DIVERSE SCHOOL CONTEXTS AND NOVICE TEACHERS'

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Declaration

I, Vanmala Poonsamy, declare that:

(i)   The research report in this dissertation, except where otherwise indicated, is my original work.

(ii)   This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

(iii)   This dissertation does not contain other person's writing, unless acknowledged as being sourced from other researchers.

This declaration was signed by me on ____ February 2013.

_____   _____

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Researcher   Supervisor

Acknowledgements

Abbreviations

B. Ed.	Bachelor of Education
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements
C2005	Curriculum 2005
CHE	Council of Higher Education
DoE	Department of Education
ELRC	Education Labour Resource Council
EMS	Economic Management Sciences
FET	Further Educational Training
HEIs	Higher Educational Institutions
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
HOD	Head of Department
INSET	In-Service Education and Training
IPET	Initial Professional Education of Teachers
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
LO	Life Orientation
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
NNSSF	National Norms and Standards for School Funding
SGB	School Governing Body
TP	Teaching Practice
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal

CONTENTS

Section Two: Novice Teachers' Professional Development

Experiences in their Work Contexts

Abstract

This study is an exploration of the influence of different school contexts on novice teachers' professional development and learning. The study sought to understand and interpret how 1st year novice teachers who were exposed to a new UKZN teaching practice approach, learnt and developed in varying school contexts. It also attempted to understand how these teachers exposure to knowledge/experiences of contextual diversity during their training contributed to their development in their present school contexts. A qualitative approach with an interpretive framework was used, as this approach allowed for the phenomenon (novice teachers' development in diverse school contexts) to be studied in natural settings and it foregrounded the social and cultural context.

The study was underpinned by the teacher development framework designed by Amin and Ramrathan, and Samuel's force field model and the situated learning theory. Amin and Ramrathan's approach foregrounded contextual diversity as this is the reality of the post-apartheid South African schools. As the study also sought to explore novice teachers' professional development in work contexts, it drew on the situated learning theory and Samuel's force field model as a means to assess the extent the role the various forces (biography, curriculum, institutional and contextual) play in influencing novice teacher development.

The case study methodology was used to elicit insight and clear perspectives of novice teachers' multiple truths and realities with regard to their professional development in the contexts they worked. The participants were purposefully selected. They were three 1st year teachers who had completed the B.Ed degree at the same university. They were of the same race and gender. These participants taught at different school contexts. This enabled me to assess how these varying contexts shaped their professional development. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews. The use of semi-structured interviews allowed for new data to be generated through probing and clarification of answers. The interviews were audio-recorded to ensure that all data was available for analysis.

The findings of the study reveal that the nature of the school contexts has a direct bearing on the professional development of the participants. Factors such as the school leadership and management styles, school resources and school based professional development programmes influenced how these teachers developed. The biography of the participants had a significant role in ensuring that they were able to rise above their many challenging experiences and thereby enhance their professional growth and professional development.

CHAPTER ONE

AN OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

INTRODUCTION

The statement, "teaching is a profession that eats its young", is a harsh and negative view of the teaching profession (Halford, 1998, p.33) and though made so many years ago, it still holds true today for some individuals. Beginner teachers' entry years into the profession remains the most difficult year and Huberman (1989) notes that novice teachers experience painful beginnings and look back to this phase with nightmarish emotion. The era of globalisation has opened many opportunities and the buzz is for teachers to create knowledge societies, increase innovative capacities and establish learning communities. Constructive teacher professional development programmes and support structures, the core of sound educational systems, more especially for beginner teachers, receive scant attention and recognition by governments of most countries. The focus of South African education is on improved matric pass rates and academic standards with little concern showed for the growth and development of teachers (Moletsane, 2004).

In South Africa, the society and government have little faith in what teachers can do and place complex demands on them and the teaching profession. The country's educational landscape is characterised by high failure rates, high levels of unemployment in society, sexual violence in and around schools, teenage pregnancy and HIV and AIDS (Moletsane, 2004). The South African Department of Education (DoE) responds to changing socio-political and educational contexts in the country and globally by constantly revising the school curricula (Moletsane, 2004; Samuel, 2009a). Since the advent of democracy in 1994, the South African education system has under gone many curriculum changes, from Curriculum 2005 (C2005) to the latest change, the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS). Samuel (2009a) states that this constant revision of curricula implies that teachers do not possess the required skills or competences to provide quality teaching and teacher development from this perspective focuses on improving teacher competences from a deficit frame of teachers' abilities. Teacher unions and professional bodies correctly note that teachers should not be held responsible for poor quality education until the necessary physical, human and financial resources are made available to all schools (Samuel, 2009a). Samuel (2009a) also points out that the policy context which impacts on the quality of the curriculum is driven by policy makers with

specific goals. Hence these policies are never neutral and are driven by the ideology of those in power (Samuel, 2009a). Research works indicate that the key to improving the quality of education in post-apartheid South Africa is to establish good practices that produce quality teachers, and the personal and professional welfare of teachers (the real levers of successful policy implementation) must be improved in South Africa (Moletsane, 2004; Samuel, 2009a).

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) inherited from the apartheid era, amongst many other issues, poor infrastructure in many thousands of schools. As a means to redress and redistribution in the South African educational sector, the quintile system which determines the funding for individual schools was implemented after democracy. The National Norms and Standards for School Funding (NNSSF), a policy change implemented in 2006, determines the funding to each school according to the poverty score. The poverty score assigns each school to a quintile rank, ranging from Q1 to Q5, with Q1 receiving the biggest amount of money. The poverty score is based on the poverty level of the community in which the school is located (HSRC, 2009).

The South African basic educational landscape consists of at least two different types of schools, these being; independent/private, and public/state schools which include former Model C schools. Private education is much more expensive than public education, and assumed to offer a high standard of education and many children from middle and high income families attend these schools. The former Model C schools are government schools that are administered and largely funded by the parents and alumni body (Brindley, 2012; Hofmeyr, 2000). Currently public schools are viewed negatively and have a tarnished reputation; they are accused of providing an inferior education to pupils (Bloch, 2009). Most public schools are dependent on the government for funding and each province is responsible for making sure its schools are well equipped and have sufficient funds to run smoothly. As a result, standards and facilities can vary depending on the efficiency and the overall wealth of the province. As there is a serious lack of adequate financing and monitoring on the part of the government, many public schools are characterized by low standards of education, a lack of qualified teachers and an absence of equipment in classrooms. Due to these shortcomings, parents prefer to send their children to private schools (Brindley, 2012). In the urban areas, the standard of education at a public school is generally better. As these public schools draw students and funds from their suburbs, it follows that the wealthier the area the better the school is. Hence parents from higher income suburbs do not need to send their children to private schools. It is generally believed, that the best government schools, the former Model C

schools, offer exceptional facilities and a very high academic standard (Arends & Phurutse, 2009, Brindley, 2012; Hofmeyr, 2000).

Policy or mandatory laws regarding novice teacher development or teacher development is rarely mentioned in state documents. The Employment of Educators Act 76 (ELRC, 1998) which spells out the roles and job descriptions of the teaching force; makes a brief mention of the school principal being responsible for the development of new teachers. Other than that there is no statutory policy that provides guidance to school leadership on how to assist or induct novice teachers into the profession. Maistry (2008) asserts that South African education is currently experiencing unprecedented reform which poses immense challenges for teacher development. He adds that the present teacher development models in South Africa have been largely ineffective in their efforts to facilitate professional development of teachers. Teacher appraisal through the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS), a school based professional development model, does not evaluate competence deeply to assist teachers to identify their needs. Developmental and performance appraisal are combined which makes it difficult to transparently and accurately identify teacher development needs. Mokoena (2005) states that through the IQMS evaluation most teachers are willing to be appraised but not for their professional developmental. They undergo the process because it is linked to salary progression and that no substantive teacher learning takes place.

In response to these numerous challenges facing teacher development and education in South Africa, a plan, (The New, Strengthened, Integrated National Plan for Teacher Development Final Draft-August 2010) has been developed. The plan places teachers (including school leaders and subject advisors) right at the centre of all efforts to improve teacher development; it proposes that teachers should take primary responsibility for their own development, and simultaneously, engage the support of the Department of Basic Education and various other stakeholders. However this plan is still to be operationalized and until then the traditional models of teacher development continue to be used.

In South Africa, prior to democracy, teacher education was located under provincial departments of education. There were many training colleges across the country and a large intake of teacher students. The post-apartheid Department of Education conducted an audit in 1995 and found the college model to be undesirable with regard to the quality of the educational training and it was also financially unviable (Ramrathan, 2007 ; Samuel, 2009a). Hence this model was dispensed with. Since then initial professional education training

(IPET) has moved to the higher education department and incorporated into universities. In 2006, the Council of Higher Education (CHE) recommended that higher education teacher education institutions prepare students to practice within authentic South African schooling contexts. Samuel (2009a) asserts that this proved a challenge to the safe world view of teacher education which provides training to teach in model C type schools. As a response to poor training models, the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) designed a new model to prepare student teachers to address the diversity of school and resource contexts, the aim of the UKZN model of IPET is to expose students to the wide variety and reality of authentic schooling which is an explicit goal of the curriculum. Students are orientated to understanding the variety of social, cultural, economic and political contexts of the South African educational landscape (Amin & Ramrathan, 2009; Samuel, 2009a).

The project of exposure to a diversity of school contexts is reinforced in the first year of the initial teacher education qualification. The policy ensures that collaborative support structures are provided for novice teachers and their mentor teachers at school level; it also includes training and workshops for university tutors/supervisors of the professional practicum and school liaison mentors where the roles and responsibilities of all partners are made known. The policy makes it compulsory for student teachers to undertake a professional practicum in all school types and teach in a range of quintile ranked schools. The aim of the project is to provide the platform for on-going professional support and growth to students; not to criticise them. Samuel (2009a) asserts that teacher education should seek to produce professionals who are able to think beyond the level of prescription and to be independent, creative and critical in thought that is relevant and appropriate to the specific contexts they find themselves. He adds that the transformation of the quality of education in schools is dependent on producing quality teachers for and within the schooling system.

The above information provides the platform on which my study is grounded. As noted in South Africa there is insufficient focus on the early professional development of teachers and an inadequate explanation of novice teachers' experiences of professional development in different South African school contexts. My study sought to understand and explain the early professional development experiences of three novice (first year) teachers in varying school contexts.

Statement of Purpose

This study intended to provide a deep understanding and explanation of the professional development experiences of novice teachers at three different geographical schooling contexts (urban, semi-urban and rural) and the impact these varying contexts and their teaching training had on their professional development. In South African, schools located in the cities or inner-city are regarded as urban schools and are generally the former white schools. Schools that serve the populations in residential and well built up areas are regarded as sub-urban or semi-urban schools and schools located in the inlands or farms are regarded to as rural schools. The participants were all first year teachers who studied at the same university and as they taught at three different school contexts it enabled the study to foreground the influence of the context.

Research Questions

The two critical questions that guide the study are:

- What are the professional development experiences of novice teachers?
- How does the context influence the professional development experiences of novice teachers?

Rationale

The post- apartheid South African educational landscape provides a wide range of diverse schooling contexts that future teachers have not been be exposed to but Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in South Africa still train teachers who think they will teach in first world conditions (Amin & Ramrathan, 2009). In an attempt to bridge the gap and prepare future teachers to be able to teach in diverse school contexts, the University of KwaZulu–Natal (UKZN) Edgewood Campus designed a new approach to teaching practice which foregrounded diverse school contexts. First year student teachers at UKZN-Edgewood were exposed to this curriculum in 2007.

UKZN's new approach attempted to prepare pre-service teachers to experience the contextual diversity of South African schools. The rationale behind this was to expose students to experience different school contexts, to consider contextual inequalities and diversities as a basis for teacher development and also to encourage students to choose different contexts for teaching practice during the completion of their Bachelor of Education (B. Ed.) degree. As the

first cycle was completed in 2010, the project attempted to review whether the exposure to diverse contexts had achieved the intended aims of the reconceptualised teaching practice approach and to understand the extent each phase in the approach assisted in producing teachers for South Africa (Amin & Ramrathan, 2009). The UKZN designers of this curriculum undertook a project (I was part of the project) which aimed to explore how this context-based teaching practice (TP) was experienced by the student teachers in their first year of teaching.

My focus area was to explore the impact the reconceptualised teaching practice had on novice teachers (2010 B.Ed students) and the influence the school had on their professional development. From a personal perspective my interest in this area of study stemmed from my challenging experiences as a novice teacher. My entry year into the teaching profession was the most difficult year in my teaching career. Bridging the gap from being a student teacher to a first year teacher was no easy task. The mismatch between theory and practice was huge and my school lacked proper support structures to make the transition a smooth process. There was no orientation, induction or mentoring from the management, my learning and development occurred largely in isolation. I was fortunate to have a few colleagues who had begun teaching a few years earlier and they assisted me. There was very little support from the management or veteran teachers. Twenty five years later I find it most disappointing to note that the scenario is the same as the current research on the discourse of novice teacher development reveals that novice teachers still find their entry years to be most challenging and leave the profession in droves (Arends & Phurutse, 2009). Research (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009) reveals that the challenges novices face are many and strong support structures are lacking. In choosing to research novice teachers' professional development my goal was to highlight the importance of novice teacher development and also to add to the knowledge base with regard to how South African novice teachers' professional development unfolds in diverse school contexts.

Research Methodology

This study encapsulated aspects of a qualitative research design and an interpretivist lens was the mode through which data was captured, explained and understood. This design enabled me to obtain a comprehensive and deep understanding of the participants' experiences at their different school contexts. The methodology was a case study. The professional development experiences of three beginner teachers at their work places were placed under the spotlight

and their school context was foregrounded. Qualitative instruments and procedures were used to explain and interpret how the participants provided meaning and understanding of their professional development experiences at their workplace. Semi-structured interviews and observations were used to obtain data to answer the research questions.

Since contextual diversity and teacher professional development formed the core of the study, central aspects of Amin and Ramrathan's (2009) reconceptualised teaching practice framework and Samuel's (2009b) Force Field Model guided the study. These frameworks highlight the importance of considering how contextual, institutional, curriculum and biographical forces influence teaching, learning and professional development. The study also drew on the situated learning theory which propagates learning within a context, the school culture and various stake holder relationships. These theories were central to my research.

Overview of chapters to follow

Chapter Two

This chapter provides international and national literature research relevant to areas that shaped my research. The literature highlights the importance of understanding novice teacher development and challenges they encounter, the significance of context in professional development and the forms of professional development support structures that are provided for novice teachers. The theoretical/conceptual framework of the study is also discussed.

Chapter Three

This chapter offers a comprehensive discussion of the research design and methodology employed to generate and analyse data to answer the research questions.

Chapter Four

This chapter presents the analyses and interpretation of data based on the research questions. There are two sections. Section one provides an analysis of the participants' backgrounds and also establishes the type of school context they teach at. In section two the participants' professional development experiences are interpreted using a thematic approach which centres on the discourse of novice teacher's challenges and support structures against diverse school contexts. It concludes by offering an overview of the data generated.

Chapter Five

This last chapter provides a synthesis of the data and arguments that I have developed; the findings and recommendations of the study. It also offers a guide of future research areas for further investigation.

Conclusion of this Chapter

In this chapter an outline of the purpose, rationale and methodology of the study was provided. There was also an outline of the entire study and a preview of the chapters to follow was offered.

In chapter two I present the literature review.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTON

This chapter provides an in-depth analysis of literature on teacher professional development specifically that of novice teachers both internationally and in South Africa. My study was an exploration of how different school contexts influence novice teachers' professional development. This literature review focuses on the concepts novice teachers, professional development, diverse school contexts and the challenges and support structures novice teachers encounter during the first year of teaching. Literature on how novice teachers' professional development unfolds in their work context and the impact of their teacher education training on their development is also reviewed.

The terms 'novice teacher', 'beginner teacher' or 'newly qualified teacher (NQT)'' is used interchangeably in this study and refers to teachers in their first few years of teaching. For the purpose of this study, the novice teacher is one who is just qualified and enters the teaching arena for the first time. Newly qualified teachers acquire the necessary qualifications and are in the first year of formal teaching and it takes at least five years for a novice teacher to become an effective teacher (Chamberlain, 2005; Veenman, 1984).

Understanding Diversity of School Contexts

Research in the area of the novice teachers' professional development reveals that the school's culture or the school context either hinders or improves novice teachers' development. The context could refer to the school, classroom, the particular students, the content, particular textbooks which has considerable influence on teachers' decisions. Teachers work in contexts that differ, there are inner-city schools, suburban or rural schools, schools with multicultural or mono-cultural populations, schools with extensive or limited resources, schools with much or little support to teachers (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009). The degree to which teachers interact is affected by many variables, such as the size of the school, its policies and procedures, and the school climate. As a result different capabilities are required and this can place different restraints on teachers (Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, Bransford, et al, 2005). In South Africa there are vast differences with regard to the school contexts. Johnson, Monk and Hodge (2000) argue that literature from northern or western research reflects the concerns of the developed countries and are poorly matched to the needs

of Southern African countries. They add that having achieved democracy in South Africa has not led to positive transformation of all schools; there are still unequal financial, human and material resources prevalent at schools. Previously advantaged schools now regarded as 'ex-Model C' are different from historically disadvantaged schools. The buildings, physical location, books, equipment, school ethos, staff qualifications, administrative expertise vary greatly between schools. Literature from northern/western countries will, therefore, be more relevant to the 'ex-Model C' schools (Johnson et al, 2000). Amin and Ramrathan (2009) concur with Johnson et al (2000). They foreground the contextual diversity of South African schools and explain contextual diversity as "the systemic, structural and ideological differences resulting from the political and social organization of South Africa during the years of apartheid" (Amin & Ramrathan, 2009, p.70). These schools are not homogenous; they vary in terms of poverty and wealth distribution, geographic locations, demography, language, culture, social and religious beliefs. Contextual diversity is seen as an institution that constitutes students of different backgrounds, with students of various racial and ethnic groups, differing perspectives and spatial location. In South Africa it also refers to teacher absenteeism, learner violence, and lack of resources, poor teaching skills, racism and socioeconomic conditions (Amin & Ramrathan, 2009). This information is most relevant to my study as the intention was to understand novice teachers' professional development in diverse school contexts.

Teacher Professional Development

As the study foregrounds teacher professional development within diverse contexts, there is a need to provide a specific understanding of teacher development to use as a yardstick when assessing how teacher development unfolds in these contexts. The discourse on teacher professional development is a contested area and each researcher has his/her own understanding of what it entails. Most literature provides information on how teachers should learn but how the actual learning process takes place remains a grey area (Evans, 2002; Henze, Driel & Verloop, 2009). Evans (2002) states that whilst everyone would not have the same interpretation of teacher development it is important for each researcher to clearly state what his/her interpretation is. She views teacher development as comprising of two elements; these being attitudinal development and functional development. When attitudinal development occurs there is a shift in the attitude because of intellectual engagement or through a change in motivation. Functional development refers to changes in the teachers' behaviour or practice. Evans (2002) adds that learning takes place when weaknesses are

recognised in practice and new ways of doing things are established. Teacher professional development and learning are viewed as processes which may be intuitive or deliberate, individual or social but it results in specific changes in professional knowledge, skills, attitudes, beliefs or actions of teachers (Fraser, Kennedy, Reid & Mckinney, 2007). Day (2000) proposes that professional development strategies should include investing in self-esteem, the whole teacher continuing professional development, personal development and learning partnerships. Professional development should be intentional and pursue clear achievable goals and purposes; there should also be consistent on-going monitoring and support and systemic involvement of the various stakeholders at school and the education sector (Guskey, 2000).

Teacher professional development should encompass more than the learning of knowledge and skills, it should include personal development so that teachers can build sound character, display maturity in themselves and others and transform their schools into morale communities (Hargreaves, 2003; Moletsane, 2004). Moletsane (2004) adds that this view is relevant to the South African context as the numerous post-1994 policies implemented has still to address the many social problems that plague the country and developing dedicated, strong teachers is one way of solving these issues. Samuel (2009a) asserts that teacher professional development should aim towards fostering a strong South African teacher identity cognisant with local and global trends. There should be a promotion towards developing an enduring and committed workforce who is really responsible for producing the next generation of thinkers, doers and shapers (Samuel, 2009a). Maistry (2008) correctly notes that South African education is experiencing many reforms which challenge teacher development immensely. In the last decade the outstanding feature with regard to teacher professional development is the move away from the in service education and training (INSET) model. INSET teacher development models in South Africa are largely ineffective in their efforts to facilitate professional development of teachers (Maistry, 2008; Moletsane, 2004). The many costly one-day workshops are futile as schools and classrooms remain unchanged and teachers are unwilling or unable to implement the changes the programmes target (Moletsane, 2004). This approach does not consider a major issue which is that teachers work is context specific and the challenges vary from school context to school context. Maistry (2008) advocates the teacher community of practice model as a way forward. Though teacher communities present interesting challenges, they have great potential as a vehicle for teacher professional development in South Africa.

For the purpose of this study teacher development was viewed as "teachers' learning, learning how to learn and transforming their knowledge into practice for the benefit of their students' growth" (Avalos, 2011, p.10). Aside from the acquisition of professional knowledge and skills, teacher development also included the personal development; the attitudinal and functional development of the participants within their work contexts. What must be noted is that teacher development occurs in a particular education policy environment or school culture and some of these environments are more appropriate and conducive to teacher learning than others (Avalos, 2011). The intent of this study was to shed light on how South African novice teachers' professional development occurred in diverse school contexts.

Novice teacher professional development theories

To date there has been no substantive information or predictable phases of how novice teachers' development unfolds at different contexts, therefore teacher educators and teacher education institutions have little guidance and understanding on this important area. Researchers worldwide have proposed many views and theories on teacher development based on their research thus a comprehensive study of these works (especially novice teacher development) will shed light on the contributions they offer to improve this research area. According to beginning teacher developmental theories, the concerns of novice teachers are quite different from the concerns of experienced teachers. Experienced teachers focus on long term professional tasks, whereas novice teachers' concerns are driven more by emotion and their immediate survival in the work context. Novice teachers are caught in a sensory overload with new co-workers, a new physical environment and new students and they struggle to make sense of all these factors that they face at the outset of their careers (Kim, & Roth, 2011).

Much research delves on novice teacher development occurring in stages. These stage theories propose that novice teacher development progresses from early concerns with the self to a gradual focus on the students and their learning and then moves on to understanding conditions of the school and schooling (Fuller, 1969; Kagan, 1992). Fuller (1969) states that novice teachers focus initially on their ability to control a classroom, the supervisors' views of them as teachers and eventually move on to concerns about their students' learning, designing curriculums and finding effective teaching strategies and assessment techniques. Kagan (1992) adds that the development of the novices is an ordered process, novice teachers' progress through distinct stages that can be defined. During the first stage (pre-service and

first year of teaching) the novice teacher's primary concern is the acquisition of knowledge of self, pupils and procedural routines. Once these issues are addressed they address their learning and their pupils' learning (Kagan, 1992). Studies on classroom practice confirm that eventually teachers develop a strong focus on student welfare and their learning and future teaching decisions are based on self-improvement efforts. However research (Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, Bransford, et al, 2005) also states that some teachers develop techniques that work for them and use them although they do not result in high levels for student progress or teacher concern when learning does not occur. Berliner (2001) critiques stage theories as they do not provide information about the characteristics of the learning experiences which could help teachers progress and acquire expert skills. Also the stage theories suggest that teacher development occurs in a linear fashion and in fixed stages thus suggesting that teacher development is invariant, sequential and hierarchical (Richardson & Placier, 2001).

Vonk (1989) identified two distinct phases in new teachers' development which are the threshold phase and growing into the profession phase. The threshold period is when new teachers are confronted with a full teaching workload and responsibilities and experience the 'transition shock'. During the growing into the profession phase novice teachers focus on being accepted by colleagues and pupils and focus on improving their competences. They enter a period of discovering themselves as teachers and try to cope with the demands of teaching. They are exposed to social forces in the form of the school culture. Fantilli and McDougall's (2009) study on novice teachers confirms Vonk's (1989) explanation. Findings of their study reveal that participants were initially overwhelmed because of assuming the complete responsibilities of a veteran teacher. It is only after the participants survived the first year did they settle in and concentrate on their professional development.

Constructivist theories form a major part in current theories of learning and teaching and are viewed more as theories of knowing not pedagogical theories (Hammerness, et al, 2005). These theories attempt to understand why trying to directly transmit new information often fails and offer other methods to bring about successful learning. These methods differ from how student teachers were taught and also how teacher educators learned (Borko & Mayfield, 1995). The constructivist theory views teachers as learners who actively construct knowledge by interpreting events on the basis of existing knowledge, beliefs and dispositions; this prior knowledge and beliefs about learning, teaching, students and subject matter influences how they learn to teach. These function as an interpretative lens through which teachers and novice

teachers make sense of their experiences and how they frame and resolve problems and construct new information (correctly or incorrectly) (Hammerness et al, 2005; Uhlenbeck, Verloop & Beijaard, 2002).

Cognition through a social lens, views learning to critically examine and reflect on teaching not as an individual but a social process. Socialization involves transferring values and norms of a certain group "through observation, imitation, and practice" (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 2004, p. 55). Socialization is a powerful and natural way for novice teachers to acquire work-related information from their colleagues and other stakeholders (Lortie, 1975, Schoonmaker, 2002). It involves coming to know how to participate in the discourses and the practices of a particular community. By collaborating with colleagues on teaching tasks, by discussing and reflecting on problems of teaching, teachers may be confronted with divergent beliefs (Uhlenbeck et al, 2002; Wenger, 1998). Novice teachers profit from such situations as they improve skills and the disposition to engage in conversations. Wenger (1998) describes the purpose of such communities as a means to increase and exchange knowledge and develop individual capabilities.

Recent learning to teach studies have focussed on theories of learning in communities of practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Maistry, 2006). This perspective has its roots in studies conducted in the United States when teachers were encouraged to collaborate and participate in researching their classrooms with university researchers. The focus of these practices is on the situated and contextualized nature of learning in communities (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Vygotsky, 1978). Learning within communities of practice research reveals similarities in learning of new teachers and experienced teachers. Within communities of practice, teachers (new and more experienced) pose problems, identify discrepancies between theories and practices, challenge common routines, draw on the work of others for generative frameworks and attempt to make visible what is taken for granted about teaching and learning (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999). This conception poses an image of the teacher as a member of a professional community and as a life-long learner focusing upon collegial life long career development; they engage in a common enterprise and build on a shared repertoire of communal resources (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Fraser et al, 2009). As teachers develop a vision for what teachers do, what good teaching is, and what they hope to accomplish as a teacher, they begin to forge an identity that guides them in their work. Fraser et al (2009) assert that there is a social dimension to teacher learning where opportunities for collaboration with colleagues are provided; information is interpreted and making meaning results. In this

way mediation of new knowledge is created within the community. A setback Fraser et al (2009, p.158) foresee is the resolving of tension between what it means to be a learner in a context and what it means to be a teacher "for teacher learning to be enacted as new developments." Lieberman and Mace (2008) propose that traditional teacher learning and development methods need to change to meet the demands of a constantly changing society. Teacher learning and development happens through practice, through meaning, through community and through identity (Wenger, 1998). They add that most valid and vital is the need to teach teachers how to learn. They highlight that teacher learning should be more social rather than individual and the importance of wisdom of practice in classrooms must be highlighted (Lieberman & Mace, 2008).

South Africa lacks substantive teacher development programmes to address teachers' needs and there is a leaning towards employing the teacher learning in communities of practice model, a relatively new phenomenon (Maistry, 2008). Maistry (2008) highlights some pertinent issues regarding the use of teacher learning communities in diverse South African contexts. The learning communities may constitute teachers from different teaching contexts and the possibility of these communities being dominated by teachers of a particular school context is highly likely. The focus of agendas at such forums may be pertinent to middle class schools and children at the expense of the challenges facing teachers working in socio-economically deprived schools. Also if middle class teachers formed middle class teacher learning communities and engaged in issues that were peculiar to their contexts, and if working class teachers did the same, this kind of situation is likely to perpetuate imbalances and inequities that presently exist in our society. Some teachers (for self-interests) who work in socio-economically and academically advantaged contexts may elect to form learning communities with like-minded individuals to 'maintain standards' and achieve high and quality pass rates as a way of entrenching their own status within their schools. These types of learning community formations are exclusionary as it would promote discrimination against certain groups and be in contravention of the principles of democracy. Despite these criticisms Maistry (2008) still considers teacher learning in communities of practice as being potential vehicles for teacher professional development in South Africa.

Situated learning theory stresses the importance of the context, it supports the fact that learning opportunities should be grounded in environments where problems arise. When learning is situated in a particular physical or social context, the context is foregrounded. The nature of a situation is seen as having a significant influence on this process (Lave & Wenger,

1991). Wenger (1998) stresses the need to adopt a perspective that foregrounds learning in the context of lived experiences of participation. His social theory stresses "learning as participation" where there is active participation by learners in social communities thus providing opportunities for them to develop identities in relation to the communities (Maistry, 2008). Over time collective sustained learning results in these practices of community because of pursuing common enterprises (Wenger, 1998). Professional development models in Africa propagate views of teachers as technicians which are rooted in images of teacher deficit, the focus being teacher learning (what is learned and how it is learned) not teacher change. There is no provision of assistance for teachers to change so that they can improve their practices (Christie, Harley & Penny, 2004). Maistry, (2008) notes that the advantage of Wenger's framework is that it allows for the simultaneous study of teacher development, policy environment, the contexts of teachers' work, as well as teachers' efforts to make meaning of the various dimensions of their teaching practice

Current teacher development literature also highlights differences with regard to the teacher knowledge of experts and novices and highlight differences in their thinking. Novices tend to focus on the superficial and general aspects of the classroom and give little attention to the intellectual work, while experts focus on the intellectual work of the students (Hammerness et al, 2005). Experts react to the demands of the situation and the tasks at hand; they also possess a broad repertoire of skills which they easily access and implement to achieve their goals (Kim, & Roth, 2011). Berliner (1994) proposes that teachers develop expertise through stages, and over time they eventually make conscious decisions about what they are going to do, reflect on what works best based on their classroom experiences. Teacher competence is accomplished during the first few years of teaching and just a small percentage of teachers become experts.

Teacher Education Training and Novice teachers' Development

A major goal of pre-service teacher preparation is to create teachers who are adaptive experts prepared for lifelong learning (Hammerness et al, 2005; Samuel, 2009a). The authors point out that the teacher education curriculum should include content and strategies which will prepare new entrants to learn from their own practice and from the insights of other teachers and researchers. Samuel (2009a) states that initial professional educational training (IPET) designers need to know the students who enter teacher education institutions and also understand what they are gaining access into. Present IPET programmes are designed with a

deficiency notion of student teachers; the teacher educators view their students as "tabula rasa, empty slates onto which the script of learning is to be written" (Samuel, 2009a, p748). These educators treat students as deficient, blank slates and veto the 12 years of hidden pedagogy that they have observed during their unique schooling experiences. Lortie (1975) refers to this as "the apprenticeship of observation".

Novice teachers' apprenticeship of observation impacts on the image of what is good teaching or what teaching, learning and assessment practices are best (Hammerness et al, 2005). The advantage is that these many experiences in the classroom have exposed these students to some good teachers and they draw on this for inspiration. A major pitfall is that many misconceptions about teaching remain as students do not understand the teacher's selection of goals, preparation or post-mortem analysis of their work (Lortie, 1975). The teachers' lessons are thus not viewed through a pedagogic framework. One such notion is that teaching is easy. Students are exposed to the superficial trappings of teaching not the underlying knowledge, skills, planning and decision making and the most easily observed aspects of teaching are imitated. During practice observations by supervisors novices give supervisors what they want, "strategic mimicry" but this is not likely to be maintained in the long term (Samuel, 2009a).

The difficulty of understanding actions through observation alone is reflected in this parable cited in Hammerness et al (2005, p.367).

> Amy had learned to cook delicious ham dinners by watching her grandmother. For the grandmother's 85th birthday, Amy cooked a ham "just like her grandmother used to make" and her grandmother stood proudly to watch.
>
> One of the secrets that Amy had observed was that her grandmother always cut off a rather large piece of the end of the ham before cooking it. Amy had explained to her children that this allowed the juices to simmer in a very special way. As the grandmother watched her granddaughter slice off the end of the ham, she asked, "Why did you cut off the end of the ham, Amy?" Amy replied, "Because you always did it, grandmother, and your hams were always the best." The grandmother smiled and explained, "I did it to fit the ham in my oven-it was much smaller than yours!" (author unknown)

Teacher development programmes should also consider understanding a student teachers' foreground. Foreground in this context refers to how student teachers see their potential as

future teachers, they have a little or no foresight of their future world as teachers and the support that formal education/schooling offers (Skovsmose, 2008). Teacher education institutions need to factor the above mentioned aspects into the curriculums. Presently they design curriculums where student teachers are made to believe that teaching and learning occur in ideal settings with ideal learners; these institutions aim to protect the student teachers within a "safe Garden of Eden worldview" which is not tainted by the sins of real world (Samuel, 2009a, p.750).

Professional Teacher Knowledge

Novice teachers need to be exposed to a wide range of knowledge in order to affect any deep understanding of professional growth. Teachers require professional and specialised knowledge to teach. Eraut (2000) identifies two domains regarding professional knowledge, these being the areas of knowledge and the content of knowledge. The areas of knowledge refer to the kinds of reservoir of resources that the teacher needs to possess with respect to subject matter. Knowledge of the discipline is considered insufficient as it is the knowing of how to transfer the subject matter to others in the teacher learning context that is important. Shulman (2004) calls this pedagogical content knowledge which is being able to adapt learning content, teaching strategies and contextual resources to enhance quality learning. This knowledge is also referred to as situated knowledge which differs across different social settings, what is accepted in one social setting might be disregarded in another setting (Samuel, 2009a). Eraut (1994) states that areas of knowledge can react with the specific knowledge that teachers develop as a result of working in unique environments, this knowledge ranges from working in small classrooms to the managing of different learners. Eraut (2000) notes that teachers (novice) also require public propositional knowledge (being able to engage in official public teacher professional development activities) which is the preferred knowledge of curriculum designers. This knowledge can be tested as it is based on documented theoretical suggestions.

Samuel (2009a) states that teachers also require craft knowledge (knowledge obtained from the habits of rituals and routines that characterises school spaces). This knowledge is vast but often undeclared and very rarely formally tested (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The school context is where craft knowledge is gleaned. It is a professional learning community where teachers develop sociologically and psychologically, collaborate and learn from one another, thereby improving their knowledge and skills (Flores, 2004; McLaughlin, 1993). Craft knowledge is

important because it offers a repertoire of what works in the context. It is upheld by custodians and depicts the culture of a school; it also embeds the hierarchies of power which characterises a school space (Maistry, 2006). This informal learning is most influential on novice teachers' conception of quality practice and begins when new teachers enter the school for the first time and seek out work-related information that can help them perform their jobs. Teachers (new and experienced) often use informal pathways to acquire work-related information as this is relevant to their jobs (Kim & Roth, 2011). Powell (1998) observes that an enormous amount of the teacher's information and knowledge exists in their minds; experienced teachers take for granted the work-related information that they have acquired and learned over time and remain uncertain of its origin. This practical knowledge, is not easily transferable and is different from the "official" knowledge that can be located in a textbook or a "how to" manual. Teacher education pre-service programs cannot provide all the work-related information that novice teachers require to teach since much of this information is context specific, it occurs within the school setting (Hammerness et al, 2005; Kim & Roth, 2011).

Research within learning communities emphasises the importance of a particular kind of knowledge development, knowledge that is developed within both teaching contexts and professional contexts. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) outline the following approaches to knowledge development, the knowledge for practice, refers to the kind of knowledge teachers rely on when developing their practice like knowledge of subject matter content, content pedagogy and theories of learning and development. This is the type of knowledge highlighted in teacher education programmes and is viewed as knowledge that is transferred from scholars to teachers or from experts to novices. Knowledge in practice refers to knowledge in action, it emphasises that much of the knowledge of accomplished teachers is practical, highly situated and acquired through reflection upon experience. When these aspects are studied by other teachers it becomes knowledge for practice, learning from the actions of expert teachers when they make choices and decisions. Knowledge of practice highlights the importance of on-going inquiry by teachers in their own classrooms, into other systems and practical sources of knowledge for addressing critical problems of practice. Communities of practice play a central role in developing and transmitting knowledge from practice to research and back again. The purposes of a community of practice are for expanding and exchanging knowledge and developing individual capabilities (Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002).

Research studies also note that metacognitive elements required to become experts can be achieved through well-structured teacher education programmes. Joyce and Showers (2002) found that the developmental process of learning to enact new skills can be maximised by skilled coaching in peer support groups as they allow teachers to explore, develop, strengthen and refine skills together. Both the collegial nature and feedback of the process appears to stimulate reflection and greater skill development. Further studies on teacher education and teacher development suggest that with right circumstances and particular kinds of learning experience new teachers can develop a more expert practice even as beginning teachers (Hammerness et al, 2005). However this does not suggest that novice teachers can immediately develop the expertise that master teachers develop over years of experience but research findings do indicate that novices can demonstrate more accomplished practices when they experience stronger and more purposeful preparation (Hammerness et al, 2005)

Need to Produce Novice Teachers who are Adaptive Experts and Life Long Learners

Teachers require knowledge of their discipline to teach effectively, however having a great deal of knowledge about one's subject matter can result in the information becoming so intuitive that an expert loses sight of what it is like to be a novice (Bransford, Derry, Berliner, Hammerness & Beckett, 2005). 'Expert blind spot' describes the disadvantage of content expertise as expert knowledge of subject matter changes from explicit to tacit and may be overlooked during instruction. Analysis of expertise focuses on the difference between "routine experts" and "adaptive experts". While both continue to learn throughout their lifetimes, routine experts develop a core set of competences that they apply with greater and greater efficiency (Bransford et al, 2005). Adaptive experts on the other hand are more likely to change their core competencies and constantly expand their expertise. Hammerness et al (2005), view the development of adaptive expertise as an appropriate gold standard for becoming a professional. Expertise comprises of two different dimensions which are innovation and efficiency. The authors add that adaptive experts are able to balance these two aspects and can efficiently use a specific classroom technique on the one hand while at the same time develop new sets of strategies to improve initial techniques that failed. These expert teachers are able to perform many tasks mechanically, they do not think about them. Lifelong learning along the innovation dimension requires foresight to re-evaluate existing routines, to change key ideas, practices and even values to improve ones' practice. Adaptive experts take cognisance of the larger social contexts within which they operate; they are innovative within constraints (Hammerness et al, 2005).

Novice teachers need to view themselves as potential innovators and change agents who operate within systems larger than their classrooms; issues of organisation and leadership are important for them to explore (Fullan, 1993; Hargreaves, 1995). Lifelong learning ensures that novices understand that being professional involves more than knowing all the answers; it also requires skills and the will to work with others when evaluating their performances and searching for new answers when needed at both classroom and community levels. When teachers have learned to develop their teaching in collaborate contexts then receiving feedback on their teaching is viewed in a positive light and is less daunting and intimidating (Hammerness et al, 2005). Schön (1983) states that effective teaching occurs in the context of practice, how strategies work with varying groups of students emerges in the course of teaching and cannot be fully known ahead of time. Research also reveals that the teachers' initial classroom experiences (good or poor) especially in the first two years are a predictor of teacher effectiveness (Rowan, Correnti, & Miller, 2002). During pre-service training and initial years novice teachers need to be supported in interpreting their experiences and expanding their repertoire so that they can move towards being adaptive experts rather than infer wrong lessons from their teaching. When well supervised student teaching experiences precedes or is conducted jointly with course work, students are able to connect theoretical learning and practice and are empowered to enact what is learnt in practice (Darling-Hammond & Macdonald, 2000; Koppich, 2000).

Helping novice teachers to learn more effectively requires not only the ability to think like a teacher but also to apply what they know which Kennedy (1999) refers to as the problem of enactment. Enactment translates into being able to apply what is known by the novice teacher into action (Simon, 1980). Novice teachers have little understanding of the complexity of teaching as teachers work with many students at once and learn to juggle multiple academic and social goals, some aspects are routine whilst others are dependent on students' responses and particular objectives sought at a given time. Turning novice teachers' attention to such issues and assisting them to think systematically is important. Novice teachers also need to understand the metacognitive principle which helps them to become adaptive learners capable of managing the complexity of teaching. Metacognition is the ability to be able to think about one's own thinking (Hammerness et al, 2005). Flavell (1979) describes two aspects of metacognition: metacognitive knowledge (understanding one's own thinking and developing strategies for planning, analysing and gaining more knowledge). The second aspect is metacognitive regulation (being able to define goals and monitor one's progress in achieving

21

them). People with high levels of metacognitive awareness train their minds to continually self-assess their performances and they modify their actions as needed. People with low levels of metacognitive abilities rely on external feedback to advise them on what to do and how to change. Helping new teachers to learn about the multidimensionality and simultaneity of teaching is important but no easy task. Beginning teachers tend to focus on their teaching rather than their students learning; they need to make a shift from their knowing or not knowing about how their students are performing to what they can do about it (Hammerness et al, 2005).

School cultures

It is important to note that schools have cultures that can be healthy or unhealthy for development, and a teacher's work in the classroom may be more effective if it represents shared values and norms throughout an entire school (Bransford, Hammond & LePage, 2005). Schools consist of multiple stakeholder relationships; the principal (and other administrators), parents, community representatives, students, and teachers themselves. The school culture is an indication of the school's ethos and environment, encompassing the compounded effect of all the stakeholders in the school who create a powerful context that shapes the behaviours, attitudes and achievement of all the members of the school community, this can facilitate or restrict teacher workplace learning (Avalos, 2011). Kim and Roth (2011) state that though teachers are the main decision makers within their classrooms principals are the ones who affect the whole school atmosphere. They add that parents and students also strongly affect the climate and culture of the school and students are the core concern of teachers' decisions. Judging situational conditions in schools based on students' needs and getting children to learn is how novice teachers assess their successes. Novice teachers need to develop coping strategies to deal with all these stakeholder relationships, especially the parent-child-teacher triangle.

School settings may be characterised as work settings of isolation and individualism (Hargreaves, 1992; Flores, 2004). In some cases, an isolated physical environment and the school climate can create barriers to information sharing both physically and emotionally among teachers. Opportunities to team teach, provides a means to see different styles and learn from it but some colleagues are uncomfortable with sharing and exposing their spaces, so they close the doors. Novice teachers point out that they are isolated not only physically but also psychologically (Kim & Roth, 2011). Johnson's (2004) study discusses three

different forms of professional culture: veteran-orientated cultures, novice-orientated cultures and integrated cultures. The veteran-orientated culture refers to experienced teachers who value their independence and privacy and pay little attention to the needs or talents of new teachers at their schools. The newness of the beginning teachers is ignored and these novices assume the full teaching load and other responsibilities right from the start. Within this culture mentoring is limited, observation tends to be more evaluative rather than supportive and new teachers may suffer from professional isolation. In a novice orientated culture there is a high proportion of young teachers and experience is absent. As a result mentoring, observation and feedback is limited, advice based on practical experience is difficult to come by. In integrated professional cultures the environment characterised by inclusion and support with strong structures that facilitate interaction and reinforce interdependence. There is formal one to one mentoring, help with classroom instruction and opportunities to observe experienced teachers and be observed (Johnson, 2004; Kim & Roth, 2011).

Within schools there are also a "Core Group" culture (Kardos, Johnson, Peske, Kauffman, & Liu, 2001). Kim and Roth (2011) state that "seniority cultures" and "age cultures" exist at most schools. Their findings reveal that because many teachers remain at the same school for a long time, they become an important group and take on a status of seniority. Novice teachers tend to fall prey to this culture and believe that senior teachers dominate the atmosphere of a school. The age culture in schools has a different meaning from seniority culture. Their findings also reveal that the age culture exists between teachers and parents, or among teachers themselves and there is a tendency to get along with stakeholders within similar age groups. This is important when they wish to share information regarding school issues or build personal relationships that are relevant to their jobs. The participants in their study expressed that a first year teacher's opinions and views does not receive as much respect as that of a senior teacher. Kim and Roth (2011) add that developing an understanding of the school setting aids novice teachers to obtain work-related information and to learn from it and the school culture can facilitate or obstruct information sharing among teachers. Flores (2004) notes that school environments are paradoxical and no two of them are exactly alike. Therefore, the approaches for accessing work related information and learning from it will probably vary from one school to the next.

Novice teachers need to realize that teaching is multipronged and teacher development programmes need to factor in strategies that can assist beginner teachers to address the many social challenges that unfolds in the school context (Moletsane, 2004). Novice teachers must

take cognisance of the impact the community the school serves has; the community influences the pupils' backgrounds, what resources are available, how diverse they are including their expectations and values. To be effective, new teachers need to learn how to manage these factors and influence them on behalf of their students (Hammerness et al, 2005).

Challenges novice teachers experience with regard to their development

Beginning to teach is recognised as a particular and complex stage of teacher learning. Research indicates that the trend in education to the socialization of new teachers remains a sink or swim mentality, novice teachers are left unassisted and have to fend for themselves (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009). Pre-service training cannot fully prepare newly qualified teachers for the challenges they encounter in their first year of teaching and this traumatic, trying and emotional journey is experienced by novice teachers in many countries.

Work overload is a frequently mentioned challenge novice teachers encounter. Novice teachers experience burnout, they are physically, mentally and emotionally fatigued from the demands of their work (Goddard, O'Brien & Goddard, 2006). These novice teachers become distressed and drained as a result of operating a full timetable from the start and learning how their schools function (Johnson, Kardos, Kauffman et al, 2004). Coping with a full workload is exacerbated by a lack of resources and attempting to teach from another teacher's programme. Day, Stobart, Sammons, et al (2006, p.50) advocate that new teachers develop resilience, 'the ability of an individual to withstand or recover quickly from difficult conditions related to self-efficacy'.

Research further reveals that when school pedagogy is incongruent with that learnt at university, new teachers become grudgingly compliant or resistant and are very demotivated (Smagorinsky, Cook & Johnson, 2003). The argument is that new teachers actually learn to teach when they enter their classroom in their first year. The tension between school realities and first time teacher ideals also lead to frustration. Flores (2004) mentions that the shock novice teachers experience with the reality of teaching challenges their personal beliefs and idealistic expectations so they attempt to unlearn the unreal theories acquired at university with pragmatic survival techniques, even if they go against their instincts. The study also reveals that pre-service training would have prepared participants more if there was less theory and more on practical assignments that reflect their new reality (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009; Flores, 2004). Researchers suggest that more opportunities to voice and reflect on personal values and beliefs should occur in the pre-service training stage and individual

teacher identity should be developed and strengthened so that this transitional phase is made easier (Flores, 2004; Smagorinsky et al, 2003). Most researchers' findings call for novices to develop strategies to work within school constraints without abandoning their ideals; novices need to take cognisance of the school context in their subject presentation (Flores, 2004; Smagorinsky et al, 2003).

A study of teachers in Israel (Friedman, 2000) identified a range of sources of stress that contributed to teachers' inefficiency; these range from criticism by colleagues, isolation, work overload, lack of recognition or reward and inappropriate training. Flores (2004) found that Portuguese newly qualified teachers who studied away from home welcomed being on their own but found this new status daunting. Findings reveal that novices are motivated by positive relations with pupils but demotivated by stress, loneliness and fatigue. They arrived at their new schools intellectually and emotionally unprepared to deal with the increased workload and distance from home. These first year teachers are uncertain and isolated in a new environment and most often lacked support and guidance from their colleagues. Many became unsure of their ability to cope and juggle the many roles they were expected to fulfil (Flores, 2004).

Novice teachers also experience challenges with regard to poor school leadership and management. Fantilli & McDougall's (2009) study reveal that there is a need for leadership training for school principals, so that they can promote a culture of collaboration. Collaboration and networking seems to be a key element in teacher learning but this is dependent on the schools organisational structures and a supportive leadership. The way the background and contextual factors interact with teachers' learning needs, depends on the traditions, culture mores, policy environment and school conditions. Barton's (2004) findings reveal that novice teachers have low status in their new schools and this encourages senior managers to impose short term deadlines on them and give them unreasonable time tables. As they are new teachers, they are conscious of their vulnerability and refrain from speaking to their supervisors. Fantilli & McDougall's (2009) study also reveals that at schools where the leadership is weak, the school culture and ethos was detrimental to the participants' growth. Participants were not accepted into the profession and resources were not shared by colleagues, they worked in isolation. In their second year two participants taught at new schools. Here there was strong leadership and the overall school culture was positive which aided their development. Participants also cited that working in isolation contributed to a lack of learning; one participant noted that in her second year she learned more because of team

teaching. The school advocated a collaborative school culture; teachers shared ideas, resources and planning strategies. Arends and Phurutse's (2009) study noted that in South Africa the school management do not observe novice teachers' lessons, instead they evaluate their record books. This is more prevalent in the rural schools and principals cite a lack of time because of their large teaching loads. The possibility of there being incongruence between what is recorded in the files and what is actually taught exists. Thus novice teachers (especially rural schools) lack substantive guidance and work in isolation.

Novice teachers show keen interest in persevering when they are exposed to situations where they feel empowered, supported and had positive experiences with pupils (Johnson, 2004). Day et al's (2006) study reveals that positive relationships with pupils and colleagues are perceived by teachers as their effectiveness and teachers with positive, stable identities had supportive colleagues. Novice teachers who have little influence and a limited range of development activities in their school contexts narrow the range of instructional strategies they employ and do not engage in experimentation in their teaching (Hardy, 1999; Smethem & Adey, 2005).

Capel (1998) study reveals that only 27% of the cohort had sound classroom management skills. Other problem areas were behaviour issues, discipline and difficult classes. Oberski, Ford, Higgins & Fisher's (1999) study revealed that discipline featured as a strong problem, followed by class assessments and differentiation and workload. Arends and Phurutse's (2009) study reveals that novice teachers experience major difficulties in controlling large classes and managing ill-disciplined pupils. The participants link these discipline issues to the scrapping of corporal punishment in South Africa and indicate that they would like to obtain more knowledge and skills in classroom management and discipline.

Support structures for novice teacher development

The retention of novice teachers at the outset of their career is influenced by the level and quality of support they receive. Induction refers to professional education and growth development programmes that are specific to beginner teachers (Conway, Krueger, Robinson et al, 2002; Olebe, 2005). Mentoring refers to a mutually beneficial relationship between an older, more experienced and powerful person with someone who is younger and less experience in a particular field or discipline (Jeruchin & Shapiro, 1992). Research indicates that well-structured mentoring and induction programmes promote higher retention rates and concrete professional development; novices tend to exhibit positive attitudes, greater

confidence, self-esteem and there are reduced feelings of isolation (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). Fantilli & McDougall's (2009) study reveals that proper mentorship training and qualification is vital for novice teachers' development. The participants experienced problems with preselected mentors as they were not qualified to offer the desired guidance; it is important for new teachers to select mentors and be given release time (Rhodes, Nevill, & Allan, 2005). Most of their participants preferred older more experienced teachers.

In England, Scotland and Wales in the United Kingdom, a statutory induction year for newly qualified teachers was introduced and schools were required to ensure adequate levels of support for new teachers. In 2002 Scotland introduced mandatory statutory procedures through which new teachers would develop through the course of the first year. New teachers were regarded as probationers and were required to follow seven tenths of the timetable in schools they were placed at (Dube, 2008). 'Induction supporters' were appointed to work and assess the probationers. Martin and Rippon's (2003) study explored the experiences of a group these probationers. The participants viewed their temporary appointment and public status as probationers as being barriers to their full participation in the placement school and were demoralised and demotivated. They stated that as new teachers were not given an equal footing as their colleagues. Research further indicates that many schools present a culture that is individualistic rather than collegiate, promotes conformism and prevents probationers from developing their own teacher identities (Martin & Rippon, 2003; Totterdell, Heilbronn, Bubb et al, 2002). A gradual increase in responsibilities should be introduced as the placement progresses allowing the new teacher a chance to develop competencies to fulfil the tasks.

Whisnant, Elliott and Pynchon (2005), describes a programme that sought to cultivate both mentor and mentee and novice and novice communities. New teachers from various settings were brought together at a neutral setting. These teachers found commonality with regard to their concerns and they felt less isolated and better understood. Whisnant et al (2005), add that a needs assessment was conducted at the end of each session by veteran teachers and this enabled the novice teachers to voice their needs which were incorporated into the next programme. The needs and concerns raised were relayed back to the university with implications for the pre-service curriculum. New teachers valued the opportunity to recognise the commonality of their concerns, they were happy to share their 'war stories' and felt that this was a way to combat the isolation of the first year (Barton, 2004; Oberski et al, 1999). These meetings were valued by novice teachers for the informal support they received from colleagues, the interest and the professional advice that was obtained (Oberski et al, 1999).

When statutory programmes are promoted the role of the induction tutor or mentor teacher becomes questionable. These tutors now have added responsibilities; they have to support, monitor, facilitate and evaluate the new teachers; they decide whether the new teachers meet the Induction Standards. They have a role to play in supporting and socialising new teachers to the culture of the host school, as well as their professional development (Whisnant et al, 2005). Issues of induction tutors remaining fair and objective about new teachers' performances during the induction period arises. Barrington (2000) points out that the induction tutor needs to take on the role of 'critical friend', they need to be supportive as well as challenging but to strike such a balance is difficult. Marable and Raimondi's (2007) study reveals the importance of developing relationships of confidentiality and mentors not taking on a supervisory role. Such situations pose the danger of mentors building trust with new teachers to such an extent that they are unable to provide constructive criticism when required and often find it difficult to confront unacceptable practices (Yusko & Feiman-Nemser, 2008). Smethem and Adey (2005) call for a collaborate culture to be promoted as new teachers are vulnerable; they are positioned between the conflicting issues of assessment, monitoring and support. Martin and Rippon's (2003) study reveals that there will be decreased problems if both the probationers and tutors are skilled in handling feedback. Contexts should be developed so that criticism is viewed positively and as a means for professional growth. Research further reveals that induction supporters need to be trained in providing feedback, they require support in terms of preparation, resources and professional time and staff development opportunities should be interactive (Heilbronn et al, 2002; Martin & Rippon, 2003 ; Rhodes et al, 2005). Problems could arise if induction tutors find their duties too onerous and may meet their obligations with less mandatory input. There is also the possibility that some mentors may promote out-dated models of mentoring. Martin and Rippon (2003) highlight the importance of providing guidance on how feedback to new teachers should be given.

Harrison's (2002) study reveals that new teachers who had positive induction experiences work in schools which value professional development and provided programmes of regular observation and feedback. Research further reveals that new teachers welcomed having their teaching observed and receiving feedback, value meetings with induction tutors and the observation of other teachers' lessons, they also value being set individual tasks that arise from the observation lessons and regular mentoring sessions (Hardy, 1999; Heilbronn, Jones, Bubb et al, 2002, Totterdell et al, 2002). Novice teachers grow in confidence when they

observe other teachers experiencing the same challenges that they encounter in class (Smethem & Adey, 2005). Trotterdel el al (2002), assert that their findings reveal that head teachers and induction tutors found that the induction programmes were beneficial. It brought about easier transition of novice teachers into teaching and provided a firm foundation for professional development. Research also highlights that new teachers are dissatisfied with mentors being management members as they experience inhibition and reluctance to speak about their difficulties, there are also inconsistencies in the support they receive and most often these mentors are unavailable (Oberski et al, 1999).

Summary of Chapter

The literature review provides current information and important research study findings on which my study is grounded. Knowledge regarding novice teachers and their professional development, the diversity of schooling contexts, novice teachers' support structures and challenges, the implications of their teacher training on their professional development and theories on how they learn were discussed. What the review highlights is a dire need for appropriate professional development models/programmes for South African teachers, especially novice teachers. South Africa has no mandatory policies in place to ensure that beginner teachers receive guidance and support on entering the profession. Formal novice teacher development programmes rests solely at the feet of the school management and this differs according to the type of school one is at. As this study foregrounded novice teachers' development at diverse school contexts the data revealed how these participants' professional development unfolded.

Theoretical and conceptual framework:

This study sought to explain novice teachers' experiences and understand how their professional development unfolded in their school context. It also attempted to understand how these teachers' exposure to knowledge/experiences of contextual diversity during their training (exposed to a new UKZN teaching practice approach) contributed to their development in their present school contexts. In attempting to explain the central phenomenon I decided to work within a qualitative paradigm and use an interpretive framework, as this approach allowed for the phenomenon (novice teachers' development in diverse school contexts) to be studied in natural settings and it foregrounded the social and cultural context (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). The interpretative lens allows for human interactions to

be understood within the context of social practice and makes provision for the construction of knowledge to be explained through peoples' intentions, beliefs, values and reasons, meaning making and self-understanding (Henning, 2004). This approach resonated well with my study as I sought to interpret teacher development of my participants (novice teachers) within their work context and their professional and social interactions with all stakeholders on site.

The study is underpinned by the teacher development framework designed by Amin and Ramrathan (2009) for first year student teachers. The framework was a response to the Department of Education's (DoE) (2006) teacher education requirement that stipulated that 25% of the programme be used for teacher practice. UKZN's previous curriculum marginalised knowledge of the context which the curriculum designers now viewed as vital as schools were regarded as equal partners in the training and production of new teachers. This new approach foregrounds contextual diversity which is the reality of the post-apartheid South African schools. Amin & Ramrathan (2009) state that pre-service teachers have little exposure and experience of diverse school contexts but are expected to teach in them. Although democracy has been achieved for over a decade the material conditions of South African schools are still the same but higher education institution (HEI) training programmes are designed to train teachers who believe they will teach in first world conditions (Amin & Ramrathan, 2009).

The 1st year curriculum comprises of four intervention phases which are conceptualised as reframing memory, disrupting experience, destabilising learning and reconstructing uncertainty. This curriculum seeks to displace the master apprentice approach and first year students now require a new lens to view schools as sites were education is enacted (Amin & Ramrathan, 2009). This study attempted to understand novice teachers' development in the school context through the lens of two of the phases, the reframing memory phase and the destabilising learning phase. During the reframing memory phase students are exposed to different theoretical constructs of school contexts that influence teaching and learning. The rationale behind this is to displace these student teachers' memories of their schooling with a new frame so that they could teach effectively in various school settings (Amin & Ramrathan, 2009). In this study reframing memory was used to assess how the novice teachers responded to contextual diversity and inequalities in their schools. During the destabilising learning phase, students are exposed to teaching and technology skills so that they possess skills to create resources to teach in any school context. This phase attempts to destabilise notions that

teacher development is more effective in resource-rich contexts and not possible in resource deprived schools. Here the intent is to increase the teaching dimension to include context with content and pedagogic approach (Amin & Ramrathan, 2009). This phase helped to understand what resources were available at the work context and how the novice teachers used them or improvised to aid their development thus enhancing their repertoire of knowledge and skills to teach.

Samuel's (2009b) "force field model" of teacher development which is linked to the socio-cultural/practical dimension of teacher development was also used. Samuel states that the four forces of biography, curriculum, contextual and institutional intersect at various instances and contribute to the construction of a teacher's identity which influences his/her professional development. These forces push, pull and complicate learning to teach (Amin & Ramrathan, 2009). This study assessed how the biographical force (experiences as pupils in school, race, gender, family and cultural views about practices of the teacher/learner) of my participants, shaped their teaching competence and ability and how it impacted on the experiential/psycho-emotional dimension of learning to teach. Samuel (2009b, p.13) argues that teachers (novices) "teach as they were taught", these deeply held personal values predispose them to act as teachers in a particular way. The institutional force (in this study refers specifically to the teacher training programme) challenges, contradicts, or confirms biographical forces and brings a theoretical/philosophical dimension to teacher development. The contextual force, the space were teaching is enacted, tests the biographical and teacher education curriculum (Amin & Ramrathan, 2009). Samuel (2009b) adds that the contextual force shapes a teacher either consciously or unconsciously. The micro-environmental contextual forces, relevant to my study, refer to specific institutions of schools and classrooms in geographical settings. In the study the school context was assessed according to the geographic location (rural, urban or semi-urban) and whether they were advantaged and well-resourced or disadvantaged and under-resourced and its influence on the participants' professional development.

As the study also sought to explore novice teachers' professional development in work contexts, it drew on the situated learning theory. This theory has been explained in the literature review.

Chapter three focusses on the research methodology and design of the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed account of the research design and methodological orientation, research participants and sites, data collection instruments, data analysis and procedures for attaining access and acceptance.

Research Approach

Paradigmatic perspective

A research design should reflect the researcher's philosophical stance, strategies of inquiry, specific methods; it is really a "plan or proposal to conduct research" (Creswell, 2009, p5). As my study foregrounded novice teachers' professional development in varying South African school contexts, it called for an interpretation and deep understanding of how these processes unfolded at these schools. Hence the qualitative approach with an interpretive gaze proved to be the most suitable way to approach the study.

The interpretive perspective foregrounds the meanings that individuals or communities assign to their experiences and allows for close interaction with the participants (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Within this framework, reality is viewed as the creation of words and names in the mind and within the levels of the individual's consciousness (nominalist). Reality is seen as multi-layered and complex (Cohen et al, 2007; Maree & Westhuizen, 2007). Knowledge is viewed as subjective and transactional and created during the interaction between the investigator and participants (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The idiographic approach centres on the individual and understanding his/her behaviour with little emphasis being placed on creating general laws (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Maree & Westhuizen, 2007). These aspects were applicable to the study as it was centred on understanding the professional development of novice teachers and a small sample was used.

As my study focused on how novice teachers' professional development unfolded in varying South African school contexts, adopting a qualitative approach provided opportunities for me to interact closely with my participants. I was able to gain deep insight and clear perspectives of the participants' multiple views of truths and realities regarding their development at their

schools (workplaces). I also had the freedom in that I did not have to have a prior conceptualizations of the phenomenon (novice teachers' development).

Research methodology

The study used the case study methodology. The underlying philosophical assumptions of a researcher determines whether the case study will be positivist, interpretive or critical (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). As this study strove to understand and explain the phenomenon (novice teacher development in varying contexts) the approach was through an interpretive lens. I attempted to obtain a comprehensive understanding of how the participants related and interacted with each other in specific situations and how they made meaning of their professional development in their particular school context (Nieuwenhuis, 2007).

Researchers provide many definitions or explanations of what they think case studies should entail. A case study could be a single instance, designed to reflect a more general principle (Cohen et al, 2007). The instance may be of a bounded system, a child, a clique, a class, a school, community (Cohen et al, 2007). Nieuwenhuis (2007) adds that a case study could have multiple meanings, could be used to describe a unit of analysis or to describe a research method. Whilst it is a bounded system that does not necessarily mean that one site is used. These aspects are most relevant to my study as it is conducted with three participants teaching at different schools.

Murray and Beglar (2009) view case studies as the intensive, in-depth study of a specific individual or specific context or situation. They add that the real strength of case study methodology is its potential to illuminate a 'case' in great depth and detail and to place that case in a real context. Case studies establish cause and effect, the strength is that they observe effects in real contexts, recognising that the context is a powerful determinant of both causes and effects. Contexts are unique and dynamic; hence case studies investigate and report the complex dynamic and unfolding interactions of events, human relationships and other factors in a unique instance (Cohen et al, 2007; Maree & Westhuizen, 2007). The above mentioned features were most relevant as an assumption that I brought to the study was that novice teacher development may vary because of the different contexts they work in.

Using the case study methodology enabled me to:

- obtain greater insight, understanding and ways to obtain knowledge about the phenomenon (novice teacher development) under investigation and I was able to interpret the phenomenon through the world of the participants (Stake, 1998; Picciano, 2004).

- interpret detailed description of events, situations or conditions occurring in the present, I was provided with a unique way to study real people in real situations. Ideas and views were clear as they were not be based on abstract theories or principals (Cohen et al, 2007).

- interpret what it was like to be in a particular situation; to catch the close-up reality and thick description of participants lived experiences of thoughts and feelings for a situation (Cohen et al, 2007)

- allowed for subjectivity and recognised the complexity and embeddedness of social truths. It allowed for subjective and objective data to be combined (Cohen et al, 2007). The participants' discrepancies and conflicts with regard to different view-points of their teacher development were valued.

- conduct a small scale study in natural environment (school) and catch unique features often lost in large investigations.

- to embrace and build in unanticipated events and variables as it is a flexible design. I was able to use multiple sources and techniques to generate data (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). I was able to determine in advance what evidence to gather and what analysis techniques to use with the data so the research questions were answered. Initially I did not consider using narrative inquiry as a means to analyse data but this was built in when I realised the advantages restructuring the interviews of my participants into stories had. Using narratives allowed for the data to follow chronological order and made interpretation and understanding of the data more fluid and easier.

The advantages of using case studies are many but the following were most relevant to the study. Case studies are strong on reality and attention holding. They are in harmony with the reader's own experience; the results are easily understood by a wide range of audience, from the non-academic to the highly qualified academics as they are written in everyday non-professional language. A major disadvantage of case studies is that the results cannot be generalised except where other researchers see their application (Cohen et al, 2007; Nieuwenhuis, 2007). However the purpose for using the case study methodology in this study was not to make generalisations but to gain greater insight and understanding of the dynamics

of a specific phenomenon in a particular situation. Cohen et al (2007) state that case studies are not easily open to cross checking therefore the opportunities for a researcher to be selective, biased and subjective are great. I addressed this issue by being reflexive. Highly reflexive researchers are well aware of the ways in which selectivity, perceptions, background and paradigms can shape research. They are aware that they are a research instrument (Cohen et al, 2007).

Choice of Research Sites

Three different research sites (schools) were selected. These schools were within the Ethekwini region and were chosen as these were the sites that the first year novice teachers (trained at the same university) taught at. My study sought to establish how these first year teachers' professional development occurred in different school contexts. These participants taught at schools that were in the urban, semi-urban and rural areas. These schools were purposively selected based on the quintile ranking and location as determined by the DoE. The urban school (advantaged and well resourced) was a high school situated in a well-established previous White residential area, now classed as an ex-Model C school. The rural school (disadvantaged and under resourced) was a primary school situated in a previous Indian district on the south coast. It was built by the indentured Indians labourers who wished to educate their children. The third school was a primary school but had just included grade eight normally part of the high school. I considered this school a semi-urban site (advantaged & well- resourced) as it was in a residential area in a previously Whites only area and had well developed infrastructure. The names of all schools and all participants have been changed in this study to maintain confidentiality. Throughout my research, I maintained the anonymity of the schools and the research participants through the use of pseudonyms.

Research participants

As I needed to obtain the best possible data to answer my research questions I selected participants who would provide rich descriptive data. I chose the participants according to a list of specific criteria and because they were experiencing the central phenomenon (novice teacher development in varying school contexts). Hence the type of sampling the study used was purposeful sampling. This type of sampling allows for selection of participants according to pre-selected criteria relevant to the research question (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). The advantage of purposive sampling was that I could select the participants based on my purposes; the

participants were first year teachers teaching in different school contexts, they were of the same race and same gender. These participants experienced the phenomenon (novice teacher professional development) under investigation and had first- hand information relevant to the study.

Being part of a project proved to be beneficial as I did not have to find my participants, they were contacted by the project leader. Since part of the study aimed to evaluate the teacher practicum programme of 2007, the participants selected were three 1st year teachers who completed the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) degree at the same university. Participants that were of the same race and gender were selected. The rationale behind this choice was to rule out these demographic factors from the study and to foreground the influence of the school context. These three participants taught in three different school contexts. As a result I was provided an opportunity to assess how these varying contexts shape their (novice teachers) professional development.

Once the participants agreed to participate in the study, I initiated contact with them telephonically to set up meetings and discuss the purpose of the study. During the telephonic conversations future appointments for interviews were arranged. My final sample comprised of three female teachers who self-identified their racial heritage as Indian. Two of the participants taught at primary schools and the third was at a high school. Two of the posts held was permanent as these participants were recipients of the Funza Lushaka bursary scheme which refers to the service contract bursaries awarded by the Department of Education (DoE) to recipients teaching in public schools (Samuel, 2009a). Students are expected to serve the DoE for the same number of years that they receive the bursary for. These two participants received appointments from the DoE. The third participant held a school governing body post (temporary) and she was appointed and paid by the school governing body.

Data Generation

Research methods

Research methods refer to the form of data collection, analysis and interpretation that researchers propose for their research (Creswell, 2009). The qualitative approach allows for research methods, questions and procedures not considered prior to the study to be included during the study. It enables the researcher to collect words (text) and images (pictures) about the research question. Data is obtained from participants in the natural setting and the

36

researcher is the instrument of data collection (Maree & Westhuisen, 2007). Data may be collected through interviews (individual and group), observations (notes and pictures taken by the researcher), documents (private and public), audio-visual material (pictures or audio recordings) and artefacts. I chose to use semi-structured interviews to collect data (Creswell, 2009).

Interviews

The aim of data collection is to source rich, descriptive information to answer the research questions. Qualitative interviews seek to see the world through the eyes of the participants; they provide a means for researchers to understand how the participants construct knowledge and social reality. Both the interviewer and interviewee discuss their interpretations of the world and express how they regard situations from their point of views (Niewenhuis, 2007; Cohen et al). Cohen et al (2007) view interviews as a two-way conversation in which the interviewer asks the participants questions to collect data and to learn about the ideas, beliefs, views, opinions and behaviours of the participant. They add that the interview is a flexible tool for data collection, a direct verbal interaction between individuals and it enables multi-sensory channels to be used- verbal, non-verbal, spoken or heard.

I used semi-structured interviews as a means of generating data as it allows for new data to be generated through probing and clarification of answers (Cohen et al, 2007; Nieuwenhuis, 2007). The advantages of semi-structured interviews is that they are flexible, they allow the interviewer to probe so that s/he may go into depth if s/he chooses to, is able to clear up misunderstandings immediately, enables the researcher to test the limits of the participants knowledge, they encourage cooperation and help establish rapport (Cohen et al, 2007; Niewenhuis, 2007). The semi-structured interview allows the interviewer to make an authentic assessment of what the participants really believe and can result in unexpected or unanticipated answers which the interviewer may not have considered. In this study, the intention was to obtain the participants views on their professional development and how this unfolded in their school context. I was able to answer questions concerning both the purpose of the interview and clear any misunderstandings experienced by the participants as soon as they arose (Cohen et al, 2007). As a novice researcher having a format kept me focused on what was required and I was be able to define the line of inquiry. Semi-structured interviews do not span a long period and this aspect was to my advantage.

Face-to-face interviews were used to facilitate interaction and as a means of collecting the data. These interviews allowed the participants to speak freely about the phenomenon; I was able to gain insight from their perspectives. The individual interviews enable me to gain additional information that participants may not have been comfortable to reveal in a group interview. Issues that are unique to particular interviewees were able to come to the fore (Chang, 2006). During the interviews a set of predetermined open-ended questions were used and this guided me through the process. These questions were broad thus enabling the participants to share their many views and opinions about their experiences at their work places. It also guided the participants to share their experiences, views and opinions on specific issues. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed thus ensuring that all data was available for analysis.

I planned to use face-to-face interviews with all participants but everything does not always occur as one wants. Due to unforeseen circumstances the rural participant was unavailable to do a face to face interview; I had to conduct the interview via the telephone. Telephonic interviews are an important method of collecting data. Some researchers state that both the interviewer and interviewee are robbed of many channels of communication and cannot develop a positive relationship when using telephonic interviews (Cohen et al, 2007). I found my telephonic interview to be just as good as my face-to-face interviews. The participant was most responsive and I picked up many unspoken clues by paying attention to the tone and pauses. Had I insisted on a face-to-face interview I would not have had a participant from the rural context as not many Indian female first year teachers accept posts away from home.

Having established contact with the participants, I then set up interview appointments with them. My initial plan was to conduct the first interview with each of the participants, transcribe the data and then proceed to the second interview. Here again things did not go according to my wishes. Ethical clearance was obtained very late leaving me with little time to conduct two separate interviews. I opted to do both interviews together so that I could save time. I chose locations that were easily accessible to the participants. The focus of the first interview was on obtaining data regarding the biography and context of the schools the participants taught at. The focus of the second interview was to obtain data on the second research question, participants' professional development experiences.

I interviewed three teachers on different days. I must admit that securing an interview with participants proved to be the most difficult part of the interview process. The first participant

postponed the interview three times before I eventually conducted the interview. Each time there was some issue that cropped up and there was a stage at which I thought that she was not keen on being a participant. I considered trying to find somebody else. Eventually I managed to secure an interview but on arriving at chosen venue it was unavailable. The venue was a local library but on that day the library was closed for political reasons (cleaner's strike). Rather than set another appointment date I asked the participant if she was willing to conduct the interview in the car. She agreed and the interview was conducted and recorded. The voice recorder captured the conversation accurately.

Obtaining an interview with the second participant also proved to be difficult. Initially she agreed to provide written responses to the questions. On finding out that the questions were many she wanted to opt out of the interview as she thought that it would be time consuming. I was really disappointed as she was the only participant who fitted the criteria for the rural context. However the first participant who was her friend convinced her to do the interview. She agreed to a telephonic interview. Fortunately for me I was able to record the interview with the voice recorder that I had. It would have proved difficult trying to capture all the data, asking questions and writing down everything said.

Securing the interview with the last participant was easy as this was set up by the project leader. But again there were unforeseen problems. Due to a misunderstanding on my part I ended up at the wrong place for the interview. After much delay and getting lost I eventually got to the right venue and conducted the interview.

During the interviews I strove to establish good rapport with each participant and tried to gain their trust. It is important for researchers to gain trust as these participants will give you information that cannot be collected in any other way (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). I tried to make the participant comfortable and assured them that the information was confidential. After the interviews I thanked the participants for their valuable time and information. I proceeded to transcribe the data immediately and made notes of any information that needed clarification.

Pilot study

Before conducting the interview proper, the interview schedule was piloted on three 4th year student teachers who undertook their teaching practicum at the school where I am employed. This process allowed me to check my interview skills; like following the schedule, being flexible, asking questions, keeping track of the conversations, taking notes and listening and

maintaining the required face (Yates, 2004). It helped me to check whether the questions were easily understood and also enabled me to make adjustments where required. It provided insight into just how much of effort is required during the process, hence I decided to conduct an interview and transcribe immediately.

Data analysis and interpretation

Data Analysis

Data analysis is based on values and meanings of the participants understanding of the world. It produces an understanding of the problem and is based on multiple contextual factors (Creswell, 2009; Maree, 2007). The process involves scrutinising the data to identify key factors or themes and to establish how these themes are related, as well as to construct an explanation of how teachers experienced professional development. In this study I applied social constructivist principles to identify themes from the emerging data and how they relate to generate a substantive theory on how novice teachers develop in different workplace contexts.

The data analysis was done in two phases and I answered them according to the two research questions. Immediately after the interviews had been concluded the audio-tapes were transcribed. These transcriptions were done by me. Once the transcripts were ready it was restructured into narratives to obtain a clearer understanding of the information. Data analysis was then conducted using content analysis, the data was coded and attention was paid to words (text) so that themes could be established. I sought the assistance of my supervisor to help analyse the data. Themes were tabulated and inferences were made to address the research questions.

Trustworthiness and Validity

As this was a qualitative study trustworthiness and validity was ensured. The reader/audience need be convinced that the findings really occurred as the researcher as stated and should be considered (Denscombe, 2002; Maree & Westhuizen, 2007). I ensured internal validity by sending the transcriptions to the participants to verify and make changes if required. Peer checks were also done. Jansen (2007) states that having members check data ensures validity. As the researcher is regarded as an instrument of data collection, bias may creep into the study (Cohen et al, 2007). Therefore I ensured that my supervisors checked my interview schedule

and verified my transcripts. The interview schedule was given to my supervisor to scrutinise and piloted on colleagues.

Ethical considerations

Gaining Access

It is imperative that clearance is obtained from the ethics committee when humans or animals are used. The participants were identified by the project leader; they were students who had agreed to be part of the research project in the previous year. After obtaining ethical clearance from the gatekeepers (UKZN, DoE) I made contact with the three participants telephonically. I checked with them if they were willing to be on my study and briefly described what the study was about. Having obtained their verbal consent, I thereafter set up appointments with them and gave them a document that gave a detailed explanation of the nature and purpose of the study. The document assured the participant that all data would be confidential and used for research purposes only, pseudonyms would be used for them and their schools. Participants were reminded that their involvement was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any stage. Audio-tapes and written transcripts were stored and locked in a filing cabinet at the university. This would be kept for five years and thereafter destroyed. These facts made the participants comfortable and encouraged them to voice their opinions and feelings without any constraint, thereby allowing for rich, descriptive data to be obtained. Thereafter written consent was secured.

Limitations of the study

The study comprised of a small sample hence it served little predictive value and broad generalisations cannot be made. The fact that all participants were of one population group the findings are not reflective of all novice teachers in South Africa. However precautions were taken to ensure that the data is trustworthy and correct.

Conclusion

This chapter sought to explain the methods and procedures that were utilised in the generation of data so that the research questions could be answered. As I have outlined, this study is placed within an interpretive/social constructivist paradigm and as such interpretive research methods were employed in the process of data collection and data analysis.

Chapter four presents the analysis of data.

CHAPTER FOUR

PARTICIPANTS' BACKGROUNDS AND EMPLOYMENT CONTEXTS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides detailed analyses of the data gathered from the research participants (novice teachers). The study sought to comprehend and explain how novice teachers' professional development unfolded in their specific work contexts and how their pre-service training contributed to their professional development. In the first section data relevant to the backgrounds and work context of each participant is analysed. My intention for obtaining biographical data was to establish who the participants were and to identify their areas of specialisation. As I sought to understand how they developed at their school, knowledge of their backgrounds was vital to provide insight on the role of school context for professional development. In the next section I interpret data that reveal the nature of the participants' professional development experiences.

From the interviews with the three participants, I reconstructed the data into narratives that revealed the various educational contexts they were exposed to, and I paid careful attention to the learning and social interactions they experienced. The narratives exposed how schooling, university education, various teaching contexts and individuals contributed to their professional development. Each participant was given a pseudonym and names of schools were omitted to protect their identity. The pseudonyms of the participants are Bavana Chetty, Nivashnee Govender and Asimah Sheik.

The research questions driving this study are:

1. What are the professional development experiences of novice teachers?

2. How does the context influence the professional development experiences of novice teachers?

To answer these questions I conducted a detailed review of the data and I derived the following two major sections which will form the basis for analysis: (i) the participants' backgrounds and work contexts and (ii) novice teachers' professional development experiences in the work context. In this section data relevant to the backgrounds and the work context of the participants is analysed. This information has direct bearing in determining how

their professional development unfolds during their first year of teaching. The next section unveils data relevant to the professional development experiences of the participants at their specific work contexts.

Participants' backgrounds

The analysis of each participant's data provides information regarding their teaching qualifications and the school phases and learning areas they are currently teaching. The participants all completed their Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) degree at the same institution. The B.Ed degree can be completed in one of these phases: Early Childhood Development-including the Foundation Phase; Foundation and Intermediate Phase; Intermediate and Senior Phase; Senior Phases- Further Educational Training Phase (FET) and Further Education and Training Phase (FET).

Bavana Chetty

Bavana Chetty, a first year teacher, teaches away from home. She completed the B.Ed degree and qualified in the Senior FET phase. She specialised in the learning areas of English, Life Orientation (LO) and Technology. She was appointed to her present position by the DoE as she is a recipient of a bursary scheme which provides for employment after qualification. Being a recipient of the state bursary entitles her to a permanent position at the school. She expressed disappointment at being appointed to a primary school which was far away from home and required her to lodgings close to the school. She was also unhappy as she taught in a phase and learning areas she did not specialised in. The learning areas she teaches are Afrikaans, Life Orientation and Economical Management Science (EMS).

Nivashnee Govender

Nivashnee also completed a B. Ed degree and specialised in English, Life Orientation and Technology in the Senior FET phase. She also received permanent appointment as she is also a recipient a state bursary. She was excited with her appointment as she had taught at the school during her practicum. However on arriving at the former Model C, urban girls' high school, she was informed that there was no position available at the school. As her appointment was made by the DoE, she was retained. She is presently teaching English in the Senior FET phase and Life Orientation (LO) from grades 8 to 12. She teaches Life Orientation in the FET phase (grades 10 to 12), a phase she has not been trained for.

Asimah Shiek

Asimah Sheik also completed a teacher training degree (B.Ed) but specialised in the Foundation- Intermediate Phase. The learning areas she trained for were English, Life Orientation and Technology. At present she teaches at a primary school which is in an elite suburb in the city of Durban. Her position at the school is temporary and she is employed by the school governing body. To find employment at a school she left her curriculum vitae at various schools while she was in the final year of study. When a position became available at the present school she was called in for an interview and then offered the job. Asimah presently teaches English, EMS and LO to grade eight pupils. Grade eight has been introduced for the first time at this school. Asimah teaches in a phase she has not specialised in and one learning area (EMS) she has not specialised in.

The Participants' Work Contexts

This section provides data and findings about the context of school the participants teach at. It includes aspects of the physical structure of the school, school resources, school pupils and teacher populations, sporting opportunities and facilities.

Bavana- working in rural and under-resourced school

According to Bavana,

> *The school was built by the indentured Indians who tried to ensure that their children obtained an education; it is situated in a rural area where these Indians were employed to work on the sugar cane plantations. As these Indians progressed they moved away and the Blacks moved in. The school was and is still disadvantaged in that it lacks resources but is well maintained.*

Bavana mentions that the school was built by indentured Indian labourers. The indentured Indian labourers came to South Africa in 1860 to work as labourers on the sugar plantations in Natal (now KwaZulu-Natal). They built schools which were partially subsidised by the state and were known as state aided schools. During the apartheid era the Group Areas Act (1956) prohibited races from mixing at a social level and living together and the school only accepted teachers and pupils of Indian origin. Since the advent of democracy in 1994, all races have political rights to choose an institution to study and to be employed. As a result, the present school pupil population is predominantly African and its recognition as an "Indian" school

does not exist anymore. Bavana added that her school is in a rural area and is under-resourced.

> *.. It is also a no fees school in that the children do not pay school fees. The department of education funds the school. However to make renovations the staff and pupils undertake fund raising activities like a spring ball, class bazaars and school concerts.*

Bavana states her school is "a no fees school." In South Africa schools receive different amounts of funding from the DoE depending on the quintile ranking of the school. Bavana's school is fully funded by the DoE as it is regarded as a disadvantaged school. Pupils do not pay school fees and receive stationery and textbooks. However to make structural improvements, further funds are required and the school engages in various fund raising projects. In this context, like all teachers at the school, fund raising activities are an added burden to a teacher's workload.

> *The community is extremely poor. Most of the children live with their grandparents who are very old and they do not get involved in school matters. The school pupil population is predominantly black; there are about 90% blacks and 10% Indians. We ensure that these pupils eat at least one meal through the school feeding scheme. These pupils are good and they are really motivated to learn. I think they wish to get out of this poor economic background.*

Bavana's data revealed that the pupil population consisted of many poor African children who do not live with their parents; they live with grandparents and guardians. These guardians, who are old, focus on caring for their grandchildren; there is little involvement in school issues. She added that though not living with parents, these pupils are well-disciplined and value a good education and there are no major disciplinary issues. They are positive towards schoolwork. At disadvantaged schools funding is provided by the state to ensure that the pupils are well nourished and able to concentrate on their work. The preparation and distribution of meals becomes another duty added to the teachers' workload at this school.

> *Our school teacher population comprises of the principal, eleven Indian teachers and one African teacher. All our teachers are fully qualified and most of them are middle-aged. They hold diplomas from a training college.*

The majority of the school staff still was of Indian origin. Teachers at the school have many years of teaching experience rather than professional credentials, as most hold diplomas, which is often a two-year or three year qualification. The B.Ed. Bavana has is a four year qualification. By contrast, Bavana stated that most of the teachers received their training from a teacher training college. The teacher population revealed a "seniority culture" (Kim & Roth, 2011) and Bavana teaches in a context that is rich with teacher experience.

> *The school is not well resourced; there is just one photocopier and a CD machine. When these break there are major setbacks to our teaching. The school does provide textbooks and stationery to all pupils.*

At 'no fees' schools pupils are provided with all the stationery and textbooks that they need. Bavana reported that the school had basic resources and this hampered the work and development of the teachers. She explained that when the printing machines break down, teachers are unable to get their work (worksheets) printed and the quality of teaching is, consequently compromised.

> *The only sport that takes place here is cricket, it is really big here. We had an athletics day but that was just for that time; no other sport has taken place.*

Since the majority of pupils attending the school are African, one would have expected soccer (popular amongst Black South Africans) to be the dominant sport, not cricket. As the teacher population is predominantly Indian it could be the reason why cricket is pursued as this sport is favoured by Indians. Bavana also mentions that no other sport is played which indicates that the sport curriculum is not representative of the students' interests.

> *We have no telephone at the moment, the cables were stolen and Telkom had replaced cables a few months before at a cost of R800 000. These were also stolen and Telkom refuses to put in new ones.*

There was no telephone (at the time of the interview) at the school. The cables were stolen twice which was an indication that the community was plagued by social issues. The theft of telephone cables is a common phenomenon in most disadvantaged communities of South Africa. The consequence of not having basic communication was that the school was isolated; for example, important notices or policy changes from the department of education were not received on time.

To summarise, the analyses revealed that Bavana taught at a small, under-resourced school in a rural area which was fully funded by the DoE. The school staff comprises of a majority of middle-aged Indian teachers who had many years of experience teaching. They provided education to a predominantly African pupil population. The pupils are extremely poor but motivated to learn and improve their circumstances. The community did not get involved in school issues and social problems (thieving) are rife. The school is isolated and communication outside the school community is hampered. The only code of sport pupils engage in is cricket.

Nivashnee – Urban, Well-Resourced School

Nivashnee taught at a former model C girls' high school located in a well-established urban area.

> *The principal, two deputies and a number of heads of departments make up the management. All of the staff members are well qualified though some teach subjects they have not specialised in… I think being in an all girls' school is better for me because I would have experienced difficulties with the boys.*

Nivashnee considered herself fortunate as she teaches girls only. Her school has a huge staff and management component which provided her with many opportunities to develop professionally. She had many people to guide and assist her. She adds that some teachers taught subjects they did not specialise in.

> *We have a large population of Black pupils; about 60% and the rest are Indians and Whites. The children come from homes that range from middle class to rich; we do have some extremely poor children. Most of the children come to school thinking that this is the place to pass their time, a minority are really dedicated. Initially the pupils tried my patience, as I was young they considered me more a friend than teacher.*

At Nivashnee's school, the pupil population consists of mostly African children and most of them come from middle-class or wealthy backgrounds. Nivashnee reported that the attitudes of pupils towards school were not positive and many considered school to be a place to socialise and pass their time. Nivashnee added that as she was a new and young teacher, most of the pupils view her as a friend. They do not respect her as a teacher.

Then of course we have those few children who are really badly behaved and have terrible attitudes. We try to implement a strict discipline code and children are monitored. If the bad behaviour persists then their parents are informed and they are kept in for detention.

Nivashnee stated that some pupils were really badly behaved and to meet this challenge, the school had a strong discipline policy. As this was a well-resourced school with a majority of the pupils coming from affluent middle class backgrounds, these discipline problems were unexpected by Nivashnee. As corporal punishment is banned in South Africa, the school resorted to detention as a means of punishment.

I must say that at the former model C schools sport is really big, a most striking feature is that there are about four to five sports grounds. There is a swimming pool, sporting facilities and equipment for all codes of sport. Different types of sport take place every term and the LO teachers are well skilled to coach. However outside coaches do assist and they are paid by the school governing body.

Nivashnee was most impressed at the attention given to sport her school; the school is well-resourced and has good sporting facilities. She was astounded at the sight of many sports fields as this was not common to the schools she attended. She added that both teachers and coaches were well-trained to teach the codes of sports to the pupils. As the school was well-resourced, they had sufficient funds to employ coaches. Undoubtedly, at Nivashnee's school, sport was an important aspect of the school curriculum.

We also have a school hall. Also amazing to me is that everything is well organised and work began on the first day. At my high school we sat and did nothing for the first week.

Nivashnee was extremely surprised at the organisational structures of the school because pupils began with work on the first day. She drew comparisons to her school days; they spent the first week doing nothing because of poor planning. She was also impressed by the facilities like the school hall, which was not common at other schools she knew of. Former Model C schools were advantaged during the apartheid era, hence the hall and many sporting fields at Nivashnee's school. Having a hall reduced the school's costs as school activities like concerts can be held on the school's premises.

The above data revealed that Nivashnee taught at an advantaged and very well-resourced girls' high school. The pupil population comprised of a majority of African pupils who came from affluent, rich backgrounds and who viewed school as a place to socialise. The school has had a good discipline policy to deal with problematic pupils. There was both a large component of management and teaching staff to help Nivashnee. The management was well-structured and extremely competent and ensured that everything ran smoothly at the school. In this school great emphasis was placed on sport, with specialist coaches paid for by the school governing body.

Asimah- Semi-Urban, Well Resourced School

> *My school is well maintained and has beautiful buildings. The school pupil population is about three hundred comprising mainly of Indian pupils, we have a sprinkling of black pupils. Most pupils come from wealthy homes but we do have a few really poor children. The class size varies from twenty five to thirty. I teach grade eights and we have twenty five pupils in class.*

Asimah related that her school has well-maintained buildings and that the pupil population (economically advantaged backgrounds) is predominantly Indian. The grade eight class size is low, with about twenty-five pupils per class. Having a low pupil-teacher ratio is rare at public schools as most schools have about forty pupils in a class. Fewer pupils in a class decrease a teacher's workload and discipline problems are minimized.

> *Most of the pupils are not really interested in school work or even sport, they have poor attitudes. On our sports day which was on a Saturday, most pupils did not turn up, including the vice captains and captains. Even though they had leadership roles it did not bother them. Pupils' attitudes have changed and the academic standards have dropped... Their interests are in cell phones, internet and shopping malls... Though pupils are problematic; we curb this. We have stringent disciplinary measures and it is enforced.... However the pupils think I am their friend because I am young and small built. They come and talk to me, want to be chat with me on facebook and mixit; they consider me more a friend than a teacher. I have maintained my distance and I am stern with them.*

According to Asimah pupils showed little interest in academic work or sport. She added that poor pupil attitudes were a reason for a decrease in academic standards and disinterest in

leadership roles and responsibilities. Asimah stated that the pupils were interested in modern modes of socialising and networking and using modern technology. Their focus was on the fun aspects of schooling rather than academic work. To reduce disruptions with regard to discipline at school, a sound discipline policy was designed and it was adhered to at the school. Asimah added that pupils considered her a friend because of her novice status and youthfulness, and a few pupils even tried to pursue an inappropriate relationship with her. She feels that free access to modern technology has bred a new generation of pupils who wished to interact with her on a social level. They viewed school as an institution to socialise and to curb this propensity; Asimah had to adopt a stern and disciplinarian role.

> *We have an OHP in each class; we have a media room with movie screens, Apple computers and data projectors. The staff members are fully qualified as teachers but not all of us teach what we specialised in. I am one of them and we struggle to find our footing…….Both the staff and management ensured that I was welcome and I feel as though I have been here for years.*

Asimah stated that her school was well-resourced and they have the latest computer and teaching equipment. Whilst most schools have very basic equipment, teachers at her school have their own overhead projectors and the best of a range of computers. At her school teachers do not have to worry about a lack of paper to run out worksheets or CD machines breaking as is the case at under-resourced schools. Asimah stated she and other teachers do experience difficulties as they teach learning areas they did not specialise in.

The above data reveals that Asimah teaches at an advantaged and well-resourced primary school located in an elite suburb. The school has, for the first time, introduced grade eight and Asimah teaches this grade. The school pupil population is predominantly wealthy Indians. Most pupils at the school are not interested in academic work, they are interested in socialising. Some pupils are really badly behaved. The staff comprises of well-qualified teachers, teaching in excellent conditions. They have low pupil numbers in their classes and the very best resources readily available to them.

SUMMARY OF SECTION ONE

Below follows two tables that summarises the backgrounds and school contexts of my participants.

Figure 1: Summary of participants' biographical details in relation to qualification and

subjects taught

Name of Participant	Race	Gender	Qualification Phase / learning Areas		Currently Teaching Phase / Learning Area	
Bavana Chetty	Indian	Female	FET- Senior	English Technology LO	Intermediate	Afrikaans EMS LO
Nivashnee Govender	Indian	Female	FET- Senior	English Technology LO	FET - Senior & FET	English LO
Asimah Sheik	Indian	Female	Foundation Intermediate	English Technology LO	FET- Senior	English EMS LO

Figure 2: Summary - Description of types of school contexts participants worked in

Name of Participant	Type of School	Context of School	Pupil Race Composition	Teacher Race Composition	Management Composition
Bavana Chetty	Co - Ed Primary School	Rural Disadvantaged & Under resourced	Majority of Poor Black Pupils	Majority Indians	Small Principal & Hod
Nivashnee Govender	Former Model C – Girl's High School	Urban Advantaged & Well Resourced	Majority of Blacks - rest are Indians & Whites	Majority Whites- rest are Indians	Large Principal, Dep. Principals & Hods
Asimah Sheik	Co - Ed Primary School	Semi-Urban Advantaged & Well Resourced	Majority Indians	Majority Indians	Large Principal, Dep. Principal & Hods

In this section I offered a brief survey of the participants of this study by providing information about their personal biography and a description of the school that they were employed in during the study. The participants were all Indians teaching in three different geographical contexts: rural, urban and semi-urban. The geographical difference also signalled quite different experiences of the resources of the school, engagement with learners and school structures. The biographical descriptions in this chapter are important for factoring into the analysis of the study which commences in the next section.

SECTION TWO

NOVICE TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCES IN THEIR WORK CONTEXTS

INTRODUCTION

In the previous section data that was relevant to the Participants' Background in relation to the Work Context was analysed so that I could establish the type of context each participant taught at. The backgrounds of the participants revealed that there was a mismatch between what the participants qualified in and what they were teaching. Nivashnee was the only one who taught her specialist learning areas in the phase she qualified for, aside for LO which was also offered in the FET phase. Bavana was most unfortunate as she taught two non-specialist learning areas in a phase she did not qualified for. Asimah taught in a phase she did not qualify for and a learning area she did not specialise in. The analysis also revealed that the school context differs significantly with regard to the geographical location, demographics and size of pupil and staff populations, resources and sporting facilities. In this section I analyse data and offer an explanation of the participants' professional development experiences at the schools they are employed in. I use an interpretive lens to clarify how these novice teachers' biographies and their specific school contexts contribute or thwart their in-service professional development.

This section provides an interpretation and understanding of each participant's data relevant to their professional development experiences at their work context. It traces their interactions with various people and the avenues they used to develop as teachers. It also highlights the challenges they encountered. There four are themes, namely, challenges faced by novice teachers in school, professional development support structures for novice teachers at school, novice teachers' professional development through own initiatives and finally novice teachers' perspectives of professional development. To each theme I provide a brief introduction followed by a detailed analysis of the participants' data.

Challenges faced by novice teachers in school

This theme provides information on the challenges each of my participants encountered during the first eight months of teaching. While some challenges were unique to the participants there were a few that were similar to all of them.

Bavana's Challenges - Bavana taught at a small primary school in a rural area. An analysis of her data presents four challenges- teaching away from home, language barriers, coping with a full teaching workload and teaching in a phase and learning areas she was not qualified for. A discussion of these challenges follows.

> *Being thrust away from home is my biggest challenge for I have never been away from the comfort and safety of my parents… I board with a family who reside near the school.*

Bavana explains that teaching in an unfamiliar environment and being away from home is challenging. She feels her development is hampered as she has to adjust to new surroundings and people and she misses her family. Added to the difficult task of adjusting to a full teaching work load and the demands of the workplace Bavana has no family support, people to whom she can turn to for comfort, guidance or discuss issues with.

> *I find that my inability to speak and understand isiZulu a big barrier to my teaching. When the pupils begin speaking isiZulu I am at a loss… The workshop was conducted in IsiZulu and I did not have a clue as to what was happening.*

Bavana also feels that not being proficient in IsiZulu hampers her development as she teaches a pupil population whose mother tongue is IsiZulu. She has to constantly caution pupils to speak through the medium of English. Her inability to speak IsiZulu also proves to be detrimental as she understood very little at workshop run by the department of education which was presented in IsiZulu. Many vital and important issues would have been discussed which Bavana missed learning about.

> *I find being fully responsible and having total control of a class challenging. As a student teacher when you are faced with problems, especially discipline, you immediately seek the help of the form teacher. Now you have to sort the problems yourself. The discipline, getting to grips with the academic work and trying to maintain the respect of the pupils is really difficult.*

Bavana explains that it is challenging trying to fulfil all the responsibilities that come with the job description of a veteran teacher. She finds it extremely difficult to multi-task; she needs to gain experience in this regard. The jump from being a student teacher to a teacher assuming full responsibilities is great. As a student teacher, Bavana could turn immediately to the

mentor teacher for assistance, now she has to learn to deal with problems herself. During the teaching practicum period student teachers concentrate on classroom pedagogy and transmission of knowledge to pupils. Now, in the real setting, Bavana is faced with a reality shock and realises that teaching includes much more; it involves a whole lot of administrative aspects and social issues besides the academic work. She finds trying to master all these aspects difficult.

> *Also having to deal with irresponsible pupils who come to school without basic*
> *writing material is time consuming. Quality teaching time is wasted.*

Bavana's data reveals that she is not equipped to deal with classroom realities thus displaying inexperience, lack of classroom management skills and knowledge. Bavana finds that dealing with contextual realities consume teaching time and this in turn impacts on her teaching, less time is spent on delivering the lesson. The consequences are that lessons are disrupted and rushed, leaving less time to ensure that pupils' grasp what is taught.

> *It has been difficult adjusting to teach primary school children as I am qualified*
> *to teach high school.*

Bavana adds that she finds it challenging to teach in a phase she did not qualify for at university. The phase she qualified for is the senior FET phase which includes grades 7, 8 and 9 and pupils' ages range from 13years to 16years. The phase she teaches is the intermediate phase which includes grades 4 to 7 and pupils' ages range from 9years to 11years. Having to adjust to teaching a different age group of pupils proves difficult as these pupils are younger, emotionally immature and cannot work independently. This age group of pupils need constant attention and supervision which Bavana was not exposed to during her teaching practicum and did not expect when she was employed.

> *I found that I was nervous to teach at first as I was not teaching learning areas*
> *I had specialised in. The fact that I did not know the content made me uneasy.*

At university Bavana majored in English, Life Orientation and Technology. She now teaches Afrikaans and Economical Management Sciences (EMS) from grade 4 to grade 6. Bavana adds that not having subject content knowledge for these learning areas made her apprehensive during her initial lessons. Her lack of expertise and specialised knowledge makes teaching these learning areas difficult. She has to learn the subject content first before

she can teach the content to the pupils. What is odd is that the school still teaches Afrikaans when they have a predominantly African pupil population.

Bavana experiences teaching away from home as a major challenge. She misses her family and her friends and feels isolated in her new environment. Her inability to speak IsiZulu adds to her teaching woes. Bavana realises that teaching includes many more aspects than those she was exposed to during her training; she discovers that there is a major difference between being a student teacher and veteran teacher and could not meet all the expected demands initially. Most challenging to her is that she teaches a phase and learning areas she did not specialise in. As a result she battles to teach, she feels inept in that she lacks pedagogical content knowledge and skills. She attributes her incompetence to these aspects being absent in the university curriculum and feels that the university curriculum is too theoretical; more practical aspects, she believes, need to be included.

Nivashnee's Challenges – Nivashnee teaches at a former model C girls' high school located in an urban area. An analysis of her data reveals two major challenges she faces, those being the assumption of a full teaching workload and a lack of sufficient subject content knowledge.

> *Being a student teacher is a totally different experience to being a new teacher taking full control and assuming all responsibilities. I find all the extra-curricular responsibilities, the ground duty and after school duties like debating, really tiresome and exhausting. As I know that I am being watched and can get into serious trouble, I do them. We used to escape this during teaching practice.*

Nivashnee states that she finds it challenging getting accustomed to teaching a full workload, the extra-curricular duties tire her but she performs them as this is part of the job description. She realises that the practice teaching sessions provide little inkling to the real working situation. During the teaching practicum period concentration is on the presentation of lessons and interaction with pupils, there is no orientation to all the various tasks and roles a full time teacher undertakes. The general trend is to teach a few lessons and do observations, so when faced with the full workload Nivashnee is overwhelmed and takes time to adjust.

> *I also find that being trained to teach LO in the senior FET phase has not equipped me to teach grade 12 LO. Everything is new to me and I have been provided with no assistance… Teaching English, my major, is also not smooth*

56

flowing. I have found that the course matter concentrated on literature reviews and critical analyses of the books. The absence of studying language at university like the teaching of conjunctions and adverbs; has left me struggling to teach this aspect to my pupils. I rely on matric knowledge which is rusty and have to learn these sections again so I can teach my pupils.

Nivashnee finds teaching Life Orientation in the Senior Phase quite challenging. She acknowledges that she has insufficient subject matter and pedagogic content knowledge as she has no training to teach in this phase. She also complains that she lacks classroom management knowledge and skills as these are not part of the university curriculum. She needs to make sense of the syllabus as everything is new to her. While she teaches English (her major) in the phase she trained for, she finds that she lacks subject content knowledge with regard to teaching the language aspect. Her university training has not considered or catered for the teaching of English at school level, the curriculum focus is on learning English as a language. Nivashnee has to rely on matric knowledge and relearn certain aspects (adverbs, conjunctions).

Nivashnee experiences teaching for a full day and performing extra-curricular activities as challenging. She adds that student teaching is vastly different from the actual teaching, teaching encompasses more than what she was exposed to during her teaching practicum. She experiences problems teaching a learning area in a phase she is not qualified to teach. She also realises that though she majored in English, the university curriculum did not equip her to teach all aspects (language) to pupils. Nivashnee adds that she has little classroom knowledge and skills as these aspects were not included in the university curriculum.

Asimah's Challenges - Asimah teaches at a primary school in a semi urban area. An analysis of her data reveals four challenges she experiences- they are assuming a full teaching workload, not qualified to teach in a phase, incongruence between university training and the needs of the school and a lack of knowledge and skills regarding classroom management.

Talk about being a fish out of water, well that's how I felt in the first few weeks. I was completely out of my depth and I struggled with many issues…I also found it difficult trying to get into the routine, standing and teaching for the entire school day proved to be really tiring and draining.

During the initial stage of teaching Asimah states that she was faced with various issues and found getting into the grips of teaching difficult. She finds the transition from being a student to a fully- fledged teacher challenging. She explains that teaching for an entire day left her exhausted. During the teaching practicum Asimah as do most student teachers, taught a few lessons and concentrated on observing lessons of the mentor teacher, therefore Asimah had difficulty carrying out the expected workload of a teacher.

> *This was the first year that there was grade eights at the school, so there was nobody to turn to. I taught not knowing whether I was on the right track and I was extremely disappointed. I felt that as a novice teacher I could have been placed in a grade where there would have been someone to guide me… Having to teach something I had not trained for meant that I had to learn the syllabus first..*

Most challenging to Asimah is that she teaches in a grade that was introduced for the first time at her school. As result there is no teacher with teaching experience in grade eight at the school; Asimah had no assistance or guidance. She lacks confidence in that she does not know whether what she teaches or does is correct. Added to this problem is that she teaches a learning area she has not qualified for, she has to first learn the subject matter knowledge before teaching it to the pupils. As a novice teacher, Asimah did not receive extra guidance and advice in her first year of teaching and had to fend for herself.

> *I was trained to teach small children and here I was, teaching children taller and bigger than me in size. These children stood up and screamed at me, back-chatted and showed no care or concern to me as a teacher.*

Asimah adds that she is qualified to teach in the Foundation Intermediate Phase but now teaches in the Senior Phase. The pupils in the Senior Phase are much older and bigger than those she had taught during her teaching practicum. Foundation Phase pupils are very small in age and size. They are obedient and eager to learn and generally idolise their teachers. So Asimah is extremely shocked at the behaviour of her present pupils; she is not prepared for the outbursts from them and the disrespect they show her.

> *Trying to ascertain what pupils knew so as to complete the year plan and work schedule proved to be really challenging…What I found most frustrating was that there was little correlation between what you trained for at university and*

what is done at school. University leaves us ill equipped to plan properly, the content and how the work schedules and year plans work is not explained... No skills are provided to us like how to manage classes and use different methods- like group work. The focus is on theory; little attention is given to the practical matters. Also we were not told what content is appropriate for the different grades, what content does a grade one pupil cover and what content is covered in grade four. I was unsure where to start at. I could go to grade four and expect the pupils to do long division only to find it is covered in a later grade.

Asimah states that she has little knowledge of how to complete the records required at the school, she is unaware of the subject content knowledge completed in the previous grade. As a result she is uncertain where the starting point is when attempting to complete school records. She adds that there is a big gap between the university training and the expectations at schools. Each school has their own format for drawing school records, there is no standardised format provided by the department of education. Hence Asimah encounters problems in this regard. Asimah explains that the university focusses on theory and that the practical aspects of teaching are ignored. She adds that pedagogic content knowledge and methodology which are crucial and of vital importance to a teacher is absent in the university curriculum.

Asimah experiences problems trying to get orientated to teaching a full workload; she is exhausted by the end of the day. Her university training did not prepare her for this reality; she was not exposed to the various roles and duties that a veteran teacher undertakes. She also experiences problems as she teaches in a phase she is not trained for; her difficulties are compounded by the fact that the grade she teaches has been introduced for the first time at the school she works. Hence there is no one on site who has experience to provide guidance or advice to her. Asimah finds it difficult teaching older pupils as they are unruly and defensive; she lacks skills on how to discipline them. Not teaching her specialist learning areas results in her lacking subject content knowledge and pedagogic skills for new learning areas she is asked to teach. She has to first learn the content before teaching it to the pupils. Asimah experiences difficulties drawing up school records and she attributes this to the gap between the university training and the requirements of the school. There is no correlation and she gets frustrated when she tries to make sense of what is expected at school level.

Support Structures and novice teachers' professional development

In this theme I present the support structures that my participants were exposed to in their work contexts. Their data reveal that they received support from the school management, support through collegial interactions, from mentors and through formal professional development opportunities.

School Management Support to Novice Teachers

Bavana's Experiences

> *At school I was assigned to the HOD to assist me. The principal did not have any programme like an induction to assist me…The principal and teachers showed me all the records that I needed and made their books and files freely accessible to me.*

Bavana's explains that the school management did not have any formal programme for newly qualified teachers at the work place. Besides not having an induction programme there is no grade or phase meetings which provides a forum for professional development to take place. These meetings take place at most schools. Bavana receives guidance only on the various record books she requires and her head of department (Hod) acts more in a supervisory capacity. Bavana states that she received previous year's record books and files which she had to understand and make sense of on her own. She has little guidance and assistance in this regard.

At Bavana's school the management comprises of the principal and one head of department. Whilst they provide assistance to her, it is not with regard to teaching and skills Bavana needs in the classroom. Resources in terms of record books are readily available to her but no provision with regard to the knowledge and skills she needs are provided.

Nivashnee' Experiences

> *When I first arrived at the school, the principal assigned me to the HOD. She was really nice and understood the great scope of work that I was trying to cope with. She gave me my space. However she ensured that all requirements be met with on time. She was most helpful and assisted me in most aspects…At*

my school we are now concentrating on CAPS, there is not much emphasis
placed on the assessment standards and learning outcomes.

Nivashnee's data reveals that the leadership at the school comprises of the principal, two deputy heads and a number of HODs. The management is extremely helpful to Nivashnee. She receives assistance and guidance from her HOD who understands and shows consideration towards her as a novice teacher. She also ensures that all work is timeously handed in. The leadership at the school also keeps abreast with the latest changes that the DoE has made and ensures that the teachers are aware of these developments. Hence the teachers at the school are working with the latest curriculum change–Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS).

Also amazing to me is that everything is well organised and work began on the
first day... At the beginning of the term work is split by the grade controller and
our supervision comes from there. The work is shared and it's not hectic as you
do not plan all the work from grade 8 to grade 12 by yourself.

Nivashnee explains that the management works as a team and each person carries out his/her duty competently. As a result the school runs smoothly and the workload is evenly distributed. Each grade at this school has a grade controller who supervises the work and ensures that the work is equitably shared. Nivashnee is most impressed by the organisation as she mentions that work began on the very first day of school.

The management team at the school is strong and united hence good organisational structures for professional growth are in place. They ensure that grade planning meetings take place timeously. The appointment of a grade controller ensures that colleagues are not over-burdened and given a platform to share ideas and knowledge thus ensuring that everyone understands what is expected. Nivashnee's HOD guides and assists her; she is understanding but at the same time ensures that Nivashnee completes all that is expected of her.

Asimah's Experiences

I received no help from the staff or management in this regard as they knew no
better. This was the first year that there was grade eights at the school, so there
was nobody to turn to. I taught, not knowing whether I was on the right track
and I was extremely disappointed. I felt that as a novice teacher I could have
been placed in a grade where there would have been someone to guide me.

Whilst there are grade and academic heads none could help because they were specialists in other learning areas. The academic HOD was head of the primary school; she had no clue of what was expected in the high school.

Asimah states that she has little help from the school management with regard to teaching grade eight because there is no one with that specialised knowledge to assist her. The principal, grade and academic heads are available to assist, but as grade eight (senior FET phase) is included at the school for the first time none of these managers have experience teaching in the phase and they are specialists in other learning areas. Therefore Asimah has little assistance. She expresses disappointment because as a first year teacher she feels she needs to be mentored, but she is thrown into the deep end to suit the needs of the school. Since Asimah has no qualifications in the phase and there is no one to help her, she struggles to make sense of all that is required.

Whilst the management and principal lacked the knowledge regarding grade eight they have assisted me whenever I needed help in other areas. We also have grade planning meetings on a Friday, all issues are discussed and we plan for the next week.

Asimah's data reveals that the organisational structures at the school are well developed. As a result Asimah is exposed to grade planning meetings on a weekly basis. This ensures that she knows what is to be taught in advance. These grade planning meetings provide Asimah and other teachers a platform to air their grievances and problems to the grade head. Asimah also acknowledges that the management are helpful in areas they have knowledge and experience in.

At Asimah's school, the management comprises of the principal, a HOD and academic and grade heads. As a result Asimah has many people from whom she can seek help and assistance but the management cannot assist her as they have no knowledge or experience with regard to teaching grade eight. Good organisational structures ensure that grade planning meetings take place timeously. Asimah has a platform to interact with the other teachers who are in a similar situation to her and together they tried to find solutions to their difficulties.

Support through collegial interactions

Bavana's Experiences

These teachers have had experience and they are willing share their knowledge with me…I have learnt a lot from colleagues, like how to get the full attention of pupils and improve their discipline…However it is only with regard to behaviour that I get help but with regard to the actual planning of my lessons and teaching techniques there is no assistance.

On a number of occasions Bavana mentions that she receives help and improves classroom skills because of the support of her colleagues. Her learning occurs during informal interactions with colleagues and their input is on routine matters and guidance on the discipline issues. Her colleagues are equipped to provide these skills and knowledge because of their many years of teaching; they were the voice of experience. In the area where she requires most help, the teaching of the subject content, pedagogic skills and assessment techniques there is little help. She has to figure out these aspects on her own.

I find that I have also learnt a lot from university colleagues; we help each other and discuss ideas before trying them.

Bavana receives help and advice from her university colleagues. There is evidence of net working with colleagues from outside the work place.

Bavana teaches with colleagues who had many years of experience and they share knowledge and skills on discipline and routine matters. They are unable to assist her with regard to obtaining subject matter knowledge and pedagogic skills. Bavana also learns from her university colleagues.

Nivashnee's Experiences

I find that at grade meetings ideas flow and we teachers share classroom experiences. Teachers find that if things do not work, like an assignment, then it is changed. Unfortunately we have not formed cluster groups but hopefully next year we can form these groups and share ideas, knowledge and content.

At Nivashnee's school the leadership and management are at the helm of everything; their organisational structures are good. As a result at grade planning meetings there is a platform for colleagues to engage in constructive interaction with each other. At these forums teachers share knowledge and skills so that it is beneficial to all concerned. Nivashnee adds that there is no networking with teachers from other schools and is keen to do so in future.

Nivashnee learns a great deal from her colleagues through structured grade planning meetings. Through collegial interactions Nivashnee is able to learn about pupils, ways to do assessments and other pedagogic knowledge and skills.

Asimah's Experiences

> *The teachers really tried to help me wherever they could; they gave me their*
> *past year files and resources…We also have a close knit teacher community*
> *and the teachers are always willing to share their knowledge and skills whether*
> *they hear about it on radio, television or from a workshop.*

Asimahs' colleagues provide past year files and resources to her. They are very helpful and share all ideas and knowledge with her, these experiences occur on an informal and incidental basis as well as through structured grade planning meetings.

> *I was fortunate to make contact with a parent who was part of the CAPS*
> *committee. She gave me the breakdown of the grade eight EMS syllabus, I*
> *follow this rigidly as it includes everything the DoE expects. In this learning*
> *area I am on the right track.*

Through her initiatives Asimah liaises with a member who was on the CAPS committee and she has access to the EMS syllabus (as required by the DoE) which she follows rigorously. This is really beneficial to her; she knows that she is teaching according to the DoE's expectations.

Asimah receives help from her colleagues on site as well as from a parent who has access to the latest DoE requirements for teaching EMS. Her colleagues guide her with regard to general pedagogic knowledge and skills of teaching.

Professional Development Support through Mentoring

Bavana's Experiences

> *I found during these teaching practice sessions that I lacked skills on issues of*
> *discipline and teaching techniques. I relied on the techniques that my mentor*
> *teachers used and those utilised by my high school teachers. These important*
> *aspects are not covered in the university curriculum.*

Bavana does not make any reference to mentoring at her present school. She states that she uses disciplinary and teaching techniques that she observed her mentor teachers using whilst on teaching practice. She also recalls what her school teachers did and imitates them. As classroom pedagogic skills and teaching methodology are not covered at university, Bavana draws on sources not taught formally. At her workplace Bavana is assisted by her HOD but it is more a supervisory role.

Nivashnee

> *When teaching I have found that I rely on the methods that was used in my high school. I reflect on what methods taught me best and I find myself using them…The mentor teacher was helpful and warm but I felt there could have been more help.*

Niivashnee does not receive much guidance and help; she feels that the mentor teacher could have been more helpful. She draws on past experiences, knowledge and memories of how she was taught and learnt as a school pupil to aid her development. She relies on methods that her school teachers used.

> *Schools maybe like mine can afford to employ mentors. These mentors can provide assistance when required. You do not have to wait for teachers who are free to help.*

Nivashnee mentions that her school did not have a formal mentoring programme and feels that this vital aspect needs to be addressed. Her opinion is that well-resourced schools should employ teachers to carry out a mentoring function and guide teachers who require help. Her development is hampered as she is only able to seek assistance from teachers who are free and willing to help.

Asimah

> *Apart from the first school, the mentor teachers at other schools proved to be very helpful and went out of their way to assist us. At one school the staff got us to attend events on the weekend because they knew this would be beneficial to us. They helped us with the lessons, their guidance was beneficial.*

Asimah recalls her teaching practicum experiences and states that her mentors were very helpful and assisted wherever they could. She appreciates the experience when as a student teacher she was requested to attend school events on a Saturday as this adds to her repertoire of knowledge and skills.

> *I was able to get things done by seeking help from my high school teacher. She sent me work schedules for the learning areas.*

Asimah's data reveals that her high school teacher, with whom she has a strong bond, proves to be a great mentor and role model. This teacher assists her by sending her work schedules for the learning areas she teaches. Asimah has no access these records at her school as this is the first year grade eight has been introduced.

Formal Professional Development Opportunities

Bavana

> *I must admit that the DoE EMS workshop which the principal sent me to was disappointing. After attending that workshop I decided not to go for further workshops as I learnt nothing. The workshop was conducted in IsiZulu and I did not have a clue as to what was happening. At school there have not been any workshops.*

On site Bavana does not attend any formal workshops or grade meetings for professional development. She attends one DoE workshop but as it is presented in IsiZulu she does not understand what transpires. The facilitator caters for the needs of the teachers of that region hence it is conducted in IsiZulu.

Nivashnee

> *The DoE workshop I attended was merely an extension of what you learn in the fourth year at university...I find that at grade meetings ideas flow and we teachers share classroom experiences. Teachers find that things do not work like an assignment then it is changed.*

There is one DoE workshop that Nivashnee attends but it is not beneficial to her. The workshop provides information on things she learnt in her final year at university. On site

there are a number of grade meetings which proves to be most beneficial to her growth and development.

Asimah

> *In this regard I have been exposed to workshops by the school and department. The school workshops were really enlightening. The topics ranged from discipline to hyper active children-ADD and ADHD and how to identify children with learning difficulties.*

Asimah states that she attends workshops at school and formal workshops organised by the DoE. The school-based workshops were really beneficial to Asimah. She is equipped with knowledge and skills on how to assist children with problems. These aspects are not part of the university curriculum and even experienced teachers encounter problems in this regard. Hence the workshops are really welcomed by Asimah.

> *The DoE held workshops on learning areas and I attended two, the English and LO workshops. I have to admit that both these workshops were a waste of time…The English workshop was supposed to be a CASS moderation workshop. I was the only teacher at my table with a CASS file; the rest (about ten) had nothing. Then the facilitator came in late and never bothered to check what was being done. She got us to sign each other's files and then we went home… The next workshop on English poetry; left me speechless. The facilitator did not know how to spell basic words and was unable to identify the different figures of speech, she knew nothing. The teachers were shocked and there was no proper planning. There was a shortage of worksheets and lesson plans. I seriously learnt nothing from these workshops.*

Asimah recalls the two DoE workshops she attended. At the CASS workshop, aside from Asimah, most teachers did not have the record books requested. The facilitator arrived late, no moderation was done and thereafter the teachers left. What is apparent is that there is no interaction or discussion, the workshop is held for departmental record purposes. As a novice teacher Asimah expects to receive valuable information and skills; not just get someone to sign her books. The English workshop reveals that the DoE does not provide the best facilitators to present their workshops and there was a shortage of resource materials. Asimah firmly believed that these workshops were a waste of time.

67

Professional development of novice teachers through own initiatives

In this theme data is provided that reveals how the participants make sense of their workloads through their own initiatives and develop professionally.

Bavana's Experiences

> *Basically I was left on my own and I had to fend for myself. In trying to understand the workload I relied on past year work schedules and quite heavily on the textbooks. This works well for EMS but with Afrikaans I battle and stick rigidly to the work schedule I was given. These work schedules were already pre-planned by teachers who taught the learning area previously.*

Bavana's professional development occurs largely through her own initiatives and self-motivation. While colleagues provide resources and advice, she is left on her own to ponder and figure out how to use the work schedules and textbooks to plan her lessons. Work schedules are requirements by the department of education and each school draws them according to the school management's requirements. As the work schedules Bavana uses were drawn by other teachers, she has poor understanding of how they work. She copes with EMS and makes sense of the subject content as it is in English. This occurs through perseverance and dedication. However with Afrikaans she teaches according to the work schedule because she is not proficient in the language.

> *I carry the bulk of the EMS and Afrikaans; I teach it from grade 4 to grade 6 so there is no one that I can turn to and ask for help. What is even more unfortunate is I am a new teacher teaching in an unfamiliar place. I do not know teachers from schools with whom I can collaborate. There are no cluster groups or meetings that take place.*

Bavana adds that her progress is hampered as she is the only person who teaches Afrikaans and EMS in the intermediate phase. As the school pupil population is low, there was just one class of each grade. Bavana has to teach Afrikaans and EMS to pupils from grade four to grade six. On site she has no help and being in a new environment means she does not know teachers in the neighbouring schools with whom she can collaborate. Cluster groups are requirements of the department of education whereby schools are grouped according to the regions they are located in. Teachers teaching specific learning areas meet to discuss

professional issues like the teaching of the subject but mainly to set standardised assessment tests. In Bavana's school region there are no cluster groups or net working with the schools and she is left to figure out things on her own.

> *When it comes to planning a lesson I take a section at a time. I use the work schedule and textbook to grasp what I have to teach. I find that all the training at university has become useless; everything I do is totally new to me. The university syllabus did not cater for the methodologies or techniques that can be used in the class.*

Since Bavana does not teach learning areas she trained for, she has to learn the subject content and acquire skills before she teaches her pupils. She takes a section, learns the content and then prepares her lesson. This means many hours paging through textbooks and other resources. The subject content knowledge gained at university has become redundant. The university syllabus did not include classroom pedagogy and here again she has to find her own ways and means to deal with problems.

Bavana has little assistance from her colleagues and management with regard to planning and teaching her lessons. As she teaches learning areas she did not specialise in she has to find the content first, learn it and then prepare her lessons. Her colleagues did not assist her as she was the only teacher teaching these specific learning areas in the grades in this phase. The absence of formal grade planning meetings did not provide opportunities for interaction and professional learning to take place. Bavana's university training is of no use, she relies on textbooks. Previous year's work schedules of other teachers are used as a guide but she still has to make sense of it.

Nivashnee's Experiences

> *We also have grade controllers for each grade and I was placed in their care. What was amazing to me was that my grade controller assisted me in the first term but more on matters of how the school was run, on things like how the register is marked, the times of the break. It was the administrative work not on the actual teaching of pupils and managing the class.*

There is not much evidence to indicate that Nivashnee's professional development took place in isolation but she did encounter problems. While the grade controller assists her in the initial

stages it is more on routine class matters not in the area she requires most help, classroom management and teaching techniques.

> *I find myself researching textbooks and working with what I think is right, there has been little guidance…The absence of studying language at university like the teaching of conjunctions and adverbs; has left me struggling to teach this aspect to my pupils. I rely on matric knowledge which is rusty and have to learn these sections again so I can teach my pupils.*

She feels inadequate to teach Life Orientation at grade 12 level because she is not trained and lacks sufficient knowledge and skills. She has to work on her own and she relies on textbooks. She also battles to teach the language aspect of English because she is not taught these skills and knowledge at university. She has to relearn certain aspects and there is little assistance at the workplace.

Nivashnee states that she lacks classroom skills and knowledge with regard to certain aspects of the learning areas she taught. She realises that there is a gap between the university curriculum and the content taught at school. This sets her back and she has to learn these aspects before she feels confident to teach her pupils.

Asimah's Experiences

> *I felt really disadvantaged and I also felt that this was an injustice to the pupils. I needed someone with expert knowledge and skills to supervise me. Having to teach something I had not trained for meant that I had to learn the syllabus first, I had to research, teach myself the content and skills and then impart this to the children. I sought help from the textbooks, the internet and whatever source was available…I am fortunate in that I have a lot of resources at my disposal. I try different approaches and use varying methods.*

Asimah states that because she teaches in a phase she has not qualified in both she and the pupils are disadvantaged. She has to learn the syllabus first and then teach the pupils. As there is no assistance on site, she learns in isolation. She studies textbooks and began surfing the internet for help. She admits that she was lucky to be at an advantaged school, she has resources readily available. Having a media room and computers available makes it easy for her to access information through the internet which would not have been as easy at an under

resourced schools. Having access to different resources enabled Asimah to try different ways of presenting lessons so that the pupils benefitted.

> *Whilst opportunities to network with other teachers arose like the cluster groups, most teachers were not interested to meet. They wished to work on their own and not keen to share their views and ideas.*

Asimah expresses disappointment in that teachers of that area did not grab the opportunity to meet as groups and discuss aspects and issues pertinent to learning areas. These platforms would have been ideal for Asimah to interact and seek advice and assistance from colleagues who have experience teaching grade eight.

Asimah expresses disappointment that she is placed in grade eight (introduced for the first time) as there is no one with experience or skills in this phase to help her. She states that she relies on textbooks and the internet to find subject matter knowledge and skills to teach the learning areas. She adds that having good resources and equipment at her school helps to make her work a little easier. Asimah is dismayed that there is no cluster groups in the area as it would have been a good source to seek assistance and guidance from.

Professional Development through learning from Experience

Bavana

> *Initially I was extremely friendly with the children which proved to be detrimental in that I was unable to get discipline. I now realise the importance of maintaining a more formal relationship and have become rather strict… I pay attention to what works and what does not. For instance I have noticed that pupils become really involved in the lesson when I pay special attention to them. I get them to interact by asking about their homes and family and they become excited and try to give off their best to please me… I have really grown in the last few months in that I know how to manage my time and keep up with the syllabus. I have also grasped how to ask different levels of questions and complete assessments of pupils properly.*

The past eight months spent in the classroom proves to be a great teacher to Bavana. Through her various experiences and mistakes, Bavana learns valuable knowledge and skills. She learns that as a teacher one cannot be too friendly with pupils and a distance has to be

71

maintained for productive work to take place. Bavana adds that she had grown in that she is able to pay attention to classroom pedagogy besides the delivery of subject content to the pupils. She is insightful and she learns to understand the psyche of her pupils; she knows how to stimulate them so they get involved in the lesson. Bavana explains that she knows the importance of using time appropriately and completing the syllabus. At university Bavana did not learn assessment strategies and as each school has its own format she has difficulty with these aspects. Whilst at the beginning she is unable to carry out these tasks efficiently, through various experiences she learnt some of the techniques.

Bavana realises that experience is a great teacher. She learns to pay careful attention to her pupils and their needs and she reflects on her mistakes and improves on them. These experiences have enhanced her teaching and development.

Nivashnee's Experiences

> *Through experience I have come to know that lessons do not pan out the way you plan it. The reality of what happens in the class depends on the pupils, you cannot be sure that the questions asked will result in pupils giving your expected answers. Intellectual abilities differ amongst pupils; sometimes you find that you have to go back to basics before teaching what you planned… What I can safely say is that is that I have really grown and matured as a whole person from the beginning of the year to now. I have settled in and I know what to do and at what pace to teach at as a result of my personal and classroom experiences. As no one supervised me and told me at what pace to teach so that the syllabus is covered, I spent time trying to ensure that pupils understood the work. However by the end of the second term I found that I had not taught an entire chapter. This has taught me that I have to move on to complete the syllabus… To me the first year is more a year that you try to settle in, it is a difficult period and you make mistakes but you learn from them. Therefore I have stuck to basics. I hope to be more creative in my teaching next year.*

Much of Nivashnee's development occurs in the classroom and to her astuteness of what happens during the lesson. She acknowledges that pupils are the focus of teaching and a great deal hinges on their differing abilities and responses. Hence the presentation of a lesson depends on their responses and does not always match the lesson plan. She realises that she

needs to resort to incidental teaching at times and ignore the lesson plan so that the pupils grasp what is taught. Nivashnee states that she has grown a great deal as a teacher since the beginning of the year. Time spent in the classroom helps her to pace her lessons so that there is time to finish the syllabus and not dwell too long on aspects that pupils did not grasp. She adds there was little guidance from the management regarding these aspects and it is through trial and error that she developed professionally. Nivashnee realises that during the first year a lot of time is spent trying to understand a range of different things and it is difficult becoming a full time teacher. She states that in the future she will try different methods and styles of teaching.

Nivashnee learns a great deal and grows professionally over the few months as a full time teacher. Through reflection on her teaching she learns important skills and gains valuable knowledge through classroom experiences. She has a better understanding of her pupils and how contextual realities impact on lessons.

Asimah's Experiences

> *Most of my learning has come from my experience…However this is not true*
> *for English and LO. I use the trial and error method and learn from my*
> *mistakes. I take one step and fall but I get up and persevere, I try again.*

Asimah reveals that she learns by using the trial and error method, this is with regard to teaching English and LO. She is not afraid to make mistakes as she regards these as stepping stones to success. Her positive attitude and being extremely self-motivated ensures that she does not give up easily; she perseveres so that she can deliver knowledge and skills to the pupils.

Asimah's development and learning centres on her determination to succeed; she is unafraid to try new ways to teach. She is not demotivated when lessons do not pan out as planned, she learns from her mistakes and views these as learning opportunities.

Novice teachers' perspectives of professional development

This theme reveals data that indicates what the participants consider most important to ensure that beginning teachers are well equipped to teach when they enter the profession.

Bavana

73

I must add that what university trains us for and the demands of the actual working world are poles apart. University is very theoretical and does not get to the practical issues of what happens at school. I feel the one month of teaching practice is not sufficient to equip you to be a good teacher.

Bavana states that there was a huge mismatch in the training at university and the expectations school. She feels that at university the emphasis is on theoretical aspects and these are not relevant at school. She adds that the university needs to adopt a more practical approach that more time should be spent on teaching practice. She feels that there are many things that can only be learnt in the work context. She explains that time is needed to get acquainted to the school culture and learn how the school functions.

I really feel that novice teachers need to be given a little administration course, like how to do a work schedule and use it to plan your lessons. They should also teach things like how to set questions for examinations, cater for the weak children; these are things I find I am having difficulty with.

Bavana states that the university curriculum should incorporate a course on the administrative aspects that teachers require to function at school. Novice teachers should know how to draw up the various records used at schools; learn about pupil assessments and how examination question papers should be structured. She also feels that knowledge and skills regarding how to approach the varying abilities of learners need be addressed.

Nivashnee

What was lacking on the part of the university was that they did not prepare us for the classroom reality; we were not given information on classroom management. I felt that school management and mentor teachers needed to be better equipped to help us… The content at university is different from the school syllabus. At times I felt that the pupils were sniggering at me as I did not know much of the content. There tended to be a huge gap from what was taught at university and school… I also found that spending a month at school was insufficient. It's really in the third week that you begin to settle into the school and its routine and feel comfortable. You then perform better… I feel that at university level, the English students should be clued in on all the aspects that are covered at school. This could be done in the fourth year before practice

teaching. We should also be taught different methods that we could use in the lessons to get active engagement, instead of us just dictating to the pupils for thirty minutes as they switch off. We need teaching methods and strategies that will help both us and the pupils, achieve desirable outcomes.

Nivashnee also feels that the gap between the expectations of the university and the requirement of schools need to be addressed. She adds that the university curriculum has not included knowledge and methodology courses to assist beginning teachers to cope with classroom realities. Aside from not having sufficient knowledge and skills she explains that the school mentors and management also lack the skills and knowledge on how to mentor. She also adds that the month spent during teaching practice is insufficient time to learn how to teach and at the same time become acquainted with the school culture. She adds that student teachers perform better when they are comfortable and more time should be set aside for teaching practice. She states that the English department at university needs to liaise with the schools to address the vast gap with regard to content and methodology. Her main grievance is the lack of knowledge on methodology as this hampered her progress with pupils. She relies heavily on the teacher-centred approach. She feels that the university curriculum needs to include various methodologies in the course pack to help the first year teacher.

Schools maybe like mine can afford to employ mentors. These mentors can provide assistance when required. You do not have to wait for teachers who are free to help. Maybe they could assist for the first few weeks until you find your feet. You also need more time to be spent watching these teachers teach and spend time assisting and guiding you. They could inform you that you are working too slow, to cover syllabus, how to check the pupil's books, the approaches that will work for lessons, mentor teachers who will help with all aspects of classroom teaching. This would make teaching so much easier in the first year. Mentoring is definitely lacking at my school.

Nivashnee stresses the importance of having qualified mentor teachers at schools; she provides various ways on how these mentors could assist novice teachers and make their learning easier. She encounters problems as there were no experienced teachers readily available to provide assistance and guidance to her. She feels that mentor teachers need to spent time in the classroom with the teacher and provide advice straight away. At most schools classroom visits by management do not occur timeously as teachers and unions view

this as detrimental to the development of the teacher. According to the IQMS document teachers are to be informed before a classroom visit can be made and the said teacher can have a peer to observe that everything is above board.

Asimah

> *My university training was a waste of time; the focus was on what was convenient for them... Universities do not train us to become teachers; they are just providing us with degrees. They do not train us to teach in a classroom nor provide the steps that are needed to be teachers… Programme for beginning teachers need to be included. Novice teachers need to be told what is expected from them at school level and how to go through an entire day… We also need to know the level pupils in each grade function at so that you can bear this in mind when planning the years' work… We do not have any idea how to plan a lesson from the beginning or sufficient knowledge and skills to do this kind of planning for every single day of our lives… There is a need to move towards developing common schedules for everyone by the department. Getting to grips with the content is what most first year teachers are battling with. In a way the new CAPS document may bring about some type of commonality with regard to what is expected at each grade in the various learning areas.*

Asimah criticises the university training she received. She feels that the university curriculum concentrates on what is convenient for them; the practical aspects of teaching are omitted. She states that she has no real training towards becoming a teacher; the university merely issued her a qualification to teach. She is quite adamant that the university curriculum needs to concentrate on the practical aspects and move away from the theory. Asimah adds that the university curriculum needs to include a programme that prepares novice teachers for what is expected at school level and how to adapt to teaching a full load. Asimah's opinions indicate that the university curriculum does not reflect the realities of school; the designers have no idea of what is taught at school level. Asimah expresses disappointment with regard to the department's expectations of teachers. She feels that the department of education should provide clear guidelines on the developing of work schedules so that it is standardised, every school would be doing the same work. Asimah adds that novice teachers battle with the acquisition of content knowledge and this aspect needs to be addressed. She is hopeful that the latest curriculum change by the department, Curriculum and Assessment Policy

Statements (CAPS), would rectify the problem areas and clarify what content is expected to be completed in each grade.

Summary of Chapter

The data in this chapter reveals that the professional development of the three novice teachers unfolds in different ways though some challenges and experiences are similar. The biography, work context and the various stake holder relationships has a direct bearing on how the participants' professional development and learning unfolds. The geographic location, size of pupil and teacher population, type of school management and leadership, organisational structures, attitudes of pupil population and resources makes each teacher's professional development unique.

Of the three participants Bavana is the only participant teaching at a small, under-resourced rural school which proves to be quite challenging to her professional development. She encounters constraints regarding a lack of basic resources and equipment, her workload is increased and the management does not provide much guidance. Bavana's biography influences her development to a large extent, teaching a predominately IsiZulu pupil population poses difficulties as the pupils prefer to speak IsiZulu, their mother tongue. Most of Bavana's professional development results through her own initiatives and her positive attitude.

Nivashnee views her professional development and growth at her work context in a positive light. She teaches at a well-resourced, urban school with a large, strong and organised management team and this is most beneficial to her professional development. Well-structured grade planning meetings offer lots of opportunities to learn in communities of practice and workloads are shared. She is also able to extend her development to the sports field as colleagues and school coaches are willing to assist her. Nivashnee's challenge is teaching learning areas she has not specialised in. Discipline at the school proves to be an issue, her school pupils focus on socialising and they view her as a friend not a teacher. Getting accustomed to the heavy workload (extra- curricular activities, sport, debates) at her school tires and she experiences difficulties trying to cope with everything.

Asimah views her professional development at her work context as quite difficult. Teaching at a well-resourced school with a large management and staff does not pan out as easily as she likes. This is due largely to her teaching in a phase and grade that is introduced for the first

time at the school. The management has good organisational structures and this ensures that grade planning meetings take place and there is a platform for collegiality. She consults with her high school teacher and receives mentoring from her. Asimah experiences problems with the pupils; they are ill-disciplined and show little interest in schoolwork. Their interests are on socialising and even display a lack of interest in sport.

All three participants experience problems regarding the absence of congruity between the university curriculum and the expectations at school level. The participants feel that the university provides a very theoretical curriculum that does not prepare them for the practical realities of teaching. They express that the omission of classroom management skills and methodology in the university curriculum leaves them ill-equipped to handle such issues. They also feel that the university curriculum should factor in more time for the teaching practicum. They state that good mentoring structures need to be present at schools and that these mentors need to be given time and have specialised skills to assist them.

<div align="center">**CHAPTER FIVE**</div>

<div align="center">**SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**</div>

Introduction

This chapter provides a synthesis of the findings of my study, offers recommendations based on the findings and highlights areas for future research based on the study.

Synthesis of the Study

This study revealed my interpretation and understanding of the nature of novice teachers' professional development at different school contexts. It highlighted their various experiences at their workplaces and how these learning experiences, school culture and context aided or hampered their professional development. There was also a focus on the participants' biography, their teacher training and the impact it had on their professional development. The literature review offered the foundation for the present study; it revealed that a major gap exists between teacher training education and the contextual realities of teaching. Literature ranged from the debate on incongruences between a theoretical orientated teacher training curriculum and the practical realities of teaching, the challenges that novice teachers' faced and the types of support they received. Adler (2002) states that theory gained from training must be applied in a context of other challenges that teachers encounter in schools. The current trend towards professional development is on the establishment of a context that provides sensitive support and attends to the specific needs of teachers. Literature further revealed that professional development programmes need to situate teacher learning and development within the teachers' school contexts. These aspects were of particular significance to the present study as it provided a benchmark since research on South African novice teachers' professional development within the school context is rare.

Theoretical and methodological reflections

The theoretical/conceptual framework that guided this study drew on the concept of contextual diversity of schools, the force field model of Samuel and the situated learning theory (Wenger, 1998). These concepts and theories have been explained in chapter two. The data analysis indicated that all these factors but more importantly the school culture and school context played an important role in the growth and professional development (positive and negative) of the participants.

Using Amin and Ramrathan's (2009) framework, Samuel's (2009b) Force Field Model of teacher development and the situated learning theory as points of references for the discussion of my findings, helped me obtain a more personified understanding and interpretation of the professional development experiences of my participants at particular (diverse) school contexts. Amin and Ramrathans'(2009) model attempts to dispel the master-apprenticeship model and highlights schools as spaces where education is enacted. Samuel (2009b) explains that the biography of the teachers influences how s/he chooses to engage in teaching. Teachers, especially new teachers, draw on their personal lived experiences of being in schools, of being taught at home and by families. Samuel's (2009b)' model also explains that the institutional force (role of teacher educators and the curriculum design), the curriculum force, (constant new programme reforms of policy makers), the contextual force (the climate of particular school environments) and context interact and influence teacher professional development. Contextual diversity as explained by Amin and Ramrathan (2009) highlights that South African schools are different as a result of geographical location, physical structure, resources, staff and management components (qualifications and leadership). This perspective enabled me to determine how varying school contexts allowed for novice teachers' professional development to unfold. Context in its spatial meaning refers to the organisational and cultural environment in which teachers work and teachers' coping strategies are significantly influenced and affected by the climate caused by the school context. Situated learning theory, stresses the importance of context, and therefore, supports the fact that learning opportunities should be grounded in environments where problems arise (Wenger, 1998; Langa, 2007). It asserts that teacher development is not an isolated activity, teachers learn through daily interactions with one another as they negotiate and solve problems. How development and learning takes place, and the situation in which it takes place, becomes an essential part of what is learned (Maistry, 2006). Using the about mentioned theories enabled me to assess how these various forces influenced the participants' professional development.

The choice of my paradigmatic stance, the interpretive approach, complimented the case study methodology I chose. It allowed for the participants' truths (views, opinions) according to their realities (their work contexts) to be brought to light. I was able to highlight the role of diverse school contexts in my participants' professional development and learning. In this case study I assumed the role an outside researcher, as the study was conducted with novice teachers I did not know and they taught at schools I had not been to. My analysis was based

solely on their responses which were obtained during the interviews. The analysis of data revealed that their professional development took the form of on-site grade planning meetings, collaboration, mentoring and their biographies played a significant role. What is pertinent is that the participants' personal biographies, their attitudes and intrinsic motivation enabled them to successfully improve their practices.

Summary of the Key Findings

In the light of the research questions the following are the findings that emerged from the analysis. The study revealed that South African school contexts are diverse and have a direct bearing on the professional development and learning of novice teachers. Though all three participants trained at the same higher education institution and specialised in some similar learning areas, they had different professional development experiences. This was due largely to differences of their school contexts and their biographies. The incongruence between the university curriculum design and the school curriculum, teaching of non-specialist subjects and the lack of proper mentoring and induction programmes on site also proved to be challenging to all three of the participants.

The influence of school contexts on novice teacher professional development

The study revealed that the geographical location (rural, semi-urban and urban) of the schools presented different professional development experiences to the participants. There were challenges and advantages in terms of school structure, wealth distribution and resources, type of school leadership and staff, school pupil population and extra-curricular activities.

The study revealed that teaching and professional development in the rural school was more challenging than at the urban and semi-urban school. South African education is still afflicted by disparities, at suburban schools SGBs raise funds and initiate induction courses while other schools struggle with basic necessities, these latter schools are most often located in poor communities (Arends & Phurutse, 2009). Novice teachers in rural areas encounter more problems than those at urban areas because of a lack of infrastructures and facilities but most important unmotivated pupils as they come to schools hungry (Shakwa, 2001). My study found the rural school to be economically depressed; it lacked basic resources and had a pupil population who hailed from poverty stricken homes. Being a 'no fee paying' school meant that pupils did not pay school fees and were provided meals at school by the state. As a result teachers' workloads at this school were increased as experienced by Bavana; they prepared

and distributed the food to pupils and engaged in many fund raising activities. Such duties were absent at the urban and semi-urban schools where Asimah and Nivashnee were employed. The pupils were affluent and wealthy and they paid high school fees. Funds were also raised by the SGB. These funds were used to employ extra staff thus reducing the class sizes. They also employed sports coaches; have ultra- modern equipment and many resources and teaching aids. Teachers at these schools concentrated on improving their classroom practice and had opportunities to improve themselves in other fields, like sport. These opportunities added to their repertoire of knowledge and skills and in the case of Asimah and Nivashnee, enabled them to acquire a wider range of learning and teaching skills. During their teacher training all three participants were exposed to the reconstructing uncertainty phase of Amin & Ramrathan's (2009) model. In this phase they were expected to develop teaching skills and lessons to teach in different contexts but their learners were fellow teachers-to-be. Thus despite Bavana's added duties and workload she had prior knowledge and skills to meet these challenges.

The study revealed that the rural school is under-resourced, technologically challenged and isolated. There were no telephones (time of interview) and communication with others outside the school proved to be difficult. Bavana encountered many challenging experiences which impacted on her teaching and professional development. At the urban and semi-urban school there were computers and modern teaching aids which the participants used to improve their teaching practice. Asimah (semi-urban) had easy access to the internet hence access to the latest information, knowledge and resources regarding the learning areas she taught. Thus, despite having little mentoring on site, she was able to utilise these resources to improve her classroom practice. There were ample opportunities to grow professionally and keep abreast with the latest information. According to Lieberman and Mace (2008) teachers can expand their learning opportunities by joining online teaching communities which allow teachers from across the world to meet, exchange knowledge and learn from each other. Establishing such learning communities could result in more open and collaborative school cultures.

The study also revealed that the nature of the pupil population at the schools impacts on the participants' professional development. Arends & Phurutse's (2009) study reveals that rural and township schools encounter more ill-discipline than suburban schools. In this study the pupils at the rural school proved to be well-disciplined and eager to learn whilst there was a trend amongst suburban and wealthy pupils to focus more on socialising and modern technology as related by Nivashnee. The pupils accorded Bavana (rural) respect and were

focused on schoolwork. As a result Bavana concentrated on academic work and on improving her teaching skills and knowledge. However Nivashnee (urban) and Asimah (semi-urban) experienced major student discipline problems at their schools. The pupils at Asimah's school were rude and screamed at her while some of them wanted to engage with her on social networks. Nivashnee also experienced problems as the pupils regarded her as a friend. These pupils displayed more interest in socialising than academic work; their interests were linked to cell-phone use and internet sites. This type of behaviour and attitude of pupils shifted the participants focus from improving their practice to dealing with discipline issues as was the case with Asimah and Nivashnee.

The study further revealed that the nature of school teacher population impacted on the professional development of the participants. The type of school professional culture influences the novice teachers' development to a certain extent. As discussed in chapter two, Johnson's (2004) study reveals three different forms of professional culture; veteran-orientated cultures, novice-orientated cultures and integrated cultures. The veteran-orientated culture refers to experienced teachers who value their independence and privacy and pay little attention to the needs or talents of new teachers at their schools. In a novice orientated culture there is a high proportion of young teachers, experience is absent. In integrated professional cultures there is an environment characterised by inclusion and support structures that facilitates interaction and reinforce interdependence. Arends and Phurutse's (2009) study reveals that the South African beginner teachers are more grounded in the new learning areas and curriculum which older and experienced teachers have not fully grasped. Bavana (rural) experienced difficulties as she taught learning areas she did not specialise in and with a senior teacher population. These teachers had years of experience and assisted her with general pedagogic skills but lacked subject content knowledge regarding the constantly changing curriculums of South African education. Nivashnee (urban) and Asimah (semi-urban) taught with a mixed teacher population, who were clued up with the latest developments and exchanged information with each other, hence there was scope for collaboration and learning in communities of practice. Professional development at these schools unfolded largely through learning communities and sharing with colleagues very important. The focus was on a school-centred approach to professional development, collegiality (learning with and from colleagues in work contexts) were fostered and platforms were provided for critical reflection on daily practices; there was also scope for developing capacities to understand complex subject matters (Lange, 2007; Xu, 2003). These aspects are supported by the situated

perspective which views teachers as active participants their learning. At the urban and semi-urban schools, through collaboration, teachers learnt from their practice and also from the practice of other teachers (Maistry, 2006).

The study also revealed that the type and size of school management and school leadership were different at schools. These aspects had a direct influence on the school culture and the nature of professional development that took place. Arends and Phurutse (2009) state that in South Africa most school managers provide guidance and assistance to new teachers through supervision of their records not by observing their lessons. Principals at the rural and township schools state that they have large teaching loads and big classes; there is no time for observing lessons. Bavana's school management comprised of just two individuals who proved to be ineffective in terms of mentoring. They provided little assistance and guidance with regard to her development, there were no sound organisational structures, no formal grade planning meetings or workshops. There was no platform for collaboration, team work or professional development to take place. At schools the principal holds a whole school view and is responsible for the quality of teaching and learning, and therefore sound teacher development programmes are needed to achieve these goals (Lumby, 2003). There was a lack of professional development opportunities at Bavana's school and a reason why there was no formal staff development workshops and meetings. School principals therefore play a significant role in determining the nature of professional development that is likely to take place at a school (Kim & Roth, 2011). At the urban and semi urban schools there were many opportunities for professional development to take place. The principal and management ensured that weekly grade planning meetings took place where teachers were presented with opportunities to collaborate and learn with colleagues. These findings support the situated learning theory which asserts that learning is most conducive within learning communities or environments and individuals need not be separated from them when learning, as learning involves developing practices and abilities in specific communities (Langa, 2007, Maistry, 2005). Teacher learning takes place in communities of practice and the self is formed and strengthened in the context of its relations with others thus initiating professional development (Wenger, 1998).

Another finding of the study was that the size of the pupil population also had an impact on the participants' development. At Bavana's school the pupil population was small hence there was just one class of each grade but a higher teacher- pupil ratio. She had more learning areas to teach to make up her teaching time. As a result she had little opportunity to collaborate

with colleagues on issues regarding subject content and pedagogic skills as they taught other learning areas. The urban and semi-urban participants had many opportunities to collaborate and learn from each other. The larger pupil population meant that they had fewer learning areas to teach and taught learning areas in one grade which comprised of many classes of smaller teacher-pupil ratios. Their workloads were reduced and they had less planning, preparation and assessments to be done. Arends and Phurutse's (2009) study reveals that classes with higher teacher-learner ratios are difficult to teach and that the working environments in rural areas are more challenging than suburban and township areas.

The role of biography on professional development

The study found that biography, in terms of race, influences professional development. Bavana experienced language difficulties as the pupils, predominantly Black, preferred to speak in their mother tongue (IsiZulu) during lesson time. Her Indian heritage proved to be detrimental as she could not converse in IsiZulu and class interaction was stifled. The study also revealed that in the rural community surrounding the school Bavana worked in, English as a medium of communication had not infiltrated the community. Though there was a large pupil population of IsiZulu pupils at Nivashnee's school (urban) she did not experience language problems. These pupils could converse fluently in English.

The study also found that professional development occurred to a large extent through reflection on classroom practice and experiences. Upon reflecting on their practices, the novice teachers developed professionally by building on previous experiences which they used as focal points to guide their thoughts and practices (Baron, 2004). All the participants were self-motivated and had positive attitudes towards their work. Evans (2002) identifies attitudinal development as an important aspect to improve professional development. During this process there is a shift in intellect and motivation which results in professional growth. Despite her difficulties (teaching away from home and non-specialist learning areas) Bavana displayed a positive stance to her teaching. Though her development occurred largely in isolation, she viewed her classroom as a space to learn. She changed teaching styles and methods to suit the needs of the pupils after reflecting on her lessons. Nivashnee learned through reflecting on her practice on how to improve discipline and manage time more effectively. Asimah used various methodologies and resources to improve her teaching; she relied on trial and error strategies to determine what works best for her. The participants' development was transformational; learning occurred through experiences created with

pupils, classrooms were viewed as laboratories, "a setting in which new forms of teaching and learning are painstakingly grown in a fertile culture of exploration" (Shulman, 2004, p506). These aspects resonate with the situated perspective which asserts that situated knowledge is gleaned as a result of learning within the context (Eraut, 1994).

The study revealed that the participants relied on the apprenticeship of observation model during their teaching. All three participants indicated that they mimicked how their teachers taught and used this as a point of reference in their classroom practice. What is relevant was that these novice teachers had not discarded their lived experiences, they taught as they were taught. Though their teacher training curriculum attempted to dismantle this notion of teaching, participants used this as a method of teaching in the absence of structured mentoring and guidance. Samuel (2009a) states that the twelve years of hidden pedagogy which students are exposed to during their unique schooling experiences cannot be disregarded. This apprenticeship of observation impacts on the image of what good teaching or teaching/learning/assessment practices are. The participants in the study resorted to teaching like their teachers, imitating observed practices without deep critical analysis of their worth (Lortie, 1975; Samuel, 2009a).

The role of the institution and school curriculum on professional development

The study revealed that the gap between theory and practice still exists. All the participants state that more time for teaching practice is needed and that they learnt more at their workplaces than their four years of training. During their stint of teaching practice they spent short periods of time in a classroom and focussed only on the lessons they were to teach. They worked in isolation and did not get accustomed to the school context and culture. They were not exposed to administrative tasks or solving discipline problems hence they were overwhelmed in their first year. All three participants expressed that they could not adjust to teaching a full workload. 'Reality shock' (Gaede, 1978) and 'sink or swim' (Veenman, 1984) are all phenomena which refer to the difficulties experienced by novices in their transition into the profession as a result of inadequate training or insufficient exposure to the 'real world' of teaching (Flores & Day, 2005).

The study found that the participants taught learning areas or in phases they did not qualify for. They fulfilled the needs of the school and lacked subject content knowledge for the learning areas they taught. Nivashnee taught her major in the phase she specialised in, aside for Life Orientation which was in the FET phase. Nivashnee indicated that she lacked subject

content knowledge with regard to teaching the language aspect of English. Clearly her teacher training did not address this aspect and it disadvantaged her. The other two participants taught in phases and some learning areas they did not qualify for. Thus the lack of specialised knowledge hindered their professional development as they had to learn the subject knowledge content of non-specialist learning areas first before teaching it to their pupils.

The study revealed that all the participants lacked classroom management skills and knowledge. Research supports the participants' experiences that teacher education is theoretical and general, more emphasis is placed on subject matter knowledge and little attention is given to instructional skills and methodology (Arends & Phurutse, 2009; Shakwa, 2001). The participants stated that teacher education training should equip them to cope with the management and administration of the classroom as that forms the core of what they need to do each day. The participants felt that this aspect needs to be addressed and changes need to be made at the universities. Asimah stated that she learnt more in one term while teaching than she learnt during her training. This comment raises concern as the reason for the training is to, as far as possible, prepare students for the realities of the classroom. There was general consensus that there is too much emphasis on the theoretical aspects and not enough opportunity for practical application.

Induction and mentoring programmes at schools

The study found that there was no formal mentoring or induction programmes at these three South African schools. In the United Kingdom statutory policy ensures that first year teachers are properly inducted and mentored. A mandatory induction year for newly qualified teachers was introduced and schools were required to ensure adequate levels of support for new teachers. In 2002 Scotland introduced statutory procedures through which new teachers would progress through the course of one year. New teachers were regarded as probationers and placed in schools and followed seven tenths of the timetable. 'Induction supporters' were appointed to work and assess the probationers (Dube, 2008).

All the participants of this study indicated that there was no induction or adequate mentoring programmes at their workplaces. Whilst appropriate organisational structures afforded participants in the urban and semi-urban schools opportunities for learning through collaboration and formal grade meetings, they were not offered proper mentoring. Asimah sought help from her high school teacher and a parent. The support they received was the supervision of their record books but no observation or guidance on their teaching. The

management assumed an evaluative and supervisory role, not a development one (Arends & Phurutse, 2009). These novice teachers received no induction into the school culture nor were they told how things work at their schools. Clearly none of the management realise the importance of good mentoring and induction so that the participants can make an easy transition into teaching.

The study revealed that no formal guidance and assistance was received from the Department of Education. Aside from workshops based on the cascading model, which participants felt were a total waste of time, none of the inspectorate assisted and guided new teachers. Day (2000) states that novice teachers' challenges should be viewed as a means to learn and be addressed immediately not at the next workshop. Moletsane (2004) adds that in South Africa it is common practice to remove teachers from their school environment in order to workshop them. The reality is that they go back to the unchanged school contexts and the physical and social environment is not favourable to any change. Hence any skills or knowledge obtained during the workshop is rendered futile. Professional development requires effective collaboration between schools and all stakeholders. The context requires teachers to educate all learners equally, develop them into participating and law abiding citizens and successful competitors in the global community but the needs of teachers are forsaken although they are the real levers of change, policy interpretation and implementation (Moletsane, 2004).

Limitations

As this was a small case study of three participants at three different schools, the issue of generalisation cannot be applied. Data limited as it was collected from just three research participants. This number was not adequate to determine how novice teachers benefitted, profited or were hampered during their professional development experiences at different school contexts.

Suggestions for further research

The following areas could be investigated:

What types of professional development programmes would benefit novice teachers in their initial year? How can the influence of contextual factors be reduced so that novice teachers' development is promoted? Since this study was restricted to three beginner female teachers trained at the same teacher training institution, there is scope for further research to assess the professional development of novices trained at different institutions, and also to provide a

gender analysis. Further research could also be conducted to determine whether similar problems exist among novice teachers who are fortunate to teach their specialised learning areas in the phases they trained for.

Conclusion of Study

This study attempted to explore and understand the unfolding of South African novice teachers' professional development experiences at diverse school contexts. The study was important as the South African educational landscape is still riddled with inequalities and imbalances and little effort is made to address the development of teachers yet alone that of novice teachers. What is of really great concern is that formal induction and mentoring programmes are virtually non-existent at most schools and most beginner teachers struggle through the first year in the profession.

Conclusions drawn from the findings revealed that novice teachers received little formal or specialised professional development at their workplaces. Instead they were incorporated into the school's programme, fulfilled the needs of the school and assumed full teaching loads whilst also trying to acclimatise to the school context and culture. Findings further indicated that situating professional development within the school context better serves the specific needs of teachers. The lack of correlation between the theoretical teacher training and the practical knowledge and skills required by the novice teachers to manage and administer their classrooms are of great concern. Novice teachers need greater exposure to the realities of the classroom and teacher education need to design and include courses which will ease novice teachers' transition into the profession. Thus the teacher education curriculum in South Africa comes under scrutiny and needs to be revisited.

I conclude this study knowing that not much progress has been made to improve the plight of novice teachers' entry into the teaching profession; they still encounter numerous challenges as I did. The study revealed that novice teachers have differing professional developmental experiences due to the school context, the school culture and their biographies. It was largely through their own efforts and motivation that the participants of this study were able to cope and improve their practices. What is undeniable is that IPET programmes alone cannot produce quality professional teachers; it is also the joint responsibility of veteran teachers and school management to ensure that this occurs at school level (Samuel, 2009) and the DoE at

the political level to design and implement professional development models which will achieve the desired result, which is the easy transition into the profession.

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APPENDIX: 1

UNIVERSITY OF
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8 August 2011

Ms V Poonsamy (210551776)
School of Education & Development
Faculty of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Ms Poonsamy

PROTOCOL REFERENCE NUMBER: HSS/0708/011M
PROJECT TITLE: Diverse School Contexts and Novice Teachers' Professional Development

In response to your application dated 5 August 2011, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has 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 school/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

....
Professor Steven Collings (Chair)
HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

cc. Supervisor: Prof P Ramrathan & Dr N Amin
cc: Ms T Mnisi, Faculty Research office, Faculty of Education, Edgewood Campus

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APPENDIX: 2

kzn education

Department:
Education
KWAZULU-NATAL

| Enquiries: Sibusiso Alwar | Tel: 033 341 8610 | Ref.: 2/4/8/99 |

Ms. Vanmala Poonsamy
12 Buxdale Gardens
21 Quali Street
Kharwastan
4092

Dear Ms. Poonsamy

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **Diverse School Contexts and Novice Teachers' Development**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The Period of investigation is limited to the period from 01 September 2011 to 31 September 2012.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Mr Alwar at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report or dissertation or thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Director-Resources Planning, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to the following Schools and Institutions:
    10.1 Queensburgh Girls High School
    10.2 Braema Primary School
    10.3 Pitlochery Primary School

Nkosinathi SP Sishi, PhD
Head of Department: Education

2011 — 09 — 28
Date

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beyond the call of duty.

APPENDIX: 3

Informed consent- Participants

UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL

12 Buxdale Gardens
21 Quail Street
Kharwastan
4092

Tel No: home: 031-4011671
       cell no: 0832621195
Email: vanmala@telkomsa.net

Date:

Dear Participant

REQUEST FOR CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

I am a student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), and this research forms part of my Master of Education (MEd) study. This study is also a part of a larger project undertaken by UKZN-led by Dr Amin. The project seeks to evaluate the teaching practice curriculum implemented in 2007. The topic of my dissertation is **diverse school contexts and novice teachers' development**. My study seeks to gage how novice teachers develop and learn in the different school contexts and assess the extent their pre-service training aids in their development. The findings of study will be used in my MEd dissertation and any related publications and presentations.

In this study, I will use the following methods to gather information from participants: individual interviews and group interviews to obtain data on novice teachers' development at different school contexts. The individual and group discussions will be audio recorded.

I hereby request permission from you to use your spoken contributions from the individual interviews and group discussions as data for my research. I will only use this data if I receive written consent from you.

If I receive your consent, I will use this data in a way that respects your dignity and privacy. Copies of your contributions will be securely stored and disposed of if no longer required for research purposes. Your name or any information that might identify you or your school will not be used in any presentation or publication that might come out of the study.

There are no direct benefits to you from participating in this study. However, I hope that this study will make a significant contribution to research on teacher development and teacher training.

I also wish to inform you that you have no binding commitment to the study and may withdraw your consent at any time if you feel the need to. If you withdraw your consent, you will not be prejudiced in any way.

This study is supervised by Professor Labby Ramrathan and Dr Nyna Amin. Professor Ramrathan can contacted telephonically at 031-2608065 and Dr Amin at 031-2607255.

If you have any questions relating to the rights of research participants, you can contact Ms Phume Ximba in the University of KwaZulu-Natal Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Office on 031-260 3587.

Thank you for your assistance.

Yours sincerely

Vanmala Poonsamy (Ms)

APPENDIX: 4

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT FOR PARTICIPANTS

UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL

TITLE OF STUDY: Diverse School Contexts and Novice Teachers' Development

I .... (full name of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of this study, and do consent to participate in the study.

I understand that I am free to leave/withdraw from the study at any time if I want to without any negative or undesirable consequences to myself.

I am consent to the following data collection activities (please tick)

	YES	NO
Audio recorded individual interviews		
Audio recorded group discussions.		

....
SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT   DATE

....
SIGNATURE OF WITNESS   DATE

APPENDIX: 5

<div align="center">

Interview Schedules
</div>

Interview One

This semi-structured interview will take place in the third term of the school calendar. The intention is to obtain biographical data and to generate data with regard to the first research question-(school context).

Section A: Biographic Data

1. First Name: _____   2. Surname: _____   3. Age: _____   4. Race:_____

4. Gender: _____   5. Place of employment: _____

6. Qualifications: _____

7. Higher Education Institution attended? _____

8. What learning areas and phase do you teach? _____

9. Did you train specifically to teach this phase/learning area? _____

10. What were your favourite subjects when you were in school? Explain why you enjoyed these

    subjects?

11. Name and describe the schools you taught at during your teaching practicum?

<div align="center">

Name   **Description (your perspective)**
</div>

1st _____2nd _____

_____3rd _____

_____4th _____

_____

Section B: **Context**

Schooling

1. Describe the context of your primary school (physical structure, pupil population, sporting

   opportunities, resources, school climate, community/parent involvement, composition of

   school population- race, gender, class size)

2. Describe the context of your high school (physical structure, pupil population, sporting

    opportunities, resources, school climate, community/parent involvement, composition of

    school population- race, gender, class size)

3. Were there any experiences/incidents (peers, teachers, managers) that you remember from

     your schooling? Why?

4. Were there any teacher/s you remember? Why?

How did these teachers teach, what methods did they use, how did they discipline the pupils?

Teacher Training

5. Where did you train to become a teacher?

6. Describe your 1st year at campus? Was the environment (space/teaching-methods/ ways of Learning) different from schooling? Explain.

7. How did you adapt to campus life? Describe your interactions with other students/lecturers? What was the student composition like, lecturer composition?

8. Describe the school contexts you taught at during your practicum? What circumstances led you to choose these schools? Explain.

9. How were you received at these schools by the management/staff/pupils?

10. Which aspects of your pre-service training have you relied on during your teaching? practicum? Explain. 1st year, 2nd year, 3rd year, 4th year

11. How would you describe the assistance you received during your teaching practice (different contexts) from the teachers at the school- in terms of knowledge, resources, socially?

Present school context

12. How did you get appointed to your present school?

13. Describe your present school context (physical structure, socio-economic status, pupil population, resources, qualifications of teachers).

14. How were you received by the staff and principal? Explain.

15. What were your experiences as a new teacher in the classroom ? Explain.

16. How did the pupils receive you? Explain.

Interview 2- Professional Development

This semi-structured interview will take place in the third term of the school calendar. The intention is to generate data with regard to the second research question - (how does the context influence novice teachers' development?).

1. What is your understanding of professional development?

2. What professional development programmes have you attended at school or anywhere else? Explain.

3. Describe the transition from being a student teacher to a teacher assuming full responsibilities?

    What challenges did you encounter? How did you deal with them? Are you still encountering challenges?

4. Were you assigned to mentor teachers and provided with assistance? Explain.

5. Have you been exposed to any sort of induction? If so describe. Does the school have a programme in place to assist new teachers?

6. How would describe your knowledge/skills/values of the learning areas you teach?

7. How have you made sense of all the assessment standards and learning outcomes of the subject/s you teach? Where has your learning come from?

8. When and how do you go about planning and preparing your lessons?

9. Has your pre-service training assisted in your teaching (knowledge, skills) - explain?

10. Are you finding gaps between your pre-service training and the reality of actual teaching? If yes explain how you are overcoming these issues.

11. How has your development and learning changed from the beginning of the year to presently? Explain.

12. Do you and other teachers share classroom experiences/knowledge/resources? Explain?

13. How have colleagues/management contributed to your professional growth?

14. Are there grade planning meetings and sharing of knowledge/resources? Explain.

15. What resources do you draw on for your lessons?

16. What methods/strategies do you use for your lessons? Would you say they are the same for most lessons? If not how do you vary them- what sources have you relied on?

17. Describe the qualification of teachers at your school- specialized in learning areas, senior and experienced/under qualified.

18. Where would you consider the most learning regarding your knowledge, skills and values

has come from during the last two terms? Why?

19. Is your school supportive to teacher learning activities- regarding novice teacher development? Explain?

20. How has the management assisted in ensuring that you properly understood and implemented what was required by them?

21. Has any learning opportunities been presented through networking with other teachers? Were these formal or incidental opportunities? Did much learning take place in this space?

22. What kind of intervention programmes do you think novice teachers need to help them? during their first year at schools?