they gathered new knowledge and selected knowledge of something with respect to the school, its functioning, and surroundings. Constructions made in this manner can sometimes refer to the procedural aspects where the meaning is created in the course of the narrations of the trainee teachers while collecting the data. In other words, what becomes part of the data was neither prompted, induced nor prepared but emerged while collecting data. The communicative signifier is also visible when the episodic memory is used to narrate experiences and encounters, as well as the trainees' own immersion in the practice of teaching. Reference to how they learnt to teach, and what

they observed as collegial and non-collegial relationships as they were immersed in the teaching context were foregrounded by the trainees as a way of constructing physical spaces and professional relationships (and their interaction with the school affects practice).

The transactive signifier is made visible by the trainee teachers' constant reference to their past experiences through an exchange between individuals within the school environment. Remembrance of a particular event is linked to people and places that are part of the school. For instance, Kyle started to talk about the dark room while referring to the janitor who was present at the time he was conversing. The presence of the janitor, who was also part of Kyle's memory since he worked there at the time Kyle was a pupil, prompted Kyle to remember the significance of the dark room. The transactive signifier signals that memory is also a collective and shared experience, although the experience may be dualistic. On the one hand, Kyle evoked the fear of the janitor and his dark room while he was a pupil in the school and, on the other, the janitor who intruded in the conversation proudly feels he contributed to restoring discipline among unruly pupils. Archie interacted with different people, places and spaces to construct the school context. He builds on his own experiences as an ex-police officer to bond with the school staff, for instance by minimising conflict between staff and parents, and instilling certain values like patriotism. In short, the transactive signifier addresses memory as people's interaction within a space in time as collectively rememorating events which describe school context.

Finally, memories also invite the recollection of events and experiences usually presented through the autobiographical (personal) and cultural (collective) memory which offer insights from the personal memory noted as the individual trainee teachers associate a particular situation which they experienced in the past with a prevailing situation during their training. It is also noted that these different spaces ultimately became the memory sites of trainee teachers' professional development temporally and spatially. This signifier also signals the collective memories and specific situations the trainee teachers, as a group of people, associate with what they recollect from having been pupils, parents or strangers in the school environment prior to immersion during placement.

Through memories, the trainee teachers are equipped with the capacity to remember with a purpose. For instance, in Tabitha's case, experiences of a lack of hygiene and educational resources generated awareness of the need for pupils to be well-groomed and well-prepared in class. The school is transformed into a memory site which allows the trainee teachers to recall good or bad experiences and events at the time they were pupils. The association with personal learner histories to construct, for instance, discipline, correct pupil behaviour, good manners and learning readiness, was evoked by Tabitha as she compared the experiences of pupils in her school to her own experiences as a learner. Her expectations were deeply rooted in her own childhood experiences as a primary school learner. Consequently, her construct of learner dispositions in terms of neatness, life skills, and being equipped with basic life skills as prerequisites for learning led to her pathologizing the pupils as lacking.

8.2.2 The use of memory as an emerging concept in this study

The findings suggest that each trainee teacher constructs the school context with memory as a starting point. Each has a mental image of the school context consisting of events, people, places, spaces, critical incidents, and certain professional relationships and practices. The retrospective element therefore underpins the construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction of school context during professional development. The school context is explicated as both an imagined and an interpreted landscape (Butler, 2006) given that the trainee teachers' own memories of places, events and encounters are presented as dialectical relations of the past-present. In the process, trainee teachers drew on their past experiences to define the contours of school context. Figure 8.1 explicates the ways in which memory is used as a conceptual tool to construct school context in this study.

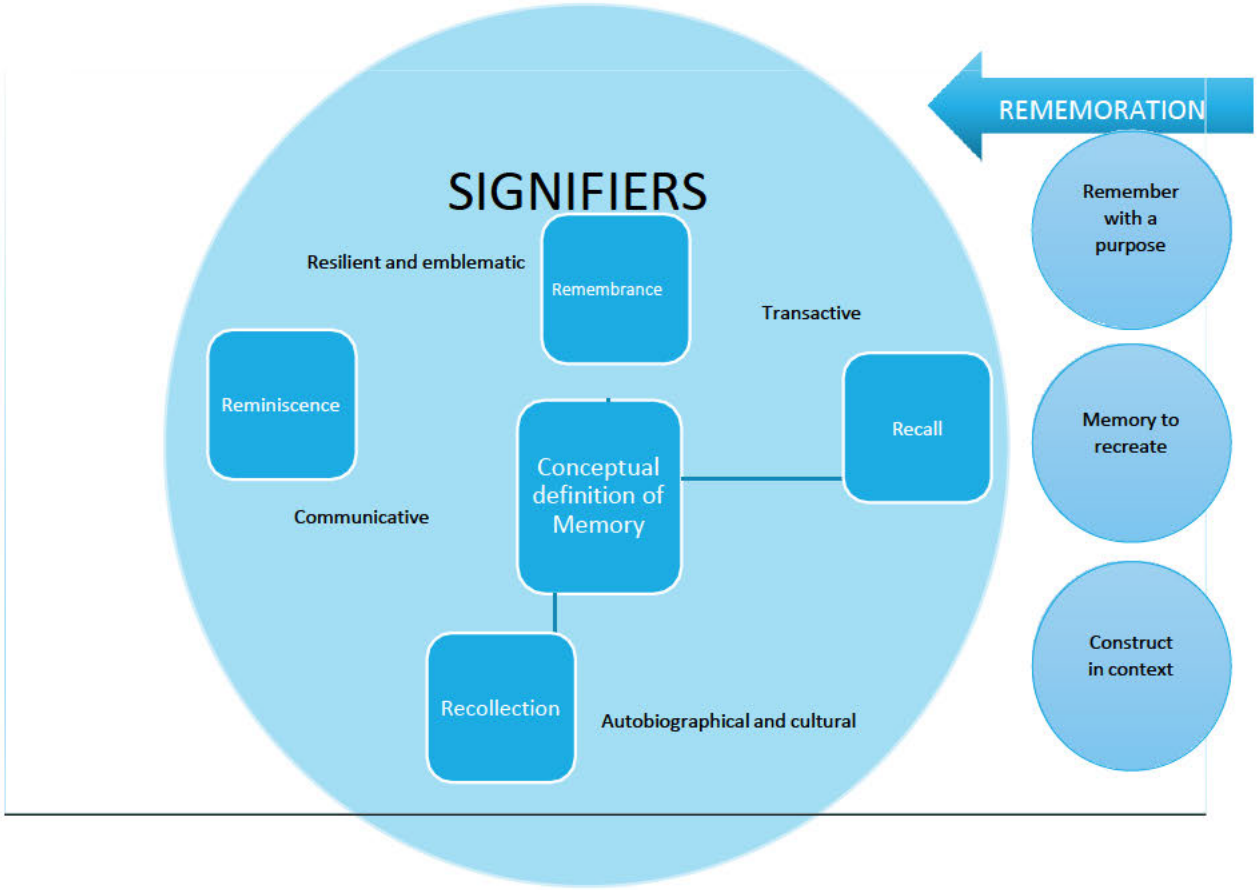

Figure 8.1: Describing memory as a conceptual lens in this study

Using memory as a construct may be described as a rememoration process. The term is derived from the Latin etymology 'rememoratus' and is defined by Merriam Webster's Dictionary (2021) as the ability to recall or remember by means of memory. My reading on the ways in which memory is used by trainee teachers to construct the school context brings me to understand that, in the process of reviving an experience of their past in their narration, the trainee teachers either recreated or retrieved past experiences to make sense of the present situation. Initially coined in psychanalytic studies (Botella, 2015; Stern, 2009; Bohleber, 2007; Freud, 2004; Akoma, 2000 Green 1990; Laugrand, 1999), the term 'rememoration' refersto the notion of memory to elicit information from the past. Autobiographical studies (Pukart et al., 2019) have also captured the essence of induction and imagination as well as stories around the recollection of war memories (Gordon, 2020) whereby war zones and subjects of wars (like Vietnamese and Japanese viewpoints) are used and remembered as historical sites

and voices countering American imperialist views. However, in this study, the revival of the term rememoration as a sociological concept extends its meaning to the following: (i) using memory to remember with a purpose, (ii) memory leading to the revival of an event, situation or experience of the past in order to create or recreate an experience in a specific context or setting. Signifiers are included in the process and act as triggers or prompts which scaffold rememoration patterns across space and time. Construction by rememoration simply depicts the measurable, understandable, bounded, and contextual facets of school contexts (Williams et. al., 2003; Davidson and Milligan, 2004). It refers to the process of rememoration as not limited to remembering or recollecting, but also encompasses meaning making which can be projected to both the present and the future.

8.4 CONSTRUCTION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL CONTEXT DRIVEN BY EMOTIONS

The second emerging concept that captures the ways in which trainee teachers in this study construct social context is linked to emotions, or what I would term the affective experiences of the trainee teachers. The use of emotions to construct social reality as the point of departure is indicative of feelings which shed light on oneself and one's interpersonal relationships. This includes familial and cultural practices which are self-contained and authentic when displayed as a human experience and embedded in specific socio-cultural contexts (McLure, 2010; Cushman, 1995; Burkitt, 1991). The sociocultural theory foregrounds emotions as being culturally informed and socially crafted.

According to this theory, the confluence of events, traditions, mores, and routines embedded in some cultures and social contexts affects the way emotions are constructed and read. In this study, emotion renders visible the trainee teachers' professional journey as affective experiences, and eventually leads to specific ways of constructing school contexts. Such experiences refer to the personal feelings of the trainee teachers (Witt & Goode, 2013; Boulton & Hramiak, 2012; Sheddon & Biasutti, 2008; Tsangaridou, 2008; Chaplain, 2008), or their emotional awareness (Bjerstedt, 2021; Brownsword, 2019; Brejard et al., 2011; Lane, 2000) and the expression of the trainee teacher self or what Karl Rogers terms human statements.

It involves ongoing self-construction of people, practice, resources, and places. I refer to Rosaldo's (1984) statement that conceptualises emotion as contributing to knowledge construction as a means to gain '…meaning, salience and form always in relation to a set of cultural norms and practices', thus, explaining the nature of emotion as a complex set of evaluative dimensions in the context inwhich it is displayed as understandable, appropriate and socially acceptable.

Taking this view,the presence, absence, and expression of emotions can be positioned as a source of knowledge about the world (McLure, 2010). For example, personal expression of anger or shock as an affective experience may signal danger, a feeling of social injustice, and abuse ofpower where the experience becomes a context enabling the reading of the wider school context. In other words, the trainee teachers' emotions were translated as affective experiences that fed into the construction of different units of the school context. Their emotional experiences are expressed as love and care, disgust and annoyance, dejection and awe, fear and anger, or resentment and antagonism. In doing so, constructions through emotions are expressed, embodied, and managed in specific instances of their placement experiences. In short, categories of affective experiences are noted as leading to trainees' unique construct of school contexts while they learn their craft (Shuck, Albornoz & Winberg, 2013; Goldie, 2004; Dirkx, 2001). This process is further explicated in the next section.

8.4.1 The emotional constructions of pupils as lacking/needing fixing

The analysis in chapter five revealed that the construction of learners was emotionally loaded. Tabitha, Kiara, Kyle and Tasha saw their pupils as lacking, needing fixing or being at risk. The designated pupils were termed as vulnerable or requiring appropriate nurturing (Harden, 2012; Scott, 2008; Bendelow & Mayall, 2000) because they do not match the expectations of the trainee teachers who expected that their pupils would have similar dispositions to theirs when they were pupils. Kiara and Tabitha's narratives revealed emotions which were guided by the need to fix pupils in line with expected values. Tabitha emphasised the need to foreground life skills and nurture the learners by creating a conducive classroom environment which would ease teaching. Both trainee teachers insisted that the wellbeing of each pupil

was a prerequisite to counter the disadvantages experienced at home through learning opportunities provided in the classroom. Kyle and Tasha acknowledged difficult homes as a major factor leading to academic disadvantage and built on that assumption to extend care to these pupils. Knowledge of the pupils' home background led trainee teachers to emotionally connect and empathise with the pupils, and this influenced their pedagogical investment in class. Furthermore, when the desired return is not forthcoming, the trainee teacher's anger and dejection, as in Kyle's case, results in another set of constructions around pupils' misbehaviour. A negative response to pupils' conditions that gives rise to negative labelling, as in the case of Tasha, implies inconsideration towards her pupils.

Further analysis of the orderly routine during recess allows the trainee teacher to construct the physical and intellectual safety of pupils who can potentially suffer physical harm while playing, highlighting the emotive. Physical signs like burglar bars, soundproof classrooms, or a well-protected school yard, were constructed as safety in the best interests of the pupils while a tarred playground was viewed as hazardous and dangerous. The discharge of love and care was, however, seen differently by Kyle, who felt that regular disciplinary sanctions, namely, corporal punishment, against pupils may prevent misbehaviour in the classroom and reinforce their willingness to perform well.

8.4.2 The emotional construct of the primary teacher's work during placement

Kyle's affective experience blends the frustration of being seen by the teaching staff and administrator as 'Mr Replacement' with his own powerlessness in the face of rowdy pupils whom he termed as 'problem cases'. In this sense, his efforts and emotional engagement showcase one of the various discursive repertoires of the emotional experiences of trainee teachers and also represents their constant interrelationships within the school's ecological environment (Ball, 2000; Brofenbrenner, 1996). The trainees' concerns about the measurable indicators of performance, like which class they are given to teach, is manifested through competition, leading to being given the cold shoulder and a lack of trust among colleagues. Moreover, as in the case of Bella, the indifference of the school administrator who imposes orders, give rise to alienation and detachment. Another pertinent aspect of emotions in the

trainee teachers' construction is reflected by the intellectual currency (Hargreaves, 2001) of teaching and learning which are described as affective experiences of what it meant to be a trainee teacher (Beatty, 2006). Performativity was signalled (Blackmore & Sachs, 1999) and was constructed through the emotional exhaustion of teachers who are expected to meet the demands of various stakeholders. For instance, Archie, Bella and Tabitha showcased the pressure of working in a star school as compared to working in a ZEP school; Kyle, Bella and Boaz expressed exasperation at dealing with parents who are unruly, demanding or in a position of power; and Tabitha and Bella described teacher accountability as emotionally draining.

8.4.3 The emotional construct of interactions and relationships

Emotions were also displayed to construct collegial experiences and offered insights into the lived experiences of trainees as they embark on teaching practicum. Apprehension, fear, resentment, and boredom describe the ways in which trainee teachers reject or accept certain conduct, attitudes and treatment imposed on them. For example, they may show rejection through apprehension and contempt and display acceptance through deployment of care. Their emotions also translate into their expectations and reactions to certain unexpected situations encountered at school. Exposure to school context during the phase of professional development and socialisation helps the trainee teachers to construct school as a workplace and interpret support and collegial standards as constantly shifting in relation to people, place, and space. For instance, bonding occurs through happiness, like celebrating a colleague's wedding, a farewell, and a birthday, or having a get together. Such bonding is expressed in the form of solidarity with one another during crisis situations; for instance, Boaz's anecdote of how the schoolteachers attempted to stop a parent from attacking another teacher. In other words, positive and negative emotions embed practices and allow the trainee teachers to define what they experienced and understand as their future professional workspace. Their feelings allowed them to demonstrate social bonds. For instance, Kyle reacted to shallow or false solidarity after witnessing the lack of support for a colleague in a difficult situation with parents while Boaz referred to the emergence of familial bonding among teachers who supported one another. Bella and Kiara constructed collegial relationships as contingent on

strong leadership. Bella resented the inflexibility of the school administration which at times gave rise to mistrust and competition among colleagues, whileKiara expressed her relief at feeling part of the teaching staff in a school with democratic leadership approaches which allowed informal interaction and sharing of good practice.

8.4.4 The Construction of teaching as emotional labour

The construction of school context through emotions also results in the construction of teaching as emotional labour (Hochschild, 1975). Four trainee teachers evoked teaching as an emotionally loaded profession. They demonstrate through their conversations that they enter teaching practice with preconceptions, assumptions and beliefs about teaching and learning, relationships and the skills expected of them. Their voices echo with experiences of alienation, dissonance and strain while interacting within the primary school context. For instance, the constant monitoring, surveillance, and measurement of the primary school teachers' competencies made trainee teachers realise that teaching in such contexts imposes pressure on the individual teacher in charge of a class. Trainee teachers observed how the schoolteachers deal with parents during face-to-face interactions. Furthermore, the teacher enters a relationship with pupils, parents, and teachers alike, leading to an emotional state which is required of them for the smooth running of the school day.

Finally, the administrator leading the school usually exercises some control over teachers and trainees by modifying, restricting, and redefining certain behaviour patterns, practices, rules, and regulations. This usually results in what Hochschild (1983) calls emotional dissonance. For instance, the headteacher in Bella's school causes stress among his staff, especially the teaching force, by exerting control over them. At the same time, certain modifications to the infrastructure are used to redefine the physical mobility of teachers and pupils (for example, the playground and the front gates are used as monitoring devices which curb physical mobility). The headteacher also attempts to restrict pedagogical choices by favouring a teacher-centred pedagogy and opposing innovative teaching practices. Bella understood that, although the methods and pedagogical approaches were meaningful and enjoyable, she was always faced with defiance of the headmaster and evoked her struggles to maintain an

equilibrium while she strove for more visibility and acknowledgement. Certain in-school practices were used as tools to exert pressure on teaching staff: the school assembly was often exploited as an antagonistic platform to reinforce power relationships while access to the staff room was restricted to some trainee teachers with the purpose of discouraging collegial bonds which may arise between the newcomers and permanent staff.

Such constructions within the workplace also point to the display of outlaw emotions, i.e., any emotions which go against conventional codes, like the trainee teacher's anger at the headteacher for discriminating against him or her (Hochschild, 1979; Jaggar, 1989). Feelings of marginalisation during school placement usually position trainee teachers in a liminal space, whereby they are neither a student nor a full-fledged teacher. Trainee teachers also commented on experiences of being denied recognition as teachers and facing denial and hindrances through sabotage. Sometimes these are displayed in a subtle manner, like re-appropriation of certain spaces (the school stadium or classroom walls as pedagogical supports); extending collegial relationships with people other than the school staff; deference to the headmaster's directives regarding replacement, or simply avoiding responsibilities when the opportunity arises.

However, this study also recognises that emotions have the positive capacity to project and extend constructive relationships among colleagues, pupils, and parents among others. This helps to situate the self in interaction with others while these emotions are subjected to social norms in specific formal and informal situations simply because emotions help enact roles which are guided by social rules (Hochschild, 1979, p. 551). Emotions form part of the professional socialisation of the trainee teachers and help them to express and manage their feelings based on their own expectations and expectations of others while in training. Teaching is also constructed as an emotional job. When confronted with the school reality, trainee teachers voiced that the profession demanded the deployment of care towards the pupils they were in contact with during placement. Tabitha assumes that children needed fixing and consequently re-engineered her efforts towards inculcating life skills prior to formal

teaching. By focusing on hygiene and the inculcation of good manners, she constantly associated her decisions with her new role as a mother while referring to the pupils she was involved with during placement. In her case, teaching was constructed as a caring profession which involves tackling deficits through morally right decisions. Although Tabitha did not tap the successful outcomes, her motherly gestures towards pupils are evocative of trainee teachers' decisions as influenced by emotions.

8.4.5 The constructions of school contexts driven by emotionally driven experiences

Drawing on a sociological lens (Hochschild, 1979; Boiger & Mesquita, 2012; Brody & Hall, 2000; Fineman, 2003), emotions in this study display the socially constructed patterns of sensations, expressive gestures, and cultural meanings which are organised around a relationship to the social object (Gordon, 1981; Hochschild, 1979; Goffman, 1959; Kivisto & Pittman, 2007). The display of emotions sometimes arises in the form of basic emotions like happiness, anger, fear, and sadness but also in the form of subjugation, powerlessness, resentment, and boredom. In short, the reality of an event or an occurrence is given meaning and understanding based on the emotional or affective state impacting on the trainee teachers' experiences. Emotional states allow trainee teachers to construct school contexts as their overall affective experiences. Deployment of care or experimenting with outlaw emotions may be a reaction or resistance to the school's habitus. At the same time, the display of trainee teachers' emotional state shadowing the conventional and expected responses illustrates their own habitus taking over the school's habitus.

When trainee teachers enter placement, they start to act in the field and experience different levels of contestation and power relations. Sometimes the conflicting nature of these relationships, like the ones with distant colleagues or authoritative headteachers may lead to outlaw emotions or/and emotional labour as well as feelings of positive experiences. The display of those emotions is what is visible. However, all these emotional states are sometimes attuned to the field and its habitus. For instance, Bella's memorable intervention during the morning assembly at school and Kyle's smooth transition from being a pupil to being a trainee teacher showcase such emotions.

The trainee teachers in this study display their feelings and the schools they were placed are depicted as affective spaces. Some schools allowed professional bonding right from the start while others were more austere and uninviting to the newcomer. The initial consideration of affective experiences resides in the feel of the school as a place. The ambiance of the school indicates the trainee teachers' feelings about placement and contributes to the ways school context is constructed. In describing the four schools which were used as data collection sites in chapter four, trainee teachers gave an overview of these schools as relatively calm with appropriate infrastructure (in the case of Archie), challenging and stressful (in the case of Bella and Tabitha) or busy and well frequented. The schools were identified as containing phlegmatic, choleric, and sanguine characters which made up the school habitus (refer to chapter five). The trainee teachers in turn refer to those emotions as contributors to their construction of relationships with teachers, pupils, parents and school administrators, among others because, for them, the physical, affective, and intellectual climates were indicative of school practices and the types of relationships emerging and being sustained.

When using emotions, trainee teachers' constructions are described in two basic categories, namely, surface and deep emotions. These categories are borrowed from the work of Hochschild (1983), Goffman (1959) and Stanislavski (1868). The surface and real emotional constructs which trainee teachers become aware of while constructing relationships and the social bonds they forge during placement are varied and obvious. The surface emotional constructs denote the formal appearance cultivated by specific performance and projected to any visitor or stranger to the school. For instance, an actor's performance is constructed based on the outsider's own assumptions, preconceptions and existing knowledge. The actor, in turn, assumes a façade which hides certain realities linked to how professional conduct, collegiality, accountability, and leadership are perceived and represented to school outsiders. For instance, to the outside observer, the enactment of the school assembly is defined as a routine task which sets the school day for pupils and teachers alike. The trainee teachers' preconceived knowledge about teaching and the primary school resided within the surface emotional construct prior to joining placement. However, deep emotions triggered by their lived experiences enabled the trainee teachers to read the school assembly as patronising and

antagonistic (in the case of Bella); lacking patriotism (in the case of Archie); displaying pride as well as a sense of achievement (Kyle and Boaz); and estrangement (the case of Bellaand Kiara). Deep emotions make trainee teachers aware of the ways in which parents pressurise practice and control performance; and how administrators use the timetable to control the movement of teachers and reject unwanted pedagogical choices.

Deep emotional constructs therefore emerge when the trainee teachers are confronted with situations and events which are peculiar and unexpected to them, giving rise to an emotional response which is self-induced and which triggers introspection. In short, deep emotions are evoked and the trainee teacher becomes fully aware and even projects some reflection of the incident which eventually marked him or her. Kyle's narration of the tumultuous exchange between a teacher and a parent is loaded with emotional response which linked the incident to a preceding event linked to lack of trust among colleagues. The same trainee teacher referred to the lack of gratitude among pupils when the trainee teacher was making an effort to help them. He explained how anger, disbelief and the loss of control become obvious when misbehaviour and indiscipline overwhelm the trainee teacher.

The way Kyle constructed managing ill-discipline, unruly children, and parents, as well as his reservations about friendships with colleagues resulted in a backlog of emotional experiences induced by anger and mistrust as well as friendliness and pride. Recalling those situations also allowed Kyle to elicit an emotional response which led to the construction of professional relationships as offering opportunities for social bonds as well as breeding resentment and antagonism. His case highlights those emotions contribute to the externalisation of an authentic response given a particular situation – which otherwise is not visible – and thus giving rise to genuine, spontaneous feelings generating knowledge of certain relationships directly experienced by the trainee teachers. Those deep emotional constructs also legitimise the trainee teachers' stories, narrations and anecdotes of events and incidents they lived through during placement.

8.5 CONSTRUCTION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL CONTEXT DRIVEN BY GAZE

The third element contributing to construction of school context in this study is the trainee teacher's gaze. While memory captures experiences through the retrospective element and emotions through the affective, the gaze renders the perceived visible and represents the individual's awareness of himself/herself and others. The analysis presented in chapters five to seven describes how trainee teachers observe incidents, events and interactions which they interpret as school context. In this manner, the notion of gaze in this study is conceptualised as what the trainee teachers observe and 'look at' in view of documenting what they see to construct their own worldview (Hooks, 1992) of the school context. The gaze thus opens possibilities for them to voice their own understanding of relationships, practices, events and occurrences during the placement period. The notion of gaze also aims to deconstruct the power relations which frame their professional practice and understanding of relations and spaces which make up the school context. The notion of gaze is widely researched and documented in the social sciences (Sartre, 1943a, 1956b; Foucault, 1975a, 1984b; Lacan, 1981; Derrida, 2008; Hooks, 1992; Urry, 2002). Inspired by the seminal thinkers who developed the term, a theoretical concept is developed to explain how the trainee teacher's gaze helps construct school context. The findings suggest that the act of gazing is not straightforward and linear, but operates in the following manner. The act of gazing goes far beyond looking at something or someone. It is linked to introspection, reflection and voice. Consequently, to capture the ways in which gazing is treated in this study, four types of gazes are premised before the trainee teacher can eventually develop and construct parts of the primary school context using what I call the transversal gaze (See Figure 8.2).

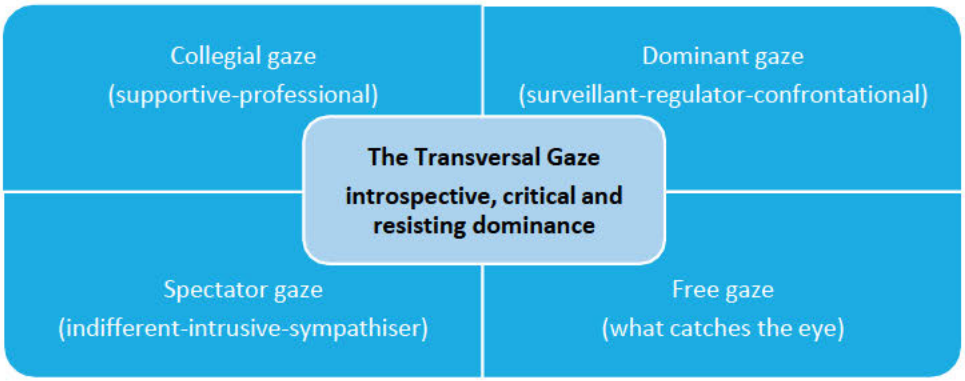

Figure 8.2: The transversal gaze constructing school context

8.5.1 Construction of school context through the free gaze

The free gaze indicates naïve contemplation of any situation, using prior knowledge as a referent to read the situation. It is characterised by the immediacy and spontaneity of what caught the eye (Doyle, 1977). Compared to the single gaze (Smidekova et al., 2020), the free gaze is open to any interpretation based on one-on-one interaction and the observation of the trainee teacher. It refers to the first impression of the school, staff, pupils and teachers. The free gaze was apparent in the trainee teachers' narratives about their first day at school. Kiara, for instance, referred to the way the pupils looked at her and how she tried to interpret what they were inferring by her presence. Kyle's and Boaz's gaze fell on the ways they were introduced and received as newcomers. It follows that the trainee's free gaze mirrors the behaviours of the administrators, pupils and teachers. The free gaze also suggests that the observer makes a surface reading of the situation, almost offering an ignorant response to a situation, like that the classroom is meant for teaching and learning or that the burglar bars make the school look like a prison. Trainee teachers are likely to shift away from the free gaze.

8.5.2 Construction of the school context through the collegial gaze

The trainee teachers evoke support and bonding as well as the spirit of familiarity while entering the school placement as a site of professional development. They were able to construct the school context based on what they observed as supportive relationships, sharing and bonding as well as offering solidarity to colleagues in critical situations. The collegial gaze also contains observations of inclusive practices like treating newcomers like members of the teaching staff and developing friendships over time. However, it has its flipside; some trainee teachers refer to the indifference and estrangement inflicted on them. For instance, Bella mentioned how she experienced an indifferent gaze when she joined and her presence was open to interpretation. She was often mistaken as the janitor or an attendant and was even termed a helper instead of a trainee teacher. The collegial gaze is therefore described in terms of vertical and horizontal relationships. The vertical relationships are represented by formal, autocratic, and hierarchical relationships while the horizontal relationships illustrate warmth, friendship and bonding arising from interaction with

colleagues and people inside the school. Figure 8.3 presents the representation of the collegial gaze which is detailed below.

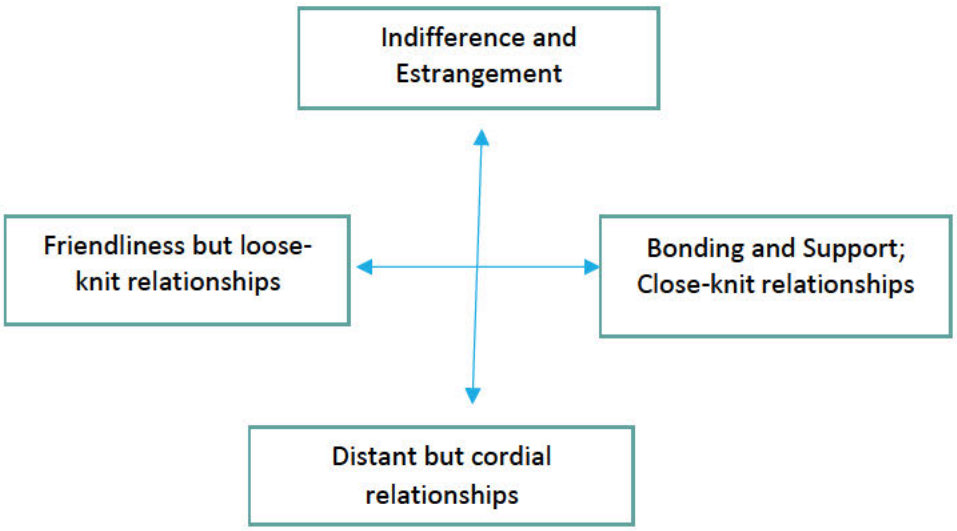

Figure 8.3: Representation of the collegial gaze as experienced by trainee teachers.

8.5.3 Construction of the school context in terms of the spectator gaze

The analysis signals the spectator gaze (McGowan, 2003) as trainee teachers refer to incidents and situations which shocked them as bystanders. This type of gaze allowed them to internalise and learn through observation. Kyle referred to the altercation between an unruly parent and a teacher who was denied support by his colleagues; Kiara and Bella recounted standing in the parent zone and being mistaken as one of them; Boaz witnessed the support offered to a colleague while trying to calm an angry parent and Tasha saw parents gathering near the school gate. In all these instances, the trainee teachers were spectators and sympathisers amidst the transgressions and darker sides of school life. The findings also showcase this type of gaze as being inflicted on teachers by people standing in the periphery and outer bounds, usually termed as intruders in the teachers' space. For instance, Bella, Tabitha, Tasha and Kiara referred to parents as imposing themselves on the affairs of the school.

8.5.4 Construction of the school context using the dominant gaze

This type of gaze is drawn from the Foucauldian Panopticon and the disciplinary gaze (Raible & Irizarry, 2016) which describes the authoritarian gaze as fostering surveillance, control and self-regulation of behaviour. Bella explains how specific spaces were centralised and colonised by parents and that the administrator monitors the movement and performances of teachers in her school. For instance, the school stadium was defined as the central control where parents conducted ongoing surveillance of teaching staff, while the headmaster's office was strategically placed to monitor staff's physical movement. Bella described the authoritarian gaze as policing the teachers' bodies and practices in the socio-political context of their work. Such control takes the form of requiring newcomers to fill in the movement book each time they leave the school, or changing the teacher's timetable. Parents' gossiping and sharing information about classroom practices and teachers' performance also highlight (i) the pressure on teachers to be accountable, (ii) how, in turn, teachers try to outperform others and self-regulate their behaviour, and (iii) the focus on academic performance which adds pressure. The authoritarian gaze allowed Bella to conclude that such stringent control led to ambivalence and invited confrontation and hostility between the administrator and the teaching staff. The control and power optimised through such a gaze reinforces distant collegial relationships and mistrust.

8.5.5 The construction of primary school context as driven by the transversal gaze

The transversal gaze refers to situations where trainee teachers read the ways in which they can resist and speak back to the four different types of gaze they were exposed to and used. It confronts power relationships and subordination, and in a way draws closer to Hooks' Oppositional gaze (1992) because it contains an element of resistance and voice. The transversal gaze allows the trainee to construct the school context by means of introspection rather than retrospection on an incident, event or experience witnessed and lived during placement. The trainee teacher diagnoses the situation as an insider-outsider standing in a liminal space (Turner, 1967), ready to transition to the next stage of their professional

development. In the process, the trainee also deconstructs and reconstructs school context because they see power as asymmetrical and being subtly reversed when teachers reclaim their rightful position. In this manner, the transversal gaze captures interrogations of malpractices and imposition of control; it allows trainee teachers to rethink the ways they relate to and connect with colleagues within specific professional and personal spaces; negotiate their own professional space and identity during placement; revoke certain decisions through innovative practices and initiation; and finally, reverse negative gazes by making themselves visible as indicated in figure 8.4 below.

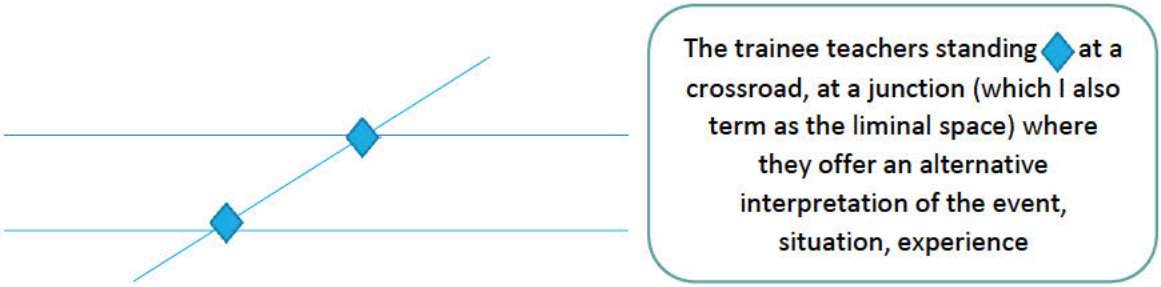

Figure 8.4: Explaining the transversal gaze in this study.

The transversal gaze as illustrate in figure 8.4 refers to an authentic and alternative gaze to the various elements of school context. Such gaze offers the possibility for trainee teachers to reflect on what they perceive and represent as lived aspects of school contexts and are usually different if not unlikely to those who are used to the school. The accounts for Kiara, Boaz and Kyle's broader understanding of classroom functions. While Boaz gazes at the classroom as a collegial space, Kyle and Kiara construct it in terms of its disciplinary functions. Their gaze allowed them to construct it as a space of practice where the teacher is in control of events, pupils and learning. The specificity of the transversal gaze allows room for personal constructions which are evocative of an insider's daily practices. Tabitha introduced the contextual elements that embed teaching, and referred to knowledge of her pupils, their home backgrounds and their socio-economic situations as fundamental elements that impacton their learning experiences. Her constructions of teaching and learning do not forego the context in which she would be teaching her pupils. Her gaze was focused on poverty and deprivation as negatively influencing practice and performance, hence constructing pupils aslacking.

The transversal gaze not only captures the trainees' subjective understanding of school context based on the reading of an event or incident as a meaningful occurrence, but also brings out what they contemplate as meaningful constructions of school context. Several extracts from the findings can be used to illustrate this. The first describes the construction of safety inside the school. Archie, Kyle and Boaz refer to burglar bars and doors as being of the upmost importance given that pupils were usually turbulent when they played with theirpeers and such measures hindered potential physical harm. This offers insight into school contexts which can be a source of danger and physical harm. Far from being constructed negatively, the presence of burglar bars connotes safety.

The second example illustrates gazing at classroom behaviour as narrated by Kyle and Tasha. While they offer a deficit gaze on the pupils' background, they also stand on the transversal border when they start constructing pupils as recalcitrant and uncooperative. The third illustration is captured in Boaz's and Kyle's cases, as both witnessed altercations between teachers and parents, but the gaze allowed them to construct collegiality as fluid and contingent on support deployed on the spot by colleagues. Finally, the gaze over control and monitoring of parents was foregrounded by Bella and Kiara, with both explaining that voyeurism influences teaching performance. Their gaze transcends the free gaze to construct intrusive relations as constituting school context.

8.6 THE CONSTRUCTING SCHOOL CONTEXT USING ASSUMPTIONS

Assumptions are central to the ways in which trainee teachers construct school context in this study. Tabitha was the first to showcase assumptions as she constructs pupils as lacking, while Kyle and Tasha also made assumptions about pupils' behaviour as influenced by their home backgrounds. In scrutinising the findings, assumptions can be conceptualised in terms of the following: (i) assumptions are evocative of personal bias which is a subjective worldview based on own beliefs, values and experiences; (ii) they refer to the ways of knowing usually referred to as the state of being aware of something based on own personal truth; and (iii) they are a taken-for-granted view such as accepting information about an event at face value.

Together, these elements constitute construction by means of unacknowledged assumptions about underperforming pupils and uncooperative parents in this study.

A closer look at the sociological relevance of using assumptions to construct school context suggests that people use their preconceived ideas, biases, and beliefs to construct the social reality around them. By constructing children as lacking or needing fixing, Tabitha concludes that pupils are in a pathological state by juxtaposing her own experiences as a pupil with her personal knowing of her pupils' realities. Tasha's bias in constructing pupils and their parents as lacking highlights that the trainee teacher's habitus is in conflict with that of her learners. Her expectations feed her assumptions that pupils from deprived areas, living in unstable homes and neighbourhoods are likely to underperform at school. The fraught relationships with parents reinforce such assumptions.

8.7 SYNTHESIS OF THE CHAPTER

Four critical concepts were developed in this chapter to explicate how trainee teachers construct the school context. This is illustrated in the figure 8.5.

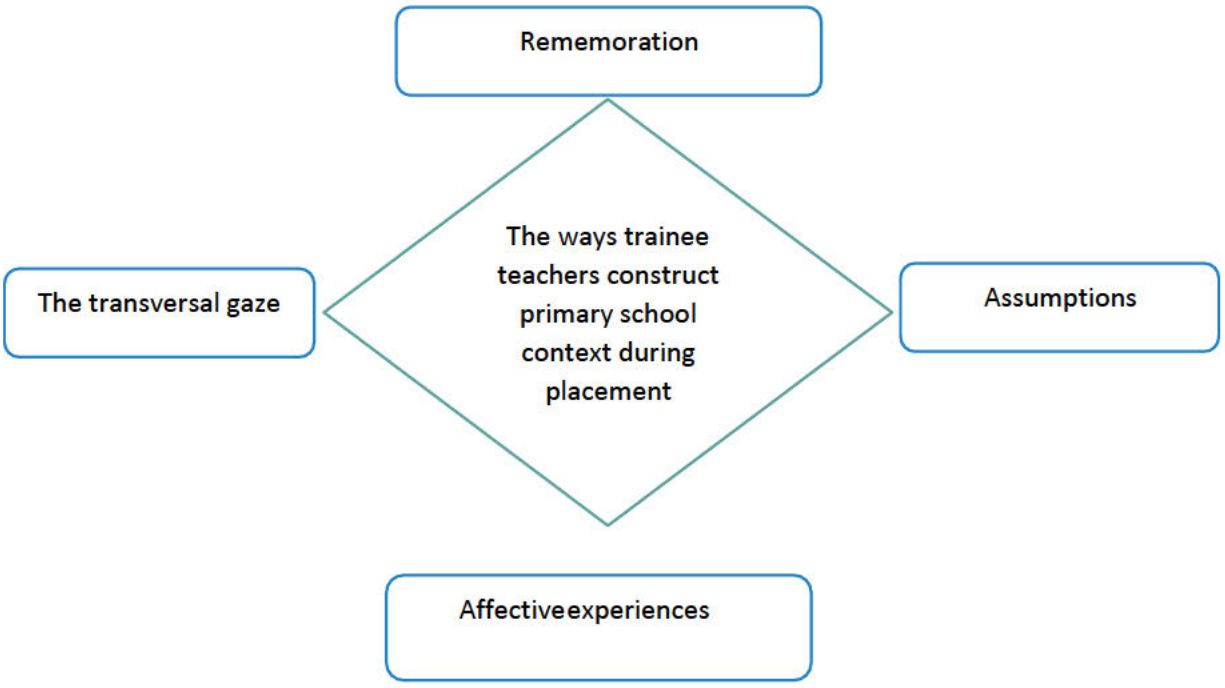

Figure 8.5: The conceptualisation of trainee teachers' construction of school context during placement

Revisiting the conceptualisations of memory, emotions, gaze and assumptions, a sociological understanding was employed to best capture how placement experiences allow the trainee teachers to construct school context. These constructions converge towards a model of understanding school placement as praxis. The four concepts are pivotal and are not used in equal share by the trainee teachers. However, they render visible the ways in which school context is deciphered and understood during placement. The constructions also enable a better understanding of the roles and functions of pre-service teacher professional development in context.

The section which follows, constituting of chapter nine and ten, offers a thorough two-fold explanation which addresses the nature of construction of school context as a social reality and underscores the potential of school placement as a site of deconstruction and reconstruction of professional knowledge.

CHAPTER NINE
FOREGROUNDING INTERPRETATIONS AND DECONSTRUCTIONS: A THEORETICAL EXPLANATION OF SCHOOL PLACEMENT AS THE SITE OF CONSTRUCTION OF SCHOOL CONTEXT

9.1 INTRODUCTION

This study explored placement as a site for construction of school contexts. Trainee teachers' voices are expressed in narratives and anecdotes on what they lived and experienced as teacher apprentices during a teacher professional development course. I explored what is constructed as school context during placement and how these constructions take place in chapters five to eight. In the previous chapter, four elements of construction, namely memory, assumptions, emotions and gaze, were developed to explain the trainee teachers' construction patterns. This chapter proposes a theoretical explanation on the significance of placement as a site of construction of school context. The findings also reveal that practicum deserves substantial considerations within the initial teacher training.

9.2 ORIENTATION

This chapter sets out to provide a theoretical explanation on the ways in which placement offers possibilities to construct and deconstruct representations made about school contexts prior and during teacher training. The first section describes placement as a site of visual landscaping where the trainee teachers are able to construct by being covert/overt observers or/and witnesses. The section that follows discuss the scope placement offers for professional transformation during initial teacher training. The last section presents the findings as exploring the school placement as ecologically dynamic and complex which breeds construction and deconstruction patterns through relationships, professional practice.

9.3 THE PLACEMENT SITE AS THE VISUAL LANDSCAPE FOR CONSTRUCTING SCHOOL CONTEXT

The placement site and environment cannot be dissociated from the idea of bearing witness as the trainee teachers tend to use placement sites as spaces which allow them to make constructions. The sites enable them to map their understanding of the primary school as a place of work and as a pedagogical space which embeds relationships, professional practices, routines and decision-making processes which also imply micro politics and leadership. Based on the principles of ecological models, placement provides room for introspection and critical deconstruction of school contexts as complex systems.

In this study, school contexts are marked out as the school's core spaces (see Figure 9.1) where professional practice takes place and where professional relationships embed familiarity, collegiality and bonding. The same space also give access to estrangement, contention and resentment that shape relationships and professional practice. The hidden bounds of the school are spaces where transgressions are allowed or triggered by teachers, parents, trainee teachers and pupils. The school's general spaces also acknowledge that power relationships are made visible and the interplay among actors is rendered more visible in those spaces. In that sense, placement offers the trainee teacher the possibility of withdrawing or preventing singular situations from occurring. Interestingly, liminal environments are also spaces which trainee teachers create for themselves to find their visibility and professional selves. They become aware that their status is not well defined and understood by school administrators, teachers, pupils and parents alike, and are faced with a culture shock which deconstructs their prior notions of school context, teaching and learning. We now move further to the outer bounds or peripheral zones which are absent in the trainee teachers' imagination prior to placement. This space is vibrant and brings novelty to constructions of school contexts in this study.

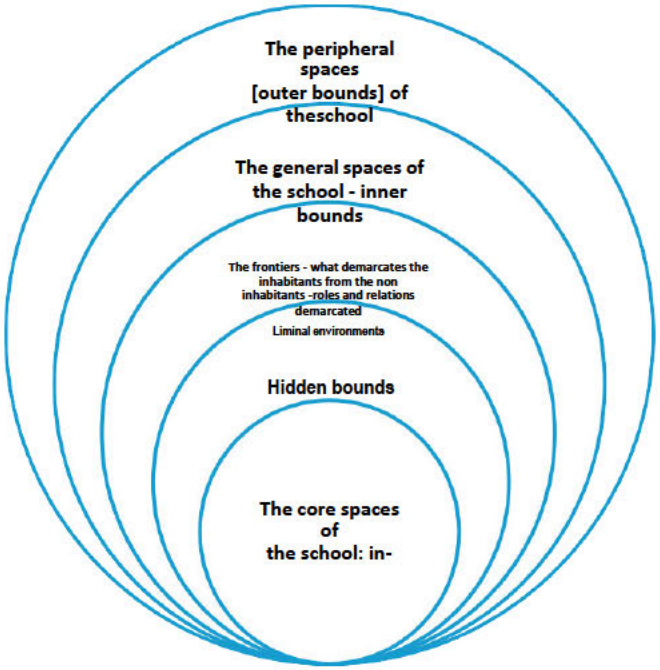

Figure 9.1: The spatial construction of the primary school context for this study

Teacher preparation programmes do not prepare them to engage with such uncertainties and novelties. Relationships transcend these different spaces where professionalisation occurs, but this is hardly addressed to prepare the trainee teachers for professional training. The trainee teachers start to map what I call their 'personal cartography of professional practice' which includes their exposure to teaching as a profession, knowledge of learners and learning, encounters with parents and acknowledging professional allies and support systems within the school ecosystem. This cartography also represents their experiences of placement and pictures their sense of space (Simm & Marvell, 2015) as they immerse in teaching. Primary schools are constructed as their lived experiences when bafflement during their first contact with professional realities occurs. While training offers silent acknowledgement of those disruptions and dissonances which might occur during placement, it offers little in terms of in-situ professional development. The interaction between the school trainee teacher and MIE teaching practice tutor is not explicit. Trainee teachers in this study hardly include the MIE teaching practice tutor as part of the primary school context during their placement. TheMIE's presence is alienated given that the trainee teachers' constructions indirectly emphasised the widening gap between what they are taught in the professional set up and what they witness as school realities.

9.4 Scope for teacher education in context: primary schools as transformational teacher training hubs

The placement sites offer possibilities for professional enrichment as well as the construction, deconstruction and reconstruction of primary school contexts as dynamic spaces. Teacher training programmes in Mauritius must create spaces for schools to interact more closely in the professional development of the in-service trainee teacher and in so doing make immersion in school placement more enriching and meaningful for trainee teachers. Based on what trainee teachers construct as school context, it was obvious that they experienced the unknown in terms of relationships in a professional context and this affected their overall teacher preparation during placement. In order to bridge this gap, the Teacher Professional Development programmes at the MIE should consider optimising primary schools as transformational training hubs instead of pull-out placement experience as distinct.

The current TDP elective modules and the School Based Experience component offer information on the trainee teachers' professional journey but do not prepare them to overcome certain challenges or smoothen their placement experiences in view of consolidating their competencies to teach in diverse school contexts.

The study also demonstrates that placement sites are dynamic, vibrant and multifaceted. Both individuals and school ecosystems contribute to fluctuations in experiences and varied construction patterns. In doing so, schools constitute what I term as repertoires of practice and teaching experiences for trainee teachers. Exposure to this multiplicity of school contexts enables the trainee teacher to better gauge the primary school as his/her future workplace. However, the outcomes of the study also trigger reflection on the role of mentorship, leadership, and the trainee teachers' roles and development of their teacher selves and knowledges. Figure 9.2 illustrates the implications of optimising primary schools in the training of in-service primary school trainee teachers in order to enrich their initial teacher experience and help bridge the theory-practice gap.

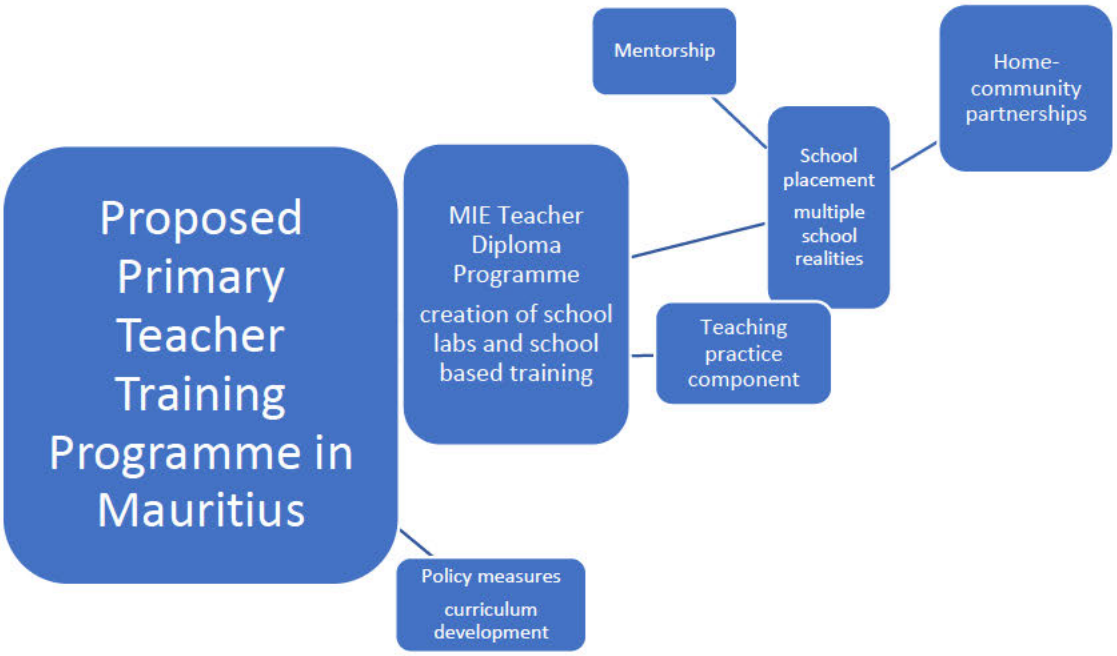

Figure 9.2: The synergy of a teacher training hub as part of the professional development of trainee primary school teachers

Thus far in this study, school placement is constructed and understood by trainee teachers as detached from their expectations prior to joining the training. Their claim that their theory- based training does not capture the salient aspect of the school as a professional space eventually led them to believe that the MIE offers little to prepare them for primary school realities. Although elements of dissonance add to the placement experiences, if the role of ancillaries were to be made more visible and framed within the placement structures, this would support the training experiences of trainee teachers as they immerse in in-situ training.

9.4.1 Extension of collegial bonds and support through school mentorship

At the time of the data collection, the Teacher's Diploma Primary Programme was being reviewed and aligned with the new educational reform. The current programme includes mentors' reports, a series of tasks which count as professional practice components and the teaching practice. However, the study demonstrates that through the construction of collegial bonds, trainee teachers experienced support as well as isolation during their initial teacher training at school. The role of the mentor is not well-defined in the current diploma

programme and there are also no formal structures and training to train potential mentors at school. In most cases, mentoring is directed by the head teacher and is restricted to the administrative role of assigning the trainee teacher to a specific class and compiling the mentor's report and evaluation. Moreover, at no time, do the trainee teachers voice about mentorship as an element influencing their construction of school context. This is because it the importance of mentors in enacting collegial bonds and professional practice was not visible during placement.

This loose mentoring structure could be one of the reasons why trainee teachers experience estrangement, isolation and resentment during placement. Consequently, the study unravels a theory-practice gap that results in the lack of a proper structure which supports the trainee teacher as he/she immerses in the web of professional relationships. A well-designed mentorship structure should be formulated to provide for induction or orientation of the trainee teacher, allocation of his/her workload and monitoring of his/her teaching competencies and professional needs. The school mentor should also support the trainee teacher's teaching progress, implying the need for close collaboration with the MIE tutor. In doing so, the relational gaps which exclude the trainee teacher's presence as a becoming teacher will be bridged.

9.4.2 Extension of informal relationships and support through home and community partnerships

Constructions of relationships with parents and external parties both inside and outside the school bounds illustrate that trainee teachers rarely feel that these stakeholders are supportive or are potential allies. Although the current TDP requires trainee teachers to initiate small school projects, the involvement with the home and community is not explicit. The MIE programmes need to focus on a sustainable network which allows for close collaboration. Teacher educators need to be more actively engaged with the home (parents and learners), school (teachers, pupils, administrators, staff) and the community (police, shop owners and medical officers, residents in the neighbourhood, enterprises) as key resources who support the school operations and allow trainee teachers to actively engage with them.

Small scale school projects involving parents and the community and regular parent-teacher workshops should be included as part of the professional portfolio for trainee teachers.

The MIE should make itself more visible by being one of the active partners. Outreach and the establishment of school labs would bridge the theory-practice gap and together with theirMIE tutors and mentors, trainee teachers could work together towards the required teaching competencies over the training period. Figure 9.5 above illustrates the inclusion of the home and the community as the collaborative synergy required to ensure that the theory-practice gap is bridged while enacting the national curriculum framework proposed under the current educational reform.

9.4.3 Extension of pedagogical support and self-evaluation

Finally, the study shows that the roles of trainee teachers are often misunderstood, and in the process, they are either distanced completely from teaching tasks or are given overwhelming responsibilities which they are not prepared for during their placement. The placement orients the trainee teacher to his/her professional realities and allows him/her to self-evaluate his/her own assumptions and preconceived ideas around learners, learning and teaching. Affective experiences overwhelm their constructions. Such important processes require facilitation of trainee teacher while encouraging innovative practices, trial of lessons and self-evaluation for improvement. Both the mentor and the teaching practice tutor are fundamental to trainee teachers' successful professional development.

9.5 THE CONTEXTUAL RELEVANCE OF CONSTRUCTING THE PRIMARY SCHOOL CONTEXT AS ECOLOGICALLY DYNAMIC.

In the first place, trainee teachers conceptualise the school as an educational organisation with distinct features. It functions around a set of distinct and defining core tasks, a structure, a unique culture, a working climate and a sense of purpose. The school is also said to display conflict, wrestle with change, interact with the environment and struggle with attempts to improve its success and public recognition. While the above may be used to illustrate the key

features of school contexts, this might lead to reductionist interpretations. Some propositions are made to unfold the intricacies of knowledge of the school context. The first proposition favours Lefebvre's notion of space (Lefebvre, 1991; Soja, 1996; Purcell, 2002) as the point of departure, enmeshing the school context in (i) the perceived (the relatively objective, concrete space people encounter in their daily environment), (ii) the conceived (mental constructions of space, creative ideas about and representations of space), and (iii) the lived spaces (the complex combination of perceived and conceived space represented in the individual's actual experience of space in which social life unfolds). However, a further step in interpretation offers scope to conceptualise the features of the school context as ecologically dynamic and distinctive to the trainee teacher's placement experiences.

In this endeavour, school contexts in general are constructed as being embedded in experiences which make up the school reality. The work of Talbert and McLaughlin (1991) and Stivaros (2007) may be referred to sustain this view. The ecologically dynamic primary school context operates in a multiple layered environment which shapes the distal locations of individual experiences. The constituent parts of such a model would firstly consist of the macro level existence of the school. These elucidate the core educational values and norms rooted in the school's historical, social and ideological contexts. A second layer locates the school within an educational system controlled by state policies and reform. Finally, the school is also explored as a community in-itself. It is not only situated geographically but also stands as a discursive space for its stakeholders who imagine it, live their experiences through it and give voice to it. The following section explores some of the attributes of the ecological model with reference to construction of school context.

9.6 THE CONTEXTUAL RELEVANCE OF USING ECOLOGICAL MODELS AS COMPLEX SYSTEMS

Recent developments in ecological models describe school contexts as inherently complex spaces. Bronfenbrenner's ecological-contextual theory can be used as the main reference because the model in question recognises school contexts as changing, dynamic and difficult to measure (Philips & Burbules, 2000; Davis, 2006; Johnson, 2008). Thus, if school context is gazed through the ecological system theory, its complexity is denoted by its systems of embedded relationships that make up the individual's environment, thus suggesting the existence of an ecology of human development which, in turn, is enmeshed in progressive and mutual accommodation of the active, growing human being and the changing propertiesof the close settings in which those individual dwells. At the same time, construction by the act of Witnessing is embedded in Bronfenbrenner's five layers of the system to explain the interaction of the individual in complex ways as the point of departure.

The *micro system*, consisting of the pattern of activities, roles andinterpersonal relationships experienced by the changing individual in a particular environment articulates the daily contact with the affairs of the school. Within the micro system, the individual trainee teacher is in interaction with aparticular physical and material setting which also contains other people with distinctive belief systems, temperaments, and personality traits. Interaction is bi-directional and the individual influences and is influenced by the system which include pupils, teachers, parents,mediators, administration, and the surrounding community. The second layer makes up the *mesosystem* which comprises of linkages between microsystems. For instance, it may refer tointeractions and dynamics between parents and pupils. Parental expectations in respect of say, their child's academic and extracurricular success may directly or indirectly influence theschool climate and school practices. The pressure to ensure high academic achievement maylead to tension or fear of failure, which imply direct impact, while the consequences of these expectations such as classroom behaviours, and pressure on teachers to complete thesyllabus may entail indirect consequences. The *exo-system* adds to the former two layers and refers to the larger social system. It is made up of events, contingencies, decisions and policieswhich are beyond the individual's control and influence, thus exerting a unidirectional influence on the person. The *macro system* follows to make up

the social blueprint of the school context and refers to the culture of the individual school. Finally, *the chrono-system*, representing the time-based dimension influences the operation of the layers within the school's ecosystem. It includes both long- and short-term time dimensions.

Understanding the school context as ecologically dynamic requires the creation of space to acknowledge construction of school context as trainee teachers' cognitive and affective ways of making sense of the school landscape while immersing in it as their workplace (Costigan, 2018) which also calls for personalised and contextualised storied lives of trainee teachers during their immersion. School placement plays an important role in their initial concrete teaching experiences and conveys implicit knowledge making which goes beyond the apprentice of observation (Lortie, 1975) or transference of theories freshly acquired from training[19]. Placement provides space for familiarisation with the school's *oikos*, that is, the dwelling place of its occupants and the field where trainees learn to teach. The findings suggest that the features of the school context are constructed temporally (at the time of the trainee teachers' placement) and spatially (in a context where trainees can locate themselves in a physical, emotional, intellectual and social set of landscapes as they first experience primary school teaching). The proposed model is described in Figure 9.3.

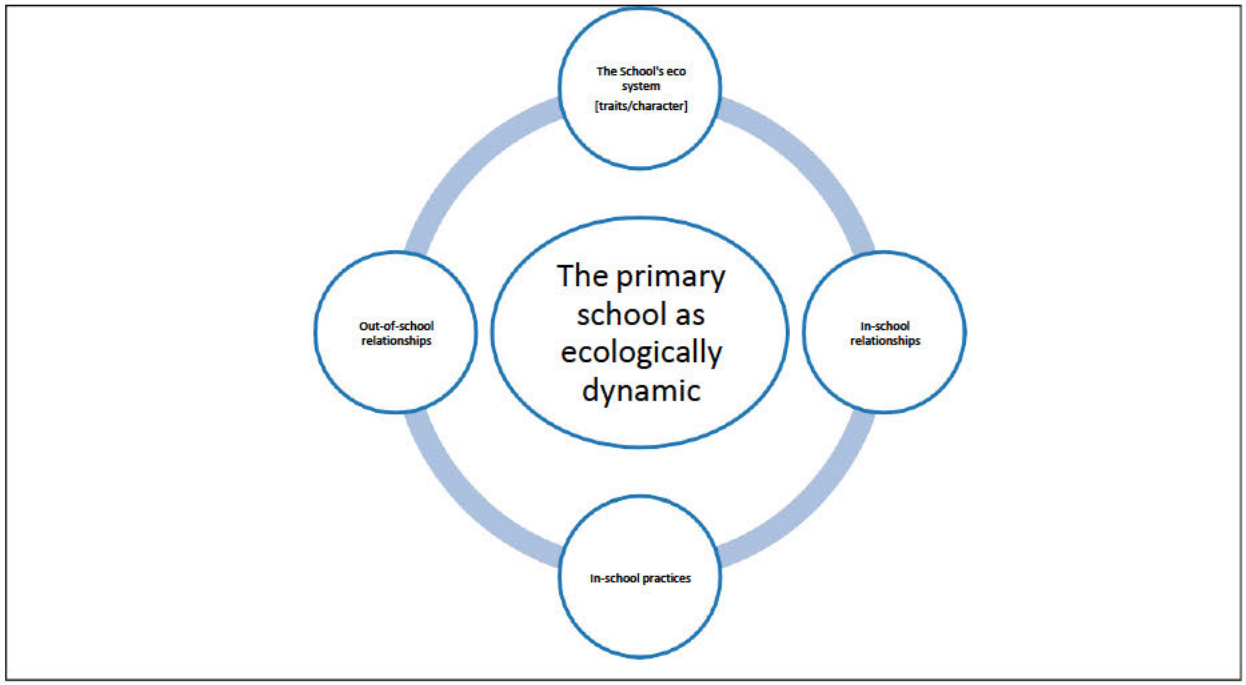

Figure 9.3: Features of the ecologically dynamic school context in this study

9.6.1 The school's eco system

This feature constitutes the habits and habitus[20] of the school and includes its institutional character or traits, ethos, working climate and sense of purpose. The architecture, the physical layout of the school, the physical spaces allocated to teaching, learning, and administrative duties, and traditions, mores and conventions make up the school's habitus. The mission and vision of the school, and symbolic representations attached to the school edifice also make up the life of the school. Further introspection leads us to the feel of the school, its intellectual, emotional, social and cultural climate which affect its running. In short, the eco system makes up the character and signature of the school. In this study, the school eco system is dealt with by trainees as they talk of traditions, routines, and the normative aspects making up the life of the school. They also sometimes highlighted places, sites, expected behaviour patterns and conventions as part of the school eco system.

The notion of school contexts as human service organisations is relevant in unlocking the essence of the school eco system. The school may be matched to personality types, which suggests that it maintains, protects and enhances the wellbeing of its occupants and clientele (Johnson, 2009). In doing so, schools have the core task of human transformation. An organisational personality could suggest the feel guiding the structure of a school. This can be illustrated through the work of Hoy and DiPaola (2010) who categorised school contexts in terms of four distinct traits (i) the *sanguine context* displaying an enthusiastic, active and optimistic outlook, (ii) the *melancholic context* which is generally analytically wise and quiet, (iii) the *choleric context*, given its irritable and grumpy nature, and (iv) the *phlegmatic context* recognisable for its calm disposition. However, given the plurality and complexity of school contexts in this study, it was almost impossible to capture the features and personality of each school using one linear and specific category to designate one school.

[19] Training here refers to MIE teacher training, the only institute that provides for placement in its teacher professional development courses.

. I chose to move beyond the trait analysis of school contexts and understood the eco system as fluid and flexible. Thus key school determinants include (i) the physical and structural environment, (ii) health and safety policies, (iii) resources, (iv) policies guiding practice, (v) the school climate and, (vi) the school composition.

Extensive research on school contexts in terms of physical structure (Darmody & Smyth, 2012; Costigan, 2014; Huang et al., 2013) refers to infrastructure, space, and spatial and social density in schools and classrooms. Features like school size and class size inside schools, personal interactions between members of the school community, indoor and outdoor space for pupils, teachers' influence based on teacher-pupil ratios and the spatial density of classrooms are considered as part and parcel of the school context's physical layout. This also includes the location of the school and its surroundings. Such extrapolations focus on tangible and measurable school determinants such as the design of the physical environment, educational policies and actions, interventionist health programmes, deployment of resources, the school climate and the school composition (Huang et al., 2013). To further illustrate this, the physical and structural environment would be determined by activity space, physical safety, air quality, how hazardous the environment is and rural/urban location. Educational policies refer to school safety and health education as well as health programmes and educational resources, extracurricular activities, provision for educational tours, deployment of teachers, and teaching and non-teaching support. The school climate interms of the level of violence, bullying, school norms, academic values, teacher-pupil relationships and family-school connections would quantify the feel of the school, while the school composition would refer to pupils' average socio-economic status, the gender of students and staff, racial and ethnic composition and school size.

[20] Habits refer to customary practices which are not usually questioned, and lifestyles which are almost routinised while habitus is taken from Bourdieu and refers to certain dispositions which are embodied in individuals. Such embodiment is made possible through a socialising process whereby new experiences are organised and produced by past experiences. Habitus is also regarded as the enactment of power in the forms of social, cultural and linguistic capital.

Figure 9.4 is an extended version of the eco system of the primary school in this study.

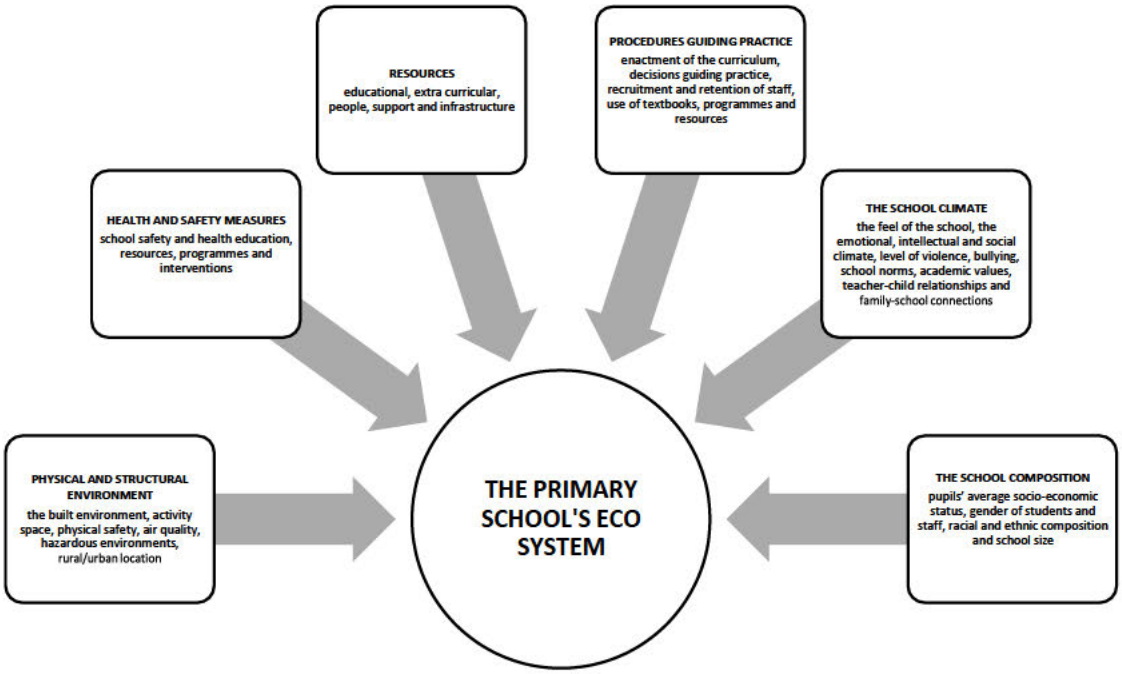

Figure 9.4.: Representation of the primary school's ecosystem

9.6.2 In-school practices

This layer of the school ecology features enactment of pedagogical rapport and performance, control structures and leadership, structures of autonomy among staff and knowledge contexts which are tested and sustained. Triggers like classroom spaces, the running of morning assemblies, people (teachers, learners, administrators and parents) in the enactment of their roles and functions are captured as constructs of in-school practices. I discuss four main clusters of in-school practices, namely, school routines, pedagogical rapport and practices, leadership and control, and discipline, health and safety issues. In this study the morning assembly and mechanisms to impose order stage the enactment of routines. Pedagogical rapport and practices also offer insights on constructs of teaching and learning which may extend beyond the classroom. Leadership and control depict the roles and influence of administrators on the day-to-day running of the school and teaching in general. The built environment is also a key determinant that influences teaching and learning. Drawing on previous research (Wall et al., 2009; H. Clark, 2002; A. Clark, 2010; Feilden, 2004;

Newton, 2008), the model draws attention to safety issues, and a healthy environment to foster learning and supporting teaching.

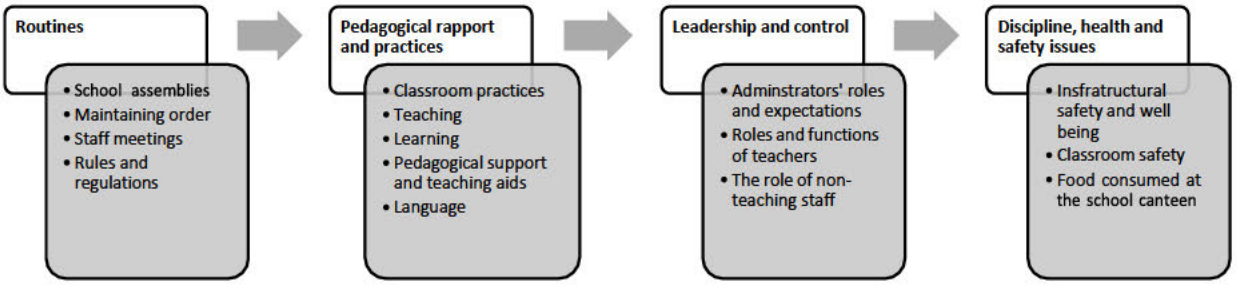

Figure 9.5.: Representation of in-school practices as part of primary school

9.6.3 In-school relationships

This third feature of the ecologically dynamic school is patterns of relationships between positions that are usually customary, preserved or subverted, but which render the school more visible and tangible as they are crystallised as activities and coping strategies in the deployment of teaching and learning resources. Figure 9.6 detail these relationships.

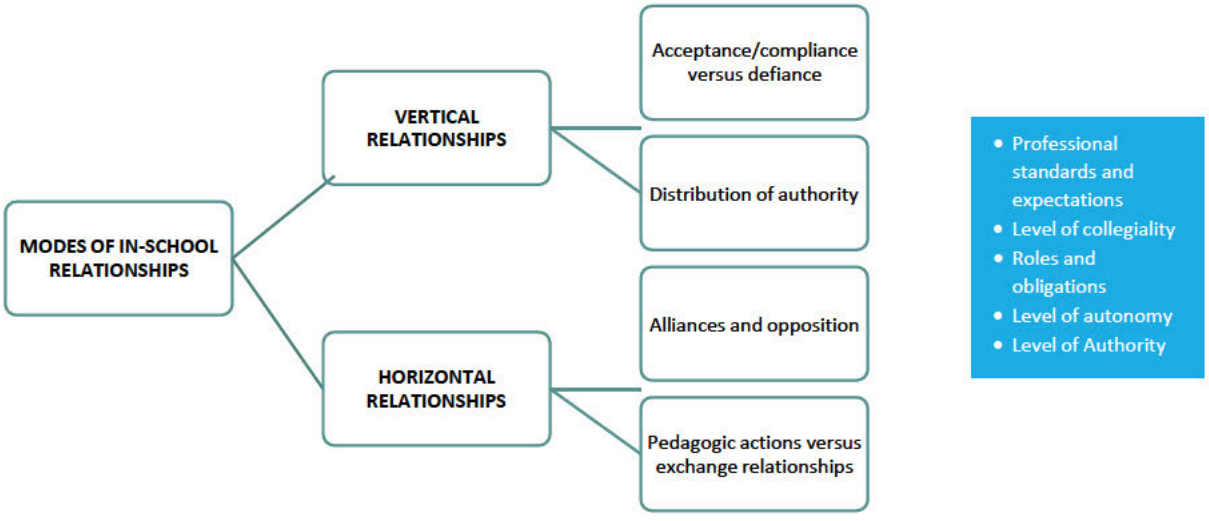

Figure 9.6. Representing in-school relationships

Two vectors are used to construe these relationships, the vertical (linear, usually unidirectional authoritative and formal) and the horizontal (multi-layered, informal and flexible). The vertical mode of in-school relationships calls for compliance with orders and

communication from school administration, the Ministry of Education, the mentor, and senior staff, among others. Some school contexts may be characterised by bureaucracy which causes relationships to remain vertical at all levels. Too much authoritarian behaviour and strong control mechanisms would lead to full compliance or subtle defiance among staff members.

At horizontal level, relations consist of informal groupings among members which can be collegial, friendly or distant. In situations where the vertical relations are cold and austere, horizontal vectors can lead to the emergence of cliques among seniors and juniors, oropponents of managerial decisions. In-school horizontal relationships may either tilt inhabitants towards pedagogic or exchange relationships. Sometimes interactions with parents may result in such duality.

9.6.4 Out-of-school relationships

Out-of-school relationships are those influencers which are closely connected to the school and its practices. The school's life is partially ineffective without this feature which is made up of parents, direct and indirect partners and stakeholders. In this study, the police, health care, the neighbourhood, shopping outlets, and hawkers constituted out-of-school relationships. Trainee teachers draw substantially on the social organisation of the school neighbourhood to construct pupils, their parents and the school's academic performance. Moreover, lived experiences related to the presence of the police, the frequency of complaints and referrals, or altercations between teachers and parents, trainee teachers construct out-of- school relationships as patronising, policing, pathological and conflictual. Parents and pupils' influence also puts a damper on the school climate, thus reflecting the strong influence of out-of-school relationships in moulding the school context in question as indicated in figure 9.7.

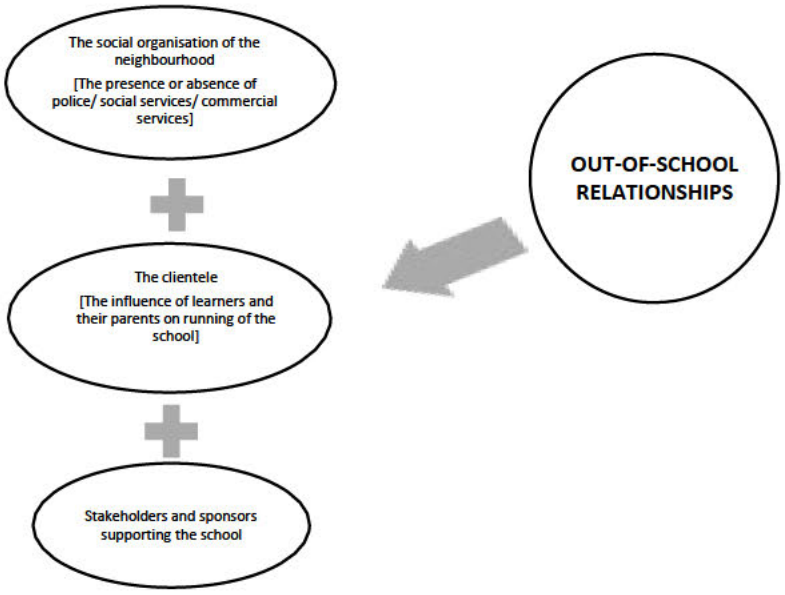

Figure 9.7: Out-of-school relationships making up the school contexts

The four features rest on three broad cores which influence the ecologically dynamic school context. An initial gaze on them would suggest that these are fixed, stagnant and finite attributes that make up the school's institutional identity but as we move further in trainee teachers' constructions, it is understood that these cores are described in relative ways by each participant. This is because, other interactive agencies such as leadership styles, collegiality, and practices are constructed differently as trainee teachers gaze, rememorate, assume and feel what they experience and live during placement. The first core is the intellectual context which presents itself as records of achievement, the goodwill earned over the years, the quality of teaching and staff efficiency, professional development and capacity building. This is followed by the ideological core, which is more concerned with the belief system, cultures, practices, idioms, traditions and values which stimulate the school habitus and climate, affect its institutional traits and adapt or resist to change in the long term. Finally, the historical core requires existential questions about the school as an entity; it gives way to questions like, *where do we come from*, *where do we stand*, *who we are* within the ecologically dynamic school context.

The first core calls for further investigation of the ways in which trainee teachers' construction of school context may offer scope to explore the dichotomy between intellectual autocracy and intellectual democracy during placement in initial teacher training. To illustrate this divergence, trainee teachers are constructed as others at school, relegating them to being outsiders, intruders or visitors, which also signals power relationships and control of their bodies and physical movement as in the case of Bella. Intellectual autocracy also transpires in pedagogical practice whereby access to classes and execution of lessons are controlled, monitored and scrutinised, thus creating a vertical and rigid relationship. Intellectual democracy is otherwise defined in this study by support and bonding which are created and sustained to facilitate the transition between MIE training and school experience through placement. Trainee teachers are given more freedom to use their agency as future teachers and colleagues.

The second core acknowledge the role of power and control which craft the consciousness of the trainee teacher and which are visible in the ways he/she constructs leadership, classroom management, rules and regulations, and professional standards which guide practice inside the school. The ecologically dynamic school becomes a space which is ideologically safe or insecure for its members. Trainee teachers translate these insecurities in their constructions of teacher-teacher relationships, teacher-pupil relationships, and spaces and pedagogical practices. The final core maps the ways trainee teachers entering schools as placement sites locate themselves in time and space, and in doing so, represent their own existence. Their constructions reflect their personal and professional trajectories prior to joining teaching and are also shaped by what they lived during placement. In other words, their construction remains fluid, dynamic and temporal. Reflection on the three cores offers scope for further investigation and research on how constructions are moulded by these during initial teacher training in Mauritius.

9.7 REVIEWING OF THE SCT THEORETICAL MODEL IN LINE TO THE FINDINGS OF THIS STUDY

Taken from the SCT, figure 9.8 describes the three levels of interpretations captured to tally with the three placement stages in which the trainee teachers posit themselves. The spatial element encompasses the school ecology and school system (with reference to Johri (2011) on socio-materiality in chapter three) which the trainee teachers enter and perform in. It also includes initial teacher training programmes which include placement as part of professional practice. Perceived interpretations are meant to occur at the early stage of school placement which represents immersion and acclimatisation. Assumptions, beliefs, and biases are meant to be apparent. As the trainee teacher moves to conceived interpretations, he/she starts to experience being a trainee and relies on observations, memories and lived experiences (referring to Lefebvre) to construct school context. These constructions are usually based on interactions which are emotive in nature and allow subjectivities and voice to take over. The final stage refers to the lived and reflexive interpretation and describes constructions as praxis. Theory is juxtaposed with practice; teacher training is revaluated; and the trainee teacher's constructions evolve around his/herexposure to placement and offer an alternative voice to what he/she deconstructs and reconstructs as school context.

The complexity of the participants' construction as they start questioning what they imagined as school context prior to training and what they live as trainees after their immersion to school-based training is observed. They enter the school placement as strangers or people with some knowledge of the primary school. Their roles as parents, ex-pupils, individuals who coach and tutor primary school pupils, yet they hardly feel part of the school as in the case of Bella. The same feeling is reciprocated by those who feel the acquaintance with the school, namely Boaz who acknowledged his inability to be the class teacher as from day one or Kyle's articulation of the misuse of his position as trainee teacher for replacement of classes. These eventually captures the idea of *being at school*. The transition from *being at school* to *being in school* is denoted when the trainee teacher starts to acclimatize him/herself to the school context, getting to know the rules, regulations, traditions, people and enacting, namely in terms of emotional labour. The transition towards embracing teaching is less fluid but signals the

readiness of the trainee to start a full fledge career and position as primary school teachers.

The knowledge acquired from informal learning during placement allows him/her to feel prepared to embrace teaching. It is a reflexive period where trainee teachers take stock of what they have lived during their placement periods and how they can best reconcile between MIE based learning and school-based practice. At that stage the perceived interpretations are deconstructed and the conceived are evaluated and aligned to the lived interpretations. Finally, notions of time and space matter as different stages of the placement experiences denote changes in the way construction patterns occur. In Bella's narratives for instance, we see that although she was more acclimatized to the physical and emotional layout of the school during her immersion stage as compared to the ones experienced during her SBE I and II in the high-profile school she was placed. Sometimes the dissonances the latter experienced allowed them to construct pupils (as in the case of Tasha and Tabitha), parents (Bella and Kiara) , stakeholders and administrators (Bella and Kyle) the way they do. The three layers of interpretations also allow us to see the placement period as a liminal period whereby trainee learn to adjust, adapt and learn about their craft.

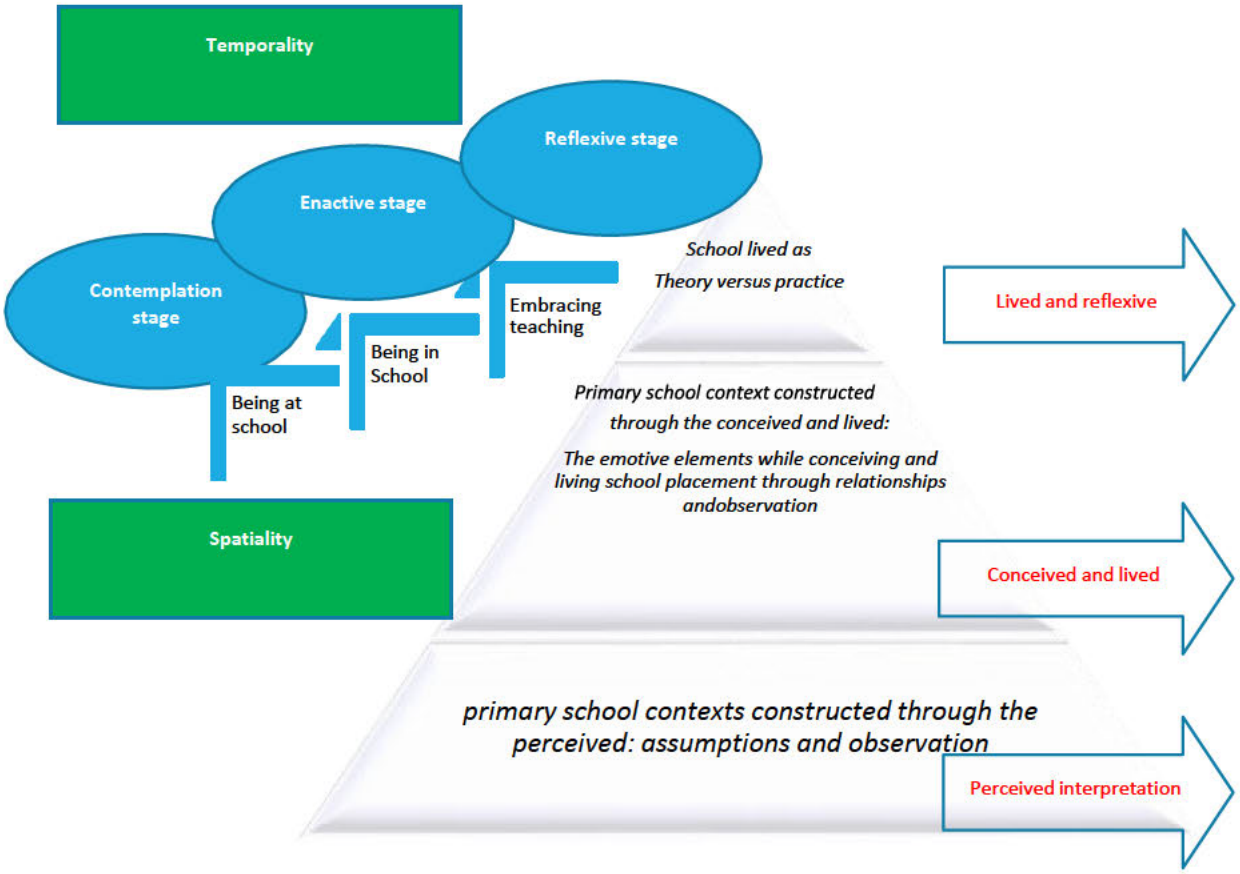

Figure 9.8: The construction of school context using SCT and its relevance to understand position of trainee teachers during placement

9.8 Synthesis of the chapter

While chapter nine explore the different facets of the placement site as an ecological space, chapter 10 extends the nature of their construction during those different stages. This chapter explicates the essence of placement in teacher professional development as multi-layered, dynamic, and complex. By doing so, it notes constructions of primary school contexts as embedding interlocking relationships and practices within their staggered boundaries. Such observations offer scope to describe the school placement as pivotal in teacher education programmes; hence, the need to make placement a core professional experience in initial primary teacher training. The next chapter deals with the theorisation ofthe phenomenon and the theoretical, contextual and methodological explications on the nature of trainee teachers' construction of school context are set out based on the premises of the SCT and theoretical lens developed in this study.

CHAPTER TEN

FOREGROUNDING INTERPRETATIONS AND DECONSTRUCTIONS: THE THESIS

10.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter offered a theoretical explanation on the significance of school placement as the site of construction and deconstruction of school context while the present chapter is oriented towards encapsulating the four elements of construction in a teacher professional development setting. In short, it sets out the view of this study which includes a theoretical concept.

10.2 ORIENTATION

This chapter presents the contribution? of this study which posits that, during placement, trainee teachers construct primary school contexts through Witnessing. The key findings and argumentations suggest that Witnessing is used as a sociological concept which explains (i) how the construction of school context is made by trainee teachers, (ii) how it emerges as a theoretical concept, and (iii) how it helps to understand the deconstruction and reconstruction of the social and professional realities of trainee teachers within specific contexts across time and space. The argumentation of this chapter consists of the conceptualisation of Witnessing developed as a social theory. Witnessing also helps explain the social construction of school contexts as engendering the ecological reconstruction and deconstruction of the school placement site by trainee teachers. Finally, the chapter discusses the avenues of using Witnessing as an empirical device to unlock the construction of social reality, including the theory's methodological possibilities.

10.3 THE MEANING OF WITNESSING IN THIS STUDY

The choice of the term **Witnessing** as a theoretical concept allows for deeper understanding of the nature of construction of primary school context. A witness is usually referred to as somebody who ascertains a fact by being part of the lived experience which he/she develops as a memory (Smit et.al., 2017; Gehl & Plecas, 2017; Lowe & Knott, 2015). This also implies the person's willingness to testify about the perceived, conceived and lived aspects of that experience as a personal knowledge form. In legal terms, witnessing refers to the act of giving testimony based on knowledge of something or promising to affirm or prove something by presenting evidence. In the literature, however, witnessing refers to the genuineness and authenticity of an event or an occurrence. It also denotes to know (Greek//eidenai) and to see (Greek//idein). By moving beyond a legal conception of the term, this study takes its meaning from journalism and it is also described as the carrier of some truth and has the responsibility to report these truths when required (Edelman 2017; Viner, 2017).

Witnessing is seen as an emancipatory act which authenticates the trainee's constructs of school context as subjective but trustworthy; situational and temporal; and complex and fuzzy. The personal but trustworthy element is explained by the fact that the unfolding of one's testimony through witnessing becomes a collective voice for trainees who saw placement as a liminal stage (Turner, 2008) which places them in a no man's land where their professional identities are usually blurred and misinterpreted. Secondly, the retrospective element leads to the act of witnessing as bounded by spatiality and temporality. Finally, it shows that the unfolding of knowledge of school context remains nonlinear and is contingent on personal and professional trajectories.

10.4 THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WITNESSING AND WITNESSING.

The layperson's understanding of the term witnessing restricts its meaning to the notion of an individual who provides an account based on first-hand information about an event or occurrence based on what he or she has seen, heard, and experienced. In this study, Witnessing is used as a theoretical concept which explains the nature of the construction of

school context. The term is more complex and includes seeing, hearing, perceiving, knowing, and experiencing certain events. The four key concepts, rememoration, affective experiences, transversal gaze and assumptions (discussed in the previous chapter) are encapsulated within the act of Witnessing as described below. Figure 10.1 shows how the different constituent elements (rememoration, affective experiences, transversal gaze and assumptions) give way to Witnessing.

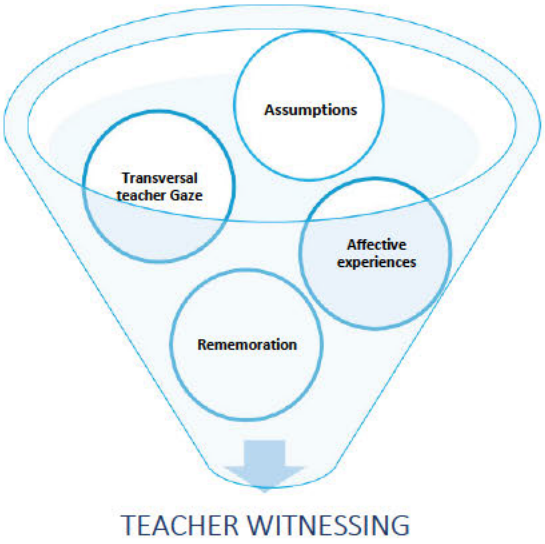

Figure 10.1: Illustration of constructions of school context using teacher Witnessing

Through rememoration, the trainee teacher remembers and retrospects into the past to make sense of school context during his/her professional development, professional relationships, teaching and learning and in-school practices. Rememoration also encompasses precedent experiences which the trainee teacher refers to in order to construct specific aspects of school context, namely relationships, pedagogical spaces, and practices. Secondly, emotions or affective experiences shape the ways in which trainee teachers construct the physical, intellectual, and affective elements of the school context. Affective experiences materialise feelings, views, or a certain state of mind as the trainee teacher observes and experiences certain events and incidents during placement. Locations identified by trainee teachers in this study were often constructed as emotional sites where they experienced fear (for example, Kyle's construction of the dark room), resentment (Bella's experience of sarcasm during the morning assembly) and pity (Tabitha's encounter with children from difficult backgrounds).

Thirdly, the trainee teachers' transversal gaze englobes observation and introspection on their placement experiences and future as primary school teachers who are reflexive and critical. The final element to construct school context is assumptions which highlight the role of biases and prejudices in construction patterns. It thus, captures the subjectivity of the trainee teachers, as well as acknowledges their bias, personal beliefs and taken-for-granted points of view in their distinct personal responses to situations they are exposed to during placement.

Assumptions are premised at the beginning of the placement experience and constitute all preconceived ideas, beliefs, and taken-for-granted views about the in-situ teacher training experience. Trainee teachers perceive and conceive the school contexts they are exposed to as a form of knowing where feelings of resentment, deficit gazes and misunderstanding take place. Assumptions capture the trainee teachers' own biases, subjectivities and reservations as influencing the way they construct school context in this study. They render the construction more authentic and contextually relevant while defining the complexity of the construction which takes place. It is also noted that the act of witnessing contained in the four elements discussed above is not equally distributed in the narratives because for some trainee teachers, one element is more dominant in their constructions than others. Witnessing as explaining the nature of the trainee teachers' construction of school context during placement is illustrated in Figure 9.1 above. All four components contained in the funnel representing school placement when distilled as personal stories and narratives makeup the act of Witnessing.

10.5 WITNESSING IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF SCHOOL CONTEXT

It is also important to note that Witnessing can position itself in different forms or facets in this study. Figure 10.2 captures the essence of Witnessing in constructing school context.

Figure 10.2: The facets of Witnessing unlocking the nature of trainee teachers' construction of school context during placement

The term *Witnessing* in this study refers to the process of experiencing placement through deep experiences which offer distinctive and authentic testimony on the veracity of certain events based on varied personal interpretations of the events, incidents, and experiences. The views given are also based on the idea of remembering, which is usually a consequence of certain exposure to events and experiences in a particular context. I refer to Agamben (1999) and Hallander (2020) as key referents in explicating Witnessing as a concept for this study. The trainee teachers who participated in this study are not merely eyewitnesses but stand as complete or true witnesses.

10.5.1 Modest or disembodied witnessing indicates the witness as a detached spectator which is usually reflected when an *a priori* reality is measured under the right conditions and construction of a particular reality tallies with stability, i.e., providing some form of consistency in the knowledge form (Hacking, 200). In positioning oneself as a modest witness, one becomes transparent and bodiless (Haraway, 2004). This position is usually linked to a positivist outlook during fieldwork. In my study, modest witnessing is almost insignificant as

the participants were fully immersed as actors and not mere subjects. However, I was interested in the detachment that sometimes occurs during the construction of certain aspects of school contexts, namely routine tasks. Sheila fits this model as her views remained factual knowledge and followed a descriptive sequence of what she encountered during school placement.

10.5.2 Immodest or embodied witnessing is rhetorical in nature. Sometimes associated with the opaque and subjective, this type of witnessing accounts for the 'what' and 'how' of one constructs an event or action. The term 'embodied' also connotes differences in the way participants construct knowledge and acknowledges both dissonance (differences in interpretations) and discernment (introspection and personal teacher gaze) as part of the process of constructing a particular reality. In short, subjectivity is central in meaning making of experiences and knowledge is produced in a consistent manner (Gallagher, 1994).

10.5.3 Communal witnessing acknowledges the multifaceted realities and value laden judgements made of an event or issue by focusing on apprehension and representations. As such, human interpretations of any version of reality are situated and contextualised. Knowledge is informed by one's beliefs, assumptions, cultural tastes, socialisation and own worldviews. In this study, placement becomes the site for the occurrence of communal witnessing as trainee teachers agreed on certain issues, namely replacement of classes during immersion and SBE. It also denotes the dialogical process where the trainees' voices are forwarded and reach consensus with respect to certain issues and events they encountered during placement.

10.5.4 Intrusive Witnessing refers to disturbing, violent or traumatic events which thetrainee teachers confronted directly or indirectly during the period of learning to teach at school. Intrusive witnessing could influence constructions of certain aspects of school context in a particular way. In my study, this type of witnessing allows emotion-congruent representations of participants' constructs during placement to be captured. For instance, constructions of violent parents, uncompromising school leaders, undisciplined pupils and uncooperative

teachers could hint at traumatic placement experiences and sometimes even the desire/urge to quit the profession or change placement sites.

10.5.5 Witnessing unknowability is another attribute of Witnessing worth exploring in unlocking the nature of trainees' construction of teaching and learning. In my study, the trainees initially articulate their own ignorance about pupils, teachers and teaching, learning and related pedagogical practices but they eventually come to terms with these unknown aspects of school life by using what Biesta (2003, 2001, 1998) terms learned ignorance/ unknowing or otherness. My reading of Simon (2003) also acknowledges this type of witnessing as the epistemology guiding the trainee teachers' construction patterns during placement. Trainee teachers make up a social group that is confronted by different life experiences while cohabiting with other groups constituting mentors, teachers, learners, and administrators. In the process, it is quite plausible that they also face power imbalances which exist among the different groups cohabiting within the school context. Experiencing such *unknowing* allows space for transformation to occur as in this situation, the trainee teachers acknowledge a multiplicity of knowledges which can be contradictory, subjective and complex to explicate what the school context is all about.

However, this form of witnessing can only be achieved when the trainee teachers shed all preconceived beliefs and assumptions and start to explore the school context by experiencing it and accepting their own vulnerability and ignorance while becoming more self-present and responsive (Simon, 2003). This implies becoming an active listener, engaging in seeing and, consequently, acting differently (Boler, 1999; Boler & Zembylas, 2003). It should also be noted that such a state of comprehending embraces a state of latency which could be explained by the fact that trainee teachers dwell in a liminal period (Merton, 1968; Turner 1977) during placement. Knowledge of school context is not achieved intellectually but is experienced by means of exposure through immersion in the school setting itself.

This liminal phase is two-fold; firstly, the trainee teacher experiences placement as *being at* school and consequently, being a stranger, guest, intruder, temporary teacher, or a helper. He/she is not recognised as a full member of the school. In the second instance, the trainee

shifts to the state of *being in* school. Immersion is complete and, given that they have gone native in the setting, they are given the same responsibilities as other teaching staff. However, the shift from one dimension of liminality to the next is not consistent for all trainees. Witnessing would thus be contingent on the trainee teachers' subjectivity and not solely by being bystanders because the trainee teacher takes a reflective stance in the situation, event, incident or knowledge he/she is exposed to through ongoing performance, elaboration, and interpretation (Oliver, 2001).

10.5.6 Guided witnessing refers to the use of visual elements as well as mapping the geographies of school contexts to recollect the existential (experiential, emotions, feelings, and empirical) aspects contained within them. The use of the transect walk as an empirical tool fits the *guided witnessing* criterion given that it has a place-based anchor or location. It should be noted that this type of witnessing enabled constructions of diverse geographies of school contexts, namely, (i) the geographies of surveillance (parents as watchdogs, administrators as archaic leaders, pupils testing trainees' endurance and teaching practice tutors as assessors), (ii) geographies of violence and harassment (witnessing school violence, aggression, trainees' feeling sexually harassed), and (iii) memory geographies where trainees built on what they recall from their past experiences as pupils to construct what they live in the present.

Kyle and Boaz used the same school where they themselves were pupils to set out their different constructs of school context while Kiara and Tabitha referred to their school days to compare what they lived as trainees. In these cases, remembering and visual imprints elicited the contours of school contexts. In Kyle's narratives, he went back and forth to his golden school days to construct in-school practices which required recall and remembering to map out the memory geographies of his narratives. Bella was more visual in her demarche; she constantly referred to sites like the kitchen, the street corner shop, the staffroom and her hide-out as markers of her own accounts of the school ecosystem.

The role of placement sites in guided witnessing are also significantly exploited. Trainee teachers voiced the complete dislocation between MIE training and school realities. They had not anticipated the gap which exists between the two sites prior to placement where they met with challenges and 'truths' of what it meant to be a primary school teacher. The placement period also coincided with personal changes which helped guided witnessing to take place in the form of emotional imprints. It is worth noting that such witnessing showcases the singular experiences of these trainees as eventful and impactful (Ross, 2015; Mylonas, 2017).

10.5.7 Bystanders, spectators or third-party witnesses are usually validators of certain 'truths' spelt out by the trainees or those which emerged from the experience of being a trainee itself. On several occasions in the previous chapters, I used the term 'intruders' to indicate the complexity of validating specific accounts and their knowledge forms. It is interesting to note that such witnesses emerge depending on either the chronology of the events presented, or the visibility of these witnesses. In one instance, Mr B, the janitor, acted as the spectator who validated and acted as an auxiliary to Kyle's constructs of the scary room while, in another, Kyle himself constructed collegiality based on witnessing a confrontation between parents and a teacher which occurred in his presence.

As a bystander himself, Kyle's construct emerged from the idleness, ignorance, refusal to intervene and lack of support by the teacher's colleagues who also witnessed the same scene. Boaz experienced a similar event but inversely, as a bystander, he saw the proactive intervention of other teachers who offered support to their colleague experiencing a difficult situation. Tabitha's experience as a bystander during the open day also hints at the vulnerability of the teacher in difficult situations. Interestingly, all accounts that refer to bystander witnessing involved confrontations with parents.

10.6 THE NATURE OF TRAINEE TEACHERS' CONSTRUCTION BASED ON WITNESSING

The merging of the four elements discussed in chapter eight explains the ways in which Witnessing can be conceptualised to explain trainee teachers' construction patterns. I start with rememoration as the element which captures witnessing as the retrospection of the past to understand school context at present. Witnessing as a reflexive process is further explicated through the affective experiences of trainee teachers whose emotions trigger constructions of power relationships and antagonism as part of school context. The third element which is the transversal gaze offers the possibility of presenting witnessing as a formof visual archiving of places, spaces and practices during placement. Finally, assumptions are denoted as the last element which is infused in the act of witnessing. It refers to the subjective, reflective and personal biases which embed the construction processes, and which are significant in the analysis of witnessing as a personal but also introspective action.

10.6.1 Rememoration: Witnessing the past in the present

The trainee teachers' personal visions (Hammerness, 2006) of their past and present worldviews of the primary school context are depicted in the form of recollection. Images, perceptions, and assumptions are revived as a memoir of what was lived as an imprint of a significant part of the trainees' lives. The photographs used as triggers of recollection led to the retelling of anecdotes which offered insights on the different constructs of school context. Through the transect walks, memory could be defined as embedding Witnessing, as the trainee teachers offered witness testimony of their own milestones and 'learning-to-teach' journey in a particular time and space. These milestones could be defined as moments where the primary school stands as a portal of rememoration which eventually helps construction of what teaching, learning, collegiality, leadership, practice, the school organisation, etc. are,as well as revisiting these constructions in the light of present experiences. Evocative spatial images like acclimatisation to the school neighbourhood, the changing landscaping, new buildings added to the old, walls, supermarkets and public services foreground the way in which memory is the bridge to Witnessing.

10.6.2 Affective experiences: Witnessing reflexivity

Affective experiences transcend emotions and include feelings, moods, and influences which drive the actions of the trainee teachers in specific situations (Russell, 2003; Muchinsky, 2000; Goleman, 1998). Constructions derived from affective experiences showcase how resentment and dejection also unravelled the trainee teacher's emotional reflexivity. By voicing their emotional response to specific situations, trainee teachers shared their internal conversations which coloured their overall placement experiences as well as shaped their social interactions with other teachers, parents, pupils, administrators and other stakeholders within the school context (Burkitt, 2012). In this sense, the emotional reflexivity of the trainee teacher is understood in this study as a human quality underlying attempts to understand and intervene in human relationships which occur in the context of placement (Holland, 1999) or suggests the ways in which the trainee teachers 'gain a sense of place' (Jimm & Marvell, 2015) as they enter professional practice. In doing so, the trainee teachers use the placement experiences as an authentic set up which helps them construct school context as containing the emotional elements which are embodied, complex and experiential. This extends the idea that trainee teachers construct school context in the geography of the unfamiliar/strange environment (Simm & Marvell, 2015) and in so doing, they also explicate how they deal with relationships with the place, which is emotionally charged (Glass, 2014).

The second aspect of emotional reflexivity in this study is the unfolding of subjectivities (Burman, 2006). As they started sharing their concerns about different aspects, each trainee teacher used emotion to construct school context through dialogue (Lumsden et al., 2019; Gray, 2008) and the interpretive mode of analysis (Wilkins, 1993). The first points to affective experiences as emotional resources which are bound with knowledge construction and which urges us to rethink our stance (Emerald & Carpenter, 2015; Gray, 2008), hence leading to analysis or empathetic attunement (Shaw, 2011, p. 59) or Verstehen (Weber, 1947) that the trainee teacher made when confronted with a difficult situation during placement.

In doing so, emotions as a tool for construction of school context become data which create a visible and observable display of the feelings and state of mind of the trainee teachers manifested in their experience of placement. This is in line with the social constructionist viewpoint and suggests that the trainee teachers construct by continuously evaluating the environment before they experience and express their emotions (Bericat, 2016). In so doing, the trainee teachers in this study construct school context as contained in resentment, antagonism and paradoxes. Finally, the affective experiences unlock this singular facet of witnessing when the trainee teachers express different emotional peaks during their placement. These could be witnessed as positive and negative emotional experiences as well as emotional shields which hide and simulate certain feelings during placement.

10.6.3 The transversal gaze: Witnessing and visual archiving

The trainee teachers' transversal gaze discussed in the previous chapter cannot be dissociated from the act of witnessing in this study and its use to construct school context is described as the visual archiving of the trainee teachers' experiences and observations. It represents visual boundaries set by the trainee teachers to construct elements and fragments of school context during their placement experiences. Using one's eyes or co-opting them with the eye of the camera (use of photography) allows the capture of sites, places, spaces and artefacts which were selected and shared. While doing so, the placement site was converted into a memory theatre and was a source of the collection or recollection of events, experiences and memories which catalogued their gaze as functional to construct school context as part of their initial teacher practicum experiences. Pictures triggered further constructions and accounts of direct witnessing allowed them to riposte and talk about incidents which explicated malpractices, interactions and relationships witnessed. For instance, the gaze favoured constructions of estrangement and revived nostalgic moments of being a learner. In so doing, the trainee teacher' construction remained interactive and dialogical.

The transversal gaze also denotes the representational boundaries of the trainee teachers' experiences (Cati, 2019) because it relies on personal narratives and testimonies which create a space where they can voice their views while at the same time representing themselves.

Their constructions of school context also signalled representations of themselves which eventually led them to exercise their agency as trainee teachers as they constructed elements of school context. The transversal gaze is a symbolic representation of school context and it individualises its construction, unravelling it as complex, dynamic and fluid. The use of the transversal gaze thus allowed personal memories to emerge and to be recycled (Mannik, 2012; Schultheis, 2008).

The transversal gaze is therefore understood in this study as eye witnessing which is either captured through direct observation (the bystander) or through photographic media. It visually archives and represents the trainee teachers' constructions. Finally, the transversal gaze reifies the trainee teachers' subjectivities. The dark room, for instance, is referred to as a place of trauma and fear for Kyle but as he projected himself as a trainee teacher, he saw an opportunity to colonise the same space and it now symbolises freedom from control and surveillance. Bella painted these nuances in her constructions of the school entrances/gates as representing gossip and constant parental surveillance. She also constructs the school assembly as an antagonistic space, although, gazed differently, the same space suggested authority and visibility. The use of the transversal gaze in conceptualising the act if witnessing is therefore denoted as the testimonies of the trainee teacher experiencing placement.

10.6.4 Assumptions: Witnessing and the rhetoric about teaching and learning

Witnessing helps in the ramifications of the trainee teachers' strongly held beliefs and assumptions to forge their constructions of their professional practice in this study (Lyon & Olson, 2012) contained in routines, mundane activities at school, and traditions and rhetorical actions which make up the school's everyday life. In some cases, it was expressed by trainees as the development and reproduction of hierarchical relationships that led to resentment and estrangement. Parents' interference unlocked another facet of outside influences on the enactment of teaching in the classroom. Assumptions of children as lacking also led to pathologizing pupils and hence, constructing them as deficit in the academic school system.

Through witnessing, trainee teachers were also able to speak back to power and sometimes deconstruct their own personal assumptions about teaching and learning. Their reports of an event or critical incident in relation to teacher-teacher relationships led to unacknowledged assumptions about safety inside the school. This pertained to constructions of measures undertaken to protect children from injury and harm while they are inside the school, or mechanisms to protect teachers against unruly parents, which in turn signals the extent to which teaching is a safe job. Assumptions describe trainee teachers' construction as the dichotomy between their perceived and lived experiences. In doing so, witnessing is objectified and authenticated because the so-called taken-for-granted was rendered plausible in these constructions.

10.7 CONTEXTUAL IMPLICATIONS OF USING WITNESSING IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF SCHOOL CONTEXT

Placement is foregrounded as a core component of the Teacher Diploma Programmes at the MIE. It covers almost a third of the overall programme and significantly impacts on the professional becoming of the trainee teacher. As the trainee is immersed in placement as the first contact with teaching, he/she becomes acquainted with the whole idea of professional practice and realities at work. The trainee teacher may experience familiarity with the place but acknowledge that teaching spaces are restricted and sometimes not easily accessible to him/her, while administrators may coerce and estrange him/her during the apprenticeship period. The trainee teacher as a witness bears testimony of his/her observations and experiences in the period of initial teacher development. In doing so, placement becomes a site of construction of primary school contexts as estranged spaces where antagonism, resentment, surveillance and constant monitoring impede his/her smooth professional socialisation. He/she also recognises that placement offers support, collegiality and some degree of bonding which facilitate his/her immersion in the profession. In this way, the trainee teacher is an informed stranger who bears witness to professional practice with the status of a visitor.

Trainee teachers' placement experiences also denote immersion in a specific school ethos, and they could feel and experience what it meant to work in different intellectual, affective and physical school climates. This multiplicity of experiences demonstrates an authentic depiction of teacher apprenticeship in an in-service teacher training programme model where construction patterns are contingent on what trainee teachers bear witness to. The following section describes the ways in which construction of school context is infused and influenced by placement experiences. In the previous chapter, the comprehensive description of school placement as ecologically dynamic and complex foregrounds how the trainee teachers' constructions and eventual deconstructions about those relationships and practices underlie Witnessing as critical and inevitable.

10.8 METHODOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF USING WITNESSING IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF SCHOOL CONTEXT

Converging factors in the knowledge produced in this study led to the conclusion that the nature of trainee teachers' construction of school context during placement resides in the act of Witnessing. Indeed, my argumentation is premised on the different ways in which Witnessing can be used in qualitative research.

10.8.1 The use of Witnessing as a methodological device in this study

The first premise concerns the credibility of capturing witnessing in view of possibilities to explore authenticity and voice while attention is drawn to who is observing and how the observation is made. The transect walk approach fits well with unlocking the act of Witnessing and was a useful analytical tool to represent certain truths or knowledge of something (Gallagher, 2014). The first proposition made in this study, is that in Witnessing, the trainee teacher's construction is a personal truth whereby he/she testifies certain evidence of what he/she has observed and perceived (Forché, 1993). The transect maps devised by the trainee teachers allowed the participants to generate and control the research field. While the accuracy of events, incidents and experiences is not premised, the traces that these experiences leave become more pertinent knowledge forms which are generated. A second proposition of using Witnessing lies in the way it is disseminated in this study. In

chapters five to seven, the trainees' accounts of what constitutes school context open up to an authentic measure which eases recollection of events, experiences and incidents which act as representations of Witnessing as both rhetorical and transactional but also as a sightseeing device with the potential to uncover perception and truth telling in the most genuine manner (Haraway, 2004).

The transect approach aimed at understanding how trainee teachers map their professional environment and construct their daily lives around them. They may also use the so-called 'lexicon' (Duany et al., 2000) or a geographical cross-section of the school to reveal a sequence of spaces, both physical and mental.

During the transect planning, the idea was to create so-called immersive environments which are tested and defined in this study as an experience of immersion in any environment by specifying and arranging the elements that comprise that environment in a way that is true to the locational character. Here the trainee becomes the locational character who is immersed in an environment which is not his/her own. Through this study, the transect was redefined as an immersive data collection tool, where the qualities of the school, namely, its topography and what it embeds, facilitate constructions ofthings outside the trainee teachers as well as how they make sense of themselves as they immerse themselves. The transect approach facilitates construction by Witnessing as the material (buildings, places), the embodied (practices, routines, traditions, leaderships, feelings), the cultural (thehabitus of the trainee teachers versus those of pupils and their parents versus the habitus of the school) and the ideological (what is normalised as normative inside the school) are captured during data collection.

The use of only traditional tools such as interviews and observation would not have yielded such rich data or done justice to the study. To unlock the depth of data contained in the act of Witnessing, the transect walk was appropriate in revealing the situatedness (in context), and partiality (dependent on the circumstances and event, and therefore cannot be generalised) and is contingent on the concept in action in thisstudy (Hesford, 2004). The transect also

helped in unravelling witnessing in the form of dialogue reached through agreement (socially constructed) and disagreement (perceived credibility) while interpreting a particular event or incident. The positionality of the participants as knowers is also underscored through Witnessing. Figure 10.3 further describes the methodological implications of the concept in this study.

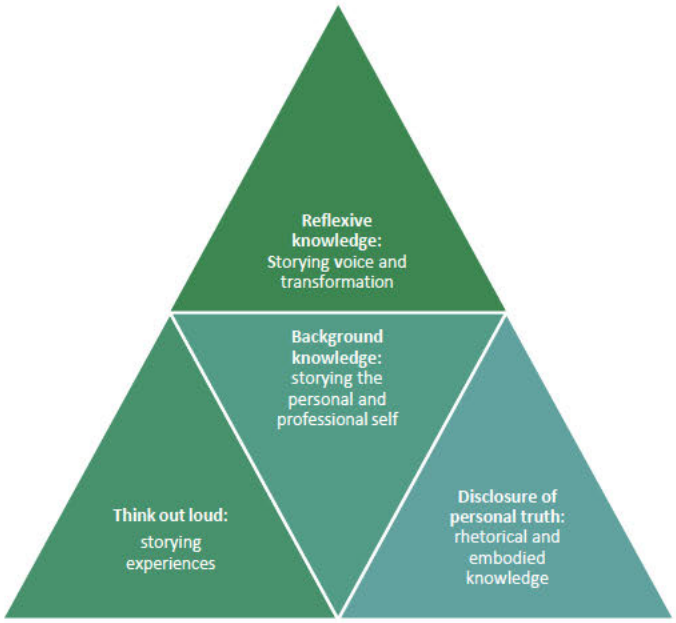

Figure 10.3: The various associations of Witnessing to unlock the nature of knowledge constructing of schoolcontext in this study

The first triangle forming the apex of the pyramid refers to the ways in which reflexivity and voice are represented and rendered possible. The participants positioned themselves as knowers who had ownership of the data. The whole idea of being a witness allowed them to vindicate an authentic idea of the professional relationships and spaces and places where professional practice matters. Being on placement positioned them as first-hand informers of the realities of professional practice. The inverted triangle facing the apex supports the witness' gaze and acknowledges that their personal and professional selves preceding teacher training influence their constructions. The witness builds on knowledge and experiences accumulated in diverse contexts.

Thus, witnessing has several nodal points which are connected to one another, making up a repertoire of knowledge about personal and professional reality. The trainee teachers in this study used this logic as they constructed different constituent parts of the school context which makes such constructions complex, relativistic and context bound. The base is supported by two triangles which brings out the notion of voice and representations. By storying and narrating their placement experiences, the trainee teachers bear witness of their professional journey using a subjective but authentic outlook while being on placement. They sometimes acknowledged that they are not fully-fledged teachers and do not have the same responsibilities and accountability as the class teacher. In the second situation, the trainee teacher is a witness who wants to showcase his/her involvement and visibility. He/she shares his/her personal truths or knowing based on the assumptions he/she made while interacting with people, starting by immersing in the job and becoming acquainted with the professional spaces. As a participant in the study, he/she bear witness of his/her own story and professional journey as a pre-service trainee teacher.

The following section extends witnessing as a theoretical lens and explication of the nature of construction of school context is further divided into stages.

10.8.2 Witnessing as a concept of visual lenses of space, landscapes and places

Using placement as a point of departure to explore constructions of school contexts intensifies trainee teachers' discourse on the question of experiencing or confronting experiential practice as they break from formal training settings and 'learning of mere theories' while experiencing a real work environment. The retrospective accounts call for the embodied transit of trainees from the formal training milieu to in-situ experiences that guide their constructs of school contexts (transcending time and space). These can be accounted for as spatial experiences and memories which I cluster in four main stages, namely (i) the immersion stage (where the trainee first encounters school life), (ii) the *being at school* stage (while immersing in school placement, the trainee teacher feels estranged or is not considered as being part of the school but cohabits with its members for some time), (iii) the *being in school*[21] stage (where the trainee undergoes complete assimilation and becomes a

native) and, finally, (iv) the reconstruction stage (where the trainee is self-aware or recognises that he/she is exiting his/her trainee self to take up other selves). The embodied dimensions of the trainee teachers' experiences are found to be sensory in nature and thus capture an existential and empirical construction pattern. Construction of placement through witnessing is therefore contained in the visual element (mental images and facts) which is rememorated through retrospection and the use of visual prompts and artefacts. In this respect, the photographs and transects used as tools of knowledge production created the possibility of rendering the data thick and credible.

In this sense, Witnessing becomes a mediator and a representation of those feelings and emotions, memories, and snapshots of events lived and facilitates recollection of those instances pertinent to the phase of their professional development through construction of school context. The smell of places, classrooms, and kitchen areas as well as soundscapes (movement of chairs and desks, voices of children reading aloud in chorus, teachers' rulers tapping on desks, the sounds of administrators walking in the corridors or parents' loud complaints) recreate and assist the trainee to build the sequences of events and recall pertinent moments which capture school contexts. Another important aspect of Witnessing in my study deals with the unveiling of the trainee's mediation of the past event while he/she remembers and negotiates what he/she deems meaningful to be presented as a snapshot of personal experiences with meaningful memories. This idea is in line with Mylones (2017) who mediated witnessing and Agamben's (1999) theorisation of memory. Moreover, the amalgamation of memory, gaze, assumptions and emotions captures construction processed as dialectical thinking and reflexivity which reveal the importance of placement experiences as exposure to authentic professional situations where the trainee teacher is also a bricoleur who learns to adapt.

[21] Abstract of Paper presented at CICE 2017 annexed

10.8.3 The conceptual implications of using Witnessing in the study

As a sociological concept and theoretical lens, Witnessing embodies the transformation of participants through 'voice', 'understanding', 'representations' and 'interpretations' during knowledge construction of their placement realities and experiences. I therefore consider Witnessing as a social process that transforms the trainee teacher's constructions of own personal and intimate experiences into a collective set of 'learning to teach' experiences which are storied as research accounts. My reading of Witnessing in this study conveys the possibilities of unlocking the backstage meaning of each participant, hence referring to the depiction of each participant's personal and professional trajectories (see appendices x) and how these trajectories influence the way they construct school context (as seen in chapter eight). This is followed by the representation of trainees' Witnessing as storying experiences that depicts some forms of personal teacher knowledge which emerge in time and space, (Samuel, 2009; Goodson & Gill, 2011; Clandinin & Clandinin,1990). The state of being on placement for the purpose of professional development including learning to teach offers a unique perspective to understand each participant's views, often fragmented but when reconstituted together form the whole picture as shaped by Witnessing. In short, the nature of trainee teachers' constructions of primary school context is explained as **emergence by Witnessing**.

10.8.3.1 Witnessing as the embodiment of personal construction as patches

The idea of constructing school context can be understood using the metaphor of patch making in *haute couture*. It is the assemblage of a variety of experiences, where there is a base fabric (in this study it is designated as the placement at school), which is knitted with own personal knowledge of the school via childhood memories as learners (practice by observation), but also professional socialisation processes. Small precious stone experiences on a day-to day basis add to the fabric until the finished product is produced. In the current study, the finished product is unique to each trainee teacher as their witnessing varies widely. Each construction is unique and specific and stands as an authentic representation of what gets constructed in the process of rememoration, voicing of affective experiences, making assumptions and gazing. Construction through witnessing also allows introspection on school context as forming an ecology of its own.

10.9 SCHOLARLY CONTRIBUTIONS

The main scholarly contribution of this study refers to construction as a dynamic process and a social act which is contained in time and space. While the act by itself is not rational but remains fluid and vacillates around people, places and relationships forged by formal and informal bonds within the school context. Such irrational responses from the trainee teachers refers to their authentic outlook of the school context as they learn to teach, explore the school as a workplace or attempt to connect to people and adapt to the different situations arising at school. Given the complexity of the latter's construction pattern, it is observed that their interpretation of the way they socialize is not linear but is forged by their personal biographies as individuals. Hence, memory, emotions, gaze and assumptions are included as the key constructs they use to build their own understanding of school context.

Professional socialization of trainees in this study is denoted by informality as part of professional development in initial teacher training. The placement period situates the trainee teacher in a liminal period where the latter attempts to make sense of who he/she is and how to sometimes adapt or adhere or mould his/her own professional identity. Changes observed in the school's physical, emotional, and intellectual climates; pedagogical practices and overall ecology, allow the latter to deconstruct and eventually reconstruct school infrastructure, teaching, learning, collegiality, leadership, relationships, school demography, performances and attainment patterns among others. Hence, by constructing the school context, the trainee teacher can voice out his/her own relationship with the profession and how he/she crafts his/her professional self. This is explicated in the form of Witnessing as trainee teachers take the posture of Witnesses in the placement spatial and temporal element. Their professional selves evolves continuously as they move from the contemplative to enactive and reflective stage. Their professional learning pathways through placement allow them to live through a period of estrangement until they are given the opportunity to be part of the school and either become native or develop a critical stance vis-à-vis teaching in practice. This is showcased in the theoretical model developed in the previous chapter. The sections below further explicate this idea.

10.9.1 Unlocking the embodiment of lived experiences and grooming professional knowledges through Witnessing.

The nature of trainee teachers' construction of primary school contexts embodies meanings around the social and professional relationships developed as becoming teachers. At the same time, these constructions are building blocks which articulate the process of learning to teach. These include observations, encounters, and interactions with people, articulating their personal knowledge of the places, spaces, and practices embedding their daily lives on placement. The meaning they derived from these constructions are determined by the social and institutional positions they hold; it also reflects their own subjectivities and power relations with other subjects. In Foucauldian terms, trainee teachersare knowing subjects who speak (the subject who knows) and are spoken about (an object ofknowledge).

It is also worth noting that such constructions are not haphazardly crafted but are usually juxtaposed with many contingencies which make up their personal, social, and professional histories. The emergence and crystallisation of these constructions are layered and coloured by power relationships, socio-historical circumstances, and the heritage of the trainees. These usually take the form of their personal baggage, their memories, perceptions and assumptions, observations, and experiences. For some, the primary school can be an antagonistic place of work while for others it is a haven of warmth and support triggered by recollection of events, places, encounters, and associations, and observations that the trainee teachers made during school placement. Their constructions also unveil personal knowledges where familiarity and strangeness are foregrounded within the spatial-temporal space which is represented by school placement in this study. There is constant fluctuation in time and space, and consequently, the findings of this study are premised on the 'presentist'. Nothing is fixed because there is no single reality. What is presented as the thesis is a compression of a parcel of that reality which is created at a particular point in time. It is a fabrication, a bricolage, an ideal type which is contingent, fragile, complex, messy, dubious, and fragmented but also contains stability, consistency, and authenticity.

10.9.2 How does Witnessing make sense on the nature construction of school context by the trainee teachers in this study?

Trainee teachers' constructions of primary school context takes place as emergent affective experiences, memories, assumptions, and gaze which is contained in the act of Witnessing. Emergence of knowledge is also selective, and it happens in the moment. In other words, construction usually entails deconstruction and reconstruction which is apparent when applied to places (like classrooms, the assembly, playgrounds); people (like parents, pupils, ancillary staff); and practices (like teaching; expectations about the profession; and leadership). All those bits and pieces make up the fundamental realities of the trainee teachers at one point in time.

In short, the nature of trainee teachers' constructions of primary school context is also explained as emergence by Witnessing. The construction of school context is two-fold but multifaceted; an inclusive cluster (supportive, bonding, resources, collegiality, communicative, we are visible, we are part of the school family) and an exclusive cluster (pathologising, fixing pupils; dangerous and toxic people; patronising leaders and colleagues, invisible, strangers). Power is exercised and manifested in the institutionalised, the hierarchy and through control mechanisms. It is in the private, concealed spaces and embodied in specific spaces and times of the day. Emergence by Witnessing depends on information and meaning making in the form of symbolism. This is usually communicated by language, and the trainee teacher's visual representation of his/her experiences, or an artefact.

Second, emergence by Witnessing relies on a feedback loop which in this study emphasized how the past influences the future and *vice versa*. In other words, the past and the future exist at the same time, giving rise to a sense of *deja-vu* in the trainee teacher. Thirdly, construction of school context is based on freewill. The trainee sanctions a specific school reality that only exists when it is observed (non-determinism). Finally, the trainee teacher constructs school context through his/her consciousness. Observations can only be made through consciousness that is made up of his/her rememoration patterns, assumptions and affective experiences, and development of the transversal gaze.

10.10 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS AND WAY FORWARD

MIE as the sole teacher training institution has the foresight to innovate and propose a Teacher Diploma Programme which is robust, is sensitive to school realities and which validate strong collaboration and professional support between the institution and school practitioners and leaders. One of the outcomes of the study demonstrate that construction of school context allows trainee teachers to informally learn about their professional practice. In the absence of support and collegial bond, trainee teachers end up isolated and estranged. In this respect, a stronger and more visible role should be given to schoolteachers with whom trainee teachers are attached to during placement. Their role as school mentors needs to be defined and made visible within the Teacher Diploma Programme. Training of trainers should also aim at empowering school practitioners (namely, headmasters, senior teachers) to offer support and be aware of what is the aim of the training for the newly recruited.

Secondly, given the nature of the primary school context and its reach in terms of a whole ecology, it is apparent that the school does not operate in isolation, but its life and culture is made up of a diverse and complex set of relationships with the inner bounds and outrebounds. In this respect, the home, school and community need to work collaboratively so as to reach same aim. Yet, this must be resolved through an active leadership and humanistic approach, whereby parents, human resources and stakeholders are encouraged to work together and target common aims.

More importantly, the study demonstrates that trainee teachers offer rich data on what influence the pedagogical practices and academic outcomes at primary school level. The primary school in that sense need to be used as a learning hub and incubator where innovative pedagogies are tested and trialed during teacher training. However, the communication channel between schools and MIE needs to be more fluid and consistent for that to take place. Some primary schools can be piloted as training hubs and the structure supporting the trainee teachers are well defined. The structure proposed is thoroughly discussed in sections 9.3 and 9.4 of chapter 9.

Likewise, the placement period offers scope for deconstruction and reconstruction of practice, hence leading the trainee teacher to adopt a reflective posture while constructing learners, teachers, teaching and teaching and non-teaching spaces. The re-imagination of the primary school as a support to training and its transformation into a professional learning hub (refer to figure 9.2) offer potential for the primary schools to actively support MIE training and hence bridging the theory-practice gap. In view of converging towards praxis, it is of upmost importance that a proper channel of information is made to ensure that the school administrators and practitioners are aware of the role of the trainee teacher during different stages of his/her placement. Regular meetings, capacity building for headmasters, school mentors and senior teaching staff will smoothen the transition between MIE teaching and School placement experiences for the trainee teachers if school leaders and stakeholders are aware of the expectations set for the trainee teachers during their placement period.

The study also unravels the trainee teachers' position as Witnesses of (mal)practices and renders their liminal positions visible and tangible. Their constructions of school context give enough insights on the potentials and limitations of initial teacher training of primary. They are at the same time the bricoleurs (see section 10.9.1 of chapter 10) and can give a genuine and authentic appraisal of what really takes place in practice. Curriculum developers should for that matter use their voice to better understand the different nuances and influences affecting the primary school teachers' pedagogical choices, teaching and learning and administration.

The study also portrays the school context as extending to the social groups forming the community, by strengthening the home, school community partnerships, the dissonances experienced with parents and other stakeholders might be curbed. Instead of gazing parents as intruders and surveillants, the latter need to be teamed as partners and given a more constructive roles parental involvement should be formally structured. Educational policies together must tap on the active roles of parents as extending support to schools and partnering with teachers instead of policing over the latter.

Finally, educational planning and development should also focus on making school infrastructures more attractive and conducive to learning. The contrast between Archie's school and Bella's demonstrate that physical safety is prioritized and in the absence of proper pedagogical spaces, learners may be bound to focus only on academics rather than having a fulfilling school life during their years of primary. Recreational spaces, classroom structures and amenities can boost the morale of teachers and improve instructions and open up to learning opportunities.

10.11 POSSIBILITIES FOR FURTHER STUDIES

In my humble opinion, the study has opened door for further research in the field of knowledge construction, initial professional development and school based practicum. Future research directions are diverse. The different constructs described to explain how construction takes place ease the way in which knowledge of the school and notions of schools are captured. These are interesting tools for analysing human interactions, construction patterns and lived experiences in social organizations and group. While the teacher gaze is widely optimized in educational literature, the use of the transversal gaze adds to this existing literature by articulating the subjectivist views which mediates between the perceived, conceived and lived experiences away from the dominant (power) gaze. The transversal gaze acts as a transgressive and resistant gaze and can redeem the voice of the participants. in this way, this concept can be used as an ideal type in educational studies with an emphasis in critical theory.

Secondly, the potential of optimizing autobiographical memories in educational studies is also noted. Narrative studies where memories are included capture the lived experiences in retrospection and allows space for induction and imagination. In line with critical studies where spaces and contextual facets of social realities are foregrounded (physical, historical, emotional, intellectual, social and cultural) are foregrounded makes use of memory to communicate such constructions deemed relevant to unpack certain phenomena under study.

Thirdly, through the use of transects as innovative data collection tools, this study has been able to combine, observation and interview techniques and reach a participatory approach where participants are acknowledged as knowledge producers. More studies within the educational context can be made using transects and validate their usefulness in producing authentic responses and diverse data sources. The use of transect can also be researched in view of sharpening the tool in terms of its trustworthiness and credibility and contribute to existing research on use of innovative research techniques and visual methodology.

Last but not least, the potential of this study to inform practice and teacher professional development is noted and the role of school placement foregrounded as an asset to initial teacher training. However, more studies are required to understand the link between training institutions like MIE and the primary schools who partner in the process. the study is limited by seven participants and is small scale. A quantitative outlook of the primary school as a space of informal learning and professional socialization may offer better scope for policy makers to plan and inform on future teacher training possibilities, innovate the teaching practice component and suggest other formal structures which support trainee teachers during their training.

Finally, research extended to the role of primary school as a constituent part of the social community, in terms of the role of geographical cartographies and performances, the role of SES on school cultures and climates can be further studied while the transects and visual methodologies are exploited beyond the school contours. Reforms pertaining on innovative practices, whether these are pedagogically driven or socially contained, require a focus on the home (e.g. SES or parental involvement) and the community in future research endeavours in the Mauritian context.

10.12 SYNTHESIS OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter offered insights into the nature of trainee teachers' constructions of (primary) school contexts in an initial teacher education programme by conceptualising Witnessing as a theoretical lens. In doing so, it pushed the contextual, methodological and theoretical boundaries in the field of educational sociology and teacher professionalism. The theory in this chapter and contribution to the study unlocks why school context matters and helps examine the role of school placementas pivotal in the initial teacher training programmes offered by the teacher education institution in dealing with in-service teacher professional development for the primary schoolsector. In this manner, the thesis concludes that school context has strong potential to inform practice and teacher education. In terms of contextual, methodological and theoretical contributions, the study highlights the significance of trainee teachers' immersion in schools as part of their professional becoming. The potential of this study also resides in the optimaluse of the transect approach as a methodological lens which further captures voice, subjectivities and reflexivity which are not possible through the traditional interview and observation. The method offers scope for a critical-interpretive turn to the study as it calibrates the authenticity of data produced as the trainee teachers exert their agency and power as knowledge producers. Finally, the thesis examines the idea of social construction through Witnessing by extending the role of the trainee teachers' subjectivities in time and space as well as honing in on the significance of relativist perspectives to underlying professional realities which are perceived, conceived and lived in a professional context whichdefined them as individuals who sit in a liminal space while becoming a primary school teacher.

EPILOGUE
WALKING OUT THE SCENE

The study has some scopes to probe the future directions of initial teacher education programmes in context. By critically exploring the trainee teachers' construction, the study unlocks how the primary school is fashioned as a workplace and as a site for trainee teachers' professional socialization. In short, the school foregrounds the telling trajectories of the trainee teachers who immerse into teaching and come to terms with their perceived, conceived and lived experiences. Constructions of school context are multifaced and boundedby the singular experiences of the trainees is captured through the act of witnessing. Traineescan be said to be bricoleurs authoring their professional immersion into practice. By referringto the SCT, the study gives room for unlocking the trainee teachers' subjective realities together with their personal and professional pathways converged to constructions of school context as dynamic, constantly changing, and complex.

The optimal use of the transect as a data production tool successfully fulfil its purpose in this study as it gave enough space to unlock the nature of trainee teachers' construction of school context given that they could socially construct or reconstruct in some cases what is particularly significant to them as they recreate the scenarios of their experiences of school placement. They could recreate their teaching trajectories alone. The retrospective element was foregrounded and mapping the site was the best way in unlocking the lived experiencesin the form of a creative emballage of their professional journey. In the process, the trainee teachers could eventually pose a personal representation of what has become a collective interpretation in this study. Professional relationships and practices are honed by the traineeteachers as they witness the complexity of the school context. In terms of method, the transect allowed the participants to recreate their School-Based Experiences through the walk-talk and participatory approach. The places and sites identified by them were used as props to trigger memories and allow the retrospection to be more vivid as well as placement acting as an alternative to triangulation. As a researcher, I was able to observe while conversing. The method facilitates the recreation of the space lived by the trainee teachers, hence unlocking the (temporal and spatial elements. Finally, the transect represents the caption of the embodiment of trainee

teachers/' experiences during placement. By recreating the experience through the walk, the participant is in the process of constructing the school context. The walk is a thoughtful process not haphazardly made because it is conceived in themind of the participant and contained the emancipatory element (voice and agency of the participant as a knower). Consequently, the tool will be further exploited and refined for future educational research in context.

I realized that by using participatory methods and visuals as prompts have allowed me to sharpen my interest in educational research and dwell further in finding possibilities to conduct research as a Witness and Witnesses. This study has offered the possibility for me to venture into the field of Sociology of knowledge and use critical-interpretivism as a research paradigm. I was able to improve my writing skills, and the critical feedback of reviewers and supervisors have greatly changed my perspectives and sharpened my scholarly writing.

Professionally, I better understand the primary school context and its operation. As an assistant programme coordinator of the Teacher Diploma Primary and coordinator of several modules at B.Ed. Primary level, the study is better informing me while I plan and write course materials targeting students who are trainee teachers, primary school teachers, head teachers and primary school leaders. Moreover, I am in a better position to plan non-award seminars which support trainee teachers of primary as they are exposed to various stakeholders like the police, ombudsperson for children, and relevant NGOs among others. Finally as I walk out, I realized the significance of school context on teaching and learning and the professional growth of teachers. School context influences teachers' work and their morale. Future studies will probe on these dimensions of school context.

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LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix (separate attachment in PDF): Language editor's report

Appendix (Separate Attachment in PDF): Turnitin report

Appendix 1: Ethical clearance letter from UKZN

Appendix 2: Gatekeeping - Permission to access school form Ministry of Education and Human resource development.

Appendix 3: Gatekeeping - Permission to access school from Bureau Education Catholique (BEC) now known as (CEDEC)

Appendix 4: Participants' informed consent forms

Appendix 5: Mapping transect as a qualitative research tool in education

Appendix 6: Pilot study's transcript

Appendix 7: Samples of Maps and transect schedules.

Appendix 8: Samples of my personal Field notes and reflections

Appendix 9a: Sample of one transcribed data set in Mauritian Creole (mother tongue)

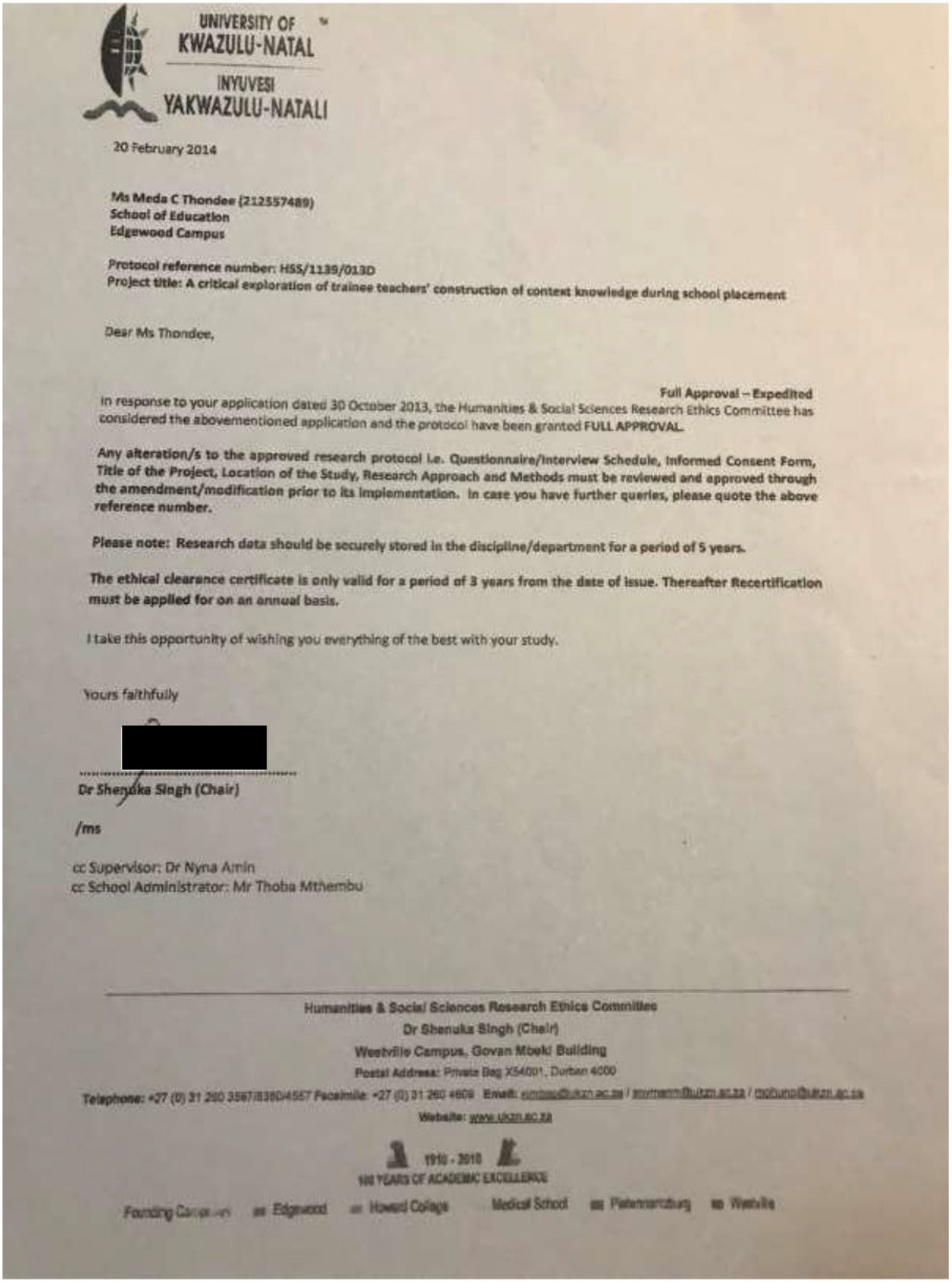
Appendix 9b: Sample of one transcribed and translated data set in English version.

Appendix 10: Records of narratives of participants' personal and professional trajectories

Appendix 11: trails of photographs as sources of data supporting findings presented chapter six and seven

Appendix 14: Abstracts of paper presentation in conferences **(**local and international**)**

Appendix1: Ethical clearance letter from UKZN



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INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

20 February 2014

Ms Meda C Thondee (212557489)
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Protocol reference number: HSS/1139/013D
Project title: A critical exploration of trainee teachers' construction of context knowledge during school placement

Dear Ms Thondee,

Full Approval – Expedited

In response to your application dated 30 October 2013, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol have been granted **FULL APPROVAL.**

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

[redacted]

.....
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

/ms

cc Supervisor: Dr Nyna Amin
cc School Administrator: Mr Thoba Mthembu

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
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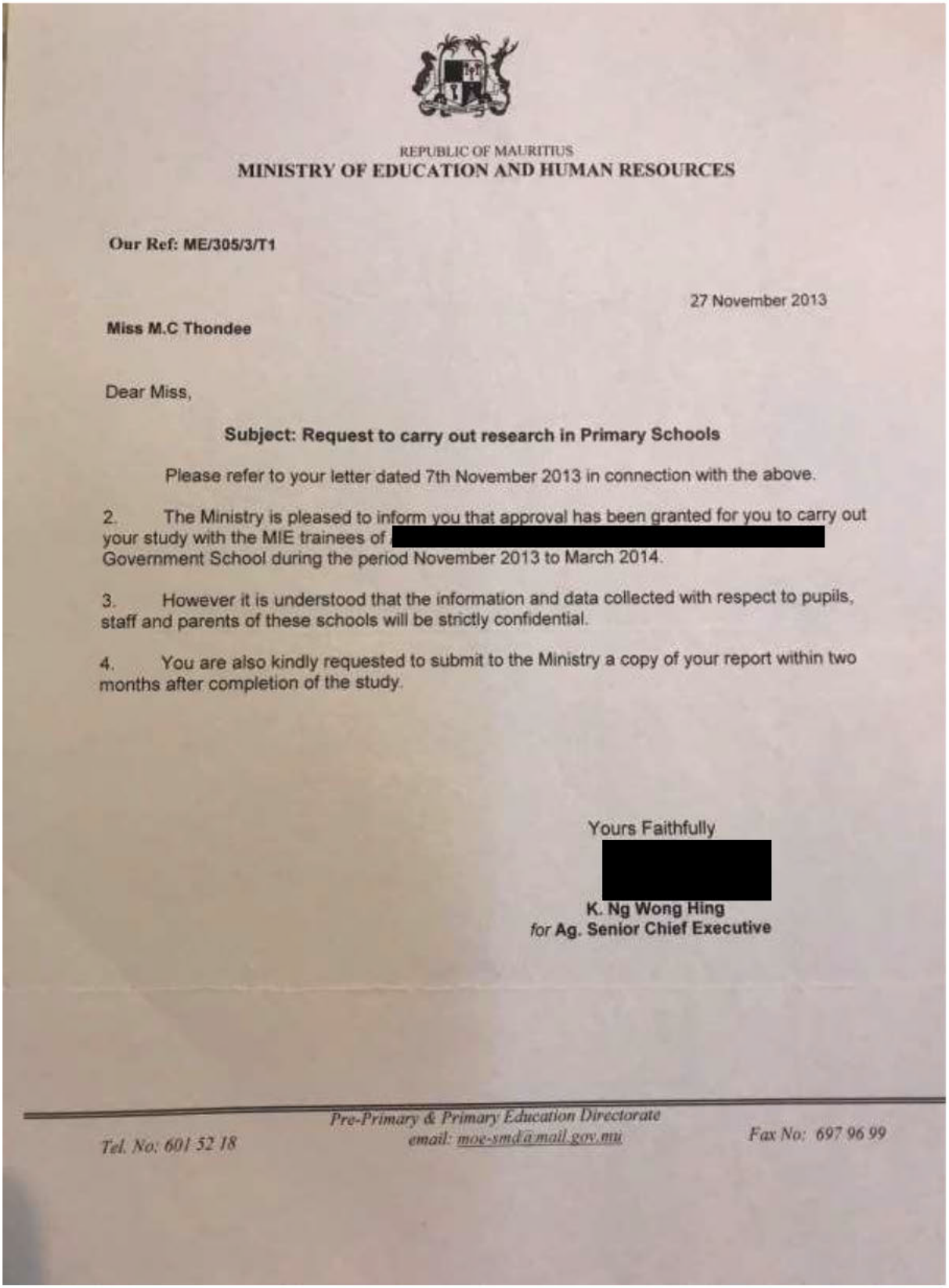
1910 - 2010
100 YEARS OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

Appendix 2: Gatekeeping - Permission to access school form Ministry of Education and Human resource development.



REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN RESOURCES

Our Ref: ME/305/3/T1

27 November 2013

Miss M.C Thondee

Dear Miss,

Subject: Request to carry out research in Primary Schools

Please refer to your letter dated 7th November 2013 in connection with the above.

2. The Ministry is pleased to inform you that approval has been granted for you to carry out your study with the MIE trainees of [redacted] Government School during the period November 2013 to March 2014.

3. However it is understood that the information and data collected with respect to pupils, staff and parents of these schools will be strictly confidential.

4. You are also kindly requested to submit to the Ministry a copy of your report within two months after completion of the study.

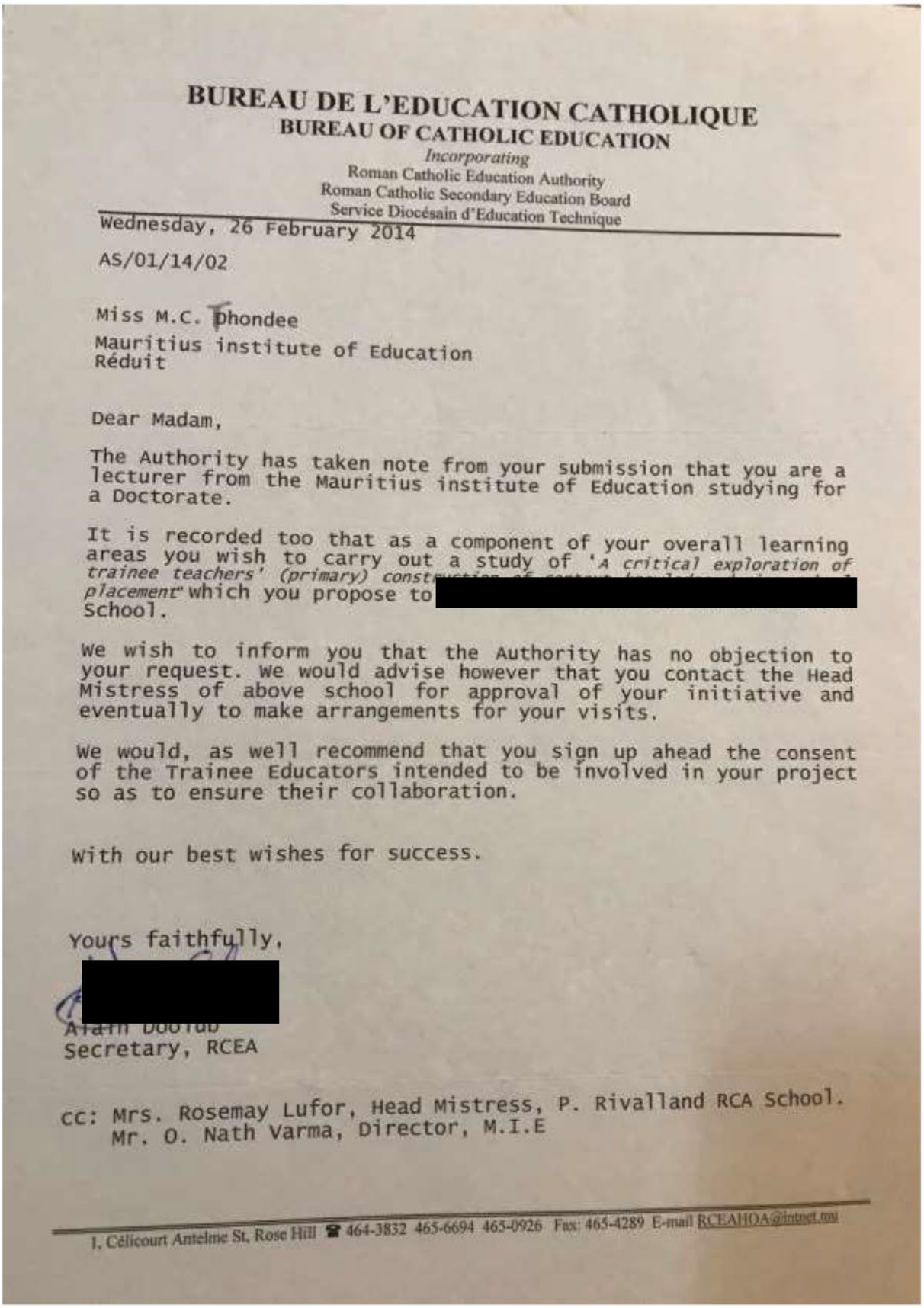
Yours Faithfully

[redacted]

K. Ng Wong Hing
for **Ag. Senior Chief Executive**

Pre-Primary & Primary Education Directorate
Tel. No: 601 52 18 *email: moe-smd@mail.gov.mu* *Fax No: 697 96 99*

Appendix 3: Gatekeeping - Permission to access school from Bureau Education Catholique (BEC) now known as (CEDEC)



BUREAU DE L'EDUCATION CATHOLIQUE
BUREAU OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION
Incorporating
Roman Catholic Education Authority
Roman Catholic Secondary Education Board
Service Diocésain d'Education Technique

Wednesday, 26 February 2014

AS/01/14/02

Miss M.C. Dhondee
Mauritius institute of Education
Réduit

Dear Madam,

The Authority has taken note from your submission that you are a lecturer from the Mauritius institute of Education studying for a Doctorate.

It is recorded too that as a component of your overall learning areas you wish to carry out a study of '*A critical exploration of trainee teachers' (primary) construction of [redacted] placement*' which you propose to [redacted] School.

We wish to inform you that the Authority has no objection to your request. We would advise however that you contact the Head Mistress of above school for approval of your initiative and eventually to make arrangements for your visits.

We would, as well recommend that you sign up ahead the consent of the Trainee Educators intended to be involved in your project so as to ensure their collaboration.

With our best wishes for success.

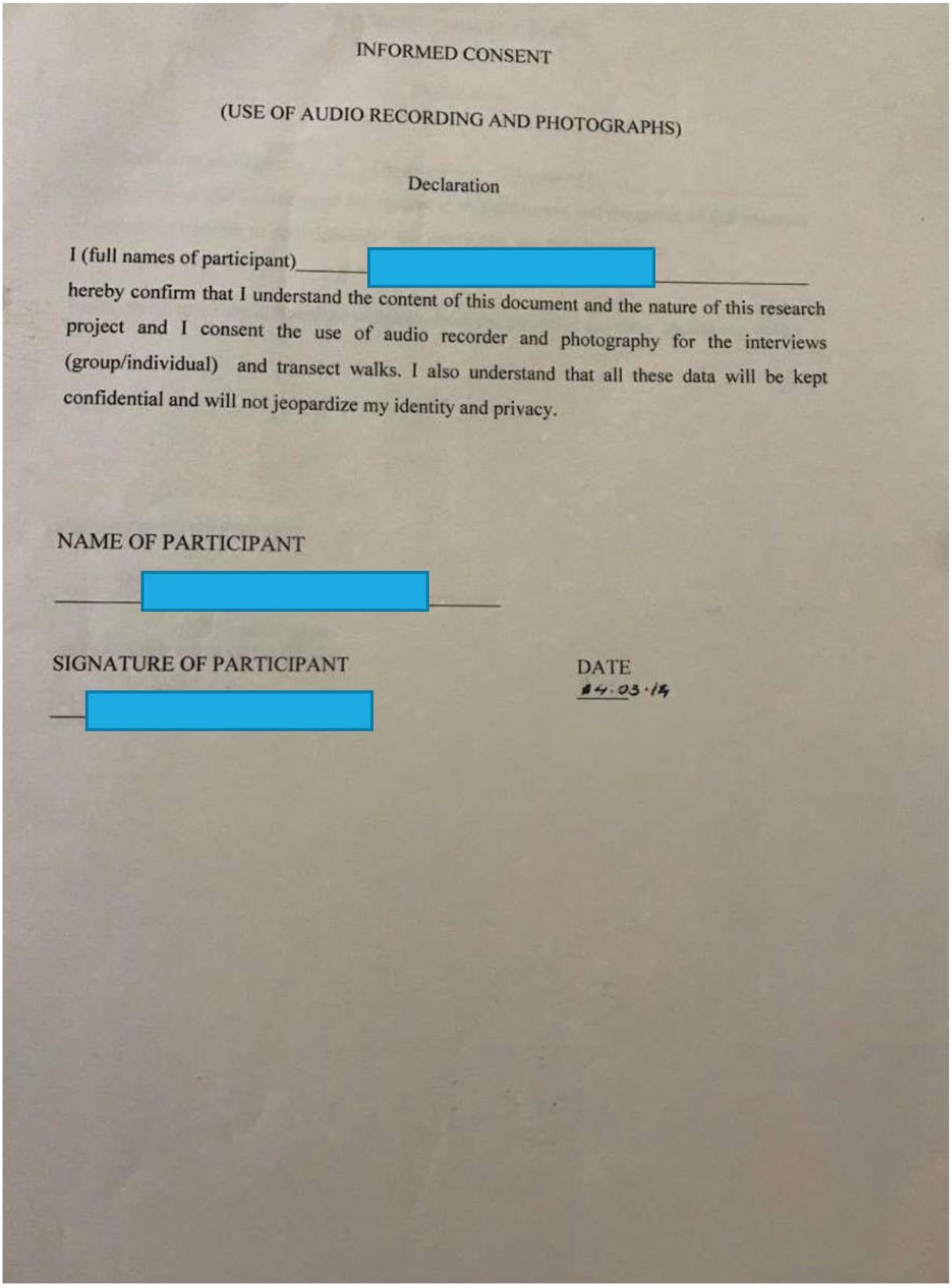
Yours faithfully,

[redacted]
Secretary, RCEA

cc: Mrs. Rosemay Lufor, Head Mistress, P. Rivalland RCA School.
Mr. O. Nath Varma, Director, M.I.E

1, Célicourt Antelme St, Rose Hill ☎ 464-3832 465-6694 465-0926 Fax: 465-4289 E-mail RCEAHOA@intnet.mu

Appendix 6: Participants' informed consent forms



INFORMED CONSENT

(USE OF AUDIO RECORDING AND PHOTOGRAPHS)

Declaration

I (full names of participant) [redacted] hereby confirm that I understand the content of this document and the nature of this research project and I consent the use of audio recorder and photography for the interviews (group/individual) and transect walks. I also understand that all these data will be kept confidential and will not jeopardize my identity and privacy.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT

[redacted]

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

[redacted]

DATE

04.03.14

Appendix7a: Mapping transect as a qualitative research tool in education.

(i) Drafting the outcome of the pilot study on the transect walk

Main headlines for the filtering of data

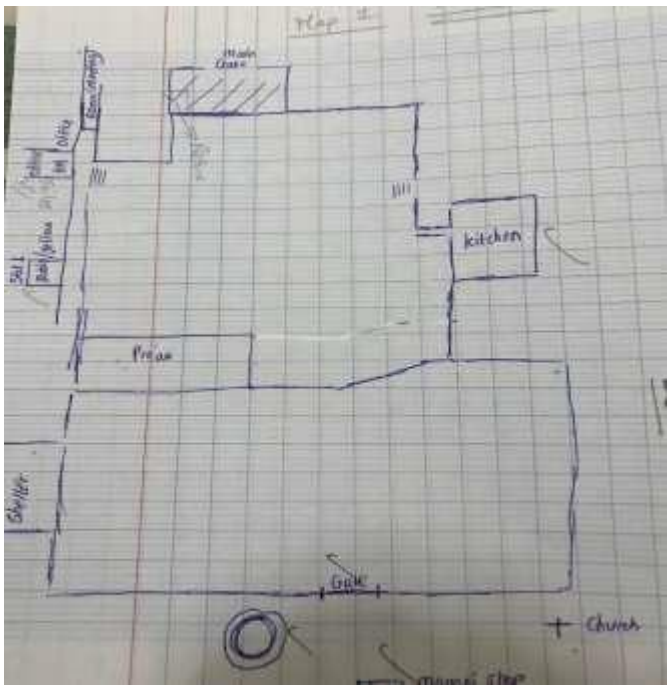
1. About the participant
2. The map
3. The pictures (the narratives of the pictures –triggers or are they data in themselves/ do they speak what do they tell and how do the participants interpret them?)
4. The sequence of the walk/conversation –portraying the developmental trajectories of the participant at the MIE
5. The pace of the walk – pauses (on track/off track) mental scripts –lose/condense
6. The silences
7. Intruders in the conversation
8. Triggers to conversation – anecdotes, remembrances, people, intruders
9. Memories – good (the mental catalogue) what do I market about the context I evolve?
10. Incidences
11. The presence of absence
12. The unsaid but lived experiences

The format of the analysis

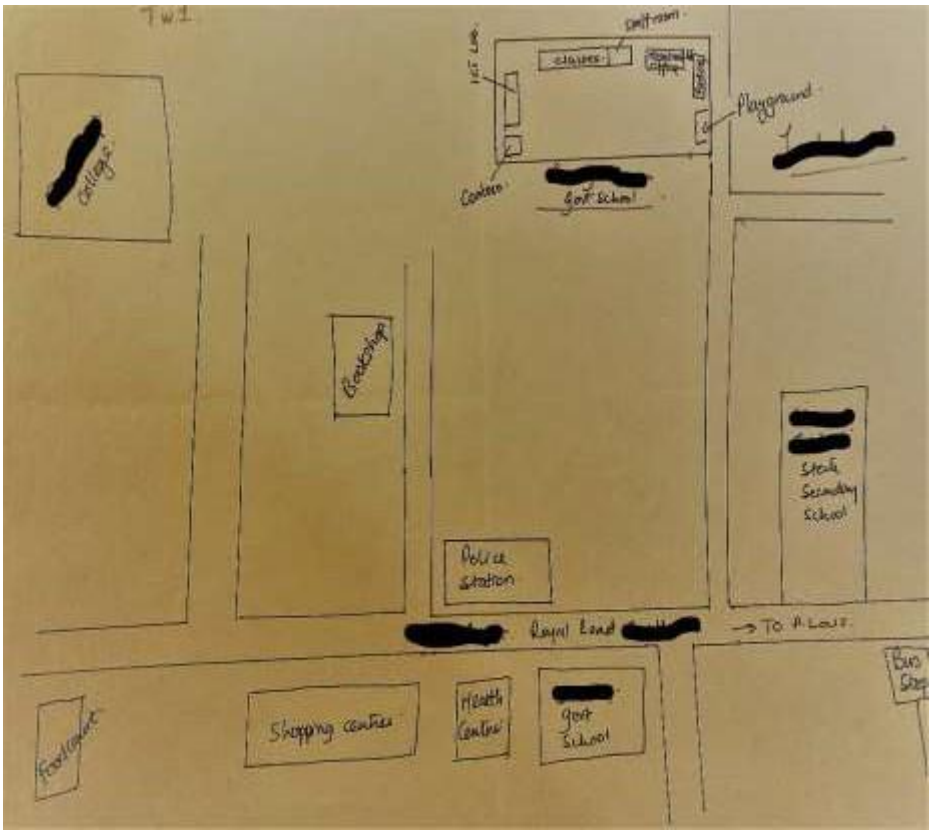
A) Triggering events as prologue
B) The conversation
C) The end is not the end
D) Terminating events as epilogue

About the instrument: What data could be collected? What could not? Where are the loopholes

Appendix 7b: Samples of Maps and transect schedules.



Bella first transect map reviewed after the first transect. The staff toilet was added afterwards.



Archie's map pre walk I and II as Archie's walk was lengthy and required more than one

journey.

Appendix 8a: Sample of pre walk interview schedule.

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE
PhD UKZN

Interview number:	**Lieu:**
Interviewee:	**Date:**
Time start:	**Time ends:**

Mode of recording: audio taped with consent of participant/back up also provided –mobile audio recorder

Other details

Biographical Sketch

1. Your biography as a learner – who is.....?

2. Your professional journey '*parcours'*

3. Why teaching at primary school level –what factors affected your choices?

Initiation to Teaching through Placement

4. How did you imagined yourself as a primary teacher?

5. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A TRAINEE TEACHER?

5b.How was your experience during immersion? Your first impression/your first day/ and first impressions? How was your presence felt on that first day?

5c. What about your SBE placement in Mauritius?

5d. How was your first day?

5e. What are the things that actually strike you on that first day?

The physical infrastructure

6. Tell me about the school infrastructure and the interaction/actors evolving in that particular space? Tell me about the things which marked you the most during placement?

Teaching and learning

7. What did you observe in terms of teaching? How were the teachers there? Was there any form of despair among your 'colleagues at time? What could be the reasons for that?

Learners and learning

8. What can you say about your learners? How was your overall encounter with them?

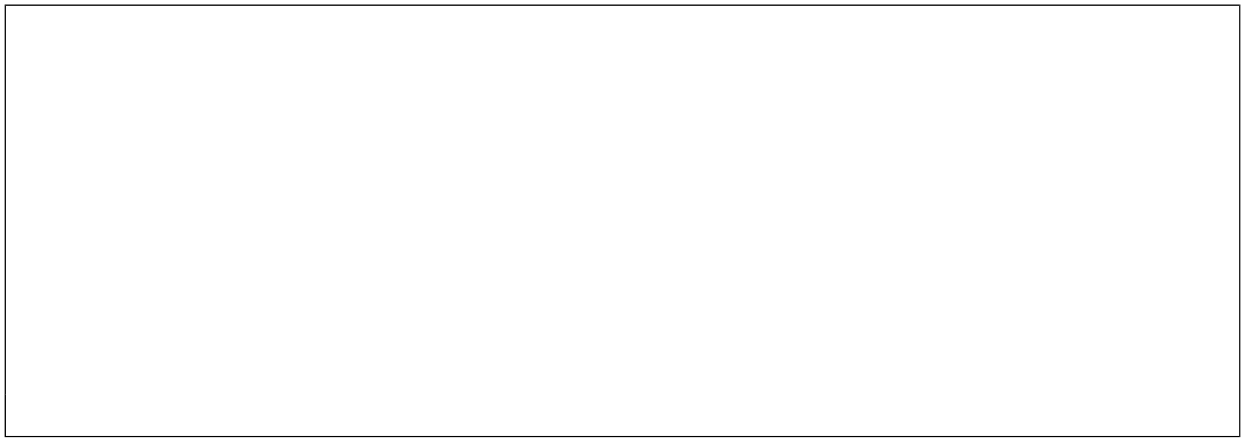
9. What can be said about the learning corners/ space/ classroom?

10. What can be said about the execution of lessons?

Your learning as a trainee teacher

11. Did you ever felt like a 'stranger' somehow at one point in time? Why? Why not? Was there a feeling of being neither student not teacher? How and why?

12. What did you learn during placement?



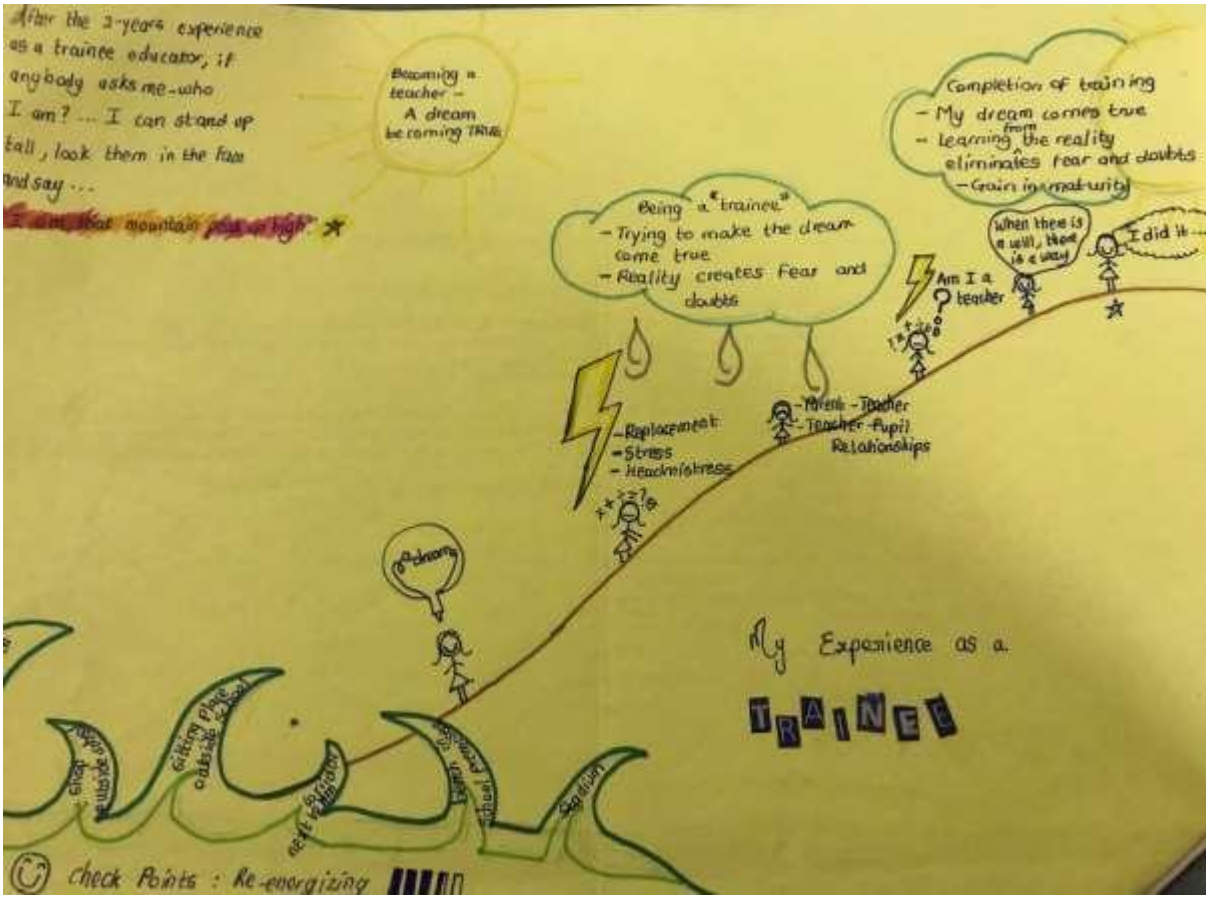
Use of personal knowledge

13. What did you bring into the process while being on placement?

14. If you have to use a **metaphor** to describe yourself/ the school/learners –what will it be?

15. **Un mot de la fin**… (final words)

Appendix 8b: Samples post walk interviews' collage and artefacts.



Bella's post walk interview she decided to make a drawing representing her journey and how she experienced placement.

Kiara's umbrella she used this as a pointer and she refers to it as an inseparable item which reminds her of her trainee teacher status as will to find shade and at the beginning staying under the shadow/feeling protected but also to assert her authority.

ANNEX CHAPTER 5

Figure 5.1. The school kitchen as a space where collegiality and support are observed and experienced. Refer to Chapter 5 section 5.3

Kyle: 'I still remember this big box; this is the same one we used to store bread before it is distributed to pupils…the kitchen (second picture) is a place where we recall good times spent with colleagues and Mr. B who was our chef (referring to the janitor).'
(Extract from Transect walk 1)

Figure 5.2a and 5.2b Schools offering pedagogical support and friendship

'While our school was under renovation, we could come here to do PE classes (school 1).' In primary school B some of our pupils were relocated here and after we returned back to the newly renovated school we kept contact with the teachers here (pictures on the right hand side), they were of great help for instructional skills. (Archie extract from Transect 1)

Figure 5.3 pupils' belongings in Bella schools as compared to Kyle's school

'We can easily monitor children's movement and note who is present and who is absent right from there (pointing at the place where pupils' lunch bags are kept)' Bella extract from transect 1

Figure 5.4a Pupils' belongings in Kyle's school
'I always make sure they (referring to the pupils) use the mini shelves to store their belongings.' (Kyle transect 1)

Figure 5.4b Pupils' always leaving their belongings behind
'The pupils always 'lose' some of their stuffs on the way. It is holiday time they become careless and leave behind their jackets, even books, and no one ever come to claim them back.' (Kiara, transect walk 2)

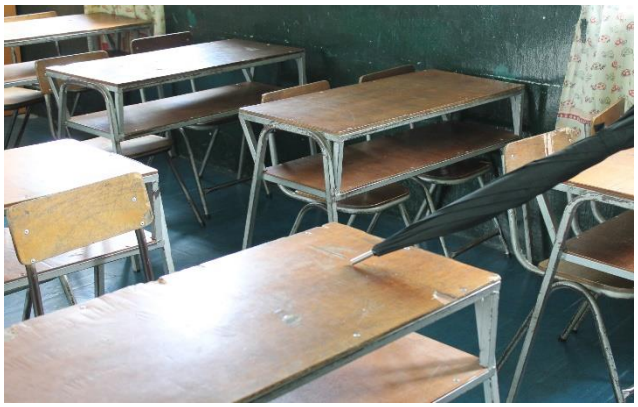


Figure 5.5 pupils are troublemakers in class

This one (pinpointing at the seat where this pupilusually sits) troubled me a lot. He was always disturbing the class, I had to shout at him all the time. I will never forget this pupil. He made a strong impression on my placement experiences while I was in this class. '(Kiara, transect walk)

ANNEX CHAPTER 6

6.1 Bella 's construction of relationships with parents

'Parents use the back gate to come sit here (referring to the stadium picture at the left-hand side) and watch what we were doing (classes picture on right-hand side). They could see all our moves; it is quite stressful for teachers…' (Bella, T1)

Figure 6.2 Bookstores and shopkeepers as a source of support and a meeting point for trainee teachers

Bella explains that coming to the shop (picture on the lefthand side) to buys some snacks and candies allows her to release the tensions felt while being at school while Archie explains that he occasionally meets colleagues and friends as well as parents in the bookshop (on the righthand side) with whom he shares a good relation.

Figure 6.4 Construction of relationships with the police

'The police have a close relationship with my school; indeed, the school gate's keys are deposited here every afternoon and the janitor come early in the morning to pick up the keys to open the gates, because we do not have a security guard there. (Kyle, T1)

…. The police signals altercation between parents and teachers where complaints are filed, and mediation made by the police to resolve conflicts. (Kyle, T1)

Fig 6.5 constructing the police as supporting the proper functioning of the school

Policemen will stand at the school gate and control in and out. This is because school buses and vans would keep coming and going in the morning to drop kids and an unattended child can just move in and be victim of an accident. So this policeman controls the gate and ensure pupils' safety during that very moment. No child is allowed to come out on their own, parents and the school bus attendant have to get in and take their wards.' (Kyle transect 1)

Fig. 6.6 Constructing police as ensuring safety of pupils and teachers

The police is very important in road safety as we (he was referring to teachers) do not have professional knowledge, he knows how to stop a vehicle to control the traffic and facilitate learners' safety (Archie, Transect walk)

Figure 6.7 Constructing Health care officers as offering support of teachers and pupils alike

Both Kyle and Kiara explained that the area health centre extends support to the school in its daily operations. Children who hurt themselves during recess are sent there for first aid and Kiara herself would often go there for here prenatal treatment during her pregnancy. The nursing officers from the centre also regularly visit the school for vacnation of pupils and senstisation with respect to promotion and monitoring of pupils' health and hygiene.

Figure 6.8a The school canteen offering conviviality.
In Archie's case, the canteen is seen as a safe place where pupils can have a well-balanced meal. The canteen owner is seen as someone who is convivial and warm.

Figure 6.8b. The school canteen owner as convivial and supporting teachers.

Bella explains that in her school the canteen owner gives full support to staff, especially teachers.

Annex chapter 7

CONSTRUCTING SCHOOL CONTEXT AS SPACES OF PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES

Figure 7.1a Constructing the school gates as spaces of power and control in Bella's school

In Bella's school, there are two gates. The main gate gives access to a small corridor leading to a second gate,which allows access to the school compound. Visitors cannot enter the second gate without permission and while dropping off their wards, parents and responsible parties' access is restricted within the confines of the first gate and the corridor. This is the space where parents take stock of

latest information regarding teaching, performance of their children.

Figure 7.1b Constructing the school gates as spaces of power and control in Kyle's and Kiara's school

'This is affixed on the school gate (referring to the poster) to inform parents they need to take the access card from the headteacher. This is a good thing else; parents just barge into the classroom and sometimes they come to insult teachers in front of pupils…' (Kyle, T2)

Figure 7.2 Constructing the spot of school assembly as a space where power is exercised, contested and resisted

In Bella's case it is used as a mechanism of control by the headmaster while in the case of Boaz and Kyle's, it affirms their status as a teacher.

Figure 7.3 The mini vegetable market this space serves as a pedagogical space extending the learning experiences of the primary school learners. Kyle explains that this is also a meeting place for teachers and parents alike but teachers also come here with their pupils to teach food group.

Figure 7.4 The neighbourhood as a marker of school composition.

Kiara highlights that the neighbourhood gives an indication of the SES of the pupils and the kind of parents they get to interact with.

Figure 7.5 The conversion of the dark room into an Asian language classroom

Kyle explains that this reconverted spaces served several purposes. It was initially a toilet for Staff and then was reconverted into a store room and is presently a classroom for those doing marathi language and can accommodate at most four learners.Kyle recalled that when he was a pupil this was used to scare kids who misbehaved.

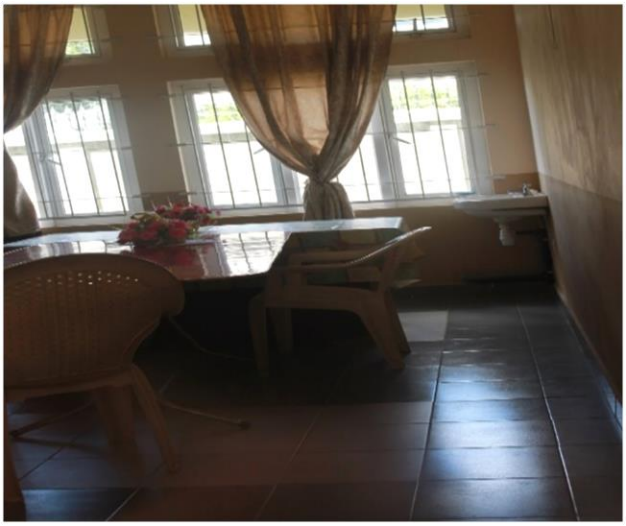


Figure 7.6 The staff room

This space is contradictory. For trainee teachers like Archie and Kyle, it is a space where they can easily find the support of the
school teachers and adminstrators, either for completion of their MIE assignments or for teaching tips, while for Bella and Tabitha, the staff room is a restricted space where they are not given free access. In their case, that kind of restriction made it clear for them that they are not fully teachers and that they are not part of the staff.

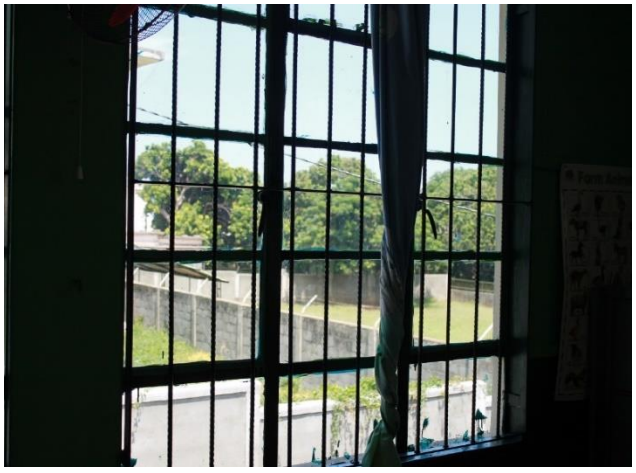


Figure 7.7a The school promoting safety

Kyle, Archie and Boaz construct burglar bars and fences as safety measures which protect pupils from potential accidents. In 7.7a Kyle explains that sometimes while playing pupils push their classmates against the door and windows, in the absence of those burglar bars, the latter can hurt themselves badly.

7.7b Fencing around the school compound
Archie explains that these fences were made to protect children who use to play football on that spot, it also hinders people to jump inside the school compound.

Figure 7.7c Handrails to protect children's movement

Boaz recall that when he was a pupil in that school accidents were frequent and by putting those handrails, pupils are protected from falling and hurting themselves badly.

Appendix 9: **transcription of the pilot**

TRANSCRIPTION OF PILOT STUDY

Conversation during a transect walk in the premises of the MIE with a new teacher-educator and a not so new teacher educator?

'Down memory lane again now'

Charisma (Colleague (interviewer)) C-CI
Chan (Colleague (participant)) C-CP

C-CI: Office - why did you choose this site as the first site?

C-CP: I am happy to have my own officeee, this is may be someway hummmm… important for me as an achievement as i…hah. Startingggg..working as a clerk, be in university and having a degree and then join the profession of educator, practiced for seven years and looking forward to achieve more in life, and have a target. I was really happy to be having myoffice have taken some pictures of my first day and I was eager to come to my office see where I am going to sit, where I will be working.

Okay…so how was your feeling, how was the first day? When you saw the office

C-CP: I was really excited to see my office and the table, I was really eager to set the place, to organize where to put my PC, where to put my chair, and how I am going to use even the cupboard…

C-CI: So si mo demann toi ene kestion? Ki es Chandan, qu'esce qu'il est en train de faire ici? What will you say?

C-CP: Ehhhhhhhhhh, learn and also share my experiences….

C-CI: Can you tell me about your experiences?

C-CP: Alorrrr…I have gone for my education, got my masters, educated in Curriculum, leadershipppp, err a little bit on research and technology in education, donc, mostly I am here in this department to share my knowledge and my experience in terms of curriculum and assessment

C-CI: Okay…what do you know about this place…what goes on in this place? C-CP: Hum I have been a student here in 2007 and 2008, for two years, for my PGCE, and I have been lecturing for two years as a part timer. So might say four years I have been here before joining the Mie, so I understand for teachers to come here to get the required knowledge, to be teaching in their contexts, that is primary, secondary and pre primary…

C-CI: Okay..i am going to ask you the question again…in this room, what do you know about THIs place, this room, what are the daily interaction here….huuuuhhh this question is not clear? **Not clear? Qu-es ce qui se passé ici dans cette piece?** Do you mean interaction between my colleagues, **the students**, the students, what I am learning and what I am

planning, bon this is what I do…errrr…well this what I do, I am really happy to be here, to be surrounded by people in the same field in academia, and learn from them, and what I do especially for the first year it is mostly the planning of what I am going to do in the classes and of course some moments, I am thinking on the areas I am going to do my research work

C-CI: Okay…well what is the feeling about the *X* floor, especially this wing?

C-CP: Special feeling forrrr meee (some hesitation) huuuh especially because my office is here and because I have been coming on this level to submit my assignment …when I was a student. So I was always coming in the typing pool, of course there has been some changes, for me some locations are really special, you know today I am working with Meera, but once I was coming to Submittt (**your assignment)** my assignments…you know it was more official type, I don't know Meera as such…she was somebody with authority, you should be coming here before half past…errr…(**four?**) three to submit your assignment?

C-CI: So should we go to the typing pool to continue the discussion?...walking…had you ever had a talk in the corridor…never? With colleagues?

(People in the typing pool we shift to conference)

C-CI: So you were talking of the typing pool and meeting with Mrs A? Right? What else?

C-CP: …I used for lecturing and I really like this class, there is ventilation, lighting and the atmosphere, there are some memories connected here because I was a student and I use to come here sooo the time when I entered the room and I was on the other side…in front of the student …I was really happy… (**so do you feel that this room is more comfortable than the other rooms that you get to do your lectures?)**

C-CP: Yeah…err. This is because there are some rooms which are not convenient in terms of ventilation, lighting and it is crumbling, you know compared to the conference room which you can accommodate around 50- 60 students…so it is more comfortable…it is more ideal compared to the other rooms

C-CI: Okayyyy so do you think that your professional needs are being met here…at the MIE?

C-CP: Yes I do feel (some hesitation) because you know the next target is to do my PHd. This is I thing the right place….in terms of arrrr…errr, where people are being…conducting researchers and where people are upgrading themselves and at the same time working, and having the right contacts, the right contacts, interactions, supervisors, having connections with people of other universities and…visiting lecturers are coming more frequently so I think it'sssssssss the right place, especially in terms of education.

C-CI: So if you had the chance of shifting somewhere else, let's say at UOM? How would you feel?

C-CP: Hum I don't think this would be the right time, anyway I feel that in terms of education in the island, MIE is the right place as compared to….uom…I have been there for four years as

a student. Soo I feel that MIE is better in research and work in the field of education.**C-CI: Okay…sooo** may be in the long run, never know… **sooo how do you feel do you mean that your role as a teacher educator is being fulfilled here?**

C-CP: Yes certainly, again as I have mentioned..errr…at MIE the dept. that you have in Curriculum and Assessment…even if I want I can shift to another dept. in Design and Technology or even leadership or even education studies…I think it more appropriate here, you know the department has lot more of experience and qualified people here as compared to other institutions. (**What make you feel that they are more qualified? That they are qualified?**)

C-CP: Errr… the…these interactions I have been having with people here and like I said I have been a student here so I know most of the people around, of course there are some new comers but the interaction with them already give you an idea what MIE is and in which direction MIE is moving…I think this is the right place!

C-CI: Okay…so should we shift to the council room? So why did you choose the council room actually?

C-CP: The council is the place I have come twice for the interview so this is a very special location, so may be I'll say I've been able to convince these people that I am the right person to be here, in this dept. of Curriculum…(**so…err…was it the first room…errr you were in…?) okay…so you still remember your interview day…yeah…**

C-CP: Yeah the set up is not the same…I still remember where I was seated, the people were seated in front of me, even if I cannot recall all the names of everybody, err, but I still remember where I was seated and how I was feeling…and before I left the room how I tried to convince these people thru' the feedback you know I got from the students…so I was already leaving but I stopped…at that time it was really important for me to tell them I have been lecturing part time and there has been eerrrr…some good feedback received from the students..so this is a very special place. So I have been here for my induction, with the director, being seated for the first time with the director…so this room is very special.

C-CI: (**So what kind of interaction, how different was your interaction during that interview and during your induction?)**

C-CP: For the interview you are not even part of the team at the MIE…so you don't feel a member of the Mie as compared to the induction…it is different, you are happy because you are already in…and also during the induction, you are seated with the director, you have a vision because some elements are being told and you know that nobody else have been said those and I have a better idea of where MIE is moving and what we are supposed to be doing. (13.47)

Appendix 10a: My positionality as a young researcher and doctoral scholar.

As I started my incursion in the professional life of some primary school trainees . I was teaching I came to the realisation that many were already immersed with the idea that what they learn in teacher training have little value to what they witness in practice. The concern for finding if there was eventually a gap between what was taught during the two years TDP training, and the reality of the school became obvious to me. As a young academic, who had no experience in teaching in the primary school context, it was puzzling to explore the school as the unknown. Very much indeed, my own primary school years was traumatic, I was usually bullied by my own classmates and had stern looking teachers who were more stressed about making me one of their best products, in any case their little winning trophy at the end of my own primary school cycle. In my imagination, school was no more than a factory and I felt disgusted whenever I pass by my own primary school as my life was filled with early morning drills, monotonous classes, afternoon tuitions and burning midnight candles while preparing for the Certificate of Primary Examinations (CPE). As a learner, I often rebelled by feigning sickness or if I was seriously ill will try to extend my home stay, which landed me in troubles later. I was bright, but I did not consider my result brilliant.I ended up in a private confessional college and this is where I started grooming my real intellectual interests and non-academic talents. I topped and never seize to do so, even when I went to study abroad. During my bachelors I was the silent learner, who hardly speak up or ask questions, my routines was home, classes, library, self-study. No fight, no party, no allegiance to the student union, nothing… but I was happy and proud of myself because I was the topper. T hen suddenly I got this wonderful fellowship and landed in New Delhi , India, in this unknown site (Jawaharlal Nehru University), a haven for hot shots and future politicians if not uncompromising Marxists who were ready to die on strike or be jailed for their cause and philosophy. I was in awe, I started feeling differently about myself and my role in society. Lecturers often invite their students for an intellectual conversation in their homes on campus or they even come over to our hostels for heated debates on pertaining socio-political issues. Each tree was

significant, each person on one's way made the difference and when I came out, I was transformed, a new leaf…I was still happy, during my exploration I witnessed the other in me, It was both confusing and clear to me that I was in a process, thanks to JNU. What really matters, was that context matters and it moulded me to what I am and is becoming!

… and when I started this study the confusion was haunting me day and night until I walked into and explored the field which shackled the daunting effects of finding my way in this sea of uncertainties. To understand what we do and how far it connects to the reality of teachers and learners, school context matters. This lesson I learnt in my first lectures with my trainees, they started citing and referring to those complexities of the school and classrooms and for which I could hardly give any explanation. They spoke with both anger and awe of what they witnessed and lived as trainees…I felt 'let me walk around once over again witha new lens, the complete *stranger* (in Shultz term) to capture what gets constructed as school context, what are those complexities of being a trainee on placement, how do trainees construct school as context and school in context'. My infiltration started with very informal conversations with my trainees which allowed me to make a profiling of my participants and finally the most exciting phase was entry into the field.

Appendix 10b: Samples of my personal Field notes and reflections

Describing the data set | **Data findings**

Level 1 (verbatim- before member check code T3 | **Processing** | **Product**

Participants	Source	Instrument	Frequency of use of instrument		Transcriptions			Level 2 analysis	Level 3 analysis
A	Archie	Interview	AI1	AI2	AIi T1 raw	AIii T2 translated	AIiii T3 Memberchecked	Data driven approach How ground-up theorising I will be developing some concrete categories which will be a lens to read all the other transcripts. I come up with the themes moving from codes to themes or categories- suspending judgment to allow the ground/field to determine. Abstractions could be in terms of statements – what does A1 tells me about CQ1. How you start talking back to the literature/TF	Theory driven approach derive a new posture/theory driven explanation and new explanation of the phenomenon under study. E.g., TT –it is a review of the TF/reviewing the Lens that helped it to produce the data.
		Transect walk	ATW1	ATW2	What am I telling them to				

PHASE ONE

					check? What you want me to remove in that transcript – ethical/ the blind out= items the person chose to withdraw/ remove from the transcripts/ use what the participants declare and what they actually espouse
B	Kyle	Interview	K1	K2	T3
		Transect walk	KTW 1	KT W2	T3
C	Bella	Interview	PR01	PR1 2	T3
		Transect walk	BTW 1	BT W2	T3
D	Kiara	Interview	KI		T3
		Transect walk	KTW 1	KT W2	T3
E	Tasha	Interview	TI		
		Transect walk	TTW 1	TT W2	T3
F	Boaz	Interview	BO1	BO 2	T3
		Transect walk	BTW 1	BT W2	T3
G	Tabitha	Interview	PR02 I	PR1 2I	T3
		Transect walk	TBT W1	TBT W2	T3

Analysis phase one – probing on emerging constructs

PHASE TWO	Level of analysis phase II	Collage Post walk	About sending member check for Interview and TW

PHASE THRE

How does this explain the credibility of the lens I am using to produce the data? How can the data itself subject to question? **A new path to theorise in the thesis-or theory driven section**

Reviewing the TF -theoretical contribution

Evaluating theory building and argumentation around social construction and SCT

Pushing the methodological relevance of using specific tools and techniques in data production

Contextual argumentation in terms of the role and relevance of school placement in Mauritian context

Reading: Bourdieu and initial teacher education – post structuralist approach (Grenfell Michael, 1996. British educational research journal, vol. 22 no. 3 pp287-303.

CONTEXT *as part of* **THE PEDAGOGIC HABITUS OF THE FIELD (HERE REFERRED TO AS TRAINING)**

SOME EPISTEMOLOGICAL QUESTIONS:

How are the trainees representing their realities during placement?

WHAT kinds of subjects do they constitute and how do they enact their subjectivities as they construct school context? --- I am looking at the praxis dimension/ where participants are subjects who stands like texts---I wrote my experiences as texts (biographical experiences as texts)

Which lens do I use ---an critical-interpretivist perspective

my trainees getting into practice are their constructions contingent to the exposure with school context or people who vehicle in and out of context?

walk-talk and collage as a text where the participant is giving insight into her own voice/ praxis. the walk has textual characteristics

refer to Hacking construction based on contingency

explicit literature search on the breadth and depth of literature and reference in the domain the phenomenon is located and looked at

the why behind choosing few participant who se voice are located in retrospection- trying to unlock the reflective nature of their encounter with school context

my initial rational for the study --- why is school context a terrain that needs to be studies and understood. why the breach between training institutions and school---what roles do participants in school /administrators/ policymakers (ministry)/ teacher educators play in teacher training

my study focus on the school context as a terrain/lens which captures the (mis)understanding arising after the trainee is placed at school for observation- initiation- teaching

the debate as to reduce courses and increase school exposure--- what if school makes more harm to the trainee--- how does school context affect his/her dispositions/ projections about the profession etc.

is it the case with our teacher training at MIE---are they in opposition to each other? why? why not?

to find out on school-based teacher education in relation to the social market political philosophy

this is a rational for my study--- trainees bringing in an existential voice to placement through their experience and (encounters) and intimacy with the field and its habitus.

spatial and temporal dimension- when was the data collected -in retrospection and before the end of training--- their status slightly changed but context under the microscope were school they were during placement.

locating Bourdieu in teacher education and in relation to training.

profession seen as a field of social/historical reproduction/ power interplay among others.

the power game between actors in the field -e.g. head teachers and teachers treating trainees as 'helpers' non teaching staff... based on criterion of competence. a relational concept objective relations (head teacher's office" across time and space ---individuals as structure structures

relations change across time and space--they arise out of individual choices they operate in relation to the field and the habitus.

Mapping the habitus of agents in the field

My notes to the reading. Highlight has to be made again

Appendix 11a: Extract od a **Sample transcribed data set in Mauritian Creole (mother tongue)**

13a: Kiara pre walk interview.

C : Ok alors mo pou demand toi premier question, dire moi un ti peu what kind, what kind of learner you were, qui aim Miss Rodrigues ? (ADC01 : C'est-à-dire ?**) Si to bizin introduire to même à quelqu'un, kuma to pou commencer, qui to pou dire ? Coze un ti peu lors to même ? To parcours profe, eh eh personnelle ?**

ADC01 : Parcours personnelle bon, eh mo vine de Rodrigues. Ene famille de pas kapave conter combien membre parce qui mo ena plusieurs demi frères, mais officiellement avec mo maman, ek mo papa, nous a huit enfants. Cinq tifi, trois garçons. Apres mo ena encore six, six demi frères. (**C : Ok**) Pou dire qui mo vine dans ene fami assez grand. Apres sa mone faire mo l'étude a Rodrigues même, mo l'étude primaire, secondaire, sauf qui tertiaire lerla mone bizin vine à Maurice. Mon parcours professionnel, quand mone quitte l'école, mone vine l'université, mone faire un an. Apres qui mone faire l'université, (**C : qui cours tone faire eh ?**) Mone faire Economics with International Relations, mais mo pas ti, mo pas ti content cours la, après mone quit. (**C : ok**) Quand mone fini quit, lerla mone retourne Rodrigues. Quand mone arrive Rodrigues mone, mone ale travaille dans l'hôtel. A l'hôtel, mone commence par serveuse, après quand mo manager in trouver qui kuma dire mo ene dimune qui content cozer, mo content beaucoup relation, mo coze ek client, tous les temps mo p rier. Lerla line promote moi, mone vine Sports Entertainement et animatrice. Ça veut dire mo ti p fini mo bane, mo bane soirées tard, une heure quand tous bane clients ti p ale dormi. Apres sa, grâce a li mone gagne accès pou vine Lycée de Labourdonnais, parce qui sogarçon ti p l'école la bas. Et so garçon ti ene enfant bien hyper actif. Comme si li ti bizin ene AVS avec li. AVS, ça veut dire eh accompagnatrice viscolaire, (**C : Ok**) mo ti ale faire sa là-bas. Et mo ti bizin rentre dans classe la, mo, mo assure qui li p faire so bane devoirs, qui li p suivre, qui li pas disturb classe parce qui li ti p, li ti p même ale prend bane papiers so miss pou li faire bane billets, pou li distribuer so bane so bane classmates. Lerla mo ti p kav control li. Aussi so parent ti p paye moi pousa. Apres par ailleurs en même temps mo ti p ale, mo ti pu ale suivre cour dans ene l'hôtel la bas. Mais mo ti refuser, mo pas ti aller. Lerla en même temps, mo tine apply pou professeur gouvernement a Rodrigues et mo nom in sorti kot lerla monabandonne Lycée de Labourdonnais, mone retourne Rodrigues. **3 :05**

cole, mo bien smart dans mo soulier talon, ek mo sac, li ti p guette moi ek bane yeux de merlan frit

11b : Kyle transcribed version transect walk

Transcription Kheel

(C: alor nou commencer nu premier transat walk tu es lib...alor la nou dan lor premises station la police cess a..right..sa c nou premioer itinerair alor ki fer no la chedy) ehh au faite sa station la police la et li ena ene relation avec lecol [redacted]..au faote sa lacle…. Lacle portail gate alor avek tou ban lezot lacle la..comsi kan lecol fini dan tanto..dan mardi ek dan jeudi…dison pena..kan au fait cest tou les jours sa..dan lundi mercredi vendredi kan ena leson kan ena leson kan leson fini 5hr moin15…5hr parla ena ene caretaker ki rester la ba..dan banla paye li ene ti la monnaie apar sa parski li rester li gagn overtime sa…lerla couma li fini li vin gard lacle la ici signer lerla so landemain kan couma dir banla p vine pren lacler la signer..pren comsi pu al ouver gate car comsi au faite perna gardien la ba…pena gardien et la cler lecol cest li lor responsabiliter sa station la police la et dan mardi avek jeudi kan pena leson sa veu dir 4hr parla 4hr 15 parla au pli tar…mo penser banla ferme gate vin kit lacler la..et aussi et ban ena deu policier de sa station la mem..kan lecol larguer li vin diboute lor crossing la ba ena ene crossing dan chemin la ba la..li diboute la ba comsi pou aid ban zelev paren la ki en tor parski ban la
coner paren la couma li eter…. paren la apar ban case lecol li déjà ena ban lezot case isi li**..(C : endacor)** ou p compran ki kaliter paren li eter la…**(C ;oui oui)** b banla geter dir coums ab bon ou pa gagn droi rent dan la cour lecol parsi parla ou compran sa ban zafer coumsa **(C ; sa ve dire na ban paremr deza ficher ou p dir mwa)** oui**…(C ; déjà ena ban)** [redacted] o p dir ou zot pena ledication zot….misier in kit zot banla divorcer ou p compran la couma dir ou lot foi la sa madam la li ena relation extra conjugal avek so bofrer mem…sa..pa zis so bofrer ena ban lezot dimoune encor b enfin ou p compran ki kaliter background sa fami la eter banla rod lagere lagere pu narien banla….banla pa rod accepter ki comsi zot zelev low ability ou compran la……pu zot comsi c professer la kip a bon banla rod laguere pu narien pu narien arrive ene momen doner profeser la si li comsi couma mo dir ou li deborder et la pa coner ki ti arriver lerla ti vin fer ene complaint cont sa paren la paren la mo croir ti menace li si pa pa coner kizafer b la mo penser administration em ti dir sa profeser la vin fer en complaint la **(C ; dacor mai eski sa ine fer ban remou entre profeser la ek paren la)** oui b aufaite seman ena sa ti vin grave coumsa mo ti dir ou lot foi la…profeser in bizin fer ene deman pu so transfer **(C ; en dacor madam ou p dir moi la sa)** oui oui oui li mem apre la ki nou truver ena aussi market place…..oui (**C ; dan ki fason li meaningful avek contex lecol**) contex lecol et surtou pu ban clas ki kan pou ene clas dison science ou health education…sa se ene profeser mem ki ti dir mua sa

mo penser ti bizin ena ene madam ki ti ress dan sachemin la ki ti appel lepok(15 ;36) ….(27 :04) mone bien met lemphase lor discipline enfin mo penser ou bizin ien truver kan oune get moi teach..fer couma dir sa ban zafer la ti ici la…tou zelev ki ena la moi mo ti fer zot met zot sac ;la dan lor ene la tab la lor ene la tab ici ls cot li la sa lot de la ba met isi..sa si fer ene suivi avek sa**(C : fer ene lorde ouai)** oui fer ene lorde sa se moi ti mo couma ou coner ti coumsa coumsa la ensuitr profeser gagn pu get so ban zelev la**(C : B ki ou penser ban sitting arrangement ki zot ine fer la)** 2nd 1st ena foi …

11c: **Bella Post walk interview (collage)**

~~C: Alors tone écrire la qui after three years' experience as a trainee educator, if anybody ask me who~~ I am, I can stand up tall, look them in the face and say I am that mountain peak up high?

PRO2T: Ouais. C'est par rapport à ça. Donc, ça veut dire eh là nous in commence ene tigit ici, pareille kuma mone écrire la, par devant ti ene soleil, pareille kuma dans la tête professer la ene mari zafer sa, mais petit à petit nous in gagne bane ti bout papier bane ti ene bane ti désespoirs, bane ti soz. Donc là c'est par rapport à remplacement de l'école, bane stress qui nous gagner dans l'école. La quand line monter la mone trouver ki ena ene ti problème parent teacher, teacher pupil kuma nous fek cozer là. Et la ici lerla mone pose moi la question, eski mone faire pou sa métier là ou sois est ce qui mo ti bizin retrouve moi kot mo ti été avant parce qui ici li p paraitre compliquer entre gère bane phycologie bane dimunes qui p bizin apran kuma pou coze r zot, kuma pou répond zot. (**1 :00**) Et là, kuma dire mone reprends ene ti peu plus confiance ici et là nous réussit kuma dire fini cour la tranquillement, nous réussit atteindre beaucoup l'expérience par rapport à ça. Eh la ene ti soleil kumance retourner tigit tigit tigit et là c'est, c'est bane place kot mo metter re-energizing kuma dire bane la cuisine, bane ti place kot mo aller, mo senti moi un ti peu plis (**C : bane bane bane pieds, feuilles, plants**) oui bane ti, kuma dire sa bane ti l'herbe. (**C : ça c'est toi**) ouais. Là au début (**C : rempli soleil la**) oui ene dream là. La li commence, plis nous p monter la montant là un ti peu plus dur kuma dire et du moment nous in arrive la haut nous in fini training la, là nous senti nous plus teacher. La quand nous fini, nous kav faire face n'importe c'est qui arriver. **(1 :43)**

C ….(6:57) Pas ti cozer, pas ti ena parce qui nous trainee la kuma dire nous bane intouchable pas kave coz r nous, bonjour même zot pas ti dire nous. Li ti kumsa mais la majorité qui moi mone ale faire training enfin pendant mo training zot in correct, zot in donne-moi ene 2 tips, passe-moi zot cahier dire moi aler ale lakaz ale apran. Mais ena in aide moi pou faire assignment tout. Quand trouve moi p trace tracer pendant ler break, dir moi qui mo p faire ? Mo dire p faire aasignment, dire ouais b mo ena mo assignment, to ler zette ene coup d'œil, mo dire non mo pas pou copier moi, donne-moi to bane l'idée. Lerla pou classroom manager bane zafer kumsa bane la aide moi, dessiner tout. Dire moi to classe bizin kumsa, to bizin faire sa. Nous pas faire nous, mais selma nous p aide toi. **(7 :31)** Pena sadans zot classe, zot dir moi to conner classe la bien tipti nous pas gagne mette green corner, lot corner, kot pou mette tous sa la. Alors zot dire moi kumsa b selman bizin ena la. Alors zot faire ene ti plan pou moi visualise zot classe. Lerla zot dire moi, sa ti pou ene classe sa si nous classe ti grand nous ti pou faire sa b, **(C : ça veut dire zot conscient)** zot conscient, zot conscient zot, mais selman zot conner qui par rapport à l'infrastructure zot bien **(C : zot bizin cor opérer)** zot bizin cor opérer. **(7 :52)** Ena surtout quand zot faire first, zot intéresser pou faire tel tel zafers, mais zot manque un peu volonté, kuma dire fauder nous pousse zot b moi pendant mo training mone seyer. Ena in dire moi, eh mo envi faire ene ene ti plante si pas qui zafer, lerla bane banderoles. Mo ti amène tissue mo ti faire zot prend la main mette lor la si pas qui b quand mo ti p faire sa pou l'indépendance, maitresse d'école toujours li pas trop accepter qui nous mette sa la et li dire moi non non la peinture si pas qui zafer. **(8 :44)** mo dire li non mo ti p rode faire ene ti projet parce qui mo ti faire sa pou citizenship, mo dire li qui ena mo faire li dans l'école ici, mo amène ene longue bout tissue chaque élèves, chaque classe quand zotp ale toilette, zot nek prend ene bout la peinture, mette ene seul koter la main, tout l'école nous getteene ku kuma sa faire. Meme classe par classe après nous ajoute li nous coudre li ensam. Bane professerla ti pas mal ti assez emballer. Le temps li dire non, non sa prend du temps, les élèves, après mone laisse tomber. **(9 :07)** Mone dire li franc **(C : to pane faire li ?)** mo pane faire li mo pane faire li……. l'indépendance ene grand groupe. Nous in prend ene grand groupe, eh mo croire nous ti ena au moins 45 élèves a 50 élèves. **(10 :01)** Eh tous c'est qui faire enhancement in participer. Faire bane tissue rouge, bleu, jaune, vert nous faire bane dessin lor la. Apres nous in faire zot santer, nous in faire zot mimer, nous in faire zot faire eh kuma dire slam. B ene grand groupe nous in prend ti groupe ti groupe ti groupe kumsa aller même. B quand line trouve sa li dire non j'ai encouragé a les filles à le faire, li dire sa aux parents. Les temps li dire sa devant moi mo get li, mo dir ok sa la, avant quand nous ti ale dire li nous pou faire ça, li pas ti d'accord r nous. **(C : Li dire non, pas gagne droit.)** **(11 :12)** Lerla

tous bane professers quatrième quand nous in ale gette zot, nous dire zot kumsa b, donne nous ene, donne nous zot show, parce qui chaque classe propose ene item, mo dire li si zot p proposer nous pas pou gagne droit faire parce qui nous in mette sa lor type quatrièmes nous. **(11 :24)** Lerla zot dire nous faire, nous nous content nous. Mo dire zot content zot pas bizin prépare nanier. Bane la dire ouais nous content nous. B lerla nous dire non parce qui nous trouver zot intéresser bane enfants la in content. Les temps nous in dire bane enfants la coze ek zot miss parce qui si miss p faire, nous pas pou kav faire. Bane la in aller in dire miss pas faire nanier miss, pas faire nanier, pas fatigue toi, bane miss la b b en même temps lerla mone dire b korek. Enfants p dire moi b mo faire, faire zot volonté mais ti pas mal. Tine assez bien passez mais même sa line gagne nous un peu matte la kuma dire. **(C : En d'accord, quand zot faire bon travaille li gagne matte ?)** **(11 :53)** Parce qui nous prend bane enfants nous amène dehors dans la cour nous faire répétition, nous même nous pas trouve ene place, nous si nous in gagne la cour la même nous faire répétition. Et nous, bane la pane faire tapaz, bane la ti tranquille. Nous nous ti p atan bane la faire ene bane ene bane vilain kumsa li ti pou dire non la prochaine fois ne refait pas ça, les enfants sont indisciplinés mais sanz qui nous in ena bane la pane faire nanier. **(12 :11)** mone fini lave zot cerveaux avant nous sorti selman. Fini dire zot si ena ene vilain, retourne dans classe. B ene deux, nous avoy dans classe, lerla b bane la in commence dire b ouais vrai même, miss la pas p laisse passez, lerla in tranquille r nous. **(12 :24)**

Appendix 11b: Sample of one transcribed and translated data set in English version.

Transcription one extract only: interview schedule prior to transect walk1 in PR primary school. The trainee lives around one KM from the school which is situated in the city centre. By the time the interview was made, the trainee was posted in school and was awaiting her final results for the award as teacher. She happens to be posted in the same school in which she was a placed for her immersion and SBE.

The interview lasted for around 50 minutes and took place in the school premises during the oriental classes. The teacher was free for 50 minutes and allowed me to interview her. It seems she made all the necessary arrangement and the headmistress was already made aware of my arrival.

The participant was selected on a snowballing basis. An initial participant recommended her and the first contacts were made via phone. I met the participant for the first time on the day of the interview itself. We talked casually and the first contact was of a friendly nature.

Interview was made in the school's audio visual room. The interview was conducted in both English and French and was audio recorded. The mode was semi structured interview.

Key C: charisma the interviewer/researcher
Key PRI01: the school name followed by participant code and finally interview number

1. BEC: Bureau Education Catholique – Catholic Education Bureau
2. l'ecole complementaire – *complementary school* a system put in place where volunteers are to help children from disadvantaged learning situation ---
3. Barkley – a disadvantaged area in the town of Beau Bassin
4. MIE –Mauritius Institute of Education
5. SBE- school based experience
6. Enhancement programme (EP)

C: We start, the tape is on, so I will ask you a couple of questions. We start by the first one, tell me a little about yourself, your professional, personal journey. Who is **Anabelle?** (Laughing –casual mood)

PRI01: ok. So, ehh after school (*referring to HSC*), as if, I did it at Maurice cure secondary, and then i started in hotel industry and after hotel industry it was in printing press and then I turn up here as teacher. So here...

C: ok, so (PRI01 was saying talking when i was to ask the question) it was by choice that you got into teaching?

PRI01: it was as if since, I had opted for that since I left hotel industry, as when I left school I wanted to be teacher but when I got the application, I had already signed a contract so I did not want to break the contract by respect to the employer. Then I got the application again and then I told myself, 'ok, I leave everything and i get into that, so this how that I have started with the application at the BEC and then here (*referring to PR*), etc

difference, between what we learn and what we live. But yet, we need to take out only what is best/good. We take what is good from there and here, it shall work.

[07.51]

C: Were you here for immersion?
PRI01: immersion, yes, i was here for immersion.

C: how was the immersion, first impression, the first day...

PRI01: ahh, (laugh) the first day i think that was the last day, i don't what, of the school, or whatever it was, so, over there it was crazy, pupils have gone hyperactive and were jumping here and there all over the place. We told ourselves, well i told myself, "am i in the right school?" the first day was the last day of something, i don't know, the children were too excited, and there the immersion for us, it was not, well we were a group of trainees, as if, we were put aside, we were bring put aside, because we have come here, last time with our little letter from the MIE, which says that we have to come there for the immersion. Then it was the last day, no one introduced us, not even with colleagues, we had something else. We have stood up there, among the crowd. As if we were parents or pupils, i really don't know, but it was not, the first day was not great (fameux). I had come,i told myself, "now i see the big school," now it has five streams, i was a little bit confused, i told myself, "a bog school like this, will i get my place in that school, well will i be able to do something here, with all the ideas that i have in mind, will these be achieved here, or will i have loads of hurdles. I started to see that in relation to …***PRI01:*** So, the SBE, i think i did my SBE here itself, euh, I think that I did both SBE here. I don't really know remember now, but the SBE was majorly, replacement, replacement, replacement.(laugh) so then we had taught sometimes, but that also we had to arrange ourselves, as if we arranged between ourselves; Doing a little here while the other would do her class, things like that. But it was really difficult to do the portfolio later, because we did not even know what to write, because at one point in time, we did were not reaching that stage, we were not there, we could not... I could do, I think only two classes, my tutor came once or twice I don't really remember. And there, I could not really appreciate the fact of using those strategies that I have learnt at the MIE to do it there, we did not have time, we did not have time, replacement all the time, and then...

C: ...and even replacement, you could not integrate…? (12:00)

PRI01: if ever we do some of them, but sometimes if we have planned for a std. four class and that we have to go on replacement in std. One..

[***C***: ahhh]

Appendix 12: Records of narratives of participants' of personal and professional trajectories

1. STORYING OUR PROFESSIONAL SELVES AS ENTRY POINTS TO SCHOOL CONTEXTS

Taking from the vantage point that knowledge of workplace is contextually laden and personal (Goodson, 1993[22]), I chose to explore the extent to which prior personal and professional contexts informing trainees' knowledge of primary school context. First, I explore how their storied lived experiences become site maps as they make their incursion into the cartography of the school as workplace and a multilayered professional space. Second, I use the same entry points to understand what they construct as school contexts.

Trainees	Personal entry point	Professional entry point	Influencers making my entry to teaching and school context	MY MAIN FOCUS on what I construct as school context	WALKING IN: 'My gaze into school context'
Archies	Married with two kids, wife co-owner of family company	Police officer/helicopter engineer Musician Businessman Engineering degree Teacher diploma secondary (PE) Diploma in Music	MIE as a pedagogical site-being a trainee already on the Teacher Diploma Secondary- PE Previous job routinized and stressing	Experiencing with secondary school context thru' TDS course [Focus on the nature of the job]	A series of walks through paths I want to take on---I am patient all the roads leads to Rome (teaching) ---I keep growing after reaching the end of each path
Boaz	Engaged (at the time of data production)	Worked in private company Started a degree in Mathematics	My teachers My passion for Mathematics Service to society	Service ethics [Focus on learners and their learning experience/ management/collegiality] Parents and colleagues	Climbing stairs one by one –sometimes I fell down, but I am reaching my destinations --- the ultimate destination not known yet but I want to be there
Bella	Single	Diploma in marketing and public relation Marketing officer, printing and advertising PR officer in Hotel	Coaching My hidden talent with children with learning difficulties Previous job experiences	Focus on the relational aspects Parents/learners/colleagues/ on being a trainee Focus on content delivery- MIE and School dichotomy	I am diving through --- I am the explorer and I know I have to keep learning and be careful, danger is also obvious
Tabhita	Married to a police officer, one new born baby	Caller in BPO Insurance Officer Started an ACCA	course	Previous job making me realize I can teach Teaching as	

Achieving success	Upbringing Notion of care andnurture Daily Routines andrules	On a treadmill --- sometimes I go slow sometimes the speed accelerates.

[22] Goodson I.F (1993) Forms of Knowledge and Teacher Education. Journal of education for teaching, JET papers No 1.

Kyle	Single, engaged	Studying ACCA in parallel with teacher Diploma Primary	Being on the job is achievement – upward mobility	Status of teacher and expectations of other stakeholders School boundedness in relation to other external influencers	Walking down memory lane but wearing different hats
Kiara	Cohabiting and mother of two kids	Started a degree at the University of Mauritius	I was a brilliant student I am a mother Mother worked in primary school canteen	Performance in the classroom Teaching and being teacher	I am a migrant --- I explore my new space
Tasha	Married to a CEO and has one child	Completing an MSc in management and Law while being on the Teacher Diploma Primary	A way to manage my careers 'marriage/motherhood/ other professional avenues offered to me'	Focus on learners social background – school context in relation to trainee's expectations	Landing in an unknown place I am a complete stranger, just passing by for a long walk

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL TRAJECTORIES OF PARTICIPANTS

Seven narratives of participants describe their life experiences and professional trajectories prior to joining teaching. The precedence of those narratives constitutes a snapshot which assists in exploring the nature of trainee teachers' construction of primary school context during placement. Bella's narrative captures her versatility in taking up new roles and adapting to her workplace, Boaz's narrative highlights the thriving nature of his professional journey and Archie narratives showcases him as somebody who extends his networking and renders his constructions of school context diverse in terms of bonding with people and places. I moved on with Kyle and Tabitha, and found out that the former continuously goes back to his childhood days in the school. His narrative allows the reader to consider his memories and gaze as he constantly shifts from being pupil to trainee teacher. Tabitha's story depicts a caring trajectory as at the time of the data production, she was on maternity leave and had just delivered. I then move to Kiara's story who pictured new professional role as grounded on a culmination of academic excellence and success. Lastly, Tasha describes her personal and professional milestone, and entry to teaching. Those narratives have helped in understanding and bringing out the different dimensions of constructions of school context based on their personal experiences.

5.1 BELLA'S NARRATIVE – *TAKING THE VERSATILITY ROUTE*

I met Bella through one of my participants. Although it was my first face to face encounter with her, the interview went on as an informal conversation between two people for around 90 minutes. The school's well-equipped audio-visual room served for that interview.

Bella's narrating her becoming to a complete stranger

Bella hails from a Star secondary school of the [redacted] Shortly after obtaining a-Higher School Certificate, she joined the Hotel Industry as an administrator in the marketing department, she then moved to advertisement before taking on the Teaching job. She explained that she chose teaching out of her own will because she always aspired to be a teacher since she left school. She applied a first time but could not join immediately as she was already working in the hotel and did not want to dishonour her contract by respect to her

employer. However, when she applied a couple of years later, she was again retained. She

decided that it was due time to enrol as she felt it was the right time to start with a new adventure.

From earning to learning milestones

Dwelling on some phases of her job experiences which shaped her, Bella recollected that the professional pathways prior to teaching were different from school life. At the beginning, it was not so easy because she felt that the hotel industry was cut off from the wider social world and was more oriented to specific tasks. When she moved to the advertisement sector she experienced it as a more flexible environment, with opportunities for meeting people from different backgrounds and nationalities, and this encouraged her to take a course in Public Relations and Marketing. She also took jobs in different sectors before getting into teaching, she had no regrets as she confirmed that she is convinced that she was finally in the right place. She learnt enormously and, reportedly, was not disheartened to have experienced different jobs and work settings.

> *I joined teaching after working in hotel industry and advertisement sector, it was different, but all these experiences helped me considerably, I discovered that I could relate to people easily especially when I took up a job in the advertisement sector. I did apply for teaching before and was received but did not take the post because I did not want to break my contract by respect to the then employer. But I eventually applied and was again received, this time, I said "no, you have to go for it Bella", and here am I! those different work experiences have helped me to grow and understand work relations better.'*

While pondering over the pros and cons, she felt that she would not be capable to deal with pre-primary learners because that she does not possess that much of a maternal instinct and disposition to deal with the toddlers while with primary learners, it was more obvious that she could easily manage and that these learners have more to give. She felt that the primary school setting was the site where the learners learned many things. Given her cheerful spirit, she wanted to be part of that innocence and craziness that she can share and transmit with her learners. Moreover, she took into consideration the fact that she did not possess an imposing physique given her small height to work with teenagers either. She felt primary school teaching was for that matter better crafted and suited for her.

> *You know I am quite petite and could easily mix up with this crowd of adolescents, I prefer a more manageable crowd, and I don't think I would make it either with the toddlers, I do not have this maternal thing I guess, I don't I have, but primary is*

just fine.

The urge for teaching influenced by different contexts

On the influencers contributing to her choice for teaching, Bella highlighted that she used to coach children from disadvantaged backgrounds through the complementary teaching programme while being a student herself. She would go there after school to give 'tuition'. She recalled that it was not a very structured and strict tutoring but was more involved in knowing the students, helping them to do other things they had interests in rather than just being academically oriented all the time.

> *I have been helping children with learning difficulties. I was volunteering and helping with free tuition, I am more comfortable that way, I wanted to be judicious in that way.*

Bella also used to give tuitions in Mathematics and Biology for free ever since she was a secondary school student. Most of her 'students' belonged to her neighbourhood and she took the activity as a kind of social service. It was nothing like teaching strategies as she had learned at the MIE, but it was fun stuff with the aim of helping them to recall important issues and attempt their examination papers successfully. It happened that at times her students will call and ask if they can come over for some lessons the next day or in the afternoon, although there were moments when she was not prepared, she would allow them in as she was at ease being in their midst, helping them out, especially those kids who were not high flyers at school.

However, the realization that she should start a career in teaching while working in the hotel industry. Very often, her colleagues would come up to her for help with their children's studies. Recognizing that her tutorials were successful with the young, her initial assumptions turned into real interests in teaching and confidently applied for the job as soon as the opportunity was presented to her.

First impression of the teaching experience

Bella felt that being teacher would be something extraordinary, in reminiscence of her old school days, with her own primary school teachers, whom she was a fan, they still remained her idols and she wanted to be appreciated in that same manner as well, and be that kind of

teacher, who is remembered and be loved a little more than the average teacher by her pupils. She wanted to be part of their learning and help them evolve intellectually. It was another way for her to bring her contribution to society. The profession was in this way a means to draw herself nearer to people, teaching implied being a public figure and role model, it carried some status. Moreover, she saw in joining teaching as an opportunity to witness her own professional and personal evolvement.

Bella recalled that it was not easy for her to adjust with her training at MIE as she resumed to studies after a long break from school, sometimes she had a whole day course and had to come home and continue the work, but stated that the training was good as she experienced significantly through sharing with other trainees. Her experience at school however was somewhat different with unexpected attitudes from teachers and administration. She recalled of petty things which have had strong impacts on her. For instance, the term 'TRAINEE' was lived as a strong and oppressive construct. She was imposed on doing certain tasks which she felt a trainee would not be ready to do without proper coaching and mentoring. She expected and wanted to school realities differently but soon realized that 'observation' also meant replacement and teaching, getting to manage a class of students who were not cooperative at all. She sighed as she said,

> *We (referring to other trainees) were a little confused at the beginning, and we did not even know the pupils. For me, it was a little hard because I was not prepared, I was not fully competent in using classroom management techniques. I could see myself drowning a little bit, especially with the CPE repeaters, who really dominated over me. Indeed, we were often asked to do replacement with the repeaters, and it was not very obvious to deal with the repeaters at the beginning of the school placement. Fortunately, we had the teachers who encouraged us, they told us that it will go on fine and that's was part of the training. Yet, there is a world of difference, between what we learn in those modules and what we lived at school. I chose to take on the best moments and make it work. I decided to choose to appreciate things I learned in piecemeal every day at school.*

Contextualising Bella during placement

Bella's story offers an interesting gaze on how different professional choices or options eventually influenced her own constructions while being on placement. She frequently opened up on the professional environment of the primary school teacher, was sensitive to hierArchie which she felt were created, reproduced and sustained within the school, namely

in the staff room, during the morning assembly and within classrooms. She also engaged lengthily on in-school practices and relationships. Whenever she discussed pupils, she made strong references to parental pressure and presence as a significant part of school context.

Bella hailed from a modest background but was a brilliant student who preferred to start work after completing her secondary education. Her willingness to join teaching grew out of her disposition to help out those who were not on track, give them a voice and visibility which they did not obtain in the school's official terrain. Her role of tutor in the complementary school and availability to receive her students at the time convenient to them for tuition and this also explained why she emphasised on pedagogic decisions which teaches, the administrator and parents made for the learners. She constructs the teacher as juggling with the three without much autonomy in her hands.

As a trainee, Bella felt that she also realised that she was constructed by the head master, teachers, the shopkeeper, parents and her learners. Placement was the kind of terrain which was covered with landmines as well as interesting surprises. While constructing school context Bella stood as a monochronic person[23] to situate herself professionally. She demonstrated that although she is highly committed to other people and human interactions, she nonetheless decides to take one task at a time, she is committed and respect the others' spaces. In consequence her gaze on school context is restrained to the school compound, the immediate outer areas and spaces and people who are directly linked to the daily affairs of the school.

[23] Edward T. Hall in *Dance of Life* (1983). Hall was an anthropologist who attempted to explain that every culture is affected by the way time, context, and space are handled. Monochronic time is characterized as linear use of time and is understood in terms of quantifiable segments. In monochronic time (M-time), events are planned to occur one at a time; the importance of preventing extraneous events from interrupting a set schedule takes precedence over interpersonal relationships. Efficiency takes on extreme importance and is measured through the 'use' of time. How time is 'spent,' 'saved,' 'wasted' or 'made' reveals the quantitative nature of linear time. Polychronic time (P-time) in contrast to monochromic time is characterized by the simultaneous occurrence of many things and by a great involvement with people. People act differently, depending on which conception of time is prevalent in their culture.

BOAZ'S NARRATIVE: *THRIVING PATHWAYS AT CROSSROADS*

Boaz was invited to join the study after being introduced by Kia, a participant who was on placement together with him. The first contact was made at the school he was placed and all consequent interviews and transects were conducted after school hours. Boaz was at ease in speaking about his enriching experiences as a learner. His narrative was nested in his academic and professional trajectories. He emphasised that his struggles as a student had a huge impact on his thinking and decision to take up a teaching job.

Mapping the narrative from being pupil to being trainee

He started primary education in the same school he was a trainee teacher. He was a pupil over there and also happened to be residing in the neighbourhood. After his primary education, Boaz attended a secondary school of the [redacted] up to Higher School Certificate (HSC) and after that he started working in a private manufacturing company. He had to struggle considerably and in 2004 he headed to the University of Brunello, in the UK to pursue a BSc in Mathematics. Boaz fondness for Mathematics started when he was in primary and wanted to be a mathematics teacher at any cost. However due to financial constraints, he had to abort his studies and return home where he resumed his previous job. He eventually tried to apply for a teaching job but did not meet the requirement as he was not a degree holder.

The opportunity finally came, and he joined teaching in primary school sector. Boaz felt he started his teaching career quite late, as he was 29 years old then, but he never lost hope that he would be a teacher. His journey towards teaching was very much related to a critical incident which occurred when he was in Form V (equivalent to grade 11). He could not clear the School Certificate at first attempt and had to repeat, and he made it because of very dedicated teachers who wanted to see their students succeed. He was always scared of his teachers, there was that constant fear since primary school but that particular year he repeated, his teachers were really friendly and he witnessed a different facet of teaching, the students were at ease and all of them learned effectively, many of those things he felt was so difficult in first year, were now more explicit and distinct. In the end he passed with 'flying colours' and this motivated and influenced him to be a teacher.

Boaz always displayed optimism and strongly felt that this job made sense to him as he realised that teachers are crucial in making students pass, to encourage them to learn. As a repeater, he realised the thriving efforts of teachers to support their students and witnessed a complete transformation which acted as an internal drive for him to never quit learning. Since then, Boaz wanted to transmit and share what he has acquired to others, he wanted others to be more knowledgeable, he wanted others to taste success like the way he did. Now that he is about to teach in the primary it still matters to him that he would be able to help these kids to flourish. For Boaz, education is primordial in a materialistic society and thechild has to be prepared to face changes and challenges ahead of him, he felt that his role was to share and give back what he has learned to the future generations, in this sense givingback to society what it has inculcated to him. Society made him successful, capable and educated, and as a teacher he is ready to give back and make a thoughtful contribution to society. He specified that his role was not restricted to the confine of the school compound and formal education but also helping parents to be more sensitive to their children's educational need. Yet, he contended that he had some apprehensions and just hoped he would not dishearten in the long run, he wanted to keep that spark in view of being a role model for his learners.

The primary school context as having many crossroads

Boaz contended that teaching is not an easy domain to work in, especially when it comes to primary school where obstacles keep mushrooming. He felt that there was a constant need to be at the pupils' back, be a good listener as this stage was the foundation itself. If they failed here, it was almost impossible for them to move ahead afterwards. This is how he put it,

> *I have witnessed certain things during my SBE and this is troubling me. During my immersion for instance, I saw that those experienced teachers who've got some attitudes towards education, attitudes towards kids, I have seen a lot in different schools. We had the opportunity to visit many schools in relation to elective module in Special Needs Education (SEN) besides being in that one for SBE and I was also posted for around two months at in another school for CPE remedial programme[24]. I talked to many teachers and also had long conversations with my peers when we got back to MIE. We are able know about the different attitudes and mind-sets.*

[24] The CPE remedial programme was set up at that time and trainee teachers on final years of their TDP were sent to some High priority primary schools to support pupils prior to their CPE examinations. The initiative was called CPE remedial programme.

What I personally witnessed through my teacher training is that those teachers with twenty, twenty-five, thirty years of experience were always exhausted. They suffer burned out for many years but are still going on, they are just waiting for their retirement and be able to enjoy their lump sum, there is no motivation, it seems to me that spark that was there twenty years ago has completely faded out. This alarms me, I do not want to be like that particular teacher, but I hope I will keep that flame that is in there now for the ten, fifteen years to come!

Boaz has met many difficulties and challenges which he termed as crossroads. Uncertainty and doubt troubled him, he hoped that he would be able to tell the same thing in ten years, that he will have the same drive to stay in teaching.

First encounters with teaching in primary

As we stopped over standard three, Boaz stopped and looked into that particular class, his eyes were focused for some time and I felt he almost forgot I was there, I asked him if something was wrong and he looked back at me and pointed to the place, 'This is the first classroom'. He continued,

'When I came to this school for the first time, I remember I handed my letter of offer to the head master I was directed to this classroom to replace the class teacher who was late that very day. I still remember how baffled I was! I think I was freaking out, I greeted them, they replied back and then silence…they were waiting for me to continue, they were waiting for me to start somewhere…in the meantime I felt that time was at a still. I was dying to see that class teacher, afterwards I felt that I should do something, I started asking them their names, what they wanted to do after school and I felt a little calmer. But believe me Miss, I felt so relieved when the teacher finally arrived.'

As we walk away from the classroom, I could feel that Boaz was emotional, he told me it was his first encounters with teaching. He never imagined it that way, he realised that indeed the simple fact of standing in front of pupils demands preparation. This incident helped him realised that sometimes even the school does not know the role of the trainee, he felt that by propelling him into the classroom on the very first day, he was already considered as a teacher, as an insider, a new member to the team.

Contextualising Boaz during placement

Boaz's story emphasised enormously the collegial dimension existing within the school. The classroom space, play spaces, school routines as well as teaching are focused on the closely-knit relationships and people are most of the time connected to those spaces

that prepared his constructs of school context. Boaz also converged his constructions of the school context through his own experiences and encounters made at school. As we engage in the transect walk, I realised that Boaz walked through memories, events, experiences rather than places, sites and physical spaces. The mapping of his transects were sketched on the spot, they were brief, unstructured and sudden. Movement from one place to the other was contingent to his experiences as a trainee teacher. I could sense his presence in each site and spaces.

ARCHIE'S STORY: *A SOCIALISER'S WALK*

Archie's happened to be among the first batch of students I worked with at MIE. He joined the TDP course while serving in the Mauritius Police Force. Married and father of two, Archie' story gave an insightful account of his milestones and the decisions influencing his choice to shift to teaching. When I first told him of my study, he quickly volunteered to participate and even referred me to another trainee who could be a potential participant. Most of his classmates would describe him as extrovert, helpful and confident. Indeed, after conversing with him, I could deduce that my participant was polyvalent and curious to learn, thus explaining his rich professional and academic journeys. He chose to start the interview in the crowded food court. Although I was slightly disturbed by the sounds of people conversing, waiters coming in and out, I soon realised that it was indeed a nice spot for an interview. This site helped both of us to shed away the lecturer/trainee relationships. I placed my audio recorder closer to Archie to ensure I would not miss any data. We were all set for a smooth start. I ordered a pizza while we started the conversation.

Decision to shift to teaching

Archie explained that he joined the Mauritius Police Force after high school and served the Force for twelve years. He decided to shift for several reasons. He was very fond of Physical Education and Sports. In 2009, he decided to take up a Teachers' Diploma in Secondary at the MIE and after its completion he waited for almost four years but there was little demand in the field. In the meantime, he was posted at the Helicopter Squadron where he operated as a technician. He explained that the boredom, lack of incentives, low professionalism and routinisation of the work there was frustrating. He decided that he had to change and when the opportunity was offered to him, he enrolled in a Teacher Diploma Primary (General Purpose). He felt that this was luck knocking at his doorstep and this time he would not let it go away. He was ready to take up the dream job which was a little more challenging as expected. Unlike his previous experience as a trainee teacher secondary, Archie explained that dealing with children required more patience, persistence and polyvalence. Moreover, he had to teach a completely different set of subjects. He felt he was re-learning, starting all over again.

As we proceeded Archie made a retrospection of his learning experience and his teacher becoming, Archie told me that he felt that perhaps he was an average ability student who excelled mostly in sports and non-academic activities. As a student, he was fully involved during music day, regional and national sports competitions. But he finally decided to quit sports because it was time consuming to practice and train at professional level.

He told me that soon he shifted his concentration to academic performance although he never considered learning of academic matter too seriously. Bunking of classes were frequent especially boring ones, but his student life was fun. With a group of friends, they would go to the riverside next to the school and fish or have a picnic. The socialising was extended to lunching after schools and organising outdoor activities. Although Archie retained this socialising side, he also felt that persistence in one's studies opened doors for better avenues.

Being a trainee at M.I.E

On his M.I.E experiences he reiterates that his first experience with the institution was in 2006 as he enrolled for a teachers' Diploma Secondary (Physical Education). He gradually got use to the new place and found that the training was interesting but was not aware that there was the education component as he felt that there were only the sports, physical education component. But was impressed by the pedagogical and psychological aspects within the teaching and learning process. He explained,

> *But when I found out that there were those teaching strategies, there were a lot of those psychological issues which is included, I realised what the real aims of education were. It is not just teaching the child like this, 'take this ball, and play'. I had to use the right strategy to teach. Any parent may believe he can teach his child but might not be using the correct strategy, the correct practices and in the end the child is not being rightly taught.*

Archie looked at MIE as a space where he has learned enormously, especially during the teaching practices there are practical issues, related to the child's safety, that he had to take into account. For instance, during placement, while conducting a Physical Education class, he was placing his students in the field under the scorching sun and he was told by his tutor that children should not face the sun all the time. He also explicated that there are many things

which led to both his content knowledge and personal growth. He has matured in relation to educating others and is more confident to deal with pupils.

As I ponder over the question of taking up a career as primary school teacher, Archie explained that he would be able to put his previous knowledge gained into practice. He however wished and hoped that like in secondary set up, P.E would become examinable at primary level and hoped that that status of teachers both at primary and secondary would be aligned with the next PRB report. Archie kept informing himself and would take up the opportunity to pursue either a B.Ed. in P.E after completing the Teacher Diploma Primary or a B.S.C in music, as he already earned a diploma in music.

Archie also took part in the MIE Student Union election and was elected Student representative on academic board, which consisted of the director, different head of schools and key stakeholders. Together with them, he dealt with issues and decisions related to reseat cases, student appeals and student affairs. His responsibilities was to be a voice to the cause of all MIE students across programmes. He felt that this was an opportunity to better know the institution in and out, which also helped in the evolvement of his own professional personal development. This new role has allowed him to lead a school committee later when he was placed in primary school, he could easily deal with the *do's* and *don'ts* while taking decisions.

The site where learning to teach took place

As far as learning experiences as a trainee is concerned, Archie felt that he has acquired meaningful knowledges during school placement. He had certain expectations about teaching learners but with exposure to school context, he contended that the course emphasised more on theories. He believed that there should be more practical elements in the TDP course. He would have preferred that the learning of psychology for instance could be made concrete in real life, as to how to talk to children, what strategies and methods to use and adopt to teach the kids. On his first day as a TDP trainee, Archie explains that he was alien to the place and space, although he had lesser issues in maintaining discipline and managing classes. He however, apprehended that when he gets to school as full-fledge teacher he might not know how to deal with cases of kids who are mentally challenged or who have learning disabilities. He would have preferred to have some practice on how to deal with similar cases learned in

books and in this way be prepared to better deal with the situation whenever it cropped up in future.

Contextualising Archie during placement

Archie was the most mature participant in this study and tracing his profile was a rather complex one. Besides his TDS in PE, he studied mechanical engineering, had a diploma in music, manage his in-laws' agricultural business and was active in social service. His teacher trait could be described as outreaching others in view of helping them out. I felt that it was difficult for Archie to refuse any favour as he is always on the helping mode. Archie could be described as a high context person as he operates in a large web of relationships. His transect was the longest and most extended one. Unlike Boaz, we had to literally walk several hundred meters to reach the next spot. His experiences led us to transect a wide perimeter which included three schools. Archie own relationships with people, both officially and unofficially led him to give a construction of school context as webbed in a larger circle of relationships. The link with school X for instance was the result of the physical displacement of pupils there re-building of the school. He could inadvertently witness the change in school climate and culture. He frequently goes back to that episode of dislocation. School Y, a secondary school was pertinent to Archie in the sense that he shared friendship ties with the teachers there are negotiated for the pupils to have PE classes there while they were waiting for their new school

Archie's mapping extended to the police station and a shopping mall to explicate his pedagogical choices. While transecting with Archie, I realised that the idea of place and people living in it were important for him. His participation explored interesting constructionsaround teachers, teaching and the social life within the school contexts.

TABITHA'S NARRATIVE: ***THE 'CARING-FOR' PATHWAYS***

First contact with the participant was made while the latter was on maternity leave. We decided to start with the interview on that very day. We met at her home and the visit gave me the opportunity to meet her mother, husband, who is a police officer and her newly born baby boy. Tabitha was very cooperative, and her account projected an authentic outlook to how she contemplated the primary school and its contexts. The following data production was made after she resumed duty at PR as a trainee few weeks after our first interview.

Teaching by choice and by chance

Tabitha was contemplating pursuing tertiary education after completion of her secondary schooling but could not do so as her dad suddenly fell ill and instead she started to take ACCA courses. Soon, she realised she did not like accounting and she dropped the idea of becoming an accounting. She soon started working in a call centre which she believed helped her to better communicate as she was reserved and shy in nature. She stated that,

> *I could not speak at all. I did not have eye contact, I was very shy. I started to work in a call centre, this helped me to better communicate, and I could not talk aloud like I am doing now, I used to speak very slowly and softly, very, very shy, although I would speak well at home.*

Afterwards she shifted to a publishing company, dealing with the publication of theses and dissertation. She explained that this is the way in which she tiptoed into the field of education. However, she soon moved to a renowned insurance company and explained how she was able to open up,

> *I was posted in the Customer service department, this has further developed all my communication skills with clients and all, and over there I was doing a lot of things in the, the field of finance, because in those branches of the insurance's customer service, there were not only queries but I also had to take payment, make huge deposits, sometimes the sum were…I had to go to the bank as well. Then after my pathway in the company I saw the vacancy as teacher, I was extremely happy because I wanted to be a teacher since I was little (a kid) but I was all the time scared because I has a throat problem, whenever, I speak loudly for a long time my throat will start soaring and I would definitively get influenza. Then (referring to close ones) they told me that - because I have family members in the teaching profession- that I should not shout all the time with children, yeah they told me that there are many techniques, there are many things to learn. So, then, it was at that moment that I have started, it was really something for me, because to*

become a teacher, it was not getting a job alone, because I was already working, I was getting a lot of perks/ advantages in the insurance company, I was getting health insurance, I was well dressed to go to work, there was a lot of parties, a lot of outings, was usually involved in the blood donation activities, many people come and talk. I have learnt a lot of things during that one year that I was there.

First hand experiences as a trainee teacher

On her first encounters with the teaching profession, Tabitha felt awkward to leave behind the world of work to become a student all over again,

> *So, I have to take exercise books, pens and stationary, take the bus and travel to MIE, it was a complete change to me, that was also the time when I was about to get married. Instead of taking more responsibilities I was backsliding, I was going back to study, I was expecting a promotion with a more consequent pay but I wanted to be a teacher and I was perseverant. I just threw myself into it because I liked the idea of teaching young children.*

She explained that she knew she had this inclination as she was always interested in buying stationary whenever she would go to supermarket. Getting back to teaching was this little world was not surprising but simply natural to her. She also sees this as a unique opportunity after the decease of her father, she had to financially support her mother, who happen to suffer from a chronic ailment. She was grateful to be able to get both a diploma and earn a living at the same time. She also explained that she feels lucky as out of the 90 trainees from RCA, she is one of the three trainee teachers who hailed from a non- catholic background who were recruited. She feels she has been able to make a big leap ahead.

Teacher Training: the Journey

Tabitha had her first contact with school was during the immersion in school E. It is described as a small school where most learners are underachievers, Tabitha explained that it might become a ZEP school soon given the low pass rate. Most learners come from disadvantaged neighbourhood and home backgrounds. She witnessed kids who turned up at school without food, whose parents are separated and invisible. For Tabitha it was a shock as she was seeing another facet of the school, which was completely different from her own experience as a pupil. She still remembers that all her classmates had their food in their tiffin boxes, their uniforms and stationary. It was the first time she saw so much deprivation and lacking among pupils. She also abhorred the lack of hygiene among both parents and pupils. She told me that it was shocking to see that some parents were rowdy and looked felonious by the way they

talked and were dressed. Some parents were involved in illegal activities, prostitution and drug dealing.

It was her very first contact with school as workplace and training at the MIE had not started yet, she felt that there was something missing in terms of meeting the basic needs of the child. When she was exposed to such reality Tabitha explained that her salary and the academic credential was no more prioritised as incentives, but she was really concerned about giving her time to her pupils. She was convinced that it was a priority to do her job diligently and honestly because those kids were not at fault if they were born in that particular milieu. It was a critical phase for her and she felt if she were to continue to teach it definitely had a purpose, she had to mould the child and make him or her in the right direction, irrespective of who are the parents. She did not quit and her experience in school E inspired her and helped her to cope with similar situation the school she was placed.

That school had a different profile, 95% of its clientele hail from aristocratic and well to do families. The school itself is situated in an upper middle-class neighbourhood and has all the required logistics and infrastructure at the disposal of teachers and pupils. However, Tabitha explained that the remaining 5% would show similar problems as in school E. She was more careful dealing with a pupil who daydreamed in class or keep forgetting his stationary while leaving for home, in that particular situation, Tabitha capitalise on inculcating values and putting the academic features of school life at the background. She would usually highlight on hygiene and their food intake, in short she would refer to each pupil as her own child, because each one of them reminded her of her baby. She would ensure they use their napkinswhen they eat, wash their hands, cut their nails and reminded them to keep themselves wellgroomed.

As far as academic experiences are concerned Tabitha explained that she has been observing other teachers and also replaced classes during placement. Indeed replacement of classes was something common, and the pupils do not listen at all given that they knew she was not permanent. However, she was made aware that the teacher she used to replace was not coming for the whole term and Tabitha requested the head master to let her stay in that class because she was concerned that the whole class was not doing anything concrete. Most of the time, trainees were not supposed to teach as a permanent teacher, so they would give a small activity, some tasks, some games while they work on their own portfolios. The

headmaster promptly accepted and she took charge of the class and did the syllabus for a whole term. The headmaster was so impressed by her performance that he asked her to set the French test paper. She was relunctant at first but because she just completed the module assessment and evaluation she was able to set that paper on her own with success. She recalled how she took all the standard four textbook home and started preparing the lessons from scrap, in the process she also had to relearn and sharpen her content knowledge and she found that MIE modules did help her evolve and she took her training with seriousness. She personally believed that the training was useful and theories learnt had passed the test of time thus making it valuable while she put it in practice. That critical moment in her training made her aware of the efficacy of teacher training in exploring school context, namely teaching and learning. By the time the field work was completed, Tabitha was posted to PR and to date she is still working there. While witnessing her growth and evolvement in the profession, she said she still valued each learner as her own child.

Conceptualising Tabitha during placement

Tabitha came across as a caring for trainee. Her new role as mother might have influenced her constructions but when I met her to school for a transect, I realised that she still sustain an ethic of care. She gave a more feminine and maternal voice to her experiences. Her focus was on classroom management, the learners' immediate needs and learning processes both officially and unofficially. Her construct also constant focused on parental roles and presence. Indeed her reading of in-school practices and in-school relationships was based on the latter's gaze. Her map was more restrictive to one classroom, the playground, the children's routines and learning and the school's neighbourhood.

KYLE'S NARRATIVE: *WALKING DOWN MEMORY LANES*

Kyle wanted to be a teacher at all costs. He wanted to make his dad proud, and he wanted to be proud of himself. Kyle accepted to be my first participant as he wanted to share his lived experiences of placement. An initial interview was conducted and two transect walks followed. Kyle constantly went back to his primary school years while narrating his placement experiences throughout the stud . In fact, he was a pupil from the school he was actually placed as a trainee. After completion of the course, Kyle was posted to another school far from his locality. The latter was still nostalgic of his school and hoped that he may be posted back there as a credentialed teacher in a permanent capacity one day.

Kyle's trajectory to teaching

Kyle hailed from a working-class background and was the most educated member of his family. He lived in a modified extended[25] family consisting of his mother, paternal aunts, uncles, his twin sister, brother-in-law, and his elder brother. Kyle was reminiscent of his school days as he was a bright pupil. Kyle lost his father, who was a janitor in a primary school in the locality he lives. Kyle's parents never received any complaints from his teachers nor did they have to supervise his work. He described himself as disciplined and willing to work hard to succeed. After completing primary school, Kyle gained access to a star school and pursued his secondary education. However, he opted for ACCA courses because he had a strong liking for numbers and figures. He also had to look for employment to help his family financially. He recognised the sacrifices and hardships faced by his family to raise his siblings and himself. At that time, he recalled that many families in the locality would face similar hardships and struggled to retain their children to school. But his parents have faced all these adversities to provide education for their kids. His mother had to work in three places as maidservant as his father's pay was meagre. He is always thankful to his parents and attributes his achievement to them.

[25] A modified Extended family refers to a family type where the extended kin do not necessarily share the same roof as in a classical extended household but live next to each other in separate nuclear family units (in same locality, on same plot of land) and support each other.

Kyle coped between seasonal jobs and studies. He moved to better options each time he would upgrade his ACCA qualifications but could not secure a permanent job. In the meantime, Kyle would give private tuitions to secondary school students. He even applied for the post of secondary school teacher but never got a response. However, Kyle knew he was made to be a teacher. Besides considering the long holidays, he believed he has the art of teaching and it was the job he was destined to do. Kyle has worked in different companies and was attached to the auditing department and when he applied for the post of primary school teacher, little did he know he would be selected. He explained that he applied in 2008, was called for the test in 2009, was called for the interview in 2010 and received his letter in April 2011. He had already forgotten about the application but was shell-shocked when he finally received the letter of acceptance. It was a moment of pride for the whole family. He was able to realise his deceased father's dream.

Although Kyle explained that he was thrilled with the job offer, he had to make a hard decision, quitting his present job as an assistant accountant would mean a considerable decrease in his monthly salary. He was earning double of what he would be receiving when he would join teaching. But his family, friends and community encouraged him to go ahead with teaching as he would have job security. Kyle calculated the gains and losses and decided to choose teaching. Alternatives exist and he could compensate these with private tuitions, enjoying quality time with his family, helping the construction of his new house, and continue to help people in his community. He does not have any regrets as he knows that was the right choice for him. However, he plans to complete his ACCA courses once his training is over. He is not the type to quit learning easily. Teaching is the seventh job within five and half years.

Walking back to school as a 'learner'

As from the beginning Kyle saw teaching as a drastic change in his social status, the way people in his locality sees him. When he stepped into the school for the first time as a trainee teacher, Kyle felt proud because he was a pupil in the same primary school and he made his mark. He went up to the head mistress and told her who he was and how he was a pupil here. He was introduced in the morning assembly as the new teacher who was once a pupil in this school and could see the awe in the children's eyes. It was a moment of pride for him; thirteen

years ago, he was in the same assembly but as a child watching his teachers and other staff members. He recalls that the setting has changed but one person was still working there and it was the school janitor. The latter who knew his father use to call him by his name but now he calls him Mr. Kyle.

Kyle's school immersion started, and he was attached to a standard two classroom. The class teacher told him it was already examination period and he recall that he could connect quickly with the latter. She was warm and welcoming, and Kyle felt at ease. With time Kyle witnessed friendship and collegiality. He took from his other MIE classmates as a reference to explain that sometimes the class teacher was reticent to share their classes with trainees, some find it disturbing but, in his case, he quickly connected with the class teacher and his immersion at school was smooth. He even helped the teacher to distribute and collect back the test papers for the examination as well as helping her in the marking. He was aware that he was being stared by the pupils and by scanning their faces he feels the pupils liked him too. He feels that the fact that he was young may be a good thing and he remembered that when he was himself a primary school learner, he witnessed a trainee in his class and all the children were happy. Firstly the teacher was quite old, in her fifties and the new trainee was young, his classmates and himself were in awe and admiration and would always prefer to ask the latter to help them when they were not able to understand things. When he was trainee, he could see that the learners were giving him respect. He was the only trainee teacher during immersion, two others joined him afterwards for School based Experience (one day per week) the following year as one of them had her immersion in Rodrigues and the other in a school near her place.

Witnessing changes…

As far as infrastructure is concerned, Kyle recollected that there was the office was situated in the actual ICT classroom. Indeed, at that time ICT was not introduced yet. The pre-primary block and upper classes have been added to the school infrastructure and the part of the playground were asphalted. He contends that most of the spaces have been reallocated for other purposes although the school is recognisable. Kyle also stressed on changes in behaviour of pupils which is a major challenge for trainee teachers. Placement has allowed him to better prepare himself face the future.

Level of indiscipline and violence

While he compared discipline issues, Kyle evoked the considerable difference and explained that this is same school he frequented when he was a learner. The school has lost its reputation when two other schools located in criminogenic areas have closed down and their pupils were absorbed by the school he was placed. Unfortunately, its learners have history of

violence and indiscipline, and hail from Low SES and poor family background. He got information form teachers that there are cases of child neglect, some would bring mobile phones and show pornographic videos to their peers. Some of those kids have even told their teachers how they smoke cigarettes and drink alcohol. Kyle believed that the inclusion of pupils from that particular school have started to change the academic and socio-cultural climate of the school where the trainee was placed. All these issues were inexistent when he was a pupil. He also feels that the fact that the age and gender of teachers in those days impacted on the level of discipline. There were more male teachers who were on average in their forties. Today teachers and much younger and he witnessed that some female colleagues have greater difficulties than their male counterpart when it comes to dealing with indiscipline issues which are becoming more and more complex. Kyle recalled that it is not allowed to use corporal punishment and children are well aware of that fact. It is more challenging for the teacher to control the behaviour of unruly pupils. Once, another trainee was replacing in a standard three and she screamed whole day, the next morning she was not able to speak and got a throat infection.

Parent-teacher relationships

Kyle witnessed that there is a very formal relationship between parents and teachers but highlighted that there are some exceptional instances where he saw difficult parents turning up at school and making a ruckus from time to time. Kyle was convinced that such illiterate behaviour was major disturbance for the smooth running of the school. Some of those parents would turn up and insult teachers for no plausible reasons. Parents would not try to be neutral, they would always listen to the pupil's version and would never accept that theirward could be faulty. Once, he saw a teacher in tears because one parent was aggressive withher. She could not cope with the situation as each time she rebuked that pupil who was misbehaving, his mom would turn up and accused the teacher of beating her son. Finally, the teacher asked for a transfer. However, it is only some parents who would be aggressive, he observed that most of them are considerate and work together with the teachers. He also reiterated that it is important to speak and communicate with parents from the very the beginning.

Being a trainee: *nicknaming himself as Mr. Replacement*

Throughout these two years on school placement Kyle constructed himself more of a replacee teacher than a trainee teacher. At one point in time, he would be replacing standard six repeaters most of the time. It was a difficult class, but he recalled that he knew how to manage them well and was able to gain control of the whole class. He was sent there because at one point in time there were no teachers for standard six repeaters and no one wanted to replace them. He was 'assigned' to replace that particular class. The class teacher in charge of that particular class was repeatedly absent and he was sacked from his job. He recalled that each time he set his foot to school, after his attendance, the mentor's good morning wasalways 'Mr. Kyle can you please replace standard six repeaters?' Indeed, it first happened a Friday afternoon, the class teacher took a half day leave and he happened to replace that class. In general, those pupils would not stay in class after recess, they would roam around the school, play in the playground and would not get in class. When he went there not a singlepupil went out. When he returned to school on Monday, the head teacher called him and complimented him, he was acknowledged by the whole school for managing such a difficult class so well but the flipside of the story was that since that day he was expected to replace the same class each time the need arose. He complained that he was not able to observe properly and 'learn to teach' with a teacher but had to replace most of the time.

Pupils' performance

Kyle termed the performance of school as average with an average of 60% pass rate at CPE level and the percentage pass among repeaters have raised by 10% because the teacher has made extra effort with the pupils.

[26] The trainee was competed the CPE under the ranking system where secondary school is allocated according to ranking in CPE. Those who were ranked among the first 1000 could secure from star to relatively well reputed schools for secondary education. The students who were given a ranking would be able to easily secure a seat for secondary. The primary school which could maintain high ranking [within the first 200 or 500] would be seen as competitive and well performing.

Three pupils have been able to get national schools but is not aware of the number of pupils who have received 5A+. He reiterates that the school wasquite good. When he was a pupil he was ranked among the first 700[26]. The first in the schoolwas ranked among the first 200. At that time, some forty out of 70 pupils competing for the CPE would be among those who were ranked. Kyle explained that the school was also good as its population was small and teachers were excellent, they would come early and coach their pupils on a voluntary basis every day from 7.30 to 8.45. Kyle did not see this happeningas most teachers prized the afternoon tuition which is fee payable.

Learners of primary are…

While relating learners of primary as plants and flowers in a garden (the classroom), Kyle explained that with some group he worked with a proper grooming and understanding of learners are important. His experience with a particular class has lead him to feel that way about learners. He educed from his first year on placement to explain how he engaged with learners during the enhancement[27] periods as well as taking their normal classes while their teacher was on leave. At the end of the year most of the learners passed with 5As and since that day he was motivated to stay into teaching. Moreover, his learners would come and hug him to thank him for being able to succeed. They were grateful and wanted him to stay as their teacher. He also received commendable feedback from the head teacher and classroom teacher. Kyle used this experience as a lesson and since then he continued to foster a firm but caring outlook towards his learners. He would make sure all the plants and flowers in his garden are given appropriate treatment to be able to grow and bear good fruits.

CONCEPTUALISING KYLE'S POSITION IN THE STORY

Kyle's story gives insights on the generic issues which captures the attention of any newcomer to school context however while digging into the milestones of his own trainee experiences one can capture the essence of construction of school context by the latter. Kyle does not see himself as a perfect stranger to the school. His previous exposure to the school as a learner feeds him with some forms of knowledge of the school, thus explaining the back-and-forth movement to the past in his narrative. Kyle has never left the school but temporarilydismissed from it. His entry as a trainee is a coming back and his exit is not a definite one because he is determined to get posted as a permanent teacher there on day. In this sense the stage where

he is '*at school*' get suspended very quickly and last on day one after morningassembly.

Recognition of the head teacher, pupils and school janitor gives allowed Kyle to push back his presence as '*being in school*' which helped him to smoothly create his own space within the

[27] Enhancement programme was set up in primary context to consolidate and extend learning experiences of learners after school hours. Learners could opt to stay on specific days of the week for such extended sessions.

school. He constructs school context using [1] personal knowledge, [2] professional experiences, [3] memories, [4] witnessing, [5] teacher knowledge, [6] reflection from lived experiences at school, and [7] exchange of experiences with other trainees. the map below provides a snapshot of his transect.

KIARA'S NARRATIVE --- *WAY BACK FROM HOME*

My first encounter with Kiara was in a teaching practice session and my first impression was that Kiara was an introvert who does not mingle much with others. Like Kyle she was posted to The school where the trainee was placed for her SBE and surprisingly when I asked her if she was interested to join in my study, she promptly accepted to be a participant. Kiara also acted as a gatekeeper as she introduced me to Bella and Tabitha. She became very enthusiastic and was completely engrossed in the study, I think it was difficult for her to leave the field. We closed her participation with a transect a few days prior to her permanent posting to another school as her training was coming to an end. Kiara spoke freely and she even told me that during the conversation she felt I was not her tutor at all, she told me what she felt and what she experienced without any reservation as I listened to what she had to say all the time.

For that matter Kiara chose the place of our pre-walk interview and I was invited to her place. I was introduced to the other tenants living in her house, all of them of Rodriguan origin. We sat in the living room and Kiara gave an insight of her learning and professional journeys. Born in Rodrigues, she hailed from a large family unit of fourteen siblings. She excelled in her primary education and completed secondary education with satisfactory results. She joined the University of Mauritius in 2009 and enrolled for a B.Sc. in Economics with International Relations but she soon gave up on the course as she did not like it and she returned to back to Rodrigues. Over there she started working in the hotel industry as waitress but was soon promoted as a sport animator given the fact that she was very at ease with tourists and clients.

A year later her manager requested her to accompany his daughter to Mauritius as an AVS (*accompagnatrice viscolaire*) in a private aided school. She was required to look after the child while being in class and ensure she did not disturb her classmates and the teacher. The child was hyperactive and would interrupt and distract the class. Kiara was employed to control the child and helped her focus in class. She recalled that this experience helped her explore teaching and she decided to join the profession after that. In 2011, she eventually applied as

got the job as pre-service primary school trainee. She returned back to Rodrigues to start her training. She recollected that she was on her last month of her pregnancy and was expecting her first child when she received her letter of offer. She could not contain her joy and jumped so much that she was admitted for delivery on the very next day. Fortunately for her, the appointment happened in end of October and she could enjoy her maternity leave and take good rest.

Immersing *back home*

Kiara started the following year as trainee in the immersion programme[28]in Rodrigues and she felt proud to start off in the same school she completed her primary education. The school was not unknown to her, nothing much have changed in terms of infrastructure and she almost felt she was back home for several reasons. Besides being an ex-pupil in that school, her home was just next to the school. She used to play in that same playground and climb the trees, pick up mangoes after school hours. In that sense she knew all the corners and places inside the school as her family was known to the neighbourhood and all parents knew her. She recalled she felt like a star when she joined in on her first day. All the kids and parents living in the locality would already address her as Miss Kiara. She recognised that as a trainee she is in the preparation stage and need experience. The placement helped her to observe other teachers so as to be able to be a good teacher. She saw experienced teachers as references as she experienced with practice.

Indeed, she was not very eager to come to Mauritius but wanted to stay over to Rodrigues, she felt it was easier for her there because it was convenient for her to stay with her kids.[29]

[28] The preservice teacher training Primary offered by the MIE includes an Immersion period where the newly recruited trainees are posted at school for a period of time to get used to the school as a workplace. During that period trainees are not allowed to teach but have to observe classes and acclimatise themselves with school context. They then proceed to theory-based training at the institute. They are posted for placement once a week and during inter semester breaks. The placement in this study also includes the immersion period.

[29] By the time her training was over, Kiara had two children. When the fieldwork started she had just delivered her second child and resumed from maternity leave.

Moreover, she apprehended coming back to Mauritius because of the delimitation in terms of development, differences in mind sets and lifestyles. She had that certainty of knowing the pupils in Rodrigues but was quite scared of working in Mauritian schools because she was ignorant of how pupils and teachers would respond and react to her presence. Coming backto Mauritius and be placed in a school there was like diving in the unknown. She explained that she had to adapt and readapt several times during her placement.

Kiara's first contact to her placement site

The school is situated at the back of Kiara's dwelling place. From her house, one could clearly see the school as well as school D. Each time Kiara had to go to that school she would walk through school D and entered the school premises from the back door which gave access to both schools. For that matter Kiara never took the front gate as it implied taking an extended route and was never exposed to attending parents in the morning before school starts. She could hear the school bell from her place and would reach there just in time while the morning assembly was starting. When Kiara was allocated the school, she was not too keen to go there but was able to get some insights of how the school functions after meeting with a little neighbour who was also a pupil in the same school. All her apprehensions vanished on her very first day at school. She recollected that all the staff members came up to her and welcomed her warmly. She almost felt like a super star. The teachers were keen to help her out and made her at ease. Till date she is in touch with most of the teachers through Facebook.

Kiara had witnessed the keenness of teachers to help and support right from day one, she was never seen as a threat but as a support, she was even given the opportunities to take charge of a whole lesson from time to time. Since the very beginning the class teacher asked her to sit next to her and share her desk and this strongly motivated Kiara.

Learning milestones kept for home

Placement revealed itself to be a surprise box for Kiara and strongly felt that it helped her better understand herself and the teacher she wants to be. She learnt considerably from challenges and difficulties encountered as well as acquired necessary values to dwell in the profession. Learners are unpredictable and teaching is complex, but she took advantage of

her trump card whenever she can, which is her urge to know others, communicate and interact with as many people as possible. The constant comparison with Rodrigues was also obvious in her account, for instance she would usually use her experience in Rodrigues to explain how she saw learners, safety, teaching and teachers.

As Kiara made her official exit from The school where the trainee was placed, she closed one chapter to open another back home. I asked her what she was carrying back home and she declared with enthusiasm, learning milestones; Learning to teach, learning to accept, learning to change, learning to unlearn and learn to face challenges. She ended up saying that she never imagined teaching being so complex and that school life was full of surprises. As we part way she told me that she will still be faced with unknowns and welcome these fully armed, she has got stringer muscles, she felt ready to face any cyclone or hurricane which might emerge there. After her training, Kiara was posted a school near her locality. She is now a mother of three and one of her children attend the same school she currently works in.

Conceptualising Kiara during placement

While sharing the placement with Kyle, Kiara positioned herself more like a stranger visiting the place before she could actually immerse herself fully. Unlike Kyle she uses the estranged status to construct the school context. Her starting point was her presence as a tenant in the neighbourhood. She relies on people several times while she builds her constructs. Her roles as mother, teacher assistant, neighbour, learner and trainee also equipped her further. Kiara constructions focused on people, relationships, classroom activities, children, pupils and the outer bounds of the schools. Her transect was more focused on some classrooms and the neighbourhood. It was obvious that Kiara distanced herself with the school, she entered feeling like a perfect stranger, left the school less alienated but what made her felt at home was somewhere else.

Tasha's narrative: The academically oriented trainee teacher

Tasha was a degree holder in Tourism and hospitality management when she joined the TDP and hailed from an orthodox school. After her graduation she taught as a replace teacher iin a secondary school for a period of six month and later joined a high company attached to the leisure industry as a marketing consultant. Although she was well renumerated and enjoyed her career, she decided to shift to teaching because she wanted quality time with her child and family. she applied for both primary and secondary teaching jobs and it was first come, first served. She explained that if she gets the opportunity to move to secondary teaching she will do so.

As a student, Tasha was a socializer and had many friends. She is also faith oriented and her religion and values are central to her ways of life. She explains that during her initiation to placement, she had a pleasant experience and she loved it. But when she moved to another school to continue her placement, she realized the difference that pupils make to teaching and the teaching experiences of young trainees like her. She recalled that her pupils were like tigers and she had that obligation to tame them:

> *'I was like that eh I was more like eh more in mood of selfless that I have to, I've been given certain not all, not all, certain pupils are really eh certain are really very motivated but there were those who were impossible for me. I really find myself in a selfless like a As, no in some classes in the form, in standard four class. Yeah, I couldn't control neither me nor my colleague who was there, was there. It was like a nightmare going back. The children, I don't know what, what they were actually. What they were actually. We couldn't describe them. And I would very much like you go visit that class. They are in standard five now. We are getting a very harsh time working. Very harsh time. They are constantly quarrelling; can can smash their face like nothing. It was very difficult. And this was the worst experience I had in that school. Other classes were ok, there are certain pupils who are not good but, I'm referring to the standard four class because that was the class who were supposed to be attached but we couldn't.'*

The meaning of placement for Tasha

Tasha recalled that her placement experiences were good as she experienced support from the colleagues and the management of the school and was appreciative of the team spirit that existed. She observed how school are managed at that level and learned from that especially when it comes to dealing with parents. However, she admits that when it comes toteaching she was more focused on the MIE approach and attempted to apply the modules

learnt in class when she was offered opportunity to teach. At school, she observed that there was a reticence from senior teachers to innovate and attempt to change with the flow. But she explained that her placement experience allowed her to better understand the school background, how to engage and organise extracurricular activities like the music day, a sports day, how to be in the committee, what who to contact, the letters to be sent, the P.T.A meetings, how does it go on.

She also prefers placement in a small school as it does not create too much disruption and unpleasant surprises to trainee teachers. She believed that in a small school, it is easer to connect with the staff while in a big school, the trainee teacher may be looked at as an intruder or become an intruder to the staff. From her own experience, she described that sometimes teachers would refuse to take her in their class or would witness clashes among colleagues competing for similar classes.

Conceptualising Tasha during placement

Tasha gave a brief description of her placement experiences and her transects were more focused on relationships with her pupils and their parents. She also exploited her initial teacher training experiences and refer to the gap she observed between what was taught during training to what was implemented or practiced at school by teachers. Tasha felt that to make it work, teachers are pragmatic and practical. Her constructions of school context are focused on relationships, namely in terms of maintaining collegiality and managing pupils. While she felt estranged in high profile school, she better positions herself as a becoming teacher in a context where teachers work in collaboration with each other. She admits her difficulties in managing indiscipline pupils and still acknowledge that control could be one way of meeting with the challenge of dealing with ‘little tigers’.

<u>Appendix 13:</u> A sample of trails of photographs as sources of data supporting findings presented chapter six and seven.

Drawing from the raw data collected during the individual interviews and transect walks. I opt for the use of representations to represent my findings. In an initial instance I have collected fragments of issues brought out by each participant to come up with a case story that inform my readers about their pathways, journeys and memories of school contexts as trainee teachers/ teachers in the making. These will be in the form of a short story which depicts the latter's biography and their entry to school as trainee. Each participant is looked at as a character taken from literature, scriptures, and mass media. The knowledge derived from their participation will be sum up as a metaphor. The very same metaphor will be used in more depth in the next chapter.

These pictures serve as triggers and allow deeper introspections into the different facets of school context as constructed by trainee teachers.

The weekly timetable of a Standard 3 class in Boaz's school affixed on the wall outside the class to facilitate knowledge of pupils' movement and activities throughout the day. For the trainees this help teachers, administrators and especially parent to check on the pupils at any time.

(Transect I Boaz)

The morining prayer in Kyle's school is an example of routines in his school. This is affixed to accustom pupils and newcomers to recite the prayer durign morning assemblies.

(Transect I, Kyle)

In kyle's school The loudspeaker is used during the morning assembly to ensure proper communication while important information are conveyed by the headmaster to staff and pupils. He recalled that this was not the case when he was a pupil in the same school.

(Transect I Kyle)

Kiara's classroom where she had her first teaching experiences.

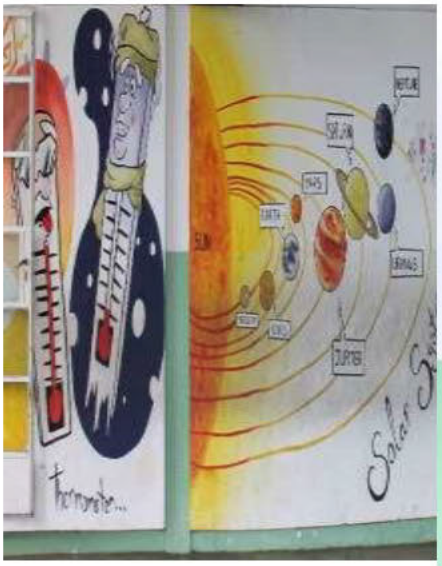
Kiara's standard 2 classroom where she evoked memories during placement:

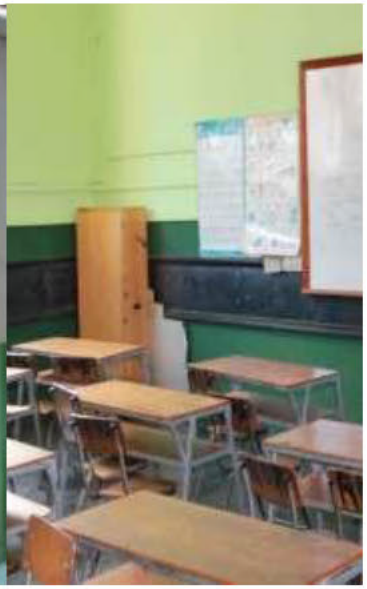
'In this classroom, there are a lot of memories yes, a lot of gossiping, my first experiences in giving them (the pupils) first class tests, I did not know how to do that, there were a lot of sharing, and we would sit and have (teachers) our breakfast together. I got a lot of appreciations from pupils in this class, I received a lot of drawings from my pupils, and some even drew me and gifted the drawing to me. Now as I am standing, I can recall all of them, I can recollect where they were sitting and who they were, I can recall their names right now.'

(Transect II, Kiara)

'Students bags are kept outside the class. each pupils have their specific space, and it facilitates attendance and roll call, a missing bag makes it easy to identify an absentee.'

(Tabitha, T)





As one enters this school, one cannot oversee these 'visual aids and learning tools' on the walls. Kyle thinks that this is very helpful for both teachers and pupils.

The classroom evoking collegiality and informal gathering among teaching staff. It also helps trainee teachers to construct the teacher-teacher relationships as supportive and bonding. Boaz recalled of this classroom as a site of regular meeting to celebrate birthdays and good news among colleagues as well as deal with daily grievances with administrators.

(Boaz, TI)

Initially the staff's toilet, then reconvereted into the infamous 'dark room' is presently a marathi classroom. Kyle uses this to construct discipline and teacher pupil relationships as well as collegiality.

While Kiara was unaware of the nature of the small building at therear end of the school, Kyle recalled all the incidents related to this place. His memories of this building dates from the time he was a pupil in the school. Now reconverted as an asian language classroom, he explained that although he used to be scared of this place, he would like to have this as his personal classroom. (Kyle, T)

Seriously gossips can happen anywhere! Anytime! At the right time… (Bella, T II)

The pupils' toilets in Archie's School is well maintained and well designed. (Archie, T II)

A shop next to the primary school where some trainees spent their time and taste new candies for 'add some flavour to their moods'

A small round about behind the school to escape from headmaster's chase. Their hide and seek sanctuary.

The school stadium being a site where parents colonise to monitors teachers movement in and out of the classroom while waiting for their children; where teachers occupy to check on pupils' movement during recess. It is also sometimes used for pedagogical purposes (Tabitha, TI)

Gatekeeping here also a safe space
for trainees to relax when they want to flee from the head teacher- replacement.

Trainees' hiding place –in the
kitchen this is best place to be, weget to see all the things happeningad escape from going to class for replacement.

The sheds are seen as significant safety space for recreation and games.

Classrooms on serious business all the time…'human cameras also on spot'.

Gatekeeping gets serious here, no one can enter that easily, except for parents of course. (Bella, TI)

Staffroom – a safe space for trainees to get acquainted to others

Residences close by – we can hear them and they do as well.

The market place is also used as a pedagogical space sometimes teachers bing their pupils here (mini fieldtrip) to discuss food for health and food for growth…Kyle

The play space is convenient according to Archie for pupils to enjoy their recess time. Trees used as a natural shed besides the one which is manmade complements in the school playground

Burglar bars according to Boaz, Kyle and Archie are safety measures and prevent any casualties among pupils.

The police station is a strategic space and the presence of the police are constructed by trainee teachers as support to the the proper running of the school; their presence signal conflict and conflict resolution as well as are constructed as pedagogical resources.

The neighbourhood is critical for trainee teachers who uses it as a proxy to construct pupils' backgrounds and behaviour. The neighbourhood is also indiciated by participants as reflecting the type of paretn-teacher relationships which will tend to prevail in that particular school

Toilets are signalled by some trainees namely kyle and archie. While the latter construct the ways in which needs of learners are catered in terms of infrastructure, the former refer to toilets as a violent/dangerous space.

Appendix 14: Abstracts of paper presentation in conferences (local and international)

14a: Canadian International Conference in Education 2017 (Conference paper presentation)

Infonomics Society
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CICE 2017 Conference Papers Index

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'Where do we come from and how We Construct Knowledge of Primary School Context': A Narrative Analysis of Trainee Teachers during Placement

Abstract

The present study explores how trainee teachers construct knowledge of primary school context during their school placement. This study extrapolates on what fashion trainees' teacher beliefs, values and attitudes to unlock the way they perceive, conceive and lived school as a place of work. As part of the findings, this study also draws attention on the latter's articulation of school contexts as being enmeshed into specific spaces and landscapes, which directly and indirectly feed them with knowledge about what constitute being a school practitioner.

Published in: Canada International Conference on Education, 2017

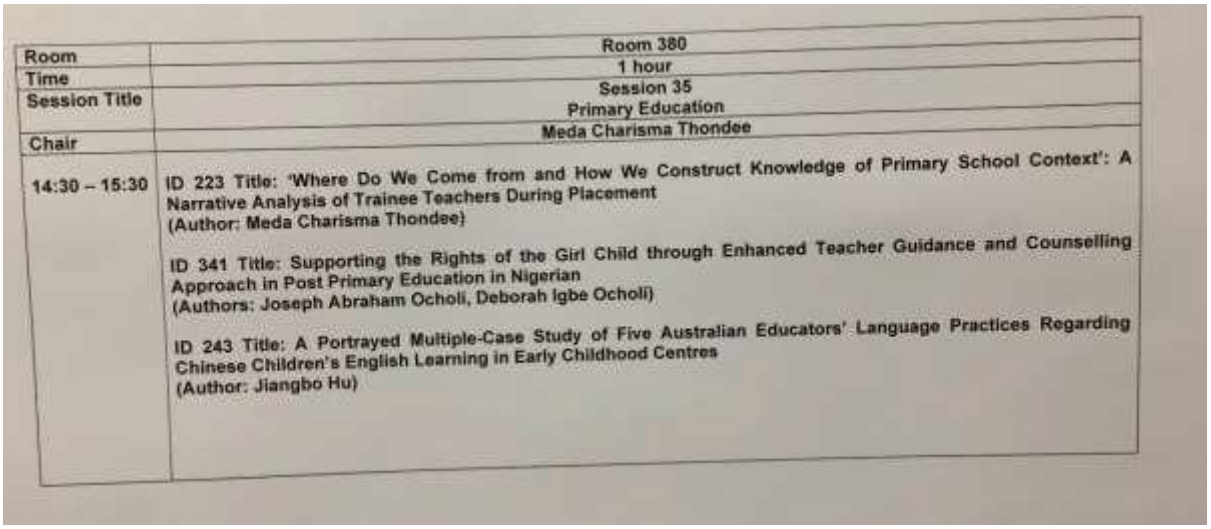
Date of Conference: 26-29 June, 2017

Electronic ISBN: 978-1-908320-83-4

DOI: 10.20533/CICE.2017.0242

Conference Location: University of Toronto Mississauga, Canada

Extract from the CICE conference book of abstracts:



Room	Room 380
Time	1 hour
Session Title	Session 35 Primary Education
Chair	Meda Charisma Thondee
14:30 – 15:30	ID 223 Title: 'Where Do We Come from and How We Construct Knowledge of Primary School Context': A Narrative Analysis of Trainee Teachers During Placement (Author: Meda Charisma Thondee) ID 341 Title: Supporting the Rights of the Girl Child through Enhanced Teacher Guidance and Counselling Approach in Post Primary Education in Nigerian (Authors: Joseph Abraham Ocholi, Deborah Igbe Ocholi) ID 243 Title: A Portrayed Multiple-Case Study of Five Australian Educators' Language Practices Regarding Chinese Children's English Learning in Early Childhood Centres (Author: Jiangbo Hu)

14b: Research Week University of Mauritius 2016 (paper presentation)

Research Week 2016

From being at school to being in school : Exploring how trainee teachers construct their experiences of Primary school contexts

M. C. Thondee*

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Abstract :

This paper focuses on an in-depth analysis of narratives of five pre-service trainees on what they construct as primary school context. The paper also unlocks the complexity of the participants' construction as they start questioning what they imagined as school context prior to training and what they live as trainees after their immersion to school-based training. I adopt a critical-interpretivist stance to read and analyse participants' construction. Findings horns on how construction of school context by trainees in time and space unlock the intricacies of teaching and learning practice on a daily basis. The study offers significant avenues to understand teacher socialisation in the Mauritian context.

Keywords: school context; primary education; teacher socialisation; construction; critical interpretivist approach

14c: DETA conference 2021/publication in TETFLE

'Epistemic and methodological implications: The relevance of using transects as a data production tools in an educational research'.

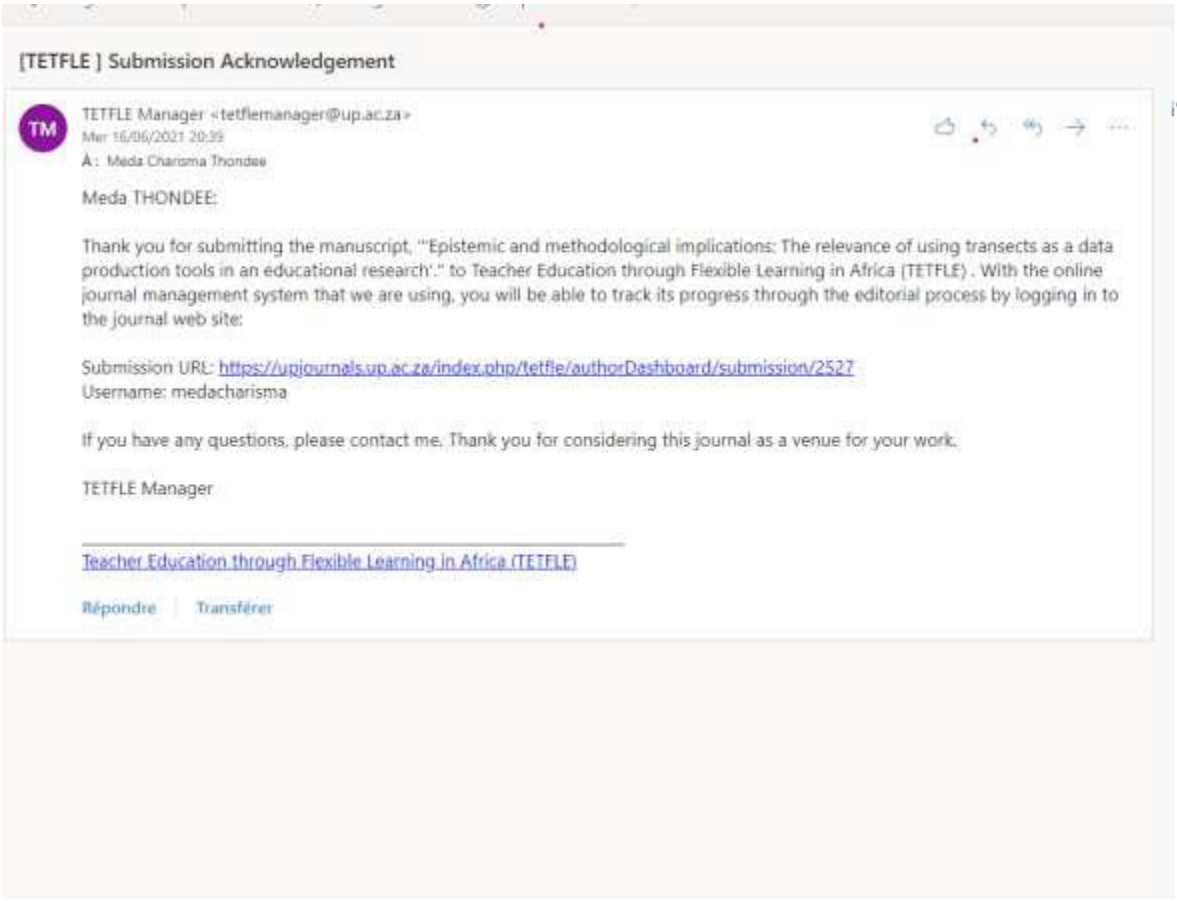
Meda Charisma THONDEE

Mauritius Institute of EducationMauritius

ABSTRACT

The present paper is derived from a PhD study which explores the nature of trainee teachers' construction of primary school context while being on school placement. This study unlocks the ways in which participatory research methods and data sources give space for authentic, trustworthy, ethical, and reflexive stances during data collection, data analysis and theory building. As part of the findings of this study attention is drawn on the trainee teachers' articulation of school contexts as being enmeshed into specific spaces and landscapes, which directly and indirectly feed them with knowledge about their professional becoming. The use of transects as alternative to traditional methods, like interviews and participant observation, is analysed and presented in a series of travel metaphors. These explicate the research tool as capable at representing the lived stories of the participants during their initial teacher training while offering a wider representation of the latter's voices and presences as knowers. The research tool is also appraised in terms of its scope to contribute to the practice of ethics in educational research and its compatibility with critical interpretivist philosophy.

Key terms: transects, participatory research tools, qualitative research, primary education.



[TETFLE] Submission Acknowledgement

TM

TETFLE Manager <tetflemanager@up.ac.za>
Mer 16/06/2021 20:39
À : Meda Charisma Thondee

Meda THONDEE:

Thank you for submitting the manuscript, "'Epistemic and methodological implications: The relevance of using transects as a data production tools in an educational research'." to Teacher Education through Flexible Learning in Africa (TETFLE) . With the online journal management system that we are using, you will be able to track its progress through the editorial process by logging in to the journal web site:

Submission URL: https://upjournals.up.ac.za/index.php/tetfle/authorDashboard/submission/2527
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If you have any questions, please contact me. Thank you for considering this journal as a venue for your work.

TETFLE Manager

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