



**An exploration of Teacher Professional Development from educational stakeholders’  
perspectives within the space of an Educational Reform**

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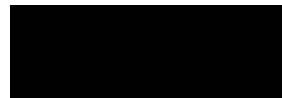
# Declaration

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Philosophy, in Post-Graduate Programme in Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.

I, MOOHKTASEEMAH BEEBEE HEETUN, declare that

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**MOOHKTASEEMAH BEEBEE HEETUN**



03 DECEMBER 2024

# Abstract

Educational Reforms (ER) are a global phenomenon, responding to a plethora of drivers for changes. Teacher Professional Development (TPD) is pivotal to achieving ER goals, yet its implementation often overlooks the kind of TPD needed by teachers under classroom conditions. This study explores the conceptions of TPD within the dynamic and landscape of the Nine Years Continuous Basic Educational Reform (NYCBER) to understand how teachers and key stakeholders experience and make meaning of TPD.

Using a hermeneutic phenomenological approach, this study draws on dialogical interviews, document analysis and WordCloud to explore the lived-experiences of teachers, school leaders, lecturers of the Mauritius institute of Education and policymakers. For an idiographic account, the data was analysed using the Interpretive Phenomenological Approach (IPA) and hermeneutic circle. This analysis procedure facilitated double hermeneutics, offering a layered understanding that balances participants' perspectives with the researcher's insights. For a comprehensive structure, data analysis for the four clusters of educational stakeholders are categorised in four sections that are synthesized to discover broader themes.

The analysis of data reveals that there is a plethora of nuanced conceptions of TPD within the space of an ER. How each cluster of educational stakeholders views TPD is uniquely informed by the space they operate in, eliciting a complex and entangled reality of TPD. The key findings highlight five overarching conceptions of TPD that emerged from the complex interplay of these realities namely: Situational dynamics, justification of knowledge of TPD, level of professional discretion of educational stakeholders, fluidity of the reform agenda and lastly emotional dimensions of the reform processes. The five concepts were interpreted using a hybridized theoretical framework informed by Brofenbrenner's Ecological System Theory and Barad's Intra Action Theory.

Informed by the hybridized theoretical lenses, the thesis realized "Bounded-Temporality" and "Bounded-TPD-Contexts" as two novel perspectives for an updated conceptualization of TPD within the space of an ER. What seems downplayed in the crowded complexities of the ER is that "time" is bounded, suggesting that the progress and sequencing of the ER is relative to the kind of PD teachers require at specific "times" of the ER; and "TPD-contexts" also is bounded

suggesting that different micro-bounded-contexts operate within the bigger and broader ER context, and within that “bounded-ness” that TPD is conceptualised. Therefore, the study not only contributes to the theoretical discourses about the interplay of TPD in a reform context but it also offers practical guidance for designing TPD programs that are adaptive to the “bounded-temporality” and “bounded-TPD-contexts” needs of teachers.

**Key words:** *Education Reform, Teacher Professional Development, educational stakeholders, hermeneutic phenomenology, reform agenda, bounded-temporality, bounded-TPD-contexts*

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this thesis to:

1. Usman, my beloved nephew, whose courage and resilience as a visually impaired adolescent have been my greatest inspiration.
2. To all children and adolescents living with impairments, this work serves as a voice for your school experiences.
3. To my father, whom I lost last year. My mother, whose prayer is with me.
4. To my dearest well-wisher.
5. To my little fairy Soofiah, sister Saleemah and brother-in-law Nawaz.

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## **List of abbreviations**

<b>TPD</b>	Teacher Professional Development
<b>PD</b>	Professional Development
<b>ER</b>	Educational Reform
<b>NYCBE</b>	Nine Years Continuous Basic Education Reform
<b>NCE</b>	National Certificate of Education
<b>NCF</b>	National Curriculum Framework
<b>PSAC</b>	Primary School Achievement Certificate
<b>MIE</b>	Mauritius Institute of Education
<b>MoE</b>	Ministry of Education
<b>MOEHRTESR</b>	Ministry of Education, Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
<b>SDG 4</b>	Sustainable Development Goal 4
<b>EST</b>	Ecological System Theory
<b>IAT</b>	Intra-Action Theory
<b>SoS</b>	Scheme of Service

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# CHAPTER 1

## ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

### 1.1 Overview of the chapter

This thesis explores Teacher Professional Development (TPD) within the space of Educational Reform (ER) within the dynamic context of Educational Reform (ER). Chapter 1 positions TPD as the central focus, defining its significance while clarifying what is meant by ER and examining the national and international forces that drive reform efforts. The chapter also situates the study in its specific context by introducing Mauritius, charting key educational milestones to illuminate how TPD has evolved and why it is such a critical focus here. It then moves to articulate the problem statement, the rationale and significance of the research, essential definitions of key terms, and concludes with an overview of the thesis structure.

### 1.2 Introduction

Educational reform is a global phenomenon, responding to a plethora of drivers for change. In Mauritius, where this study was conducted, multiple reforms have been implemented over time. The most recent, introduced in 2015, is the Nine Years Continuous Basic Education (NYCBE), which serves as the focal point of this study. As is typical with Educational Reforms (ERs), teachers occupy a central role in enacting policy intentions at the classroom level. Accordingly, teachers must engage in targeted Teacher Professional Development (TPD) to understand and fulfil their roles and responsibilities in implementing these envisaged reform agendas. This study therefore focuses on Teacher Professional Development (TPD) for the implementation of Education Reform (ER), using Mauritius as the contextual setting. In this chapter I present a background to the study, highlighting the focus and purpose of the study.

Teacher Professional Development (TPD) is widely regarded as central to the success of ER, as it is through TPD that teachers, who are pivotal to the enactment of reforms, are expected to develop professionally to gear up the objectives set by the reform initiatives (Mogliacci et al., 2016). TPD is vitally important to ER (Datnow, 2020; Bredeson, 2000) and it demands high quality Professional Development programmes as an indispensable development tool (Sancar,

2021; Hefnawi, 2017). Proponents claim that success or failure of the reform depends on teachers and TPD (Haris, 2021; Penual et al., 2007), and on whether teachers have been given sufficient trainings and suitable coping mechanisms such as skills and knowledge to develop themselves professionally, and to be conversant with them. ER requires transforming TPD to meet urgent educational needs (Porter et al., 1994), and change requirements (Hefnawi, 2017). In responding to ER, teachers' roles and functions as professionals become more challenging and demanding as they are also expected to respond effectively to the systemic changes happening in the education system of the country. The challenges and issues surfacing around TPD during periods of reforms are seen to be multifarious and knotty and worthy of exploration with a view to question its impact on the desired reform outcomes (Penual et al., 2007) within the space of ER.

### **Harmonising the term “Teacher Professional Development” for this study**

The term TPD is seen to be flexible as it is manifested in different forms of actions and is based on different beliefs, value and contexts (Asghar & Ahmad, 2014). There is also the debate on whether TPD is understood as activities or a process. Therefore, to harmonize this term for the purpose of this study, I considered it thoughtful to provide a brief description of TPD in this chapter. It is important to highlight that I am not aiming to conceptualise TPD at this level as its key constructs and concepts will be discussed in Chapter two, six and seven. Firstly, Teacher Professional Development (TPD) is often used interchangeable with terms like professional and teacher learning (Thurlings & den Brok, 2018; Avalo, 2016), Continuous Professional Development (CPD) (Arifin, Suryaningsih & Arifudin, 2024; Widayati, MacCallum & Woods-McConney, 2021; Faulkner et al., 2019; Day & Leitch, 2007), Teacher Professional Learning (Deleon Sautu et al., 2025; Korthagen, 2017; Darling-Hammond et al., 2009), Teacher Professionalization (Berbegal Vázquez & Merino Orozco, 2024; Brass & Holloway, 2021; Eggleston, 2018) and Professional Education (Vreuls et al., 2022; Pereira, Lopes & Marta, 2015; Jarvis, 2018). While these terms somewhat meekly differ from each other, they are closely interconnected, representing ongoing learning and development of and for teachers. Therefore, given this close connection, I have opted to employ the term “Teacher Professional Development” in this study. Secondly, many studies have studied TPD in terms of formal and informal TPD programs and activities (Beyer, 2024; Khan, Haq & batool, 2023; Sachs, 1999; Opfer, 2011; Mizell, 2010; Darling-Hammond, 2010). On the other hand, there is the agreement by scholars that TPD is rather a process (Tan 2014; Bellibas and Gumus, 2016; Misra 2018; Hassel 1999). For Tan (2014), TPD is a process for learning; for Bellibas

and Gumus (2016), it is as a process of improving teacher knowledge, skills and behaviours which then impact positively in students' success; for Misra (2018), it is a process for ongoing TPD activities; and for Hassel (1999), it is the process of improving the needed skills and competences of staff for improvement in results. The discussion here highlights that TPD appears an isolated and vague concept when it is understood solely as a set of activities. However, when it is also understood as a process, its structure and coherence become clearer. Therefore, to bring harmony between the two, in this study, TPD will be considered as a process followed by professional development activities to achieve specific professional development goals or outcomes.

### **1.3 Context of the study**

#### **1.3.1 Situating Mauritius in the global context**

The need to move the education system from one condition to another is founded on manifold critical influences that the nation experiences. Socio-economic development and transformation is one of the major goals of an ER. As per Martinez et al., (2013), ER is a vehicle for development and social progress of a country and for the fulfilment of the 'worldwide' commitments made on the subject of education. In light of what Vasquez-Martinez et al., has advanced, ER of a country is linked to both national and international influences. At national level, ER agendas are linked to the socio-economic improvement and progress of the country and these national agendas are reciprocally linked to wider agendas which are more global. Shadowed by the influences of globalisation, each country is acting as a global economy. In Carnoy's (2000, p.43) words, "a global economy is one whose strategic, core activities, including innovation, finance, and corporate management, function on a planetary scale on real time." This 'globality' is the product and result of technological innovations providing easy communications and transportation between countries hence making capital, technology, management, information, and core markets globalized (Carnoy, 2000). As a result of this, Carnoy also stated that there is increased competition among nations in a more closely interlaced international economy. In response to this increasingly interconnected and competitive global landscape, numerous countries are adapting their educational system accordingly by undertaking significant changes through comprehensive ERs (Sahlberg, 2023; Jamil, Ahmad & Pudasaini, 2021; AbU-Shawish & Romanowski, 2021; Diano et al., 2023; Zajda, 2020). Ultimately, as Carnoy (2000) asserts, globalisation serves as

a critical determinant in shaping national priorities and directions for ER. It influences not only the content and structure of education systems but also the policies and frameworks through which reform is conceptualised and implemented. Thus, globalisation plays a foundational role in framing both the challenges and opportunities that education systems must navigate in their pursuit of relevance and excellence.

Educational reform is also influenced by global development agendas such as the Education For All (EFA) in 1990 in the Jomtien Convention also referred to as The World Declaration on Education For All, Dakar's framework in 2000 in which EFA was renewed by providing a framework for realizing EFA by 2015, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) published by the UN in 2000, the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) which is to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all' (UN, 2018, p.27) and the Incheon Declaration for Education 2030 with the goal for inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all (UNESCO,2016d). Positioned at the forefront, the SDG4 and the Incheon Declaration for Education 2030 are the most recent agendas which will keep education as a global priority for at least fifteen years.

Given the international agendas as a unifying focus for educational policies meant for all regions of the world (Martinez et al., 2013), many countries, mostly developing, have made a joint effort to respond to them through educational reforms (Kuroda, 2024; Diemer, Khushik & Ndiaye, 2020; Costan, 2021; Sayed & Moriarty, 2020) for which many of them are financed by international organizations, among which there is the World Bank, the major financer of educational projects of many countries (Bonal, Fontdevila & Zancajo, 2023; Edwards& Caravaca, 2024; Vorisek & Yu, 2020; Mundy & Verger, 2016). As stated on the official website of the World Bank Group (World Bank Group, 2020), "The World Bank Group is the largest financer of education in the developing world. We work on education programs in more than 80 countries and are committed to helping countries reach SD4, which calls for access to quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030." Along with being the world's leading provider of external funding for education, the World Bank also provides policy advice, analysis and technical assistance to its borrowing countries to support its policy goals (Edwards & Caravaca, 2024; Bromley et et., 2023; Ferdous, 2013; Bonal, 2002; Sarkar& Abdus Salam, 2011). As advanced by many, World Bank has a strong influence on setting the educational policies' agenda for countries (Ferdous, 2013) because of the power it holds as a loan provider. When financing educational projects, the Bank binds countries with its strict

loan conditionality (Bonal, 2002), strategies and ideas on educational and policy operations, which in return leaves the borrowing countries with little option (Jones, 2004). Many countries find themselves under the hegemony of the World Bank (Bonal, 2002; Ferdous, 2013; Klees, 2002). In a critical analysis of the World Bank Report, Klees (2002) clearly showed that the Bank has a control over every recommendation and decision though it refuses to admit it openly.

Finally, at this point of the discussion, it can, therefore, be said that Educational Reforms take place in a country as a consequence of multi-level influences emerging from both national and international level. Alike many other countries, mainly the developing ones, the education system of The Republic of Mauritius, too, does not function in isolation and is greatly impacted by the above discussed unavoidable influences. As already discussed, the macro level, global agendas have served as influential policy frameworks for national and international efforts in education development (Rowell, 2020; Tawil, 2006). In response to this, the macro level's aims and goals get translated into nation's aims and goals.

### **1.3.2 The Nine Years Continuous Basic Education(NYCBE) Reform as the space of this study**

This section positions the NYCBE Reform within the broader educational landscape of Mauritius, informing the phenomenon TPD. While the phenomenon under the microscope is TPD, situating it within its current and historical contexts provides foundational knowledge in understanding its evolution within varied contexts. Therefore, this section starts by presenting an overview of the Mauritian educational system tracing its history and path to reach where it is today. It then introduces the NYCBE Reform as the space of this study in light of policy documents. This section ends by positioning TPD in the NYCBE Reform space, the main context of this study.

### **1.3.3 Overview of the Mauritian educational system**

Mauritius forms part of the small island developing states (SIDS) in the Indian Ocean with a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic population of approximately 1.3 million as at the year 2024. Mauritius, which was a former British colony, gained independence in 1968 and since then, there has been constant evolution in the education system. The island has made huge and exemplary developments in a relatively short period of time in adjusting its education system

according to the needs of its own society (Ministry of Education, Culture and human Resources, 2009).

Today, the education sector of Mauritius is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research (MOEHRTSR). This Ministry chaperone and regulate all the education sectors namely, primary, secondary, tertiary, and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). It is also the parent ministry for parastatal bodies such as the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE), The Mauritius Examination Syndicate (MES), The Mahatma Gandhi Institute (MGI), to mention a few.

Since Mauritius was previously a British colony, its education system has celebrated the English Model of 3+6+5+2 a long way. The structure of that model was designed to first start with three years of pre-primary education followed by six years of primary education in the Primary Schools (state and private) leading to the (ex)Certificate of Primary Education examinations, then secondary education leading to the Cambridge School Certificate examinations after five years and two years of optional additional education leading to Cambridge Higher School Certificate examinations. This colonial trend continued until the implementation of the current NYCBE Reform in January 2016. Since the independence of Mauritius in 1968, the education system has undergone various reforms over the years, each aiming to ameliorate the system according to the national level and macro level agendas coming from international organisations such as UN, UNESCO and World Bank.

After consulting a number of educational documents, the following table was developed to present key milestones in the evolution of the Mauritian education system. It highlights significant signposts and development of the education system, and the place of TPD in the policies, that shows its evolution over time. The table provides a concise overview of both historical and contemporary developments and serves as a useful reference for understanding of the trajectory of educational progress in Mauritius.

Signposts in the Mauritian Education System	The development of the Education System	The place of TPD in the policies
Pre-Independence of Mauritius	In 1941, primary school was free but not compulsory. Not all children could afford to go to school due to poverty and limited schools. The proportion of children who could afford post-primary education was very small since it was payable (Ward, 1941). Post-primary education included five years till Cambridge School Certificate, and another two more years leading to English Scholarship examinations.	Teachers did not experience any TPD during that period.
1968	Mauritius got its independence from the British rulership in 1968. After the independence, primary education became compulsory for both boys and girls. Primary level examinations were set by Moray House, London with a final examination leading to the Junior Scholarship.	
1971-1975	The 1971-1975 plan was introduced. Some of the major points of the plan are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The plan proposed to give opportunity for secondary and vocational training for at least 60 % of boys in the age group 15 to 19 by 1980.</li> <li>• The plan came up with a balanced curriculum to include technical subjects and integrated sciences.</li> <li>• Equality of educational opportunity be given to all.</li> </ul>	In that phase, TPD was introduced in the form of minimal pre-service training for only primary sector.
1975-1980	The 1975-1980 plan was based on <b>Social and Economic Development</b> of Mauritius. The plan proposed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Democratised the education system.</li> <li>• Diversify the curricula.</li> <li>• Spread out schools and colleges evenly over the country so as to improve the balance between the urban and rural areas.</li> <li>• Adjust the education system to meet the manpower requirements.</li> </ul>	The MIE was set up. It provided teachers with pre-service teacher education on full-time basis to prepare teachers for the major educational changes.
1977	Major reforms took place in the Education System of Mauritius as from 1977 with the main purpose to Mauritianise and Modernise the system. Some of the changes in the reform are as follows:	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free secondary education was introduced in 1977. New schools were constructed in the form of 12 Junior Secondary Schools.</li> <li>• The Mauritius Institute of Education was set up as a national instrument of change and reform. It was set up to help the Ministry of Education to overcome the shortcomings of the then existing system (Mauritius Institute of Education, 1977).</li> <li>• The reform brought a change of the Junior Secondary Curriculum whereby students sat for Central Mauritius Examination at Form 3. The results of the Form 3 examinations were viewed as essential for guidance and placement of students for further education and training (Mauritius Institute of Education, 1977).</li> </ul> <p>During those years, the education system was similar to the British system with a minimum of six years of primary schooling which was the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE), five years of secondary education leading to School Certificate (SC) and lastly, another two years for Higher School Certificate (HSC).</p>	To note, the pre-service teacher education was specific to only the primary sector.
1980	The CPE Examinations were developed in 1980 in Mauritius (Report, 1978). Successful students attended private and state secondary schools and those who were not, were given the option to attend Community Schools.	
1991	The Master Plan of Education was published in 1991 to impart better education to the citizen of Mauritius.  Nine years compulsory basic education was in the plan. Then after the 9 <sup>th</sup> year, the student either goes for technical education or for academic.	
1998	The Action Plan which was proposed. It came forward with a 9 years schooling plan but it faced resistance and was never implemented.	
2000/2002	In 2002, an Educational Reform took place mainly with the key objective to erase the rat-race and competition that existed at the primary level. Before 2002, students who were taking part in the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE) were victims of severe competitions from a very tender age (11 years old) and had to fight to obtain the best rank in CPE exams to be able to get a seat in an elite secondary	

	<p>school. That competition predominantly deprived the students from developing important aspects like physical development, creativity, being responsible citizens and aesthetic appreciation just to mention a few, and made them focus on academic learning. Hence, the systemic Educational Reform of 2002 came up with a realistic and stress free education for the students. Some of the main changes in the education system are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The abolition of ranking at the CPE level and end the rat-race from a tender age.</li> <li>• Construction of 23 additional state secondary schools to accommodate the Form 1 students who passed the CPE.</li> <li>• Regionalising all state secondary schools for Form 1 admission.</li> <li>• Transformation of ‘star’ state secondary schools into Form VI colleges (HSC schools) which accommodated students of regional schools after they had passed the School Certificate Exams.</li> <li>• Setting up of Prevocational classes in regional state secondary schools for students who failed CPE twice.</li> <li>• The national goal ‘<b>Education For All</b>’ was being emphasized upon.</li> </ul> <p>Whilst one of the objectives of the reform was to reduce the competition, the cut-throat competition still existed. This time, students started to compete to get a seat in a state secondary regional school because seats in those schools were limited. The trauma of selecting the best school in the region gave rise to a different kind of competition.</p> <p>In addition to that, the education structure remained the same as the British model, that is, 1-2years (Pre-Primary) + 6years (Primary) + (3+2) years (Lower Secondary) + 2years (Upper Secondary).</p>	
2005	<p>With Education Act of 2005, school was made compulsory till the age of 16.</p> <p>The education system remained the same with no change in assessments and evaluations.</p>	
2006	<p>(Ministry of Education, 2006)</p> <p>In 2006, the Ministry of Education came up with a roadmap for Curriculum Reform which was put in place towards achieving the vision ‘<b>World Class Quality Education For All</b>’, by focusing mainly on</p>	<p>“No reform will ever be effective unless they (teachers) are</p>

	<p>Pre-Primary, Primary and Secondary education. The reform was about a comprehensive review of the curriculum at the three levels.</p> <p>For the Pre-Primary level, a new set of guidelines were setup. For the Primary level, the six-year primary education was divided into three stages of two-year span each with the aim of de-loading the curriculum and enable teachers to focus more easily on each stage for the development of basic skills.</p> <p>At secondary level, the structure remained more or less the same for the mainstream.</p> <p>The major change was that with this reform, prevocational students would be admitted in state secondary schools instead of isolating them.</p> <p>The plan for the reform also made mention about teacher education and training. It was clearly stated in the reform plan “No reform will be effective unless they are trained and supported continuously at school level, prior to the introduction of change, and also throughout the duration of the reform process” (p.16). The responsibility was given to the Mauritius Institute of Education to integrate in its regular training programmes all elements of the new curriculum.</p> <p>Despite this plan for Curriculum Reform, the education structure that prevailed since years remained unchanged with 6+5+2 structure.</p>	<p>trained and supported continuously at school level, prior to the introduction of the change, and also throughout the duration of the reform process.”</p>
2008-2014	<p>In 2008, the Educational Reform ‘<b>Learning For All</b>’ for 2008-2014 was proposed. It was a shift from 2006’s ‘Education For All’ to ‘Learning for All’.</p> <p>At the primary level, the National Curriculum Framework integrated various subjects like Human Values, Citizenship Education, The Arts, Sexuality Education, among other core subjects at Standard 1,2 and 3.</p> <p>At the secondary level, the National Curriculum Framework (2009) introduced new subjects.</p> <p>At the prevocational level, a reviewed curriculum was introduced in 2011 which targeted the CPE repeaters.</p> <p>The Reform also made mention of holistic development of learners.</p> <p>Co and extra-curricular activities were introduced.</p> <p>There was the introduction of formalized Activity Periods in the working timetable of all educators as from 2009.</p>	<p>“At a time when there is a popular and universal cry for innovation in the school and the classroom, School Heads and teachers cannot be allowed to remain in their comfort zone, falling back upon traditional headship and pedagogical practices.</p>

	<p>The Tablet PC project for the Form 4 and the Sankoré project for the primary level were mentioned as future plans.</p>	<p>Capacity building has thus become a standard feature of the Mauritian educational landscape.” (Ministry of Education, 2014, p. 83)</p>
<p>2015 till the thesis was submitted.</p>	<p>The Nine Year Continuous Basic Education (NYCBE) Educational Reform, the current reform, is a Systemic Reform.</p> <p>The innovation with the current reform is that it blends both primary and secondary education in a set of 9 years continuous basic schooling for all. The competitive CPE Examinations have been replaced by PSAC Examinations at the primary level. From here, students get a place in secondary schools as per their performance in PSAC Examinations and complete their 9-years schooling. From here, the students have the option to go to an Academy, stay in their regional school or go for technical institutions. Students who wish go to an Academy or stay in their respective school will have to follow the traditional British examinations are the Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) in collaboration with the Mauritius Examination Syndicate (MES).</p> <p>The NYCBE Reform has been set in line with the <b>Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 4)</b> which is about inclusive and equitable quality education for all and lifelong learning.</p> <p>Currently, the <b>World Bank</b> is supporting the implementation of the NYCBE Reform in Mauritius (The World Bank website, 2019)</p> <p>The Nine Years Continuous Basic Education (NYCBE) Reform also known as the Nine Years Schooling (NYS) was first implemented in the primary schools in January 2016 and secondary schools in January 2018.</p>	<p>For the first time, secondary school teachers were given in-service training for the purpose of an ER.</p> <p>And for the first time Post Graduation Certificate became a compulsory qualification for candidates who were interested to postulate in secondary teaching sector.</p>

Table 1: Key milestones in the education system of Mauritius

Just like any other reforms, the Nine Years Continuous Basic Schooling (NYCBS) reform is a whole set of reforms aimed at strategically transforming the education system. The reform project is in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goal 4 on Education which is to ‘ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all’ (National Curriculum Framework Nine Years Continuous Basic Education, 2015), and which in return is responding to the universal 2030 Education agenda which emphasizes on early childhood learning to youth and adult education and training, the acquisition of skills for work, the importance of citizenship education, inclusion, equity and gender equality, and lifelong quality learning outcomes for all (Hinzen & Schmitt, 2016).

In the name of “inclusion”, firstly, the four-years-Extended Program (known as the Extended Program), previously termed as the Pre-Vocational stream has been introduced as one of the major reforms. This program targets the students who have not been able to attain the Primary School Achievement Certificate (PSAC). The students who normally form part of the Extended program are those who have undergone academic difficulties due to various social, family and health problems, among others. Though their fragile backgrounds, these students have to sit for the same National Certificate Examinations (NCE) as the mainstream students. The only difference between the Extended Program (EP) students and the mainstream ones are that the EP students are accorded one additional year to prepare themselves to sit for the NCE.

Secondly, in the name of “inclusion”, students with special needs have been included in the mainstream classes. Students with visual impairments and autism spectrum disorders are among the most common ones who are included with the mainstream students, having to follow the same kind of teaching like any other. There are no special arrangements for these students unfortunately. For instance, a student with 70% of visual impairment have to do the same subjects like others by the same classroom teacher who has not been trained to deal with these kind of students. Both, students with special education needs and those in the Extended Programs are compelled to follow the same syllabus as the mainstream counterparts. This aspect of the current ER has been strongly criticised by all the concerned educational stakeholders in terms of its implementation and practicality (Defimedia, 2018).

### **1.3.4 Positioning TPD within the NYCBE Reform space**

In the endeavour to transform the education system, the NYCBE Reform embraces a systemic and holistic approach. The Reform agenda is built on six major pillars to achieve the desired impact on the teaching and learning process namely:

1. Curriculum change
2. Innovative pedagogies
3. Meaningful assessment
4. Continuous Professional Development
5. The learning environment
6. System governance and accountability

(Inspiring Every Child, 2016)

At this point, it is crucial to note that during the 2006 and 2014 reforms, teachers' development was recognized as crucial during the signposts enumerated in the above table, however, in-service TPD during an ER was only documented in policies without putting it into action. TPD within reform contexts appeared to be of low priority and mostly insignificant until the influx of the NYCBE Reform in 2016. For the first time in the education history, TPD was inducted within the ER context of Mauritius. As one of the main drivers of the reform agenda, it acknowledges teachers' preparedness and empowerment as important factors in the effective delivery of the new curriculum. The 4<sup>th</sup> pillar also emphasises that TPD will be strengthened with the aim to foster a culture of learning among teachers.

In view of the fact that the ER focuses predominantly on the Extended Program, the secondary schooling sector is generally concerned. Consequently, at the initiation of the ER in 2017, teachers (of secondary schools) who were targeted to teach in the Extended Program classes were prescribed workshops and training sessions (TPD) at the Mauritius Institute of Education.

## **1.4 Understanding the problematic of this study**

Teacher Professional Development has been widely recognized as a key factor in improving educational quality and ensuring the success of educational reforms (Arcaro, 2024; Gore, 2021; Haug & Mork, 2021; Demchento et al., 2021; Budiharso & Tamani, 2020; Osman & Warner, 2020; Darling-Hammond, 2017; Kennedy, 2016; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011;

Borko et al., 2010; Mizell, 2020). Studies consistently highlight that TPD is indispensable for reform success. However, they (studies) also underscore that in contexts of educational reforms, its effectiveness often differs significantly. During reform periods, TPD becomes essential for helping teachers adapt to policy shifts (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017), such as curriculum, pedagogy, assessment modes and new students. Therefore, to address the ER challenges, such as the introduction of inclusive education or new curriculum, there is the need for targeted TPD, ensuring that teachers feel prepared and supported. Moreover, going backward in literature but still relevant to this study, Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) argue that PD needs to address specific socio-cultural contexts during reform implementation. Hence, within ER spaces, the significance of TPD fluctuates according to specific demands, challenges, and goals of the ER. However, despite TPD's recognized importance, its implementation often fails to meet the specific needs of teachers, particularly in contexts of national ERs such as Mauritius's Nine Years Continuous Basic Education Reform (NYCBE Reform).

While implementing a globally accepted agenda (SDG 4) with a state-of-art National Curriculum Framework (NCF), there are critical contextual, social and daily classroom realities that can lead teachers to face major challenges during the ER implementation. After the above review (above sections) of the Mauritian reform policies in education with specific attention to TPD, it is understood that educational decision at national level is regulated by higher level officers (policymakers/decision makers) of the Ministry of Education. Moreover, the Minister of Education has the power to make rules to the training of teachers (Education Act, 39/1957). Hence, the TPD activities and policies that were implemented were directives from the higher level officers of the Ministry. At the initiation of this policy, teachers suddenly found themselves amidst a new system with new curriculum (from Grade 7 to Grade 9) and new students (Extended Programme and SEN students). Given this situation, a number of studies (as already mentioned in the first paragraph of this section) highlighted the importance of TPD in addressing the emerging challenges within a reform context.

The current NYCBE Reform has emphasized TPD as integral to the implementation. For instance, the website of the Ministry of Education, Human Resources, tertiary Education and Scientific Research

<https://education.govmu.org/Documents/educationsector/nys/Documents/NYS%20Brochure>

[%20Secondary%20English%20\(Viewing\)%20FINAL%20121217.pdf](#)) strongly emphasized the following three points:

1. Sustaining teacher training programme to prepare Educators to deliver the curriculum effectively as well as plan and manage diverse assessment tools and methods.
2. Provision for capacity building and continuous professional development of school staff for greater empowerment and higher professional standards.
3. The educators will be provided necessary support and training by the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE). Capacity building will be sustained through continuous professional development by the Ministry of Education in close collaboration with all stakeholders.

The above three points highlighted by the Ministry relates to the inclusion of the new Extended Program (EP) in all secondary schools. These students who are the ex-prevocational students were previously (before the NYCBE Reform) being taught by prevocational teachers. With the arrival of the current ER, the ‘prevocational’ term was abandoned and renamed under the term “Extended Program”. However, this time it was the mainstream teachers who got the responsibility to teach the EP. To note, the above three points relate to the mainstream teachers for whom the EP students were a completely new experience. For this reason, the Ministry aimed to train the mainstream teachers to implement the EP curriculum (NCF, 2017 & Ministry Website).

Under the current reform, the EP students are expected to benefit from a “*differentiated pedagogy, appropriate learning materials, conducive learning environment and adapted assessment so as to achieve the agreed learning objectives*” (MIE, 2017, pg 5). Moreover, the EP also aim to reconnect the learner with school and provide remedial education and “*learning support to address learning difficulties*” (pg.21). This indicates that there were high expectations from the mainstream teachers who would be teaching these students. In a study by Hurreeram (2019) with Mauritian prevocational teachers, data revealed that the fast evolving ER adversely affected the practice and TPD of his participants. The question here is that if the prevocational teachers who had been working with the EP (ex-prevocational) students for years were experiencing challenges with the ER implementation, then how mainstream teachers were managing and teaching the students? The answer to this question may be uncovered in the NCE’s results of the first batch of the EP students attached in Appendix 10 ((Mauritius Examination Syndicate Website). The results visibly indicate that

learning did not take place. Student learning is associated with teaching effectiveness (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). If student learning has not taken place, it is not the mainstream teachers' inherent effectiveness that should be questioned, but rather the adequacy and design of their TPD that should be robustly questioned.

Within the space of an ER, teachers may have followed trainings and workshops but to what extent their PD has been positively impacted is a critical question. Despite the recognition of the importance of TPD during systemic reforms, its implementation often fails to meet the specific needs of teachers due to various reasons (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). For instance, generic top-down approaches used for systemic reforms often fail to consider the unique realities of the educational systems (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). While recent trends emphasize collaborative and community-based learning strategies, such as professional networks in meeting teachers' immediate needs (Mu et al., 2018), there is, however, limited studies focusing on how teachers conceptualise TPD within the space of an ER. There is also an obvious dearth of studies on how teachers' conceptions of TPD defines their classroom practices within an ER.

Regardless of the increased focus on TPD as a critical driver of successful ER, challenges persist in ensuring that PD initiatives effectively align with the goals of the ER, and simultaneously meet the needs of teachers. This gap is particularly problematic in reform settings, where misalignment between reform goals and TPD initiatives can lead to implementation challenges and diminished reform outcomes (Ell & Major, 2019). This may have implications for other educational stakeholders in the system also who are directly related to TPD within the ER. All educational stakeholders share a common goal (the SDG 4), however, because each has a different role in the education system, there may be conflicting views on TPD among them (Shen et al., 2010). Noticeably, these conflicts or divergences in TPD perspectives have rarely been addressed in the literature. There is a visible neglect about the interconnected roles of multiple educational stakeholders and the systemic nature of TPD during ER processes. Hence, this neglect poses a significant barrier to designing effective and sustainable TPD programs that are responsive to the realities of ER. Addressing this issue is critical for ensuring that reforms achieve their intended impact on teacher practice and student learning. Therefore, this study aims to explore TPD within the context of ER, focusing on the perspectives of multiple educational stakeholders and their meaning-making in shaping TPD. Therefore, by addressing these gaps, the study seeks to contribute to a more nuanced and

comprehensive understanding of TPD within the space of an ER and inform the design of more context-sensitive TPD programs.

#### **1.4.1 Critical Questions of the Study**

This study aimed to explore the conceptions of Teacher Professional Development within the space of an ER through the perspectives of multiple educational stakeholders who are directly concerned with TPD. The related three critical questions that guided the study were:

- (1) What are the conceptions of TPD through the perspectives of educational stakeholders within the space of Educational Reform?
- (2) How is TPD conceptualized by educational stakeholders within the space of Educational Reform?
- (3) Why is TPD conceptualized in the way it is by educational stakeholders within the space of Educational Reform?

#### **1.5 Rationale and significance of this study**

This study aimed to contribute to the growing area of TPD by exploring and engaging with different educational stakeholders' perspectives within the context of an ER. For the purpose of clarity and orderliness of this section, first, I discuss my interest and justification for conducting this study. Before elaborating my motivation from a researcher's perspective, I present my motivation and justification for this study from personal and professional experiences of ERs and TPD. The section also provides a view of the big discourses around TPD and ER and how my study intends to contribute towards that discourse. Alongside the rationale, the significance of the study also has been underscored whereby its contribution to the main proponents is described.

##### **1.5.1 Personal motivation and interest**

This study is grounded in my personal experiences and interests in TPD. As Denscombe (2002, p.34) highlights, "as far as social research is concerned, decisions about what to investigate frequently reflect the personal interests of the researcher". This does not mean that my interest in this phenomenon has emerged as a result of bad experiences of TPD, instead, it has taken shape as regards to gaining knowledge and develop understanding of TPD that appeared like a 'wild' phenomenon with no direction provoking obnoxious experiences at personal and

professional level. At this point, I have to acknowledge my positionality as a teacher and ‘parent’ experiencing TPD within the ER context.

The NYCBE Reform has taken bold steps towards in the name of “inclusivity” by including students who have not attained the PSAC and students with ‘special needs’ in the same system as the mainstream ones. This step has received more negative reviews than positive ones from a big majority of teachers, parents and all concerned stakeholders. Considering this, I wish to highlight that besides being a teacher, I am a ‘parent’ of a visually impaired adolescent (with approximately 70% impairment level) who is now studying in a State Secondary School (SSS) of Mauritius. Despite his visual challenges, the system drives him to sit with mainstream students and get the same kind explanation and service from teachers like any other students in the class. During more social classes like Physical Education and activity-based classes, teachers often overlook his inclusion in group activities, which are critical for social development. Given his situation, he is dependent on teachers for adaptation and learning supports, which unfortunately are absent. As a consequence, his unmet needs at school and in the classroom, definitely affects his performance. From a parental perspective, there is a clear sense of ‘exclusion’ rather than ‘inclusion’ for my child within the current education system. Instances of isolation in the classroom, particularly when teachers are occupied with other students, raise serious concerns about the effectiveness of ‘inclusive’ practices in State Secondary schools of Mauritius. At this point, I question the system and the the kind of teachers who are failing to educate him. This situation prompts me to critically reflect on the preparedness of teachers and the adequacy of the training they receive. Specifically, it raises questions about whether the TPD initiatives provided by the authorities effectively address ‘inclusive education’ and the needs of students with disabilities in State Secondary Schools.

### **1.5.2 Professional interest and justification**

From the perspective of a teacher, I find myself in a more convenient position to understand my ‘parent-perspective’. Forming part of the ER, working with the EP students and experiencing another visually impaired (100% blind) student at my workplace, I reflected on teachers’ role in addressing the needs of these students. While teachers are instrumental in creating an inclusive environment, they may often fail in this endeavour due to lack of knowledge and know-how about handling these students in a mainstream classroom. From a teacher’s perspective, insufficient TPD (training and workshops) in working with these students appear to be most crucial factor. Teachers lack the knowledge on how to balance the

needs of these students with those of the wider class.

On a final note, the experience of two students with visual impairments at my school, one completely blind and using Braille, the other partially sighted, highlight profound shortcomings in the public education system's claims of 'inclusivity.' Their persistent struggles to navigate a rigid, competitive schooling model, which has forced them to repeat multiple grades, call into question the sincerity and effectiveness of inclusive initiatives of the ER. Critically, these cases expose a glaring gap in TPD: where precisely, is the preparation for genuine inclusiveness embedded in the TPD initiatives?

As a teacher, I find it crucial to understand what constitute PD and what is expected of me, and what is expected from other teachers also. Therefore, this study was opted to give me that perspective of how teachers need to understand who they are with regard to the ER and how they take their TPD to cater for the "inclusive" education, hence, responding to the learners' needs. I questioned the limited TPD support from Rectors and if there was a link between how they understand TPD. I also questioned the kind of TPD that teachers received from the MIE and how its in-service TPD for the ER landed where it was. I wanted to understand how they understand TPD. At the same time, I was aware that the NYCBE Reform policy agenda has its roots from 'above' and that the all decisions come from 'above'. Hence, I wanted to understand how do those policymakers and decision-makers view the ER and TPD.

### **1.5.3 Scholarly interest and justification**

From a researcher's perspective, it can be said that the literature has revealed a myriad of studies conducted in the field of TPD and ER. For instance, Bantwini (2010) focused on the way teachers perceive the new curriculum reform by taking into account teachers' perceptions and meanings that are attributed to the ER. In another study, Islami, Anantanukulwong and Faikhamta (2022), investigated the trends of PD strategies and learning outcomes that proved to be useful during ERs for addressing diverse learning needs and managing multicultural classrooms. Freeman (2023), explored new frameworks to understand how teachers learn in TPD. Roux (2018) explored the role of teacher motivation and teacher satisfaction during the implementation of a new language policy in Mexico. In the same line, a study conducted by Starkey et al., (2008), evaluates how TPD during the embedding stage of a national reform may differ fundamentally from other forms of teacher education and professional development. Apart from these, several other studies interrelated to TDP and ER have been conducted focusing on policymakers', teacher educators' and principals' role within the space of ER.

After profound and extensive reading, it can be argued that there is the need to contribute in the literature on the way different groups of educational stakeholders conceptualise TPD within the space of ER. Studies on professional development are many, but after thorough readings I observed that few studies related to the lived experiences of different stakeholders within the space of ER exist. The gap between the perspectives of different educational stakeholders on TPD within the space of ER has been hardly explored altogether. Studies providing a picture of the lived experiences of all the educational stakeholders on TPD is seriously limited. Since TPD is being studied contextually, the gap between the perspectives of different educational stakeholders that is seen in the Mauritian context is, therefore, needed to be explored and understood to inform the NYCBE Reform process that was unfolding. Hence, this study expected to contribute to the immediate need within the Mauritian ER process as well as contribute to the international literature based on varying perspectives on TPD amongst the stakeholders of education. Additionally, this study can also help in uncovering critical areas in TPD process within the space of ER that many researchers can find useful to further plan to explore in this field. It can be said that, part of what this study aimed to achieve is to make a contribution towards filling that void.

As my concluding comment, this study's focus was primarily based on my personal and professional interest. Then, literature highlighted that there was a need to develop a comprehensive understanding of TPD from each group of educational perspectives namely, teachers, Rectors, MIE lecturers and policymakers so that this contribute to bring their perspectives and experiences to TPD within an ER. As such, by gaining their nuanced understanding of TPD, the study sought to benefit from a holistic view of the problematic. Finally, as the environments of each group of educational stakeholders are interconnected, it became a motivation for me to understand how they view TPD and how their views impact teachers' TPD and practice. Thus, in my view, this study served as a compass to obtain the voices of all stakeholders in the complexities of the phenomenon and contribute to the growing body of knowledge in the field.

## **1.6 Outline of the thesis**

The thesis constitutes seven chapters.

The first chapter introduces the background and context of the study. It then explores the interplay between TPD and ER by presenting the research problem. The research problem articulates the issues and gaps in knowledge the thesis addresses. The chapter also discussed the broader context indicating from where the study is coming. Lastly, the rationale of the study is presented where I articulate my motivation and interest to the study.

The second chapter provides a microscopic overview of TPD. It starts with the evolution of TPD, discussing how TPD became a profession overtime. It addresses contemporary debates and challenges around TPD in different contexts. It also reviews prior research related to TPD, identifying gaps in the literature. The chapter ends by discussing futurere directions for TPD within an ER.

The third chapter explains and discusses the theories underpinning the research. First, it presents Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System Theory as a lens to for TPD within an ER. Secondly, it presents Barad's Intra-Action Theory to complement the Ecological System Theory. Thirdly, the chapter produces a hybridized framework using the two theories for interpretation and also serving as a basis for the study's contribution to the body of knowledge.

The fourth chapter explains the research methodology. It starts by justification of opting for a qualitative design and hermeneutic phenomenology as the methodology of the study. it emphasizes on the importance of the lived-experiences of the educational stakeholders as the main data source. The chapter further explains and justifies the data production protocol and sampling. It also elaborates on Interpretive Phenomenological Approach (IPA) and hermeneutic circle for data analysis procedure. Lastly, the description of ethical protocols and limitations of the study are presented.

The fifth chapter focuses on data presentation and analysis. The chapter is divided into four sections namely Section A for teachers, Section B for Rectors, Section C for MIE lecturers and Section D for policymakers. Supported by vignettes from interviews, the four sections are presented thematically.

The sixth chapter brings all the four sections together to present the interrelationships between each category of educational stakeholders in the form of broader themes. This chapter draws from the theoretical lenses and literature to create a conceptual framework with the broad themes that emerged.

The seventh chapter is divided in two sections, namely Section A and B. Section A presents two novel perspectives of TPD, as my main contributions to theory. The chapter deeply discusses how EST and IAT paves the way to the two novel perspectives. Section B presents my concluding comments in the form of the study's implications, limitations and self-reflections.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **PLACING TPD UNDER THE MICROSCOPE**

##### **2.1 Introduction**

Chapter one introduced TPD as the phenomenon of the study by contextualising and problematizing it within the ER context. This chapter situates TPD within the broader empirical landscape. In the face of ongoing changes in educational policies and practices, TPD has become a central focus of research and practice. Understanding how TPD is conceptualized, implemented, and experienced within the dynamic and complex landscape of ERs is essential to situate the challenges faced by teachers and stakeholders alike. The chapter provides a comprehensive review of the existing literature on TPD, with particular attention to its role during ERs.

##### **2.2 Overview of the chapter**

The structure of this chapter reflects a systematic approach to the review. It starts by first exploring the historical context of TPD, tracing how it has evolved overtime to support the development of teaching as a profession. This section also considers what it means to be a professional within the education sector. The second part explores recent trends on TPD, including site-based, self-directed, and hybrid models, and their alignment with evolving educational priorities. It critically examines key TPD concepts and approaches that underpin TPD research, exploring their relevance in capturing the multifaceted and context-dependent nature of professional growth. It further explores how contemporary reforms challenge the traditional approached to professional development and learning, and highlight the processes and outcomes. The chapter also considers how different educational stakeholders perceive and contribute to TPD during reform periods. Lastly, the research gaps are highlighted and the need to gain deeper insight on TPD within a reform context.

## **2.3 The route from profession to Teacher Professional Development**

The concept of Teacher Professional Development will remain blurred without unpacking ‘profession’ and the ‘teaching profession’. Noting that this study is underpinned by hermeneutic phenomenology, this section would first trace the concept of ‘profession’ by exploring the historical context of professions, their transformation, and their current conceptual constructs. It further discusses teaching as a profession and teachers as professionals by examining ongoing debates in the educational field.

### **2.3.1 Professions and professionalization over time**

Profession has its roots in history, dating back to medieval times (Delosa, 2023) and classical civilizations (Sareh, 2013) where certain roles were deeply rooted in the societal structures. During the medieval guild system, the concept of job surfaced as societies shifted from nomadic customs to skilled communities. These jobs were profoundly interweaved with survival, ranging from hunting and crafting tools and shelters (Sulaiman, 2016). As civilisation prospered, so did the range of professions, creating a mixture of skilled trades, crafts, and roles that shaped the course of history. This specialisation led to the ‘beginning’ of professions and occupations, founding a structured workforce. The skilled trades were regulated and standardized (McDonald, 1995). Professions such as medicine and law emerged from these guilds, as they were considered as fundamental needs to society. These roles were characterized by a defined set of specialized knowledge, ethical standards, and a commitment to serving the public (Freidson, 2001).

With time, starting in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, novel understandings of profession began to take shape during the Industrial Revolution. That era marked the rapid growth of industries. It brought about a significant shift in the nature of work as it brought about mechanization, factories, and a shift from agrarian economies to industrial ones (Varriale, Bartoletto & Sabiu, 2024). The expansion of industries and the rise of new forms of work created the need for more formally recognized and regulated occupations. The Industrial Revolution initiated a need for specialized knowledge and technical skills, which led to the development of formal education and training programs. Professions became more defined by expertise that required advanced

study. Consequently, professions started to be institutionalised through the creation of professional associations and regulatory bodies. These associations not only provided formal recognition for professionals but also assisted in *controlling* entry into the professions, ensuring that only qualified individuals could practice (Abbott, 1988). By the end of the nineteenth century, the English Parliament started to regulate associations systematically, in order to provide some assurance that practitioners of certain professions owned a minimum level of competence (Sareh, 2013). Max Weber (1970) highlighted the role of credentialism and formal qualifications in the *professionalization* process, emphasizing how professions distinguish themselves from other occupations through specialized education and institutional recognition. These reformed social hierarchies gave rise to the *professionalization* of many fields. Fields like engineering became a formal profession as industries needed trained experts like engineers to design factories, railways, and machinery. At this juncture, education became a critical path to *professionalization*, with universities and specialized institutions offering the qualifications necessary to pursue professional careers (Abbott, 1988). The Industrial Revolution was a transformative period for the concept of professions. This process of *professionalization* distinguishes skilled professionals from the growing ranks of industrial labours. As economies became more complex, professions became increasingly defined by specialized knowledge, formal education, and institutional recognition.

The Post-Industrial Revolution phase, brightened by the twentieth century can be considered as the modern era of professions. During that phase, professions underwent significant transformations due to various factors, including industrialization, globalization, and technological advancements, giving rise to new industries. There was substantial impact of globalization on the evolution of professions, transforming both the nature and scope of professional work within diverse sectors (Beck, 2000; Hanlon, 1998; Evetts, 2011; Freidson, 2001). Globalization has augmented the interconnectedness of economies, markets, and cultures, resulting in new demands for professionals to adjust to global standards and practices. According to Ho and Chan (2023), globalization has led to the internationalization of professional norms, whereby professionals across the globe are increasingly subject to similar regulatory frameworks, ethical standards, and performance metrics. This shift has fostered a more homogenized understanding of *professionalism*, reducing differences across regions and heightening mobility for professionals seeking international opportunities.

The influence of globalization is rapidly changing the concept of professions, adding new descriptions in its definition. Murray and Overton (2014) argue that the globalization of professions has created competitive pressures, as organizations and individuals strive to meet global benchmarks. This competitive space has brought innovation in professional training and development by emphasizing on lifelong learning and development and skills acquisition to remain relevant in a rapidly changing global market. Evetts (2021) expands on this, noting that the *professionalization* process has been influenced by neoliberal ideologies, where market-driven forces shape professional roles and expectations, often resulting in the commercialization of professions. Adding to this, Donnelly (2023) highlights that while globalization has expanded professional opportunities, it has also generated challenges, specifically for professions that are highly localized or context-dependent.

With the advent of the digital age, professions continue to evolve. There are significant shifts in the nature of work, professional identities, and skill demands. Digital technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), mechanization, robotics and data analytics, have transformed professional practices, making them more efficient and dependent on technology. According to Donnelly (2023), the rise of digital tools has redefined the boundaries of professional expertise, as professionals highly rely on data-driven decision-making and automated systems. This has led to growing emphasis on digital literacy and technical skills as core components of professional development. In an article, Smith (2022) explored the evolving nature of professions in light of technological developments. It discusses how technology is redesigning the roles, responsibilities, and required skill sets of professionals throughout diverse industries. The authors note that traditional markers of professions, such as specialized knowledge, autonomy, and ethics, are being challenged by the integration of technology, which is revising both the workflow and professional identity. The review highlights that while some professions are experiencing enhancement and greater efficiency due to technology, others are confronting disruptions, leading to a redefinition of what it means to be a professional in modern context. In the article “Professionalism in the Age of Artificial Intelligence: Challenges and Opportunities” by Ho and Chan (2023), the authors explore how artificial intelligence (AI) is redefining the concept of professionalism, highlighting that professional competence is no longer solely about specialized knowledge. It increasingly includes the ability to work alongside AI technologies, manage ethical concerns, and continuously update one’s skills to stay relevant. Ho and Chan (2023) emphasize that AI is challenging traditional

concepts of professionalism but also creating new opportunities for growth and evolution within various fields.

Evetts (2021) notes that as technology and globalization drive changes in industries, new types of professions and professional roles are emerging, blending traditional professions with new skills and responsibilities. Evettes (2021) argues that the concept of profession is becoming more fluid, shaped by economic, technological, and organizational changes that are redefining traditional notions of professional work. Within the age of the digital world, Donnelly (2023) argues that the post-pandemic world is restructuring professions, with an increased emphasis on adaptability, digital competence, and cross-disciplinary collaboration as essential elements of modern professionalism. He points out that professions are increasingly adopting *hybrid models of work*, blending in-person and remote tasks.

The review provided traces of the historical and evolving concept of a “profession” by unpacking the broader concept of professions. This historical background is critical for understanding the modern professionalization process. Industrial Revolution, globalization and technology have accounted for the shifting nature of professions and professional identities. Despite the clarity that history provides, the conceptualization of profession in the current era is still evolving.

### **2.3.2 The evolution of Teacher Professional Development (key concepts)**

Profession, teaching profession and teacher professional development has experienced a simultaneous evolution. While previous section explored profession at different point in time, this section will focus on key developments that have shaped the teaching profession, from early origins to its current form, and how Teacher Professional Development emerged from it.

Similar to profession, the teaching profession has undergone significant evolution overtime, shaped by various historical phases, socio-political, economic, and technological factors. In its early forms, teaching was often informal, with religious leaders, community elders, or family members passing down knowledge to the younger generations (Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996). This approach was *informal and largely unstructured*.

As education became more formalized in the nineteenth century, particularly in the Western nations, where Industrial Revolution was taking place, teaching started to take the form of a more formal structure. As elaborated in Section 2.3, the Industrial Revolution initiated a need for specialized knowledge and technical skills, which led to the development of formal education and training programs. Consequently, the teaching profession directly experienced the impact of this ‘need’. In the twentieth century, as public education systems expanded, particularly in Europe and north America, there was a growing demand for trained teachers to meet the need of an increasingly literate population. Teacher Professional Development started to take the form of *standardized training*. There started to have establishments and institutions to train teachers which were more in the form of standardized teacher preparation by offering formal courses. These programs were typically delivered in a top-down manner, with little input from teachers themselves.

At the start of the twentieth century, teachers themselves became highly educated. The education requirements for teachers continued to rise (Darling-Hammond & Berry, 1988). The move toward *professionalization* came with the establishment of state education systems, teacher training colleges, and certification requirements. They eventually became *professionals with specialized knowledge* in pedagogy, subject matter, and child development. The expansion of compulsory education and the growing complexity of curricula further emphasized the need for professional teachers who could meet the educational needs of diverse student populations (Darling-Hammond, 2006). However, traditional training model was characterized by one-size-fits-all workshops, where teachers attended sessions that were often disconnected from their specific needs and classroom contexts. While these workshops provided opportunities for teachers to learn new skills, they were often criticised for being too generic and not sufficiently tailored to individual teachers’ needs. Additionally, increasing public regulation of teaching decreased the control of teachers over what is taught and how it is taught, lessening their *professional responsibility and autonomy* (Darling-Hammond & Berry, 1988).

By the end of the twentieth century and as the twenty-first century began, there was a growing recognition of the importance of lifelong learning for teachers. The concept of *Continuous Professional Development* (CPD) began to gain traction, emphasizing the need for teachers to engage in ongoing learning throughout their careers. This shift in the teaching profession was influenced by globalization, technological advancements, changes in the labour market, and

the increasing complexity of the teaching profession. Globalization has led to the internationalization of educational standards, resulting in a more standardized approach to teaching across different countries. International assessments like PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) impacted the teaching profession by introducing international benchmarks for educational standards and practices. As a response to these global educational reforms, Teacher Professional Development started to take the form of *continuous growth, self-assessment and reflective practice* (Calderhead., 2021; McGar, 2021; Farrell, 2020; McChesney & Aldridge, 2021; Tal & Bitan, 2024). With this impact, TPD became globalized as there was the creation of *transnational professional learning networks*, where teachers across the world can share resources, strategies, and experiences. Networks like MOOCS, seminars and webinars have become a crucial tool for TPD (Misra, 2018). Moreover, international organizations such as the OECD and World Bank have played a role in shaping TPD policies, often promoting standardization, accountability, and measurable outcomes (Boesken, Nusche & Yurita, 2020; Fraser, 2017; Pesambili, Sayed & Stambach, 2022). This is followed by increasing control over curriculum, assessments, and teaching methods that have eroded the professional autonomy of teachers. With top-down mandates from policy-makers and administrators, teachers may feel restricted in their ability to tailor their teaching to the needs of their students (Evetts, 2021). In response to these pressures, some scholars argue for a rethinking of how teaching is valued in society.

In the late twentieth century and till date (the twenty-first century), the shift in the teaching profession and TPD occurred by technological advancements (Brown, 2013; Brown et al., 1999). In the late twentieth century, TPD began integrating basic technological tools, such as educational software and the use of computers in schools. TPD was still conducted through in-person workshops where teachers were trained on how to use specific software or hardware. At the rise of the twenty-first century, with the expansion of the internet, *TPD moved into the online learning space* (Paulus, Villegas & Howze-Owens, 2020). Access to webinars, seminars, online tutorials and educational forums were easier. TPD at this stage took the form of *asynchronous learning* as teachers could learn at their own pace. As the digital era progressed, it opened more doors to teachers for their PD. There started to have blended learning and personalized TPD with MOOCS (Massive Open Online Courses) social media integration like Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook and many more. Professional Learning Networks (PLNs) became more accessible, facilitating TPD (Philipsen et al., 2019). Within years, TPD started to happen through LMS (Learning Management Systems) such as Google Classroom,

Canvas, Moodle, Teams, Blackboard, Gamification and many more where teachers could access professional development resources in real-time (Liu & Geertshuis, 2021; Krasnova & Shurygin, 2020). Soon after, with coming of the COVID-19 pandemic as a catalyst, teachers rapidly had to shift toward digital TPD to be able to meet the needs of remote learning (Kalman, Kalender & Cesur, 2022; Marek, Chew & Wu, 2021). Teachers had to adapt quickly to new technologies, leading to a surge in virtual TPD offerings where teachers developed the skills needed for remote and hybrid instruction. During this period, TPD emphasized developing teachers' digital literacy and pedagogical skills for online learning environments. To meet the urgencies of the needs during the pandemic, *'just-in-time'* TPD took form where experienced educators provided personalized support to colleague via online platforms. After the Covid-19 era, Artificial Intelligence(AI) integrated into education (Filgueiras, 2024; Kamalov, Santandreu & Gurrib, 2023; Ouyang & Jiao, 2021). Teachers are now starting to learn to use AI-Driven platforms like adaptive learning systems that tailor educational content to student needs. AI is also shaping TPD (Nazaretsky et al., 2022; Cukurova et al., 2024; Tomaskinova et al., 2024) by providing personalized learning paths like Predictive Analytics and AI-enhanced feedback (Edthena and TeachFX) to teachers based on their experiences and skill levels.

### **2.3.3 Contemporary Key concepts of Teacher Professional Development**

The precedent section highlighted key concepts overtime in the form of informal and unstructured TPD and gradually moving towards more structured ones in the form of standardized training, TPD as specialized knowledge, professional autonomy, Continuous Professional Development, reflective practices, transnational professional learning, technology-based TPD, asynchronous learning and collaborative TPD. Though technological advancements and globalization are ongoing influences, concepts of TPD in the contemporary era continues to evolve. This section explores current conceptions and future trends of TPD within the rapidly evolving world.

With ongoing global and technological influences, TPD is differentiated and personalized (Gamrat et al., 2014; Chaipidech et al., 2024; Schachter & Gerde, 2019; Biehn, 2015). Recognizes that teaching teachers have diverse needs and learning styles, there has been a shift towards differentiated and personalized TPD. As TPD is more flexible and accessible with

technological advancements, teachers select PD activities that are directly relevant to their individual goals and classroom contexts, rather than following a one-size fits-all model (Reinhard et al., 2024; Samuel & Rosenzweig, 2019; Liao et al., 2017).

Given a globalized world with inter-cultural exchanges and an increase focus on equity and inclusivity in education, TPD is skewing towards cultural competence by applying a global perspective (Yeh, Jaiswal-Olivier & Posejpal, 2017). TPD has expanded to include training on culturally responsive teaching, social-emotional learning, and addressing the diverse needs of students (Yeh, et al., 2022; Gimbert et al., 2023; Esen-Aygun & Sachin-Taskin, 2017). Teachers are encouraged to develop the skills and knowledge needed to effectively teach students from diverse backgrounds and to engage with global perspectives on education (Zalli, 2024; Paine, Blömeke & Aydarova, 2016; Abdallah & Alkaabi, 2024).

Moreover, while technological advancements are ongoing, TPD is experiencing a more collaborative nature as teachers get access to various digital tools and forums easily. Through this collaborative TPD, they get the opportunity to work together share ideas, and learn from each other in professional learning communities, study groups, and other collaborative settings (Hargreaves, 2021).

The leading trend in education today is “*inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all*”, a main pillar of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development education. This conventional trend has become a dominating factor in almost all countries (Boeren, 2019) as it addresses a universal and fundamental need: education, which is widely recognized as a cornerstone of sustainable development. Following this main trend, teaching has become more contextualized (Arcidiacono & Baucal., 2020; Love & Horn, 2021). Consequently, to meet the contextual relevance, TPD also needs to adapt to these specific contexts (Collazo Expósito & Granados Sánchez, 2020; Baena-Morales & Prieto-Ayuso, 2024) with ongoing TPD to meet the demands of the changing educational and contextual landscape. As the field continues to evolve, it will be important to build and construct conceptions of TPD in accordance to the the national and international demands.

### **2.3.4 Contemporary debates on Teacher Professional Development**

Despite a rich historical backdrop of “profession/s”, its conceptualization in the contemporary era is not without its controversies. As the debate on professions continues, TPD also is facing equal debates. The previous sections (2.3.2 and 2.3.3) highlighted how globalization, technological innovations, market forces, and shifting societal expectations shape new forms of work and existing professions making them to adapt to changing circumstances. Following this, the ongoing discussion about what constitutes a profession will likely remain a vital part of understanding the role of work in contemporary society. These debates often challenge traditional notions of what it means to be a professional and how professions should be regulated, organized, and evolved.

Referring to what has been discussed in the previous sections of this chapter, one of the primary debates centres around the boundaries between professions and other forms of work. Some scholars argue that the distinction between professions and occupations is becoming increasingly blurred (Wessels et al., 2018; Berthelsen et al., 2017; Brante, 2011), particularly in fields such as information technology, where traditional markers of professionalism (like formal education, licensure) are less important. As elaborated in Section 2.3, what makes a profession distinct from an occupation is its requirement of specialized knowledge, trainings, ethical standards (Susskind and Susskind, 2023), and a higher degree of autonomy (Freidson, 2001). However, in the current era, as technology increasingly becomes integral to professional practice, there is a debate about how it redefines professions and professionals. Today, technological tools and online learning platforms have become crucial to the modern classroom as it transforms how teachers engage with students and deliver content (Schleicer, 2020). In the modern teaching profession, there is an increasing expectation for teachers to be lifelong learners (Abdalina et al., 2022; Navidinia, 2021; Kokanović, 2019). Continuous professional development is no longer optional (Sreekaram, 2019; Park et al., 2016) but essential to stay current with technological advancements and pedagogical innovations (Fernández-Batanero, 2022; Tay, Lee & Ramachandran, 2021; Day & Gu, 2010). This shift transformed how teachers engage with their work, requiring them to balance instructional responsibilities with professional growth opportunities. Teachers now need to develop new competencies, such as digital pedagogy, to effectively integrate technology into their practice (Ho & Chan, 2023).

Susskind and Susskind (2023) argue that AI and data-driven technologies challenge traditional notions of expertise, where professional competence was largely based on deep, specialized knowledge. As AI begins to handle more technical or data-based aspects of work, professionals may need to pivot to managing technology rather than practicing their craft in the traditional sense (Ho&Chan, 2023). The rise of technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI) has sparked debates about the future of the teaching profession and TPD. Although technology has the potential to heighten education by providing teachers with state-of-art resources, there are concerns that technology may challenge the professional identity of teachers by mechanising tasks traditionally performed by human educators (Rosdi et al., 2020; Badia & Iglesias, 2019; Nykvist & Muherjee, 2016). This indicate that with time teaching profession could become a more transactional occupation, where the role of the teacher shifts from educator to facilitator of technology. Additionally, with the advent of technology, professions are grappling with new ethical dilemmas relating to data privacy, AI driven-decision-making, and the potential dehumanization of professional practices (Rodrigues et al., 2023).

As an integral influence, globalization has redefined professions, introducing international professional norms in it (Goodwin, 2020; Goodwin, 2014; Angus, 2004). Professions are increasingly governed by global standards, accountability and performance metrics (Sareh, 2013). Similarly, TPD is influenced by international organizations such as the OECD and World Bank which play an important role in shaping TPD policies, often promoting standardization, accountability, and measurable outcomes (Boesken, Nusche & Yurita, 2020; Fraser, 2017; Pesambili, Sayed & Stambach, 2022). Advocates of this approach argue that it leads to better accountability and improved services for consumers (Sahlberg, 2023; Klees et al., 2020; Mbiti, 2016; Takala et al., 2018; Mundy & Verger, 2016). However, this internationalization and standardization undermine the specialized expertise traditionally associated with professions. Additionally, many professionals view this as a threat to professional autonomy (McLaughlin, 2021) and ethics, which have traditionally been a hallmark of professions, where professionals are trusted to use their expert knowledge to make independent decisions in the best interest of their clients or society (Saks, 2012). Following this, one of the core debate concerns whether teaching is undergoing further professionalization or deprofessionalization. Professionalization advocates argue that teaching requires specialized knowledge (Guerriero & Deligiannidi, 2017; Goodwin, 2012; Strike, 1990), strong ethical foundation (Maxwell & Schwimmer, 2016; Campbell, 1997), and continuous professional development, placing it on par with other professions like medicine or law

(Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996). However, some argue that teaching is experiencing deprofessionalization due to increasing bureaucratic oversight, market-driven reforms, and standardized testing (Buchanan, 2020). These critics believe that such external pressures reduce teacher professional autonomy, judgment, and turn teachers into technicians who simply implement pre-set curricula.

As a result of the big global influences discussed above, teaching is becoming increasingly challenging in meeting the rapid global and digital demands and needs. Consequently, TPD, a hallmark of teaching as a profession, is also having to directly confront these challenges (Sidik, Suharyati & Fujiastuti, 2024; Mydlowska, 2020; Goodwin, 2014; Sobe, 2012). There are debates over how well current TPD opportunities serve the needs of teachers (Svendson, 2020; Hennessy et al., 2022; Sulaimon & Sdebayo, 2024; Xia, 2024; Tinio & Lim, 2022; Tondeur et al., 2016). They (the debates) argue that many professional development programs are too prescriptive and do not always align with the real challenges teachers face in the classroom. There is also growing recognition that teaching in the 21st century requires teachers to stay updated (Jan, 2017; Srinivasacharlu, 2019; Jena & Barad, 2024; Haug & Mork, 2021; Purba et al., 2022; Latorre-Coscolluela et al., 2021)). This shift has ignited debates about how much additional expertise and training teachers need to remain relevant, and whether this expanding skill set reflects the continued **professionalization** of teaching or a further blurring of boundaries between teaching and other roles (Murray & Smith, 2022). Additionally, as technological advancements, global benchmarks, and market-driven policies reshape professions, there is also a debate about what it means to be a professional today; and what TPD means today (Guskey, 2021). This debate highlights the tension between preserving traditional professional ideals like autonomy, specialized knowledge, ethical responsibility and adapting to the demands of a rapidly changing, globalized, and technology-driven world.

The recognition of teaching as a true profession remains a complex issue (Pugach, 2023; Flores, 2023; Monteiro, 2015). While teaching meets many of the traditional criteria of a profession—such as specialized knowledge and public service—it often lacks full professional autonomy (Evetts, 2021). In many contexts, teachers face prescriptive curricula and assessment standards, which limit their ability to exercise professional judgment (Murray & Smith, 2022). This issue has sparked debates about the extent to which teaching can be considered a fully autonomous profession. Further debates centre on whether teaching fully meets the criteria of a profession and the pressure that are reshaping its status.

As Friedson (1994) pointed out, TPD is a subjective or an objective process, or both. It may be thought of as an internalisation process on the part of teachers, or it may be an externally applied process, directed at teachers, but affected by external agencies. He defines teacher development (TPD) as: the process whereby teachers professionalism and/or professionalism may be considered to be enhanced. The trend towards lifelong learning continues, with an emphasis on continuous professional growth. TPD has evolved from rigid, top-down approaches to more flexible, collaborative, and personalized models. As education continues to change, TPD will likely keep evolving to meet the needs of both teachers and students in an increasingly complex and interconnected world.

### **2.3.5 Contemporary challenges and barriers to Teacher Professional Development**

One of the major challenges in TPD is the presence of structural (Murphy, 2015, 2017) and systemic barriers (McLure & Aldridge, 2022; Mascio & Fornauf, 2024) that can hinder the effectiveness of PD programs (Erroglu & Kaya, 2021). These barriers include a lack of resources, policy and structural alignment and insufficient support systems from school or administrators, and insufficient contextual relevance of TPD. For instance, lack of clear policies results in ambiguities and inconsistencies regarding TPD resulting in confusion (Kirsten, 2020; Song, 2008). Insufficient or lack of administrative support impede TPD at school level (Butt, Aziz and Nadeem, 2021). As for contextual barriers, when local contexts and the nuances of each classroom reality is under-looked, TPD feel irrelevant to teachers (Sasere & Makhasane, 2023; Petras, Jamil & Mohamed, 2012).

In many cases, teachers are expected to participate in PD activities outside of their regular work hours, which can lead to burnout and reduce the impact of PD (Boamah et al., 2022; Zysberg & Maskit, 2017). Additionally, top-down nature of some TPD programs can limit their effectiveness (Grinshtain et al., 2023). When TPD is mandated by administrators without input from teachers, it can lead to a lack of engagement and a sense of disconnection between the PD content and teachers' actual needs (Martin et al., 2019). Overly prescriptive curricula or curriculum changes may discouragement and reflective practices in TPD. Given this disconnection, teachers engagement and motivation become critical in the success of PD

programs. Therefore, engaging teachers in PD can be challenging, particularly when they perceive the PD as irrelevant or disconnected from their classroom practice (Fairman et al., 2022; Margolis, Durbon & Doring, 2017).

Another major challenge is resource constraints for effective TPD. This can be in the form of funding, time, material and human resources (Popova, Evans & Breeding, 2022; Sancar, Atal & Deryakulu, 2021; Darling-Hammond, Hyler & Gardner, 2017; Kraut, Chandler & Hertenstein, 2016). Due to resource constraints, schools and institutions have to rely on less effective, one-time workshops or generic courses (Scott & Hussain, 2021). Therefore, limited resources in the provision of TPD is highly important.

## **2.4 Contemporary debates on the common Models of Teacher Professional Development**

Having set the path of TPD in Section 2.3, this section will talk through contemporary debates on common models of TPD. Following the evolution of TPD over time, different models have emerged, ranging from traditional, top-down approaches to more collaborative, teacher-centred strategies. Each model is grounded in ‘time and space’, addressing specific needs of teachers’ ongoing growth and professionalism. In contemporary educational discourse, debates surrounding these models have intensified due to rapid changes in technology, globalization, Covid-19 pandemic, and evolving educational demands. These debates reflect broader tensions between traditional and innovative models, as well as the challenges of ensuring that TPD is adaptable to diverse and dynamic contexts in which teachers operate today. This section further explores the major contemporary debates surrounding four most common models of TPD, standardized, site-based, self-initiated and hybrid models, focusing on their implications for educational practice and policy.

### **2.4.1 The prevalence of Standardized Model**

Standardized TPD, also known as “one-size-fits-all” model is one of the most traditional model dated since the evolution of TPD started (as discussed in Section 2.3.1). In the middle of the twentieth century, this model was also known as the “Deficit Model”, based on the assumption that teachers lacked certain knowledge or skills necessary to be effective in the classroom (Brown, 2017). It often involved top-down approaches, where teachers were expected to attend

workshops or training sessions to “fix” deficiencies identified by administrators of education. Over time, the standardized model evolved gradually to include more large-scale activities in it. However, within the contemporary era, despite being recognized as a traditional model with formal nature and externally structured, (Stevenson et al., 2016), it continues to be the most prevalent PD methods used in many countries (Pallitt, Gachago & Bali, 2021; Angadi, 2013).

Standardized TPD model is famous for disseminating common knowledge base and information to large group, country or region; build awareness; facilitates rapid diffusion across the system; and for its cost-effectiveness (Smith, 2017; Gaible & Burns, 2005). It emphasizes consistency and alignment with educational standards or reforms, aiming to ensure that all teachers acquire a common set of skills or knowledge. For instance, within the NYCB Education Reform of Mauritius, mass standardized TPD was carried out in the form of informative sessions about the new ER. It was aimed to disseminate the agenda and policy to all teachers and educational stakeholders throughout the island. The standardized TPD was in the form of one-size-fits-all model targeting a large scale of teachers, and which took place at one time and in one location without follow-ups, and without helping teachers to build an understanding for the ER. These one-time sessions certainly helped introduce and build awareness about a new ER. Similarly, during the Covid-19 pandemic, standardized online TPD was used to disseminate information to the largest number of teachers possible to build awareness of best practices for remote learning. It takes the form of a “pyramid” structure facilitating large-scale projects and rapid diffusion across systems. During urgent large-scale awareness and diffusion of information, this form of learning/development is the most cost effective outreach (Gyimah & Ayinselya, 2022).

While the standardized model can be most effective in disseminating key information quickly and uniformly, research and practice have increasingly highlighted the limitations of this model. It has been vastly criticized for being generic, inflexible, and often disconnected from unique needs of individual teachers and their classroom contexts (Kalim, 2024; Artman, Danner & Crow, 2020; Mitchell, 2024; Ajani, 2022; Ray, 2003; Kennedy, 2016; Cho, 2014). In a study by Hübner et al., (2021) based on PD during a large-scale reform in a high-stakes Science curriculum, it was found that teachers who participated in the formal PD activities tended to report higher challenges with the reform. Similarly, in a study on the essence of one-shot model, Bellmon (2024) found that one-size-fits-all model makes it difficult for teachers to establish a direct relationship between the content of their PD and possibilities of improving

classroom practices. There is a plethora of studies that revealed standardized models in the form of one-size-fits-all and one-shot approach are ineffective in enhancing the PD of teachers (Summey, 2013; Koellner&Greenblatt, 2018; Guskey, 2002); lack continuity and follow-ups (Summey, 2013); are fragmented, disconnected and inconsistent in meeting the learning needs of teachers (Steiner, 2014); ineffective models of delivery as it dwells much on the use of the lecture method; not effective as it is normally short duration (Guskey, 2000; Supovic&Tuner, 2000); and mostly looked as an event rather than a process (Burns, 2015). In his review of existing literature, Alexandrou (2014) found that there were often mismatches between top-down designed TPD and the kinds of learning that teachers preferred, leading to disengagement in programmes. In the same vein, Tanzania et al., (2018) also found that formal approaches did not address teachers' learning needs as they took place far from the schools and under the control of educational officials who had little interactions with teachers after in-service training. Last but not the least, there is also evidence that such form of learning undermines teachers' professional identity and autonomy (Alexandrou, 2014; Smith, 2017; Tran and Le, 2018). In a way or other, standardized model contribute in deprofessionalization of teachers (Greenblatt, 2015). Upon such disengaged circumstances, teachers may establish a dependency upon outside expertise (Smith, 2017). That limits their capacity to engage in effective learning and again the confidence needed to contribute their knowledge to the wider educational discourse.

The cascade model also is considered as standardized TPD model. In cascading, a few champion teachers are expected to attend professional activities to transfer knowledge gained during the PD activities to their colleagues upon return to their schools (Ejima & Okutachi, 2012). Fiske and Ladd (2004) agree that teachers in the cascade approach may not be able to deliver as much knowledge and skills as they have received in their PD to colleagues. Hence, other teachers cannot benefit from the cascade model. Ajani (2022) purports that these standardized models are ineffective in improving the classroom performance.

In contemporary educational discourse, while the standardized model can be effective in many cases, it has known more challenges than opportunities in effecting TPD. Not tailored to teachers' specific needs and teaching environment, such TPD is difficult to implement in classroom. Questions about teachers' engagement, equity, scalability, and sustainability of such TPD programs/sessions/events are ongoing among various educational stakeholders.

The international literature has compared traditional professional development activities-consisting of short workshops, conferences etc. – to non-traditional professional development activities -consisting of mentoring, coaching, peer observation, and so on. The duration of a professional development program is a key determinant for deciding whether the activity is regarded as traditional or nontraditional (Ozer, 2008). Researchers have criticized traditional professional development activities, because, while shorter in the time commitment they require of participants, they tend to be less effective in reaching their desired goal (Birman et al., 2000; Easton, 2008). Therefore, they offer little or no impact on the skills of teachers (Boyle et al., 2004). Collinson (2000) also noted that traditional professional development programs lack efficiency regarding specific teaching and learning issues.

Additionally, Bayer (2014) criticized traditional professional development activities stating, “For years, educators have been confronted with poorly designed staff development. Scarce resources have been wasted because few understood or took time to understand what helps adults acquire the knowledge and skills that help students achieve” (p. 255). Birman et al. (2000) argued that traditional professional development activities do not provide enough time to the teachers; therefore, they do not have much influence on changing teaching practice. Abadiano and Turney (2004) stated that while traditional professional development programs are organized for a short time; they tend to be inefficient and unproductive. Corcoran (1995) also criticized traditional professional development programs and stated, “there is a growing body of opinion among ‘experts’ that the conventional forms of professional development are virtually a waste of time” (p. 4). Similarly, Kelleher (2003) criticized traditional professional development activities, indicating that they fail to demonstrate an observable effect on education.

#### **2.4.2 The leap to Site-based Model**

Teacher Professional Development models have evolved significantly over the years. As discussed in the preceding Section 2.3, in the mid twentieth century, TPD often took the form of externally organized workshops or seminars in standardized format. Over time, in the late twentieth century, more differentiated approach emerged, driven by the recognition that TPD is most effective when it is context-specific, ongoing, and embedded within the school environment. This shift led to the emergence of “site-based” TPD, where training was designed and implemented at school level. That was the time when terms like professional learning communities (PLCs) were introduced, where they could share knowledge, reflect on their

practices, and work together to solve problems. That era also saw the rise of coaching models, where experienced teachers or external coaches provided ongoing support and feedback to help teachers refine their skills (Avalos, 2011). At the rise of the twenty-first century, site-based TPD started to focus on more of collaboration, personalized and job-embedded learning (Darling-Hammond & Gardner, 2017). As site-based TPD is contextualised and sustained over time (Postholm, 2018), it is now creating sustained, reflective, and collaborative learning environments. In the contemporary era, site-based TPD is considered as a critical component of teacher growth and school improvement.

Site-based TPD can be carried out in various ways. For example, some researchers have focused on site-based mentoring and coaching which leads to a number of advantages. For example, in a hybrid model of online and site-based mentoring as PD, it was found that participants engaged in more site-based PD than they did online (Barbee, 2020). Pryce et al., (2015) also conducted a study on site-based mentoring called 'Lunch-Buddy mentoring' and it was found that this type of site-based PD promoted positive change for the mentees. Bray (2019) examined how site-based professional learning communities (PLCs) promote technology integration for middle school science classrooms. The study revealed that the site-based PLC model was sustainable and it helped teachers to engage in educational initiatives specific to their school and populations. Some other researchers have focused on the implementation of Lesson Study as a form of site-based PD (Admiraal et al., 2021; Aimah, Ifadah & Bharati, 2023; Mhakure, 2019). For example, Mhakure's (2019) study focuses on Lesson Study approach which is site-based in nature. Further findings from other studies have shown that it can be personalised for teachers whereby teachers are active learners (Forrester, 2024). Site-based PD can be differentiated to meet individual and group needs (Pedder & Opfer, 2013; Quick et al., 2009). It is embedded in daily work life and activities of teachers (Forrester, 2018). It also offers collegial support to each other at school (Owen, 2003). According to Gaible and Burns (2006), site-based PD draws people together, encourages collaborative methods and approaches to difficulties, allows more flexibility and sustainability in terms of TPD and provide opportunities for continuous PD. As per Guskey and Yoon (2009), many educational writers today are of the view that PD should be predominantly site-based and should be based on mutual experiences of in-house staff members. In addition to these, Croft (2010) pointed out that job-embedded TPD provides school administrators with a way to personalize professional development for each teacher while also facilitating collaboration among the staff. He also added that it allows administrators to implement

professional development that supports the schools' vision through the creation of a learning culture. Those who adopt job-embedded TPD are able to build professional capacity across the entire organization (Debra et al., 2016). Last but not least, Lipscombe et al., (2019) explored the phenomenon of collaborative teacher teams as a form of site-based PD in three primary schools in Australia.

A study conducted by Alshaikhi (2020) explores Saudi EFL teachers' TPD with special emphasis on workplace learning and self-directed initiatives found that participants showed positive attitude for this form of learning. By engaging with a community of learners at school, teachers were able to improve their understanding, develop their self confidence and improve their practices. It is seen that such type of learning communities is important to teachers' practices because they involve teachers in shared work on realistic situations emerging from the "dailiness" of their practice (Lieberman, 1995). In another study conducted by Forrester (2018) within the context of a national Education Reform in Australia which explored the influence of on-site PD on teacher practice. Multi-site case study of five primary schools that implemented on-site PD for four years were studied. It was found that on-site PD influenced teacher practice in many ways. Teacher learning was mainly cyclical, contextual and active. Furthermore, there were multiple opportunities for collective participation as teachers shared understandings and a vision for student learning. For the success of the on-site PD in the five schools, it is important to note that school leaders and principals had a considerable contribution. They planned the PD strategically by situating the learning within the context of schools needs. The joint endeavour of leaders and teachers led to collective responsibility for student learning.

Site-based TPD can be carried out by school principals and middle leaders equally. Edwards-Edwards-Groves et al., (2019) conducted a study by researching into the role of 'middle leaders' for site-based education development in three primary school in regional Australia. Middle leaders are teachers with formal leadership responsibilities for teachers' professional capacity building (Bryant et al., 2020) and who leads the professional learning of their peers (Edwards et al., 2019). They are also described as highly proficient teachers a major responsibility for classroom teaching (Glover et al., 1998). The study takes into account interviews from middle leaders, principals and teachers together. It was found that middle leaders help to share responsibilities and promote teacher learning at school. The study also reveals that middle leaders have the capacity to re-build teacher understanding and meet their local needs. A

remarkable drawback of using middle leaders for the promotion of site-based PD is that they have to face the resistance of their peers which leads to chaotic situations. Relating this study to the Mauritian context, it can be said that State Secondary Schools have ‘middle leaders’ in the form of Head of Departments and Senior Educators. Head of Departments have the responsibility to “Support Professional Development by advising the Rector on school based training for Educators and other staff in the department and by participating in such programmes.” (Appendix 13). While Senior Educators have the responsibility to “To organise and run in-service training courses. And to advise on the improvement of teaching methods and education programmes, and on new trends in education.” (Appendix 14). Given that there is no adequate training on how to implement site-based TPD, middle leaders are often seen not implementing it or they do not have any knowledge on how to implement it.

Site-based PD has known scarcely any drawbacks as compared to the number of advantages it holds (Forrester, 2018; Pedder & Opfer, 2013; Gupta & Lee, 2020; Smith & Gillespie, 2023). However, the challenges surface in its implementation at different levels. One of the major challenges for effective site-based TPD are faced by school leaders who requires sustained and ongoing engagement, but principals often struggle to find adequate time within the school schedule. Teachers are frequently over-burdened with teaching responsibilities, grading, and administrative tasks, leaving little room for collaborative learning sessions (Javed & Akhtar, 2024; Mohamed & Nkomo, 2023; Guskey, 2000). Similarly, in the Mauritian State Secondary Schools’ context, teachers are pressured for syllabus coverage for a more exam-oriented curriculum, grading and loads of paperwork. This situation leaves teachers with no time to involve into collaborative job-embedded TPD. Consequently, with this type of rigid structure, Rectors (Principals) of these schools may find it challenging to balance instructional time with the need for meaningful TPD opportunities (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

Additionally, implementation of site-based TPD requires strong instructional leadership, which not all principals may possess. The role of the principal has expanded over the years to include not only managerial duties but also the responsibility of being an instructional leader (Stein, 2016; Fullan, 2007). However, not all principals feel adequately prepared to lead site-based TPD, especially when it involves complex instructional practices or new educational technologies (Tolwinska, 2021; Beytekin, 2014; Sincar, 2013; Thomas, 1999). Within this study’s context, appointed Rectors by the Public Service Commission are ex-teachers. They have the responsibility “to lead, inspire and ensure the development of staff to secure

excellence in teaching, learning...and ensure that newly appointed staff have appropriate induction and support” (Appendix 14, PSC, Circular note No.19 of 2023). Whereas Deputy Rectors have the responsibility “to provide pedagogical guidance to all newly recruited teaching staff and monitoring their work... and to chair pedagogical committees set up in the SSS” (PSC, Circular note No.5 of 2021). These Rectors and Deputy Rectors may hold pedagogical knowledge but may not possibly hold training or knowledge on how to lead and implement site-based TPD. In this case, studies have shown that principals who lack a deep understanding of instructional strategies may struggle to provide meaningful guidance and feedback to teachers during PD sessions (Borko, 2004). This leadership gap can undermine the effectiveness of PD efforts and reduce teacher engagement.

Another common challenge of site-based TPD for school principals is the prevailing school culture within which the performance of teachers is embedded (Guskey, 2000). Without such change in culture, most teachers will find it difficult, if not impossible, to sustain the new practices they have acquired. Within this study’s context, Rectors (Principals) of SSS keep on being transferred from one school to another within limited time frame. They do not get the opportunity and time needed to culture the school into more collaborative and continuous improvement of teachers. Moreover, as already pointed out in the above paragraph, many school principals are not adequately prepared to implement site-based TPD due to reasons such as newly recruited Rectors with no experience and knowledge of site-based TPD. Consequently, when Rectors of SSS get transferred from one school to another too often, the culture of the school experiences a gradual change. Recreating a culture of trust and openness is essential for site-based TPD to be able to be effective, but bringing a new culture to change deep-rooted attitudes and behaviours takes time and consistent effort. This is what Rectors of Mauritius do not have.

Site-based TPD depends largely on resources, both financially and human for effective implementation and this often poses a major challenge for many principals. TPD often requires access to instructional coaches, materials, and external experts who can provide specialized knowledge and feedback. In a study conducted by Mewborn and Huberty (2004) in which TPD was focused on teachers’ needs., it was found that a major drawback of this model is that it requires a significant commitment of resources and any replication or expansion of this model is expensive as it requires considerable human resources. However, many schools, mainly SSSs of Mauritius do not have the budget to hire coaches or provide sufficient resources for

ongoing TPD (Chacha, 2022; Opfer & Pedder, 2011). A number of studies highlighted the role of the Ministry of Education in the development and implementation of site-based TPD in public schools (Fullan, 2007; Darling-Hammond, 2017). However, without support, site-based TPD in the Mauritius SSS seems blurred.

### **2.4.3 The shift to Self-Initiated Model**

As the evolution of TPD has known standardized and site-based TPD overtime, self-directed TPD also emerged as an automatic consequence of changing socio-economic, political and educational contexts. In response to criticisms against mandated standardized TPD, more flexible and teacher-centered models started emerge in the late twentieth century. The rise of action research and teacher inquiry in the 1980s and 1990s allows teachers to become researchers in their own classrooms, exploring and experimenting with strategies to enhance student learning (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993). This marked a significant shift towards more reflective and autonomous forms of TPD, laying the groundwork for the rise of Self-Directed TPD (SDTPD). During that era, Knowles' (1975) theory of andragogy that emphasized the role of adult learners as self-driven agents, started to emerge as an effective learning theory. As adult learners, teachers engage in learning to improve their abilities to deal with immediate tasks (Knowles et al., 2005). They “learn what they think they ought to learn depending on their professional needs” (Terehoff, 2002, p.74). In the following years, SDTPD gained significant traction, reflecting a broader movement towards personalized learning, autonomy, and flexibility in professional growth with their personal needs, goals, and teaching environments (Guskey, 2002; Ryan & Deci, 2000). During the past decade, SDTPD has gained much attention due to increasing concern on the effectiveness of TPD practices nationally and internationally. It has also been used interchangeably with self-initiated, self-led and self-regulated TPD in the literature from different perspectives. For the purpose of this study, the term Self-Directed TPD (SDTPD) will be employed.

Self-directed TPD is a form of PD that “arises from teachers’ own initiatives” (Mushayikwa & Lubben, 2009, p.376) which develop their intellect, experience as well as attitude (Mushayikwa, 2013). It is personally driven (Simegn, 2019) and mostly informal in nature (Utami & Prestridge, 2018). vanEekelen et al., (2006) states that Self-directed PD emerges from teachers’ individual initiative as it is a process that is internally determined and initiated. They further describe Self-directed PD as ‘the will to learn’ that is possessing the desire to

discover, experience and learn new practices as well as be pro-active and collaborative. According to Tri et al., (2017), it is an application of self-directed learning which is learner-driven and a learning which is determined by the needs, interests and learning conditions of the individual. SDTPD takes the form of Self-directed TPD activities are in the form of individual or independent reading, joining online professional web browsing/communities/blogs/courses/tools/Twitter (Curran et al., 2019; Brady, 2021; Utami & Prestridge, 2018; Visser et al., 2014), writing reflective journals and self reflection (Simegn, 2019), action research (Kask & Laius, 2019), peer classroom observations (Hamilton, 2014), reading and study groups ((Voltz et al., 2004), inquiry-based learning (Grosemans et al., 2015), Edcamps (Carpenter, 2016) and many more which involves the teachers' own initiatives.

Several studies in different contexts advocate for Self-directed PD for its numerous benefits. As a result of Self-directed PD, both teachers and students benefit; teachers benefit in the form of meaningful learning and professional growth, and students in the form of improved learning (Acevado, 2018; Mushayikwa & Lubben, 2009; du Toit-Brits, 2019). In a phenomenological study conducted by Porter and Freeman (2020) on a Self-directed PD certification project, all participants reported that there was an increase in their understanding of the teaching methods, content and administrative methods. The finding of this study also indicated that there is the need to guide and help some educators in identifying their professional learning needs and plan their Self-directed activities. Another study conducted with EFL teachers found that by using this model, teachers became proactive learners, taking control of their education and taking the initiative to develop their teaching abilities (Wardhani, 2024). SDTPD has been used with talented and talented students also. For instance, Fraser-Seeto et al., (2015) conducted a study in which it was found that Self-directed PD provided the participants with opportunities to involve in such learnings that are of their interest, learn at their own pace and when it is more convenient to their lives. Last but not the least, SDTPD develops the buy-in among teachers which can result in greater teacher change. For example, in a case study done by Slavit and Mc Duffie (2013), they found that Self-directed PD was a way for teachers to be more inquisitive towards their practice and when there is the inquisitiveness, the buy-in occurs which then push teachers for positive change.

A number of studies have found that 'professional development needs' is the foundation of SDTPD. In a study conducted by Hood and Littlejohn (2017), it was found that teachers' learning commitment is generally driven by individual knowledge requirements and

professional needs related to practice. The Self-directed PD is about allowing the teacher to take decision on his/her learning needs and how to attain his/her learning objectives (Riddle, 2018; Yost ET AL., 2009). In a qualitative study by Brady (2021), one of the findings is that tenured school teachers found self-directed PD effective in meeting their personal needs and their students' also. In other words, it allows teachers the opportunity to select the PD activities that best fit their PD needs for the benefit of their students. Conversely, Utami and Prestridge (2018) conducted a study on Indonesian teachers about their professional learning and development. One of the findings of the study is that because professional development programs of the Indonesia provided very little learning with regard to what they needed, they opted for Self-directed online learning.

However, there is evidence that SDTPD is accompanied by such contextual challenges that hamper its effectiveness. The manner in which contextual aspects inter-relate with teachers' learning needs differs depending on the culture and policies of a given country (Avalos, 2011). For example, in a study with TVET teachers of Malaysia, it was found that the country's educational change agenda plays an important role in the success of SDTPD (Fransen, 2022). Without adequate resource, support and motivation from the authority and the school management, SDTPD is hindered (Simegn, 2014). Within this study's context, SDTPD is under-employed as SSS's teachers do not have time from their loaded daily teaching timetable to integrate SDTPD into their work and philosophy. Policymakers take control of the large-scale standardized TPD but fails to take control of teachers' individual PD needs. TPD during the NYCB ER is a concrete example of a highly centralized approach by the authority whereby a sense of teacher empowerment is rarely present with no guidelines provided for SDTPD. Hence, with no support in this new approach, SSS's teachers do not recognize what they do not know (Riddle, 2018). According to Voltz et al., (2004), though SDTPD is a flexible model, it does not operate in isolation and in an individual manner. Though teachers assume primary responsibility for planning, implementing, and evaluating SDTPD, they need the experts or education agents to facilitate the process and align their PD with broader school and policy goals (Guskey, 2000; Knight, 2012). Hence, given the lack of support, guidelines and self-awareness of teachers for SDTPD, it remains an underdeveloped model in Mauritius.

Likewise, SDTPD remains an underdeveloped model in many countries including Mauritius as teachers lack self-motivation (Chang& Lin, 2017). There is no reward system offered to teachers as motivation for their SDTPD. In such a case when rewards do not match teachers'

effort, their job satisfaction and motivation decrease (Martín & Uribe, 2021; Kumari, Ali & Abbas, 2021; Ayele, 2014). Most of the time, there is also no acknowledgement of educators' learning characteristics as adult learners and neglect principles of adult learning in their design (Steinke, 2012). Consequently, it becomes hard to find teachers who remain committed to their PD over a lengthy period unless there is something that could motivate them (Lopes & Cunha, 2017). Another challenge in the implementation of SDTPD lies in teachers' self-awareness about this model's concept. Most teachers also lack prior experience with this form of learning (Nooriati et al., 2016). If teachers do not clearly understand the definition and concept of a PD model, it results in poor quality in their self-awareness about what is expected from them. Consequently, it is seen as a burden which resulted in teachers' low motivation and dissatisfaction in their work (Faizulizami, 2018).

SDTPD becomes effective when school leaders (Principal, Rector, Manager) play their leadership role effectively. Since decades, countless studies conducted on the importance of a school leadership. These leaders, as facilitators and change agents, play a critical role in fostering TPD, guide the quality of teaching and learning, and develop a learning culture among teachers (Leithwood et al., 2004; Lim et al., 2014; Desimone, 2009). Their contribution in SDTPD as instructional leaders help to build confidence in the PD efforts, particularly if teachers have limited experience in the concerned domain. Their vital presence in the implementation of SDTPD has been researched by many, however, there are numerable studies also that show the challenges that school leaders face in its implementation. As change agents, school principals are required to be proactive in identifying areas for improvement, encourage teachers to adopt new practice, and fostering a collaborative approach to professional learning. These requirements are often not concretised as principals do not have time to cater for diverse PD needs due to their overburdened duties (Rose, 2021). They often have to navigate a complex system of external pressures, including policies, accountability measures, which may not always align with specific teachers' needs and goals of SDTPD (Spillane et al., 2001). Often, coherence between external accountability goals and teachers' professional learning is not always present in such effort (Lindvall & Ryve, 2019). Within the Mauritian educational landscape, SSS's Rectors are more accountable about the performance of students rather than what he/she is doing to improve TPD at school.

In summary of the above, it can be said that Self-directed PD is one of the most beneficial TPD model as it corroborates with teachers' individual needs and contexts. Its flexibility helps

teachers to learn and develop themselves whenever they want. Though all the mentioned benefits, SDTPD could be a failure in case teachers are not accustomed to being self-directed and setting personal objectives (Craig, 1999), resist change, are unaware of the concept and unmotivated.

#### **2.4.4 The emergence of a Hybrid Model**

The precedent sections showcased how Teacher Professional Development has experienced continuous changes in a rapidly changing world. With the rise of digital technologies and increased focus on flexibility, “Hybrid Teacher Professional Development” (HTPD) models emerged as a viable alternative, combining face-to-face interaction with online interactions (Cohen et al., 2020; Köppe et al., 2018; Nortvig & Pederson et al., 2018; Powell & Bodur, 2018; Lesiak et al., 2021). The term “hybrid” has often been confused with notions of online, blended, parallel, flipped or other learning forms (Nørgård, 2021). As the term “hybrid” carry distinctive conceptualizations, theories, characteristics and ways of thinking, it needs to be carefully defined for this study’s context.

Hybrid learning and learning environment, Hybrid teaching and teaching methods, and HTPD, all have focuses on the aspect of digital and non-digital elements. For instance, as per Spiller (2009), in a hybrid learning environment, learners (teachers) move imperceptibly across digital and non-digital materials, spaces, tools, formats and networks within the hybridized learning. In other words, it is a way of intentionally and reflectively, overlapping and blending different concepts at the same time, such as online and offline, formal and informal (Kohls et al., 2018). It is for example in the form of learning interactions that unfolds as a coherent experience of being in multiple places at once. It can be a synchronous group discussion, where one learner is sitting at home in her or his apartment with the children next door being home-schooled, another learner is participating in the discussion from a café while the teacher is joining in from a classroom at campus. In the shared online room, they all bring in the different locations and realities while writing together in a shared document. Therefore, using the constructs of Nørgård (2021), HTPD will be conceptualized as relevant formal and informal digital TPD that cater for contextually situated teachers’ PD needs.

In its early stages, HTPD began as an extension of traditional in-person workshops, incorporating online resources. The development of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and Learning Management Systems (LMS) in the late 2000s and early 2010s significantly accelerated the HTPD model's growth. The Covid-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of HTPD as teachers across the globe were forced to rely on digital tools for both teaching and professional learning. In recent years, HTPD has become more sophisticated, benefitting from advancements in educational technology and the understanding that teachers need both collaborative and personalized learning experiences. Collaborative Hybrid learning platforms like Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams, and Zoom allow teachers to engage in synchronous, real-time discussions with peers, administrators, and instructional coaches. Contemporary research highlights the transformative impact of this model. In a recent study by Rodrigues (2023), it was found that this HTPD supports both pre-service and in-service teachers in their ongoing professional growth, making use of technology to bridge gaps in time and space while maintaining high levels of engagement. Another study conducted to capture the essence of the hybrid experiences of ten teachers showed that it is an active learning activity that holds teachers accountable to prepare for collective participation activities (Francis, 2023).

Following positive outcomes of HTPD from a number of studies, this model can significantly facilitate TPD within an ER. As HTPD can be scaled to reach large numbers of teachers, which is often necessary during systemic ER, it can accommodate and offer teachers different schedules, allowing them to balance PD with their classroom responsibilities. This flexibility is essential for reforms that need to be implemented rapidly across the country, as it ensures that PD is not limited by logistical constraints like travel or timing (Rodrigues, 2023). By employing HTPD, collaboration in the form of professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to share best practices within an ER can be formed. By using digital platforms to exchange resources and experiences, teachers become part of a broader professional community focused on reform (Trust et al., 2016). It can also offer strong potential for improving accessibility to PD on demand, providing evidence-based PD that is relevant to teachers' diverse contexts, and connecting teachers with experts and wider networks (Stevenson et al., 2016; Powell & Bodur, 2019). Moreover, teachers can choose specific modules or online resources that align with the aspects of the reform most pertinent to their role, ensuring that PD is targeted and meaningful (Desimone, 2011).

The continuous cycle of learning, application, and reflection is key to embedded reforms into daily teaching practices (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Given its accessibility, flexibility and cost-effectiveness, HTPD can act as an effective model in the alignment of TPD and reform goals. Teachers who seek out virtual collaborative environments can feel empowered to take ownership of their learning rather than passive participants in TPD (Trust, 2017). Last but not the least, HTPD models offer opportunities for continuous monitoring and assessment of teacher progress by tracking participation of teachers. Additionally, policymakers (reform leaders) can use data from online interactions to assess how well the PD is supporting the reform and make adjustments as needed, ensuring that the PD remains relevant and effective (Koç, 2020).

The HTPD has known/is knowing innumerable advantages, however, a few studies have highlighted accompanied challenges in terms of its relevance to different contexts (Fairman et al., 2020). Although HTPD is increasingly utilized, it does not necessarily ensure effective TPD. A study on teachers' perceptions on the design and implementation of a job-embedded OTPD experience (HTPD) found that though this model was used to address teachers' concerns, it did not ensure effective TPD (Powel& Bodur, 2019). More critics argue that while HTPD increased accessibility, the depth of professional learning in fully online components often lagged behind. It is also reported that the asynchronous nature of many online activities risk reducing meaningful engagement between participants, and the lack of face-to-face accountability. Additionally, there is a high risk of disengagement of teachers in HTPD. Brysch (2020) recommended starting with face-to-face TPD to establish relationship and effective online collective participation when teachers do not have a social aspect, they may feel disconnected from the TPD material (Lesiak et al., 2021; Trust, 2017). HTPD cannot be systematically leveraged to design effective active learning and collective participation until the human connection aspect is understood (Brysch, 2020; Foster, 2022).

## **2.5 Teachers' dispositions to TPD within an ER**

### **2.5.1 Teacher Personal development (Human Capital) (preparedness)**

Personal (individual/self) development has emerged as a critical aspect for professional development and vice-versa (Kirkwood, 2019). There is ample evidence that personal development of people conditions their professional development in different context

(Dabrowska & Paulewicz, 2014). However, many studies have used personal and professional development together but they are two distinct aspects that relate to each other (Corcoran & O'Flaherty, 2022; Kosholap et al., 2021). Personal development, also known as self-development, may be defined as a process in which persons reflect upon themselves introspectively and interpersonally (Kirkwood, 2019) to reach their fullest potential as human being. It emphasizes on the well-being (Mendes et al., 2016) and life-satisfaction, which indirectly support their professional development.

Many studies have emphasized on the personal development of employees within diverse contexts. In a study by Mendes et al., (2016), the elements of the personal and professional development of teachers were reviewed by focusing mainly on the wellbeing of teachers and how this could contribute to their personal and professional development. The review advocates that teachers' wellbeing contributes significantly in their personal and working life. Following this, Mandes et al., (2016) stressed on the aspect of supporting teachers' daily demands and to think about their integral training. At the end of the article, the authors suggested two paths towards teacher wellbeing: the individual level and the collective (social) level. The individual level is more concerned with the teacher and his/her self development and the collective level is mainly concerned with management agencies and the community in general for the promotion and support of teacher welfare. In sum, it can be said that this article supports the fact that teacher wellbeing is a feature of personal development and professional development and which is both personally and collectively (socially) developed.

As an ER often introduce new approaches, policies, and expectations, personal development helps teachers grow in their professional development. Given that there is a lack of studies based on teacher personal development within an ER, I will draw from available studies to make connections with this study's context. Cunningham (2004) highlighted three notable components of self-development within the context of the changing nature of work process and organizations. In the context of this study, the changing nature of work is related to the NYCBE Reform and the changing role of teachers within it. Cunningham (2004) firstly pointed that self-renewal is an important aspect in the life of employees. He also advanced that self-improvement as a process of individual change, requires a life-long commitment to and involvement in it. Within the context of an ER, teachers therefore have the responsibility to improve their personal skills, attributes, and well-being to enhance their overall effectiveness within the ER. Effective personal development allows teachers to enhance their professional

competence and embrace the pedagogical shifts that reforms require (Fullan,2012). Personal development provides teachers with the necessary skills to navigate the complexities of change, including new instructional strategies, assessment practices, and classroom management techniques. In a study conducted by Tzima et al., (2019), it was found that strong personal development overcomes negative factors on the new system. Research by Fullan (2016) highlights that teacher development is essential for ensuring that ERs translate into meaningful changes in classroom practice, particularly when reforms introduce new curricula, technologies, or teaching methods.

However, personal development may have a number of benefits but it is surrounded by challenges that hinder its concretisation. Reforms often create additional stress and workload, making personal development programs that focus on emotional resilience and self-care vital for teacher retention and sustained reform efforts (Day & Gu, 2010). Another challenge in the process of personal development occur at the level of the context in which self-reflection is done (Saric & Steh, 2017). Contextual factors play a crucial role in personal development. In a study by Padillo et al., (2021), perceived benefits of professional development were attributed to personal perceptions and contextual factors. Personal development relies on the type of training (PD) that teachers receive. For instance, in study by Lessing and deWitt (2007), more than 90% of teachers agreed that effective workshops and trainings (TPD) are important for their personal development. Therefore, apart from being self-initiated, strong personal development is highly dependent on the effectiveness of professional development.

### **2.5.2 Teachers' Agency for TPD**

The precedent section discussed the impact of teacher personal development on TPD. Another strong impact of personal development is on Teacher Agency development, a crucial element in TPD within an ER. This section will discuss how Teacher Agency impacts TPD by first presenting a brief overview of the initiation of Agency in education, followed by its importance, development and challenges in a reform context.

Before reaching the current conception, Teacher Agency (TA) has undergone a number of different phases. As already highlighted in Section 2.3, in the mid twentieth century, teachers were often seen as “technicians” or “executors” of pre-determined curricula and policy directives. TA first made its appearance in the late twentieth century when teachers started to

be reflective and more autonomous. Agency took the form of reflective practice and professional autonomy. With time, in the early twenty-first century, TA became a topic of concern mainly in response to the growing emphasis on ERs, accountability measures, and standardized testing. With growing policy demands, teacher autonomy started to fade once again. In response to these, research began to highlight the importance of TA in responding to these pressures, emphasizing that teachers are not merely implementers of policy but active participants who mediate and interpret reforms based on their contexts (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). Following Priestly, Biesta and Lytle's (2009) Ecological Model, TA has known a significant shift. They view agency as something that is dynamically enacted in specific contexts, rather than as an intrinsic personal trait. TA is not just an individual attribute but it is shaped by the broader social, cultural, and institutional contexts in which teachers work (Priestley et al., 2015).

Today, following a rapidly changing demands of the teaching profession, TA has become a critical topic of research in the educational field. There is a high number of scholars who explored TA and its role in multiple educational contexts (Priestly, et al., 2015; Biesta, 2017; Ahmad & Shan, 2022; Yakavets et al., 2023; Rose, 2020; Datnow, 2020; Lopes & D'Ambrosio, 2016). For instance, according to Priestly et al., (2015), the concept of Agency is linked to the capacity of teachers to make intentional decisions, take action (Eteläpelto et al., 2013), and reflect on their practice within the constraints and opportunities of their world environment. In the same vein, Biesta et al., (2015) are of the view that agency is not something that people have as a property, capacity, or competence, but rather, it is something that people do. It is a dynamic process inflected by teachers' beliefs (Biesta et al., 2015) and personal goals (Ketelaar et al., 2012). In the words of Frost (2006, p.20), "Agency is having a sense of self encompassing particular values and a cultural identity, and being able to pursue self determined purposes and goals through self-conscious strategic action." Teacher Agency is often linked to self-directed TPD activities that are relevant and meaningful to teachers' PD (Rose, 2020). Therefore, TA can be understood as the "self" of teachers in the enactment of reflective learning actions for their professional growth.

In the context of ERs (or change), Teacher Professional Agency (Teacher Agency for PD) plays an important role (Vähäsantanen, 2015). However, TA does not exist in a vacuum. PD activities are a key aspect in the activation of agency. For instance, in a study conducted by Lopes and D'Ambrosio (2016), four teachers participated in a 360-hour course. Teachers

reported that the course contributed to their professional knowledge, that allowed them to reconstruct their professional identities and thus, develop and nurture the agency necessary for the change. Another study by Yakavets et al., (2023) on ER and TA in the reconstruction of pedagogical practices in Kazakhstan, reveal that TA opens up a range of different forms of actions for TPD. Currently, however, there is limited scholarly evidence regarding the interconnectedness of TA and inclusive education that could help to add more arguments to this debate. This gap between inclusive education, TA and TPD in the literature demands high attention.

In many countries, reforms are designed and imposed on a top-down basis (Billet, 2014; Pyhältö et al., 2012), and in such a situation, where there is absence of opportunities for active participation and influence, the agency of teachers is reduced. In a study by Vähäsatanen (2015), it was found that in a top-down ER, teachers' voice and opinions was unheard, as they perceived themselves as passive objects whose actions are mainly regulated by external bodies (Lasky, 2005). This resulted in teacher's weak agency. Moreover, in the study of Yakavets et al., (2023), teachers voiced out that internal and external structures that have a historical background impacted their agency negatively. Here, it can be argued that an ER can be new but its historical background in terms of traditional TPD and prevailing old cultural traditions may cause hindrances in TA. This can be supported by a study by Datnow (2020) in which he found that TA was and is deeply intertwined with the structures and cultures of which it is part, both within the school and beyond it.

In the contemporary era, inclusive education is fundamental in most countries. Similarly, the NYCBE Reform of Mauritius also is giving much attention to inclusivity by including students with different abilities in the same classroom. Within this reform context, teachers are expected to implement inclusive pedagogy (Miller et al., 2022). However, lack of teacher agency negatively impact TPD (Miller et al., 2022). Conversely, it can also be argued that lack of effective and relevant TPD negatively impact TA. Owing to the fact is that during a top-down ER, TPD is viewed as a compliance task rather than a growth opportunity (Miller et al., 2022). Hence, this result in low motivation for agency. The debate on whether agency influences PD or PD influences agency is ongoing. This research gap demands attention of scholars.

TA is not an isolated concept as it inter-relates with different stakeholders. As discussed in the previous sections, school leaders are pivotal to TPD. Given their role as ER mediators, they

have the responsibility in agency development for TPD as well (Wood, 2024; Hilal& Akar, 2022; Rose, 2020). Rose (2020) found that principals were supportive of TA but at the same time they expressed concerns meeting their own school needs and the needs that the authority expected them to support with limited PD time. However, the literature is especially silent about the role of school leaders in developing TA in SSSs' of Mauritius. This silence is unfortunate because school leaders of SSSs have an important responsibility to cater for the 'inclusive' students and their learning. Given the dead silence on this topic in the Mauritian context, lack of data on how TA is being done and supported by school leaders for inclusive education does not provide any hint on the success or failure of TPD and the ER.

### **2.5.3 Teachers' Belief system**

The precedent sections discussed the impact of personal development on TPD and Teacher Agency. Personal development, as a crucial aspect of TPD, is highly influenced by Teacher Beliefs (TB) as well. research consistently indicates that these beliefs influence not only how teachers perceive and engage with their PD but also the overall impact of such initiatives on teaching practices and student outcome. Thus section will discuss the influence of TB on personal and professional development with an emphasis on ER. This discussion will also discuss the influence of TPD on TB as a reverse effect.

In understanding Teacher Beliefs, the definition of Pajares (1992, p.316) highlights "belief is an individual's judgement of the truth or falsity of a proposition." In other words, beliefs represent an individual's representation of reality or what an individual holds to be true, whether or not evidence supports that representation. Adding to this, Richardson (1996) advanced that beliefs represent a set of views, perceptions, or propositions felt by a person to be true. Whether objectively true or not, beliefs guide our goals, emotions, decisions, actions, and reactions (Bandura, 1997). These definitions are confirmed by a number of studies. For instance, in a study by Fives and Buehl (2016) on teachers' beliefs in the context of policy reform, it was found that teachers with enough personal conviction to be considered true, were helpful for teachers to embed themselves in the complex reform contexts. A number of scholars have highlighted the influence of TB on TPD.

However, a paradoxical point has cropped up in terms of whether TB influence TPD or is it vice-versa? This paradox needs further clarifications from the Literature as contrarily to the

above argument, there are a number of studies evidenced that TPD influence TB (Thurn & Borzel, 2020; Sanger, 2015; Levin & Wadmang, 2005). For instance, in a study conducted by Thurn and Borzel (2020) on the effects of PD programs for teaching Mathematics with technology on TB, it was found that the strongest impact of the PD program was on teachers' technology-related beliefs and their professionalization. Brinkmann (2015) advanced that the underlying beliefs of teachers are addressed through training programmes. He also emphasized on the importance of taking into account teachers' beliefs within teacher education programmes. As recommendation in his study on the implementation of technology, Ertmer et al., (2012) suggested to refocus professional development efforts on strategies for facilitating changing teachers' attitudes and beliefs. Adopting a constructivist training programme whereby first, engagement with and build upon the knowledge and beliefs about the world that teachers already bring with them is taken into account because without this, teachers may fail to fully grasp new concepts, or revert to their previous positions once they leave the training sessions.

The discussion follows that change in teachers' beliefs can take place through TPD activities but contrastingly, it has also been found that changing teachers' beliefs is difficult (Ertmer, 2005). There are also opposing views about using professional development activities to address teachers' beliefs. One contrasting view that fits in the context of this study is that teachers' thinking (belief) and practice are strongly shaped by the culture in which teachers are embedded (Hargreaves, 1997; Hongbootri & Keawkhong, 2014; Rozenholtz, 1991; Alexander, 2001). Professional development programmes are not always successful because of cultural beliefs that influence teachers' beliefs greatly (Brinkmann, 2015). Brinkmann (2015) pointed out that culturally inherited beliefs about how the mind works and how one learns, are difficult to override even after extensive trainings. In the same vein, TB is affected by different cultural beliefs as well. For instance, the broader school culture deeply influences how teachers' beliefs impact their TPD. In this, school leaders have a crucial role in the way they prioritize professional growth and support teachers. School leaders' have the capacity to change the culture and foster positive beliefs among teachers, facilitating smarter implementation of reforms. In contrast, a culture that does not support change can reinforce existing beliefs and hinder progress. Therefore, it can be concluded that along with professional development programs, cultural context that shape teachers' beliefs as well is equally important. Cultural incompatibility impacts the beliefs of teachers, impacting their acceptability of a reform.

TPD significantly impact TPD within the context of ER in several ways. Teachers make sense of the ER (or any change) in terms of their own beliefs. They judge the validity of new approaches based on their pre-existing beliefs. For example, in a study on the implementation of differentiated instruction Brighton (2003), for example, found that teachers whose pre-existing beliefs were aligned with the philosophy and practices of new instructional mode, they implemented differentiated strategies with fidelity. When PD aligns with teachers' existing beliefs, it is more likely to be embraced. For example, NYCBE Reform emphasizes inclusive education. Teachers who believe in inclusiveness, are more likely to actively participate in TPD (in either form).

However, traditional beliefs of teachers can be a major challenge for TPD and acceptance of the ER. Deeply held traditional beliefs can lead to resistance against reform initiatives. For instance, within the NYCBE Reform, teachers who are accustomed to working with mainstream students, may be sceptical of working with Extended Programme students or disabled students 'included' in the mainstream classes, and develop specific PD for them. This resistance can hinder the successful implementation of the reform, as teachers may revert to familiar practices, undermining the intended change.

Within the context of an ER, a prominent point that emerged from literature is the 'epistemic beliefs', that is beliefs about the nature of knowledge that teachers possess. There is evidence that researchers have become concerned with teachers' beliefs about knowledge and how such beliefs may influence their approach (Sosu & Gray, 2012). According to Fives and Buehl (2016), beliefs about the nature of knowledge address several dimensions: (a) certainty of knowledge (as whether the knowledge is unchanged or fluid), (b) simplicity of knowledge (as whether the knowledge is isolated or interconnected), (c) source of knowledge (if the knowledge is coming from the authority or constructed by the self), and (d) justification of knowledge (the process and evidence needed to evaluate knowledge claims (Fives & Buehl, 2016; Grenne et al., 2008). In the context of the NYCBE Reform, epistemic beliefs are in the form of knowledge that teachers have about the kind of TPD knowledge they possess; the quality of knowledge they have of the ER; the root of the knowledge they have (the knowledge providers like the MIE, school leaders or self); and finally the appropriateness of the TPD knowledge they have. Aligning these epistemic beliefs with TPD can lead to transformative changes, as teachers are more likely to integrate new knowledge into their teaching (Desimone, 2009).

Teacher beliefs are pivotal in shaping TPD within an ER. As Desimone (2009) emphasized, coherence between PD content and teachers' existing beliefs and practices are important. Therefore, understanding these beliefs allows for the design of TPD that align with teachers' needs, ultimately leading to more successful implementation of reform initiatives. However, the debate continues on whether TB influence TPD or is it vice-versa. This can be considered as a gap as till date there has not been any studies that have highlighted this.

## **2.6 Synthesis of chapter**

TPD is a cornerstone of educational quality and reform, directly influencing teaching practices and student outcomes. As education systems worldwide undergo significant transformations, the professional growth of teachers has garnered increasing scholarly and policy attention. This chapter provided a deep exploration of TPD within the historical and contemporary reform contexts. By engaging with diverse perspectives and bodies of literature, this review lays the groundwork for understanding how teachers navigate their professional development amid shifting educational landscapes, emphasizing the centrality of context in these processes.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 3.1 Introduction

Chapter two presented the literature review on Teacher Professional Development (TPD) within the space of an Educational Reform (ER). It elaborated on key concepts relating to TPD at different levels of the educational hierarchy; and the influences of ERs on TPD across multiple levels. In this chapter, the theoretical framework that is used to understand TPD at different levels within the ER space will be presented, followed by a critical review of the framework.

As elaborated in Chapter one and two, TPD within the ER is a complex phenomenon that is affected by a multitude of interconnected influences at multi-levels (micro, meso and macro) of the educational hierarchy. The context of this study relates not only to the immediate micro-context of TPD but also to extended contexts encompassing all educational stakeholders who have direct and indirect influence on TPD at different levels. Additionally, this study aims to understand the notion of TPD from the perspectives of multiple educational stakeholders of the educational hierarchy, which adds complexity in the understanding of TPD as each category of stakeholder views it according to their professional and historical experiences, beliefs, and authority (power) they hold. Therefore, understanding the multifaceted nature of TPD from the perspectives of diverse educational stakeholders within the space of the ER necessitates a comprehensive theoretical framework that explains TPD, and its conceptualisation within the ER space. Given this complexity, I employed Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System's Theory (EST) (1979) and Barad's Intra-Action Theory (IAT) (2007) to make sense of TPD and how it is conceptualised in the way it is within the context of an ER, and to explore whether diverse conceptions of TPD exist that are 'silent' and not openly 'voiced out' by the stakeholders. Thus, the EST and IAT serve not only as a lens to examine TPD within an ER context but also to explain the interrelationships and intra-relationships between TPD and multiple elements that shape TPD.

Most researchers on TPD typically focus on the direct influence of single activities or programs within a given context (Ehrenfeld, 2022). They less often acknowledge the interactive impacts and influences of the multiple experiences of TPD at different levels, and from multiple stakeholders in various contexts. By employing Bronfenbrenner's EST and Barad's IAT, I intend to focus on the interconnectedness that uncovers the inter/intra-active relationships between the immediate and broader TPD contexts.

### **3.2 An overview of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory**

Bronfenbrenner's EST, originally developed to understand human development, has been widely adapted in various fields, including education (Evans, 2012; Lai & Chen, 2020; Henry & Namhla, 2020; Chu et al., 2021; Widayati, MacCallum & Woods-McConney, 2021; Ehrenfeld, 2022; Ross et al., 2022; Lenhoft et al., 2022; Saglam et al., 2023). This theory posits that human development is influenced by different types of environmental systems. It describes human development (children development) as occurring within a series of linked systems that influence each other in complex ways. Ecological theory attempts to see human interaction in systems or subsystems. According to Bronfenbrenner:

The ecology of human development involves the scientific study of the progressive, mutual accommodation between an active, growing human being and the changing properties of the immediate settings in which the developing person lives, as this process is affected by relations between these settings, and by the larger contexts in which the settings are embedded.

EST is structured around five environmental systems: the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem. Each system encompasses different aspects of an individual's environment that interact and influence development. Bronfenbrenner describes these five systems around children and young people's lives which are interconnected in a complex manner. A clear understanding of these systems provides a necessary foundation for interpreting their relevance within this study. The following figure offers a visual summary of these systems.

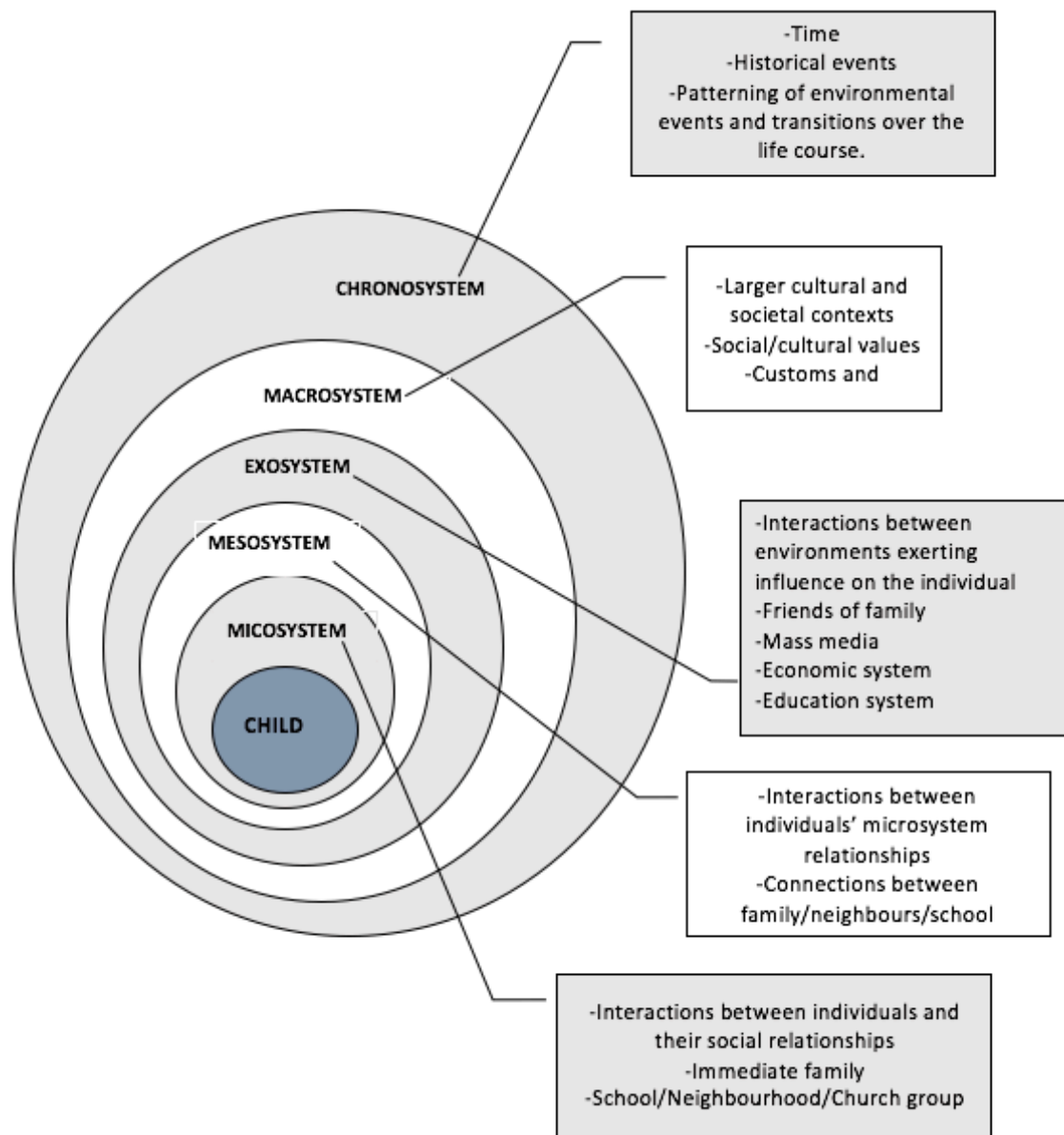


Figure 1: Bronfenbrenner's EST (Adapted from Santrock, 2008)

### **Microsystem**

In Bronfenbrenner's original EST, the microsystem is the closest to the child's everyday life. It represents the smallest and most immediate environment in which the child lives, describing how the child spends his or her daily life. This system includes people, institutions, neighbourhood and services that she or he directly interacts with in their immediate environment. Interactions in the microsystem are bi-directional; each influence can change the opinion of the other. This is where the child is actively participating at a given moment in his life.

### **Mesosystem**

The mesosystem includes connections within the microsystem. It encompasses the interaction of the different microsystems that the developing child is involved in. It is in essence, a system of microsystems and as such, involves linkages between home and schooling, between peer groups, family, neighbours and so on. Bronfenbrenner claimed that the richer the medium for communication in the mesosystem, the more influential it is on the microsystem.

### **Exosystem**

Exosystem influences come from a wider local context, therefore include community-level influences that can be physical or spatial. This system pertains to the linkages that may exist between two or more settings, one of which may not contain the developing child but affects him indirectly however (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). This may include the parents' workplaces, mass media, the larger neighbourhood, and extended family members, economic system, education system, and so on.

### **Macrosystem**

The macrosystem is a 'societal blueprint for a particular culture or sub-culture' (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p.1645) that affects all other systems. It is the largest and most distant collection of people and places to the child that still exercises significant influence on the child. This system comprises the child's dominant beliefs and ideas, political and economic systems. It emphasises the overarching patterns of the microsystem, mesosystem and exosystem, featuring a given culture, sub-culture, or other extended social structure, such as social beliefs, resources, and lifestyle (Bronfenbrenner, 2005).

## **Chronosystem**

The chronosystem is a key component of Bronfenbrenner's EST. It encompasses the dimension of time as it relates to the child's environment. It includes two key aspects: life transitions and events, and sociohistorical conditions. By 'life transitions and events', Bronfenbrenner refers to the significant life events and transitions that the child or an individual experiences over time. These can include major life changes such as starting kindergarten, transiting to adolescence, getting a degree, change in family structure, or experiencing the loss of somebody close. Such events can have profound effects on development and can alter the course of a child's/an individual's life. Whereas by the 'sociohistorical conditions', the sociohistorical contexts in which a child/individual lives are inferred. This includes broader societal changes and historical events that impact the individual and the systems that are part of. For example, technological advancements, economic cycles and recessions, political changes, and cultural shifts are all part of the chronosystem. Moreover, the chronosystem adds the useful dimension of time, which demonstrates the influence of both change and constancy in the child's environment.

### **3.2.1 Ecological System Theory in the understanding of Teacher Professional Development within an Educational Reform**

Section 3.1 depicted the original EST of Bronfenbrenner, describing the human development as occurring within a series of linking systems which influences each other in complex ways. It also highlighted the importance of the five linking systems that shape individual behaviour and development. In the context of this study, recognizing and addressing the various influences on TPD is essential. To this end, this section draws from the principles of EST to conceptualize TPD within an ER setting. The following figure then offers a visual summary of the different systems, illustrating the multiple layers of contextual factors that impact TPD within an ER.

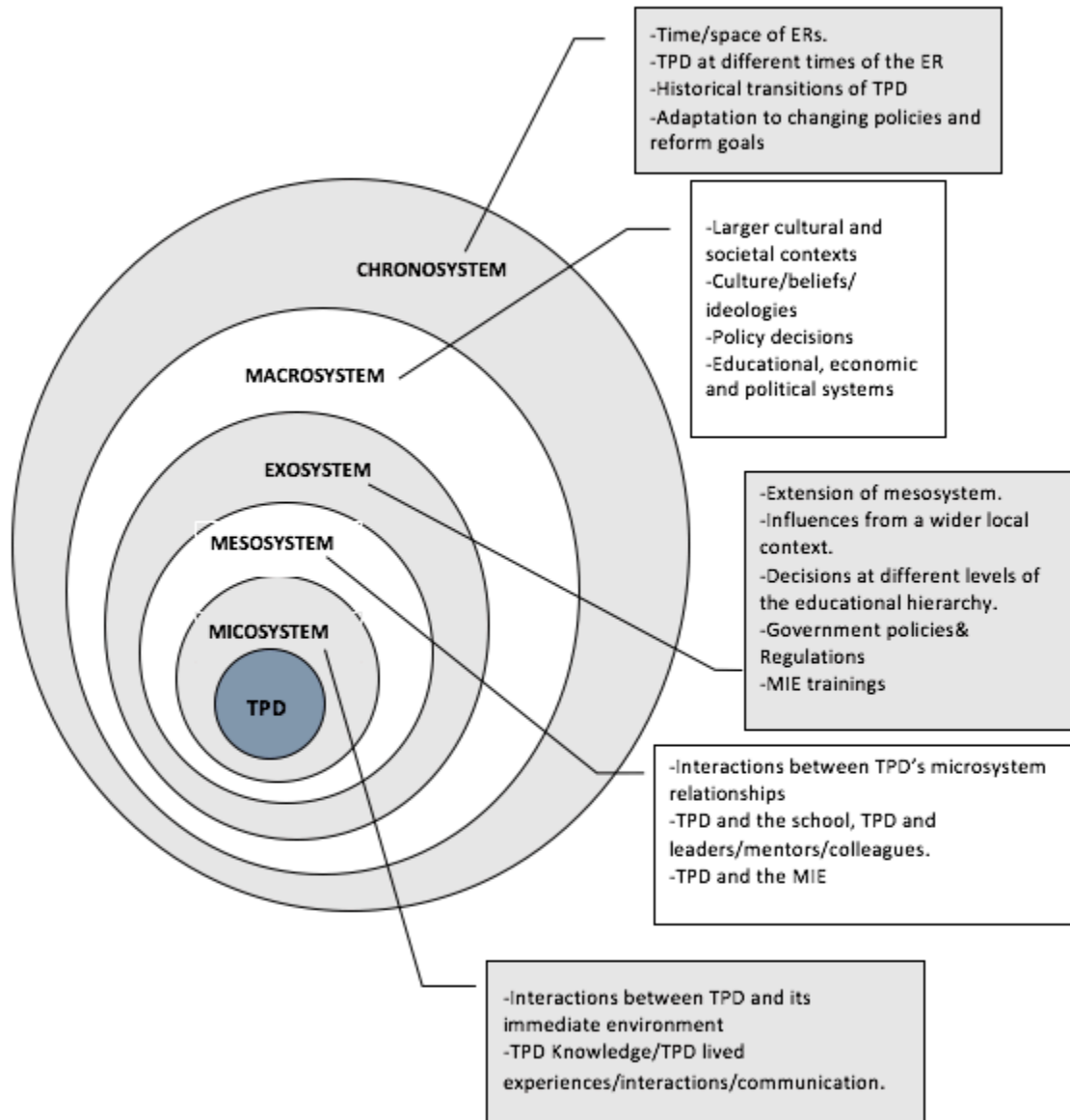


Figure 2: Application of Bronfenbrenner's EST in the conceptualisation of TPD within an ER

The following sub-sections provide an elaborated critical explanation on the use of the EST as a lens to understand the phenomenon (TPD) within the context of an ER.

### Microsystem

The original EST of Bronfenbrenner describes the microsystem as closest to the child's everyday life where he interacts with his immediate environment. Applying this to the context of this study, a microsystem is the innermost layer to which the phenomenon (TPD) is the closest. It depicts the interactions between TPD and its immediate environment which

comprises of TPD knowledge, TPD experiences, TPD interactions, communication and every element that directly affect TPD within an ER. Each of these elements directly influences educational stakeholders' notion of TPD. For instance, element like knowledge of TPD that stakeholders possess may influence their notion of TPD. Their lived-experiences of TPD within an ER is another element that may have direct influence on their conceptions of TPD. In sum, the microsystem provides a lens to view TPD in its most immediate environment from the perspective of various category of educational stakeholders, each holding a specific set of microsystem elements according to their position they hold in the educational hierarchy.

### **Mesosystem**

In Bronfenbrenner's original EST, the mesosystem includes the interconnections with the microsystem of the child as explained in section 3.1. Using the same constructs, the mesosystem of TPD includes connections with, and encompasses the interaction of the different microsystems where TPD is situated as shown in Figure 2. In this study's context, these interactions can be between TPD and the school environment, TPD and school leaders, TPD and mentors, TPD and colleagues, TPD and training institutions, and so on. The school environment plays a crucial role in TPD as it is the primary site where ER is implemented (Tran et al., 2020). The school is the space where TPD is initiated and mentored by school leaders, Head of Departments, and informal TPD from colleagues' interactions. Apart from the school which is the immediate environment of TPD, training institutions like the Mauritius Institute of Education, also act as immediate environments for TPD, providing direct experiences, knowledge, and support. Therefore, the mesosystem is where the notion of TPD emerge as a direct influence from its immediate environment, showcasing the transactions among different elements in the microsystem.

The mesosystem highlights how various elements interact to shape the conceptions of TPD, emphasizing the influence of communication (Crawford, 2020). For instance, the mesosystem influences the knowledge of TPD, experiences of TPD, and interactions for TPD of different categories of educational stakeholders within the space of an ER. As this is the closest to the microsystem, it comprises of a plethora of direct elements that informs TPD, among which is the silent voices of certain educational stakeholders. By creating linkages between the micro and mesosystems, I intend to unpack the 'unshared' experiences of certain stakeholders and analyse the 'silence' in relation to their specific positions they hold in the educational

hierarchy. Therefore, the mesosystem may copiously inform the conceptions of TPD from the perspectives of multiple educational stakeholders within an ER context.

### **Exosystem**

Exosystem from the original EST of Bronfenbrenner, pertains to the linkages that may exist between two or more settings, one of which may not include the developing child but still affects him indirectly. It is an extension of the mesosystem where there are the influences of a wider local context. Like the mesosystem, the exosystem also is a system of interrelations between two or more microsystems.

As already explained in Section 3.2, different studies have re-adapted the exosystem in relation to the study's contexts as researchers have the independence to decide what elements and influences drive-in this layer of the EST. For instance, in a study by Chen (2020) on teacher emotions for their PD, the exosystem revealed some crucial factors that were consequences of decisions made by others in the educational context. This study focuses on the conceptions of TPD within an ER from the perspective of multiple educational stakeholders. The exosystem therefore, may not contain TPD but affects it in various ways. In the context of this study, it comprises of decisions made at different levels of the educational hierarchy (Ross et al., 2022), for example school leaders', administrators', directors' and policymakers' decisions; government regulations (Widayati et al., 2021); education standards officers (Mo Maguvhe & Mutambo, 2023) that can include the Quality Assurance Officers of the Ministry; curriculum developers and teacher educators like the MIE Lecturers, and so on. Although these elements do not have direct 'contact' with TPD, they are interconnected with the micro and mesosystems, this significantly affect how TPD is conceptualised. Therefore, the exosystem helps to understand the indirect influences on TPD from broader educational decision-making and policy contexts.

### **Macrosystem**

The macrosystem is the largest and most distant collection of people and places to the child that exercise significant influence on the child as elaborated in the original EST of Bronfenbrenner. It is composed of the child's dominant beliefs and ideas, cultures and sub-cultures, lifestyle, values, political and economic systems. In the context of this study, not all

of the constructs of the original macrosystem are relevant. Therefore, I have discarded a few, and presented and regrouped most relevant constructs relative to TPD within the ER context.

In this study, the macrosystem does not comprise of only the belief systems and larger cultural and community contexts of TPD but a broader space that extends to policy decisions, educational decisions, economic and political systems, and the ideologies of each category of educational stakeholders vis-à-vis TPD, forming the basis of the broader macrosystem within which TPD is influenced. These elements form a wider context within which TPD is situated and influenced. Taken together, the macrosystem factors affect TPD and the understanding of the world (Thompson, 2021). Therefore, paying a closer attention to the broader macrosystem and its multiple influences that inform the notion of TPD within an ER is much necessitated for this study.

### **Chronosystem**

The chronosystem significantly informs TPD within the context of an ER by highlighting the dimension of time, historical context and life transitions. For instance, transition of TPD over time to align with the ER; TPD within previous reforms to inform current practices and adapt to changes in educational policies; and long term PD initiatives that align with the reform goals and future challenges.

TPD has known previous ERs and its relative challenges brought about by various factors, such as school leaders, policy makers, policy implementation, new curriculum implementation, TPD activities, and so on. It has felt the impact of decision makers at different levels of the education system, after which TPD is conceptualised the way it currently is. Historical events and shifts in educational policies also play a critical role. Therefore, understanding the historical context of ERs helps in analysing their impact on TPD (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005). The chronosystem provides a lens to analyse the current and historical contexts of TPD as well by dialoguing with the lived-experiences of the participants of this study. Their interactions with TPD within different spaces and time showcase the transition of TPD.

Moreover, the chronosystem provides a contextually relevant framework to analyse TPD within the space of an ER over time. The lived-experiences of different stakeholders during previous ER contexts may inform the current study about TPD conceptions within an ER. For

instance, these can include major educational or curriculum reforms over time; TPD opportunities and challenges within different ERs; and its interconnections with the current TPD context of this study.

### **3.2.2 Aligning Bronfenbrenner's EST with this study's methodology**

The interrelation with previous TPD experiences and the current one align with hermeneutics phenomenology, this study's methodology. Hermeneutics phenomenology focuses on interpreting and understanding human experiences (Neubauer, Witkop & Varpio, 2019); and recognizing the importance of context in shaping experiences (Ajawi & Higgs, 2007).

EST stresses the interconnectedness of the five systems (contexts) in influencing development. This aligns with the methodology as hermeneutics phenomenology focuses on how context shapes the meaning and understanding of individual experiences. For instance, the child in Bronfenbrenner's EST is influenced by all the five systems directly or indirectly. Hermeneutics phenomenology looks into how each system (context) shapes the meaning and understanding of the child's experiences within each system. In the same way, in this study, Hermeneutics phenomenology focuses on how different educational stakeholders conceptualise TPD within an ER in each system of the EST, and how these systems (contexts) give shape to the understanding of TPD from each educational stakeholder's perspective.

In the EST, Bronfenbrenner highlights the interconnectedness of the five systems (microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem) which influence the child. In this study, the interconnectedness of different systems with which TPD is related aligns with the methodology as Hermeneutics Phenomenology recognizes the interconnectedness of TPD experiences and how they influence one another. This 'interconnectedness' as a common feature in the EST and the methodology gives this study one more reason to employ EST as a theoretical lens.

Hermeneutic Phenomenology can be used to interpret how TPD is conceptualised within the space of an ER and make sense of the environment within which it is situated (within Bronfenbrenner's EST). I intend to use EST as a theoretical framework as it aligns well with

the methodology, to better understand educational stakeholders' notion of TPD by considering both their subjective experiences and the broader environmental contexts.

In summary, Bronfenbrenner's EST provides a structural framework for understanding environmental influences on development, while Hermeneutic Phenomenology offers a method for deeply interpreting the meanings of TPD experiences within the space of an ER within these five contexts (systems). As such, the EST as a theoretical lens and Hermeneutic Phenomenology as the methodology, can provide a comprehensive approach to analysing TPD experiences within an ER context.

### **3.2.3 Reflection on the use of EST as a lens for this study**

Bronfenbrenner's EST provides a useful framework for analysing the perspectives of multiple educational stakeholders in TPD. It emphasizes the five systems: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem, which influence TPD within the space of an ER. The five systems provide different lens to look at TPD in different contexts, facilitating the understanding of the notion of TPD within an ER. However, despite its useful lens, there are a few gaps in the theory's application within this study's context.

Most studies that have employed EST in the context of an educational setting, have focused on only one category of stakeholder. For instance, Perara (2023), Renn&Smith (2023), Analisah (2019), Renn& Arnold (2003) focused on mostly students. Other studies such as Elomaa et al., (2022) focused on only school principals, or teachers (Smith et al., 2017; Johnson,2018; Buchanan,2020). Despite the plethora of studies available on the use of EST, there is however, a significant lack of studies that have employed EST as a lens to analyze a phenomenon from the perspectives of multiple stakeholders. This may be a gap to ponder on.

Additionally, there are a number of ways to think about what goes on in the environment, and how TPD reacts and interacts with environments and stakeholders within them. The five systems elaborated by Bronfenbrenner provide a comprehensive lens to analyse TPD in different contexts/systems but it does not adequately address the 'global system', which according to me as a researcher is a crucial system to consider in the analysis of broader phenomena facing the impact and influences of 'global system'. For instance, in this study, the global perspective to analyse TPD is excluded. The five systems of EST ends with the

chronosystem, but in my opinion as a researcher, there is the need to look at TPD beyond this system as ERs are directly influenced by much broader system that I may call the ‘metasystem’. There is also a lack of studies and literature on EST where the influences of the ‘metasystem’ have been given attention to.

Another reflection on the use of EST as a lens is that, the role of ‘power’ is under-pronounced. For instance, the macrosystem do not attend to the role of power (Celebra et al., 2016). Within this study’s context, the conception of TPD from the perspectives of multiple educational stakeholders within an ER emerges as a result of various influences, of which one is ‘power’, as the education system follows a top-down structure. These reflections highlight the need to consider broader influences and power dynamics when using EST to analyse TPD within an ER context.

### **3.3 Barad’s Intra-Action Theory**

#### **3.3.1 Introduction**

The above section provided an initial framing lens for analysing and interpreting the research findings. As a theoretical lens, EST emphasizes the significance of multi-layers of context in shaping TPD within an ER. It provides a framework to make sense of the complex multi-layered space within which the stakeholders operate. However, as identified in Section 3.2.3, a few gaps in the application of this theory within this study’s context required to be addressed. For instance, despite its widespread use, EST studies lack analyses incorporating multiple stakeholders’ perspectives, gives limited attention to the global system’s policy influence, and underexplores macro-level power dynamics in the system’s top-down structures. Additionally, EST does not provide insights about what is happening ‘*within*’ the phenomenon. To address these gaps and explore the internal dynamics of the TPD context, I employ Barad’s Intra-Action Theory (IAT) as a second theoretical lens to make sense of TPD within an ER. Therefore, this section presents Barad’s Intra-Action as an additional theoretical lens to deepen the understanding of TPD from the perspectives of various educational stakeholders. Key theoretical concepts of Intra-Action will be utilized in the analysis and interpretation of emerging findings, with particular emphasis on the implications of IAT for TPD within an ER.

### 3.3.2 An overview of Barad's Intra-Action Theory

A thorough understanding of Barad's theory is important to make sense of not only the interconnected aspects/influences of TPD within an ER but also the entanglements between different conceptions of TPD as understood by multiple stakeholders', and the five systems presented by EST.

Intra-Action Theory (IAT) is derived from Barad's theory of Agential Realism, which emphasizes the mutual constitution of entangled agencies. This theory is grounded in the work of the physicist Niels Bohr, mainly his principle of complementarity, which suggests that the properties of particles are not inherent but are determined by the experimental context. Barad extends this idea to the macroscopic world, which she presents in her book '*Meeting The Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter Meaning*' (2007). The book presents a profound rethinking of the relationship between entities and their interactions. Barad emphasizes that, rather than treating objects and individuals as separate, pre-existing entities that interact, entities actually come into being through their relationships with each other. This notion challenges traditional ideas of individualism and causality, drawing from quantum physics, feminine theory, and post-structuralism.

As mentioned in the above paragraph, IAT is derived from Agential Realism, a broader framework in which the world is perceived as a dynamic and ongoing reconfiguration of material-discursive practices. Within this frame of reference, Barad argues that,

'the primary ontological unit is not independent objects with inherent boundaries and properties but rather *phenomena*. In my agential-realist elaboration, phenomena do not merely mark the epistemological inseparability of observer and observed, or the results of measurements; rather, phenomena are the ontological inseparability/entanglement of intra-acting "agencies". That is, *phenomena* are ontologically primitive relations - relations without pre-existing relata.' (p. 139) and '*phenomena* are the ontological inseparability of agentially intra-acting components' (p.33).

In other words, ontologically, reality is a dynamic and co-constitutive relation of entangled and intra-acting agencies. Barad aims to realize a fundamental reconceptualization of how reality should be understood, not as something that is 'interactive' but as something that is 'intra-active'. At the core of reality is not a stable set of 'things' but rather dynamic relations within which the world is continually reconfigured, and the material-discursive boundaries of 'things' are in perpetual negotiation and reformation. The concept of intra-action prehends the deep

relationality of the world in its course of ‘becoming’ and offers a novel and profound perspective on how processes of ‘becoming’ materialise without reliance upon the basic substance ontology of the modernist era.

From the above quotation, Barad means that meaning-making through ‘interaction’ depends on the prior existence of independent entities, while meaning-making through specific agential intra-actions depends on the boundaries and properties of components of phenomena.

Barad elaborates that reality is not composed of ‘things-in-themselves’ or ‘things-behind-phenomena’, but of ‘things-in-phenomena.’ She further explains that the world is a dynamic process of intra-activity and materialization, enacted through determinate causal structures with specific boundaries, properties, meanings, and patterns of mark on bodies.

Barad uses the concept of agential-intra-action to show how phenomena come to matter through their intra-actions. As she explains in her book (2007) ‘reality is composed’ (p.140). There is a continuous flow of agency in the world, a dynamic process of intra-activity. The stabilization and destabilization of determinate causal structures with specific boundaries, properties, meanings, and patterns *happens not in space and time but in the making of spacetime itself.*

Agential-realism does not position human concepts, human knowledge, or laboratory contrivances as foundational elements of the quantum theory. On the contrary, rather than granting humans a privileged status within the theory, agential-realism calls for an account of intra-active emergence of “humans” as a specifically differentiated phenomena, that is, as specific configurations. *Intra-actions are not the result of human interventions; rather, “humans” themselves emerge through specific intra-actions.*

As Barad (2007) explains,

... “intra-action” *signifies the mutual constitution of entangled agencies.* That is, in contrast to the usual “interaction,” which assumes that there are separate individual agencies that precede their interaction, the notion of intra-action recognizes that distinct agencies do not precede, but rather emerge through, their intra-action.” (p. 33; her emphasis).

From an intra-actional view, things are secondary to relations; it is within relations that things (and individuals) become and change. As implied in the above quote, sociologically speaking, the concept of intra-action offers a novel and profoundly relational view of basic social process.

in contrasting intra-action with the conventional concept of interaction, Barad offers a lens through which we can more clearly see how substance ontologies have been consistently deployed within sociological thinking itself (Bourdieu, 1989).

### **3.3.3 Intra-Action Theory in the understanding of this study**

Barad's IAT has been used in various studies and across different fields such as education, medicine, psychology, politics, economics and finance, and so on. Having presented the central concepts of Barad's Intra-Action Theory in the preceding section, in this section I will employ central tenets of that framework to explain its applicability as an analytical and interpretive lens to TPD within the space of an ER.

Unlike the concept of interaction, where separate entities influence each other, intra-action posits that entities do not pre-exist their relationships but are co-constituted through their entanglements. This perspective offers profound insights into how multiple educational stakeholders (teachers, Rectors, MIE lecturers and policy makers) and educational reforms, are dynamically intertwined and co-constructed. Given this, IAT provides a framework for mapping how key educational stakeholders intra-act with TPD within an ER, indicating how they mutually constitute each other. Applying this concept to TPD within an ER context may provide a nuanced understanding of the complexities and dynamics involved.

Intra-action suggests that relationships are co-constituted through their interactions. For instance, the concept of 'co-constitution' can deepen our understanding of how teachers and TPD are not different entities but are co-constituted through their interactions. The aspect of 'co-constitution' can provide a deeper understanding of not only how teachers and TPD interact, but how their conceptions of TPD within an ER emerge through ongoing intra-actions within the school environment and the broader context. In the same way, co-constitution helps to understand how Rectors, MIE Lecturers, and policy makers develop their conception of TPD within an ER. The mutual influences are not from one side, but from both sides.

IAT highlights the importance of context. From this perspective, TPD is seen as context-specific, shaped by the unique culture, policies, and practices of the context. For instance, educational stakeholders' conceptions of TPD are influenced by the specific reform initiatives

and broader socio-political development. Intra-action provides a framework to analyse the complex, multi-layered context as elaborated in section 3.2 and 3.3, and its influences on the conceptions of TPD, acknowledging the importance of being attuned to the realities of the environment.

IAT emphasizes that reality is composed of interconnected relationships. In the context of this study, the relationships among different educational stakeholders are central to TPD as it sheds light on the importance of trust, mutual respect, and open communication in fostering a supportive context for TPD.

Another core element that I consider relevant to this study is the material-discursive practices of the IAT. The role of material resources such as technology, resources, textbooks and infrastructure; and discursive practices such as language, policies and so on, is important in shaping TPD. IAT highlights how these elements are entangled with human actors in co-creating TPD experience. Therefore, looking at TPD from a ‘material-discursive’ lens allows for a more comprehensive understanding of TPD as a complex phenomenon.

### **3.3.4 Aligning Intra-Action Theory with Hermeneutic Phenomenology**

The theoretical frameworks and methodology of a study are essential components in conducting rigorous and well-structured research. Barad’s IAT and Hermeneutics Phenomenology are based on two philosophical ways of understanding the world, which will be elaborated on in the following paragraphs. Their key concepts can be insightful for this study.

Barad’s IAT, as part of her agential-realism, challenges the classical notion of interaction, where entities are assumed to exist independently before coming into contact with each other. Instead, she argues that entities (TPD and educational stakeholders) do not pre-exist, their intra-actions but emerge through them. This concept aligns well with Hermeneutics Phenomenology, which is concerned with the lived-experiences of individuals and how these experiences are interpreted. It stresses understanding the meaning of phenomena through the subjective experiences of people. This indicates that Hermeneutic Phenomenology takes into account individual experiences that form a ‘whole’. Both IAT and Hermeneutic

Phenomenology ontologies reject the idea of separate, independent entities. Both view reality as a process of ‘becoming’ rather than a collection of stagnant entities.

From an ontological perspective, Barad’s IAT focuses on the material-discursive practices that generate reality. According to her, reality is not something “out there” waiting to be discovered but it is actively constructed through these practices. Hermeneutic Phenomenology, on the other hand, is concerned with the “being” of individuals and the world as experienced by them. It posits that understanding is always situated within a historical and cultural context, which shapes how phenomena (TPD) are experienced and interpreted. From this perspective, once more both see reality as a process of ‘becoming’ rather than a set of static entities.

Additionally, IAT aligns with Hermeneutic Phenomenology in that both discard the idea of an isolated observer. IAT affirms that the observers/actors (educational stakeholders), and the phenomenon (TPD) itself co-constitute knowledge (of TPD). Meanwhile, Hermeneutic Phenomenology acknowledges that the researcher’s interpretations are shaped by their own historical and cultural context. Both perspectives view knowledge as situated and emergent. Therefore, IAT aligns well with the methodology of this study, as both frameworks seek to explore the fluid and evolutionary nature of phenomena (TPD). However, a probable challenge is that IAT can add complexity to the study, as it requires navigating different ontological and epistemological commitments. However, this complexity can also enrich the research by providing a more nuanced understanding of TPD within an ER context.

### **3.4 The hybrid of Ecological System Theory and Intra-Action Theory**

For exploring the philosophical underpinnings of research (Scotland, 2012), multiple (more than one) theories can be utilized to support and develop a model according to epistemological perspective (Love, 2022). To have a deeper understanding of the conceptions of TPD within an ER from the perspectives of various sets of educational stakeholders, I have hybridized Bronfenbrenner’s EST and Barad’s IAT by combining relevant elements from each framework to inform this study. Given EST’s and IAT’s heterogeneity and influences at different levels of the educational hierarchy, the hybridity of these two theories offers a hybrid theoretical insight to analyse and interpret the conceptions of TPD at different levels.

Section 3.2.1 elaborated on the five layers of EST, highlighting the interaction of TPD with each layer (system) and multiple influences on TPD. EST recognizes that TPD is shaped by interactions within and between multiple systems, ranging from immediate school settings to broader societal contexts; and that TPD evolves overtime, influenced by historical and future changes. Section 3.4 elaborated on Barad's IAT, highlighting that TPD conceptions do not exist independently but emerge through its interactions and entanglements in terms of actions, materials, and discourses that are deeply interconnected. IAT suggests that educational stakeholders are co-creators of TPD knowledge, each influencing and shaping the development process. Moreover, IAT highlights the dynamic relationships among stakeholders in understanding TPD, emphasizing collaboration and mutual influences.

The hybrid of these two theories provide a holistic and dynamic understanding of the interaction and intra-action of TPD within multiple systems at different levels. The combination allows TPD to be viewed as a result of intra-actions within and across the different ecological systems. For instance, the relationship between TPD and a teacher (microsystem) is influenced by school policies (mesosystem), the government policies (exosystem), culture and economic influences (macrosystem) and TPD history within previous ERs (chronosystem).

Moreover, the combination gives an indication on the mutual shaping and co-creation of TPD within an ER. For instance, it helps to understand that TPD is not just influenced by multiple layers of the Ecological Systems but how it is co-created, highlighting the entanglements of actions and contexts. Hence, integrating Barad's concepts of intra-action with Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory provides a robust framework for understanding TPD within an ER context. This hybrid approach emphasizes the dynamic, interconnected, and context-specific nature of TPD, recognizing the co-creation of knowledge and the multiple layers of influence from various stakeholders. This comprehensive perspective can lead to a deeper understanding of TPD conceptions.

### **3.5 Synthesis of the chapter**

The chapter aimed to present the theoretical framings for this study. TPD within the ER context is influenced by multiple interconnected factors at micro, meso and macro levels. The study aims to understand TPD from the perspectives of various categories of educational stakeholders, acknowledging the complexity of diverse viewpoints shaped by professional

experiences, beliefs, and power dynamics. Bronfenbrenner's EST is employed to explore and conceptualise TPD within the ER context, addressing potential "silent" conceptions of PD. EST, structured around five systems, provides a framework for understanding how these systems influence individual development and TPD. Barad's IAT is used as an additional theoretical framework to add more rigour in the study. IAT offers a profound insight into how multiple educational stakeholders within an ER are dynamically intertwined and intra-act with TPD, indicating how they mutually co-constitute each other. The chapter also highlights how EST and IAT aligns with Hermeneutic Phenomenology, which focuses on interpreting human experiences and understanding the role of context in shaping these experiences.

# **CHAPTER 4**

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The preceding first two chapters provided a detailed course of TPD and the ER contexts. In chapter three, the theoretical framework couching this study was presented. In the current chapter, qualitative approach as the research design is presented. It further presents hermeneutic phenomenology as the research paradigm and outlines the justification behind its selection for generating data above other research methodologies. The hermeneutic phenomenological approach provides a richer understanding of TPD in the context of reform by offering deep insights into how different educational stakeholders interpret, experience, and navigate changes in their professional lives. The chapter further presents the data analysis framework and also features my positionality as a researcher and ethical dilemmas regarding the research paradigm and approach adopted. This chapter is a detailed scheme presented in answering the critical questions in this study.

Critical questions of this study:

1. What are educational stakeholders' conceptions of TPD within the space of educational reform?
2. How have these educational stakeholders developed their conceptions of TPD within the space of educational reform?
3. Why do these educational stakeholders have such conceptions of TPD within the space of educational reform?

### **4.2 Research Approach**

#### **4.2.1 Research Paradigm**

A paradigm is an important aspect in research as it represents beliefs and directs what should be studied, how it should be studied, and how the findings of the study should be interpreted (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). In other words, it provides a lens through which I as a researcher will examine the methodological aspects of my research and to define the research methods

that will be adopted and the approach data will be analysed. For the purpose of this study, I employed an interpretivist paradigm to get insight and in-depth information of the world view through the perceptions and lived-experiences of the educational holders on TPD within an ER (Punch, 2009), which were then used to interpret and build understanding of the phenomenon. The central tenet of the interpretivist paradigm emphasizes that reality is socially constructed (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). As presented in Chapter 3, given the multi-layered contexts within which TPD is situated, an interpretivist paradigm helps to interpret TPD experiences of the educational stakeholders as a socially constructed and context-dependent phenomenon by acknowledging the multi-layered realities, values, and perspectives of the participants (Schwandt et al., 1994).

#### **4.2.2 Qualitative research design**

This study aims to explore and understand the conceptions of TPD from the perspectives of multiple educational stakeholders in their real-world settings where they function. It seeks to understand and interpret TPD as a complex social phenomenon in its natural setting to gain richer and more authentic insights behind their conceptions. For instance, in the case of this study, the natural setting is the different spaces (for example, the classroom, the school, MIE, the Ministry) of the NYCBE Reform within which TPD takes place for different educational stakeholders. Given these complex settings of the phenomenon, qualitative design provides an approach to capture this richness, particularly when quantitative data might omit core contextual or social (Pilcher & Cortazzi, 2024).

A key feature of Qualitative research design is that it prioritises understanding the whole picture, often focusing on multiple variables or layers of experience and examining how they interconnect. This aligns well with the theoretical framing of this study as it provides a holistic understanding of the multiple contexts that are presented in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System Theory and examining how they interconnect, and also the intra-connections of Barad's Intra-Action Theory. Hence, qualitative research design provides a comprehensive approach in navigating TPD in real-world complex educational settings with multiple truths.

Since qualitative research often starts without predefined hypotheses, it allows for the discovery of new theories, models, or explanations based on merging data. In the case of this

study, in Chapter two, different conceptions of TPD have been underscored in light of diverse contexts. Therefore, by adopting a qualitative approach for this study, emergent new/evolving conceptions of TPD from multiple perspectives can be discovered. This approach allowed me as a researcher to experience the beauty of discovering how the lived-experiences of TPD of educational stakeholders within an ER moulded their conceptions of TPD in ways that the literature still has to uncover.

### **4.2.3 Hermeneutic Phenomenology as the Research Methodology**

This study adopts hermeneutic phenomenology as the methodology since it intends to explain and obtain deep and total understanding of the lived experiences on TPD from the perspectives of different educational stakeholders within the space of educational reform by not only reflecting on the meanings but by interpreting them as well. Flood (2017) argued that hermeneutic phenomenology provides the best opportunity to ‘give voice’ to the experiences of participants. It seeks to understand not only the experiences but also the way participants ascribe meaning to it (Smythe & Spence, 2012). Within the context of this study, this approach will allow voice to the educational stakeholders’ lived-experience of TPD within the space of ER and allow me as a researcher to uncover deeper insights into the meanings and interpretations that participants bring to their experiences.

Hermeneutic phenomenology is based on the work of Husserl and Heidegger. As Wilcke (2006) puts it, before undertaking hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry, the researcher needs to have some understanding of the philosophical thinking on which the approach is based. Therefore, two crucial terms, ‘phenomenology’ and ‘hermeneutics’, demand a thorough understanding to justify the choice of ‘hermeneutic phenomenology’ for this study.

#### **4.2.3.1 From phenomenology to hermeneutic phenomenology**

Phenomenology is both a philosophical and a research methodology. The commencement of phenomenology was done by Edmund Husserl around the turn of the twentieth century to challenge the Cartesian philosophy (Savage, 2021). This philosophy emphasizes the use of reasons and doubts as the foundation of knowledge, encapsulated in the phrase ‘I think, therefore I am’ (Descartes, 1637). Challenging this philosophy, Husserl (1913/1931) came up with the idea of philosophical inquiry, into how human beings experience the world. He

presented the descriptive/transcendental phenomenology whereby the researcher/observer could transcend the phenomena and meaning being investigated to take a global view of the essence discovered (Sloan & Bowe, 2011); make sense of 'brackets' - detaching oneself and remaining neutral from the things- in order to study the objects of consideration.

In view of his phenomenological philosophy, Husserl proposed that in order to understand the essence of phenomena, researchers must bracket their preconceptions and focus on the lived-experiences itself (Moustakas, 1994; Sloan & Bowe, 2011). This process, known as "epoché", requires researchers to suspend their natural attitudes, the world as it appears, and instead focus on the phenomenon in its pure form. It posits that understanding the subjective experience is just as crucial for comprehending human existence (Cresswell & Poth, 2017). This approach experienced strong criticism by philosophers and scholars as they argue that "bracketing" can help researchers set aside their biases, but complete neutrality is impossible as human beings' interpretations of experiences are always shaped by their prior knowledge, beliefs, and social contexts (Finlay, 2009).

In response to Husserl's transcendental phenomenology, Heidegger, the student of Husserl, further developed it by bringing a change in its conceptualisation and came up with the concept of hermeneutic phenomenology (McConnell-Henry et al., 2009). Heidegger rejected Husserl's notion of "bracketing" and argued that we cannot remove ourselves from the process of essence-identification because we exist with the phenomena and the essences (Langdrige, 2007), therefore, how is it possible to detach ourselves from what is being investigated. Heidegger came up with the Dasein concept of "Being-in-the-world", emphasizing that human beings are always situated in a world that shapes their experiences (Heidegger, 1962). This ontological shift made Heidegger's phenomenology more existential, focusing on the interrelationship between individuals and their environment. Moreover, while Husserl's phenomenology sought to focus on only the description of the essence of the phenomenon by using bracketing, Heidegger argued that 'interpretation' gives deeper understanding of the phenomenon. He emphasized that phenomenology must account for the interpretive process inherent in understanding lived experiences. This is where hermeneutics, the art and science of interpretation, becomes central. Phenomenologists have a detached, objective view of the phenomenon, while hermeneutic phenomenologists bring preconceptions and historical understandings to the research process (Gadamer, 1982). This interpretive process, referred to as the "hermeneutic circle" (discussed in Section 4.5.2), involves moving back and forth

between the parts of an experience and the whole, allowing for a deeper understanding of both (Gadamer, 1975; Gadamer, 1982). This is how hermeneutic phenomenology came into existence.

After Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty (1962), Gadamer (1982), Gadamer-Habermas and Ricoeur (McWhorter, 2021; Dallmayr, 2000; Tan, 2009) also raised strong arguments against “bracketing.” Merleau-Ponty (1962) emphasized that our perception of the world is always rooted in our bodily engagement with it. In the same vein, Laverty (2003) echoed that researcher should engage in a process of self-reflection and that the biases and assumptions should not be bracketed, but rather be embedded. In addition to these, the famous Habermas-Gadamer’s debate on hermeneutics brings about in-depth insight between traditional hermeneutics and what Habermas proposes in terms of social theory and critical theory in hermeneutics. He incorporates hermeneutic concepts on the epistemological-methodological level and build the concepts into his philosophy of history and social theory.

Following traditional proponents of hermeneutics, Gadamer (Gadamer, 1982) also emphasizes on the ontological aspect of interpretation by involving the grasping of an historical totality which embraces both the text as well as its history in which the knower is embedded. He strongly emphasizes on the ‘historical consciousness’ by explaining that one cannot deny his historicity consciously or unconsciously. As advanced by Heckman (1986), the effect of history influences our interpretations. Gadamer further developed the hermeneutic phenomenology by emphasizing the role of language, dialogue, and tradition in shaping human understanding. He argued that the understanding is always situated within a historical and cultural context and that interpretation is never final or complete but always ongoing and dynamic. He further emphasizes that the process of interpretation is a dialogical encounter, where the interpreter engages with the text or experience in a conversation that opens up new possibilities for understanding (Gadamer,1975).

For the purpose of this study, I have used the Heidegger’s constructs of ‘interpretation’ of the phenomenon as I intend to explore and uncover hidden meaning of TPD of the participants’ lived-experiences in all its complexities. Moreover, adopting Gadamer’s constructs of ‘interpretation’ relative to historical and cultural context, I expect to uncover new possibilities for understanding TPD within an ER.

#### **4.2.3.2 Defending hermeneutic phenomenology as this study's methodology**

TPD within the space of an ER has been studied by a number of researchers (Little, 1993; Arcaro, 2014; Gore, 2021; Haug & Mork, 2021; Sancar, 2021; Datnow, 2020; Bredson, 2000; Hefwani, 2017; Whitehead, 2002; Little, 1993; Demchento et al., 2021; Budiharso & Tamani, 2020; Osman & Warner, 2020; Pharis, Sullivan, Wo & Moore, 2019; Ell & Major, 2019; Darling-Hammond, 2017; Kennedy, 2016; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011; Borko et al., 2010; Mizell, 2020), but remarkably, hermeneutic phenomenology is not a methodology that has been employed as often as other qualitative methods of inquiry such as case study, action research, grounded theory and narratives. From a qualitative perspective, all of the mentioned qualitative research methods are closely linked to this study's focus and the kind of data that I wanted to generate. However, after going through the literature and different methodologies, and developing a thorough understanding of this study's focus and context, hermeneutic phenomenology was opted as the best fit methodology.

At the initial stage of this study, I intended to use grounded theory. Given that there is no specific theoretical framework for TPD within and ER, I wanted to explore TPD in such a way that could allow me to generate new theoretical frameworks that explain the phenomenon (Glasser & Strauss, 1967; Charmaz, 2014). However, it was limiting what I want to research regarding educational stakeholders' conceptions of TPD, how they developed it, and why they conceptualise TPD in the way they do. That limitation in grounded theory led me to explore more methodologies like case study methodology as well as it involves in-depth exploration of a specific case/cases within its real-world context. It is also famous as a methodology as it helps to understand the complexities and particularities of a specific instance in great detail, offering insights that might not be obtained through other research methods (Yin, 2014). This method was also helping to answer the "how" and "why" questions (Stake, 1995) that was missing when I was thinking to adopt grounded theory method primarily. Since this study's context is multi-layered and inter/intra-connected (as discussed in Chapter 3), case study as a methodology provides deep, detailed investigation, including historical, social, and cultural contexts. It would have contributed in offering a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities within which TPD takes place. However, despite case-study's closely fit this study's focus, it misses the insight into the meanings educational stakeholders attach to their TPD lived-experiences. As a researcher, in exploring the conceptions of TPD, I wanted to

delve deeper into how each category of educational stakeholder make sense of it in a more subjective manner.

Moreover, being a teacher experiencing TPD within the NYCBE Reform on a daily basis, I cannot detach my preconceptions, experiences, biases and the historical contexts to the research (Heidegger, 1962). Hermeneutic phenomenology recognizes the preconceptions and the reflexive role of the researcher that allows deeper engagement with data, producing insights that go beyond mere description to address fundamental meanings of the lived-experiences of participants. The goal is not to eliminate these preconceptions but to work with them reflexively, allowing the researcher's understanding to deepen through engagement with the data (Heidegger, 1962). It allowed me as a researcher the opportunity to connect with the educational stakeholders in the form of dialogues to understand their complex and ambiguous experiences, particularly those involving historical experiences. To make sense of TPD within the ER, participants dialogued about the previous ER in 2009 and reflected on its TPD. This past and current experiences of TPD made interpretation an ongoing process of meaning-making, whereby the researcher moves between the parts and the whole of the experience (Heidegger, 1962; Gadamer, 1975; Gadamer, 1982).

Choosing hermeneutic phenomenology over other qualitative methodologies has helped to produce data that fit the cause of this study. When the goal of research is to gain a deep, nuanced understanding of how participants experience and make sense of their lives, hermeneutic phenomenology offers unmatched depth.

### **4.3 Source of data**

#### **4.3.1 Purposive snowball Sampling for the selection of participants**

Snowball sampling is a widely used approach to data collection on qualitative studies (Blukacz et al., 2023; Schambow et al., 2022; Leighton et al., 2021; Hsu et al., 2022; Palinkas et al., 2015; Parker et al., 2019; Naderifar et al., 2017; Noy, 2008; Audemard, 2020; Gierczyk et al., 2023; Wilmot, 2005). Given the research approach, research methodology and research paradigm selected for this study, purposive snowball sampling has been used to obtain the most relevant and profuse data from the selected participants for the topic which is being studied (Yin, 2011). Snowball sampling is purposive in nature. Purposive sampling is widely used in

qualitative research for identification and selection of information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest (Patton, 2002). This implies that it involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest (Creswell & PlanoClark, 2011). It requires the researcher to have a clear and well-defined criteria or purpose for selecting his/her participants. Considering this study's focus, the participants are the educational stakeholders who are experiencing TPD within the NYCBE Reform. Secondly, as highlighted in Section 4.2.2.1 and 4.2.2.2, their historicity of TPD during previous ERs also informs their current conceptions of TPD. Considering these three points about the type of participants for this study, snowballing sampling was opted as the most suitable approach for data collection.

As per van Manen (1997), the aim of participant selection in hermeneutic phenomenological research is to select participants who have lived-experience in relation to the focus of the study and who are willing to talk about their experiences. But finding such participants is a challenging quest. Snowball sampling became particularly useful when I researched hard-to-reach participants (Atkinson & Flint, 2001) whose lived-experiences were central to TPD. It also helped to ensure that the selected ones have meaningful experiences related to the phenomenon.

Snowball sampling involves finding and recruiting participants through referrals from existing or initial participants (Parker et al., 2019; Noy, 2008). It is applied when samples with the target characteristics are not easily accessible to the researcher. In the case of this study, searching for educational stakeholders who have experienced TPD during at least two ERs were challenging. Therefore, by adopting the referral system, I was able to reach a number of informants, among whom a few became the participants of this study; and a few remained just as informants who recommend others to become prospective participants for this study (Parker et al., 2019).

Hermeneutic phenomenology stresses on the interpretive process. By adopting snowball sampling, I could select participants with similar sampling criteria who gave the study a variety of similar experiences with all its nuances. Moreover, given the flexible and interpretive approach of snowballing, as I moved through the research process and gathered initial interpretations, I continued to seek participants who could offer deeper or alternative

perspectives on TPD. This flexibility helped in an enriched interpretive process in the form of hermeneutic circle, where interpretation evolves through engagement with new data.

Van Manen (1997) argues that in hermeneutic phenomenology, the participants should be diverse enough from one another to enhance possibilities of rich and unique stories of the particular experience. Moreover, Ross (2010) notes that selecting the right participant is a fundamental aspect of qualitative research, because the quality of data/information reflects them. However, he feels that though the criteria for these participants can provide quality data, finding and recruiting them can be a tedious job. Therefore, before stepping to the choice of my participants, I have purposively selected participants deemed to have divergent views on TPD across the stakeholders in education. This initial step was important for me because as per Yin (2011), by including those who might offer contrary views may help me to avoid biasing my study.

The criteria and scope for sampling selection are as follows:

Criteria for sample selection

1. Educational stakeholders who are directly connected to TPD within the space of ER.
2. Educational stakeholders who have experienced at least two ERs in their career.

Scope after selection:

1. One staff from Ministry of Education who was involved in policy making within the space of ER.
2. Four Lecturers (teacher educators) from the Mauritius Institute of Education (School of Education) who were involved in trainings and workshops for the NYCBE Reform.
3. Three experienced state secondary school's Rectors who have experienced at least one reform in their career as rector. Rectors are from Regional state secondary schools of Mauritius where the ER has already been implemented since January 2018. These are the schools where teachers are experiencing the effect of the ER mostly.
4. Eight state secondary school's teachers. The teachers have the following criteria:
  - They were from regional state secondary schools whereby the ER was already being implemented.
  - They were teachers who were working with the lower secondary level students (from Grade 7 to 9) because the ER is mostly linked with the lower secondary level in regional schools.

- They were teachers teaching any subject as this study's focus is on TPD rather than on TPD for a specific subject.
- They were teachers working with the Extended Streams Programme students (or students with certain disability) as per the Inclusive Education.
- They were teacher who had taken part in any form of trainings (TPD) provided by the Ministry for the purpose of the Reform.
- They were teachers who had experienced at least one reform before the NYCBE Reform in their career.
- They were teachers from diverse geographic locations (from the four educational zones of Mauritius) as I wanted to get the lived-experiences of TPD from different regions for a nuanced interpretation of data.

A detailed account of each category of educational stakeholders is presented in the Chapter 5, where I have analysed and represented data. I have chosen to include this part in Chapter 5 as it facilitates sense-making by providing an account for each category just before the analysis begins.

After determining the scope and criteria for the participants, I started by targeting one participant from each category of stakeholders whom I know to start the chain of referrals. Each informant from each category indicated a few people who could be prospective participants. I then got into contact and dialogue with each one of them, and the agreeable ones were then asked to recommend other contacts who fit the research criteria. This chain continued until saturation emerged from data (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Parker et al., 2019; Palinkas et al., 2015).

Snowball sampling is commonly represented through 'sampling trees' or 'stemmata', which indicate the course of the sampling process (Noy, 2008). Below is an example of the sampling tree for Rectors (the rest of the sampling trees are attached in the appendices). The names in **bold** indicate those who agreed to participate in this study. Rector Patter was recommended by a critical friend who had previously worked under his leadership. In line with the snowballing criteria for this study, this recommendation was considered appropriate, and Rector Patter was was contacted for an interview. Upon contact, he responded affirmatively and agreed to participate. The snowball sampling process started when he suggested two Rectors, Rector Rony and Rector Becker, who according to him had sufficient years of

experience of ERs. One of the two, Rector Becker consented to participate, while Rector Rony declined. The snowballing process concluded upon reaching data saturation (Weller et al., 2018). In other words, after conducting the interviews with the three Rector participants, recurring patterns, themes and insights were consistently observed. At this point, it was determined that conducting further interviews would not produce any substantially new or relevant information in relation to the research questions (Weller et al., 2018).

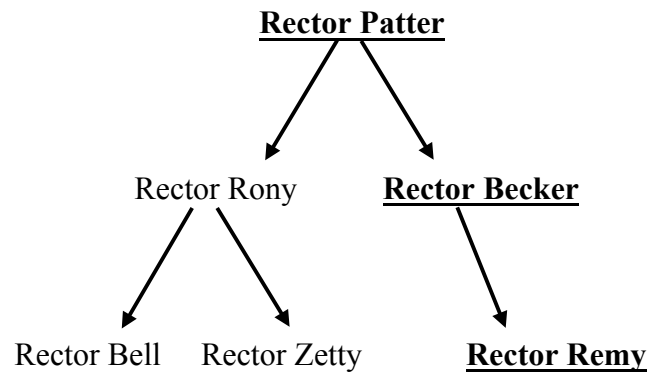


Figure 3: Snowballing Sampling

The same process of snowballing sampling was employed with the other three remaining groups of educational stakeholders. To protect participants' anonymity and confidentiality, pseudonyms were assigned. The table below presents an overview of the participants selected from each stakeholder group.

<b>TEACHERS</b>						
	Pseudonyms of participants	Years of teaching experience in state secondary schools	Subject	Gender	Description of school participants are working	Number/Duration of interviews
1	Soo	21	Biology	F	She works in a rural boy's school where the academic performance is below average. Most of the students are in the	3 interviews  Duration: 4 hrs 26 mins

					Extended Programme in that school.	
2	Par	15	Mathematics	F	She works in a girls' school in the urban area where the academic performance is of average level.	1 interview Duration: 1 hr 32 mins
3	Sai	17	Urdu	F	She works in a girls' school in the urban area where the academic performance is of average level.	2 interviews Duration: 1 hr 46 mins
4	Cimmi	21	Mathematics	F	She works in a boys' school in a rural area where there are indiscipline problems. The academic level is below average.	2 interviews Duration: 2 hrs 52 mins
5	Cho	15	French	M	He works in a girls' in a rural school where the academic performance is of average and slightly below average level.	2 interviews Duration: 1 hr 36 mins
6	Pol	19	Mathematics	M	He works in a girls' school in the rural area where the academic performance is above average level.	1 interview Duration: 33 mins

7	Ros	21	Home Economics	F	She works in a boys' school in the rural area where there is a high level of indiscipline problems. The academic performance is average/slightly below average level.	2 interviews Duration: 1 hr 44 mins
8	Aru	18	Art and Design	F	She works in a boys' school in the urban area where the academic performance is slightly below average level.	2 interviews Duration: 1 hr 22 mins
<b>RECTORS</b>						
	Pseudonyms of participants	Years of experience as Rector in SSS	Years of experience as ex-teacher in SSS	Gender	Description of school participants are working	Number/Duration of interviews
1	Remmy	8	11	M	He works in a girls' school in urban the area with high academic performance.	1 interview Duration: 1 hr 22 mins
2	Becky	10	25	F	She works in a boys' school in the urban area with indiscipline and social issues. The academic performance is below average.	1 interview Duration: 1 hr 31 mins

3	Patter	14	20	M	He works in a girls' school in the rural area where the academic performance is of average level.	2 interviews Duration: 3 hrs 12 mins
<b>MAURITIUS INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION LECTURERS</b>						
	Pseudonyms of participants	Years of experience as Lecturer at the MIE	Years of experience as ex-teacher in SSS	Gender	The Lecturers have not given their consent to share information about them.	Number/Duration of interviews
1	Reddy	10	-	M		3 interviews Duration: 3 hrs 16 mins
2	Derby	8	12	M		Duration: 1 hr 46 mins
3	Sassy	9	10	M		1 interview Duration: 59mins
4	Beny	11	10	F		Duration: 1 hr 13 mins
<b>MINISTRY OFFICER</b>						
	Pseudonyms of participants	Years of experience as Ministry officer	Years of experience as ex-teacher in SSS	Gender	Given the tenure he holds, the Ministry officer has not given any indication about his previous positions he held.	Number/Duration of interviews
1	Zamy			M		Only part of the interview schedule was completed. Duration: 44 mins

Table 2: Illustration of Participants

## **4.4 Data Production Process**

### **4.4.1 Document Analysis**

Document analysis is a widely used method by researchers for a number of reasons (Atkinson & Coffey, 2004; Bowen, 2009). For the purpose of this study, document analysis was chosen as a source of data to inform data analysis and interpretation. It was also employed to enable a comprehensive understanding of the complex influences shaping TPD during the ERs. Above all, document analysis in qualitative studies is frequently used as a supplemental way of collecting data as a means to add rigour to a study through multi-method form of triangulation (Bryman, 2012). Given that this is a phenomenological study, it aims at construing the meaning of the document in both its surface and underlying meanings that the document avails. Moreover, as hermeneutic phenomenology emphasizes on historicity (Armstrong, 2021), document analysis provided information on previous ERs and TPD.

The kind of documents employed for analysis in this study is centred on policy documents of NYCBE Reform, documents related to previous ERs and the scheme of service of different educational stakeholders involved in this study (Annex 9, 10 and 15). Policy documents often provides background evidence into understanding educational problems in both research and practice (Cardno, 2018). As Bell and Stevenson (2006) state, there is the need to cross-examine the text to find out why it is structured or framed in a particular way. Moreover, informed by hermeneutic phenomenology, there was the need to look at and behind the NYCBE Reform policy to know what dynamisms brought it into being. Policy analysis also helped me to tap into policy history to know how TPD were constructed within ERs. Alongside policy documents, the Scheme of Service (SoS) of teachers, Rectors and MIE lecturers also were analysed to understand their roles and responsibilities vis-à-vis TPD within an ER space. The SoS of each group of stakeholders offered me a rich and nuanced understanding of their multifaceted roles within their micro and the broader macro educational context. This facilitated the data analysis procedure when I had to understand why for example, Rectors do not facilitate of lead school based TPD when this is clearly stated in their Scheme of Service (Annex 10)

Document analysis provided me with valuable insights as it helped me to capture the perspectives of multiple educational stakeholders who were not directly accessible for interviews, such as the policymakers/decision-makers at higher level of the educational hierarchy. It also provided a baseline against which the lived experiences of each stakeholder could be compared, offering a layered understanding of the research context.

#### **4.4.2 Dialogical interview**

To gain data for this study's research questions, it was crucial to look for data generation tools that could bring me as closer as possible to the participants' world (Ross, 2007) and lived-experiences of TPD. Hermeneutic phenomenology delves into the lived experiences by relying on dialogue to uncover and interpret meaning. Furthermore, "Understanding occurs through a fusion of horizons, which is a dialectic between the pre-understanding of the research process, the interpretive framework and the source of information." (Koch, 1995, p.835). According to Moules et al., (2015), the dialectic process takes place between the interpreter's pre-understandings and the meaning embedded within the text (Moules et al., 2015). This dialectic in the fusion of horizons, simplifies the identification not only of shared elements across participants' lived-experiences but also of probable contradictions that warrant attention. In the context of this study, engaging in this process expanded my horizon, as I embarked the study with my mind set not only on my prior knowledge and lived-experiences, but with an openness to alternative experiences, and even surprising outcomes of the research (Webber, 2020; Gadamer, 1976). As averted by Angroshio et al., (2007), if a researcher wishes to know and understand the participants' world then the researcher needs to talk to them in person. Therefore, I searched for various 'conversations tools' from which human beings could be understood (Thusi, 2004), until I encountered dialogical interview approach. Therefore, taking these aspects into consideration, I opted for 'dialogical interviews' for maximising generation of data. Dialogical interview method generates the co-construction of knowledge through dialogues between the researcher and the participant. This aligns with hermeneutic phenomenology's fusion of horizon. It is deeply interactive and relational, emphasizing mutual understanding, reflection, and the sharing of perspectives between the researcher and the participant. The co-participation provides an open, fluid exchange of ideas and experiences, allowing deeper insights to emerge.

Apart from the methodological correlation with dialogical interview, I also thought about diverse aspects that could make dialogical interviews the most appropriate match to become the main data collection tool for this study. Since hermeneutics phenomenology involves the lived-experiences of participants, in this case, about TPD experiences within the space of ER, I wanted to leave the participants free to relate and narrate their lived-experiences, and not to bind them with questions which demand specific and direct answers. In doing so, their ‘voice’ became visible, which is of utmost importance for the purpose of this study. I intended to get the authentic voice of participants as singular and autonomous but there is the argument that the nature of all dialogues is bounded by power relations between the interviewer and the interviewee (Bakhtin, 1981;1994), and this may have an effect of obscuring dialogical communication where meanings are acknowledged as temporal, constituted in the space between listeners and speakers, and open to multiple interpretations (Frank, 2005). To counter this argument about power-relation effect, I opted to make the interview more dialogical by allowing the participants to ask me questions if they were willing to. Alongside, I have definitely bared in mind not to let my answers influence their flow of thinking in anyway.

The iterative process in the dialogical interview help both the researcher and the participant engage in meaning-making. Through this, the researcher’s interpretations are shaped by the responses of the participant in an ongoing, reflective process. Throughout the interview journey, I remained aware about my own positionality and acknowledged how my background, philosophies, biases, and perspectives could affect the conversations. To avoid this, I adopted reflexivity as a main armament throughout the process.

#### **4.4.2.1 Sailing the field using dialogical interviews**

Instantly after confirming the data collection tool for this study, I stepped in the field for data collection. I started by first meeting with one purposive informant from each category of educational stakeholders who are as follows:

1. One officer from the Head quarter of Ministry of Education from whom I expected snowballing to diverse educational stakeholders at the level of the ministry who were directly linked with TPD within the space of ER.

2. One Rector of the state secondary school from whom I expected snowballing to other Rectors.
3. One Lecturer from the Mauritius Institute of Education from whom I expected snowballing to other Lecturers who were directly involved with teacher training for the ER.
4. One teacher from a state secondary school whom I knew personally and who provided me some names of participants who could participate in my study.

Once the snowballing started with the help of the preliminary meeting with the purposive informants, I called the referred participants personally and requested for an appointment. Day, date, time and place were proposed by the participants for their sake of their confidentiality and ease. During the first meeting, I introduced myself as an educator and a PhD student, explained my role as a researcher and gave a summary of the focus of my study. I also ensured that the participants met the sampling criteria of the study. I had had three participants who did not meet the sampling criteria of the study. Therefore, in that case, I humbly explained them the reasons why they could not be my participants and presented my apology.

Those who were in the sampling criteria, were given more details before the interview started. During the first meeting, apart from introducing myself and explaining my role as a researcher, I gave them more details on the importance of their input for my study. I gave them the Informed Consent Form (Appendix 4), which I read and explained to them. Some participants preferred to read it on their own and asked me questions wherever needed. Once the Informed Consent Form were read and understood, I requested them to sign it.

While the participants were signing the form, I re-attracted their attention on the clause '*I hereby provide consent to Audio-record my interview. YES/NO*'. Two of the participants were not agreeable for audio-recording. One was a trade-unionist for state secondary schools' teachers and the second one was a high calibre officer from the Ministry of Education involved in policy-making. I respected their decisions without asking for a justification. I then asked them permission to take note during the interview which they accepted without any hesitation.

To obtain participants' deep experiences, thoughts, and perspectives, I made use of open-ended questions which were reflective, exploratory, comparative and probing in nature. Open-ended questions have been widely used in qualitative studies to encourage participants provide detailed, personalized responses in their own words without being limited by pre-determined

answer options (Creswell, 2009). These questions allow for a comprehensive understanding of the topic, capturing rich narratives and diverse perspectives. In this study, TPD evolves in a complex space of the NYCBE Reform with diverse lived-experiences of educational stakeholders. Given this complexity, open-ended questions allowed participants to share their experiences and opinions in their own words, leading to more in-depth and detailed responses. This approach facilitated understanding of the educational stakeholders' experiences. A notable fact is that open-ended questions can often lead to unexpected responses and reveal new or surprising information. During the interviews, I received a number of surprising responses that helped me to bring up new perspectives that I had not considered. This helped me to avoid unintentional biases that could lead me to unintentionally guide participants towards a particular answer or perspective. Examples of the interview questions are attached in Appendix (5A, 5B, 5C and 5D).

#### **4.4.2.1.1 Photo Elicitation**

As the interview progressed with participants, I faced the issue of getting wrong response for a question that was asked to them. Either it was because the participants failed to understand the questions posed to them or it could be that my questions were too broad. In either case, probes were used to direct participants to the focus of the questions. According to Robinson (2023), probes are central to interviews as it elicits rich, deep data from participants. Probing is done via verbal prompts to clarify, elaborate, illustrate or explain a prior answer to an interview question that the interviewee has already given (Robinson, 2023; Given, 2012). During that phase, a key consideration is that I used was "photo elicitation" also as probes. I used a few printed pages from the NCF (2017) as photos to elicit and probe participants.

Photo elicitation has been widely used by researchers of multiple disciplines because of its numerous advantages associated with data collection. Photo elicitation is a tool which involves the use of one or more sets of photographs or visual images (Elliot et al., 2018) during interviews and then asking participants to comment on the visual images (Meo, 2010). It is also used as stimulus (Glaw et al., 2017) and prompts (Hurworth et al., 2005) during research interviews. Apart from these, it can be used to generate verbal discussions (Thomas, 2009) and also to facilitate in-depth interpretive discussions of sensitive issues (Elliot et al., 2018). Photo elicitation can involve images generated by the participants within the context of the

study, self-selected, or introduced by the researcher. For the purpose of this study, I have elected to use a few figures from the NCF (2017) as photos to be used as probes and prompts, and to enrich the interview discussions.

Below is a structured account of how photo elicitation was used with one teacher participant. This photo was taken directly from the NCF (2015, p.2).

The Nine-Year Continuous Basic Education, which is an educational reform from pre-primary to secondary is based on a set of main pillars which are represented in Figure 1 below.

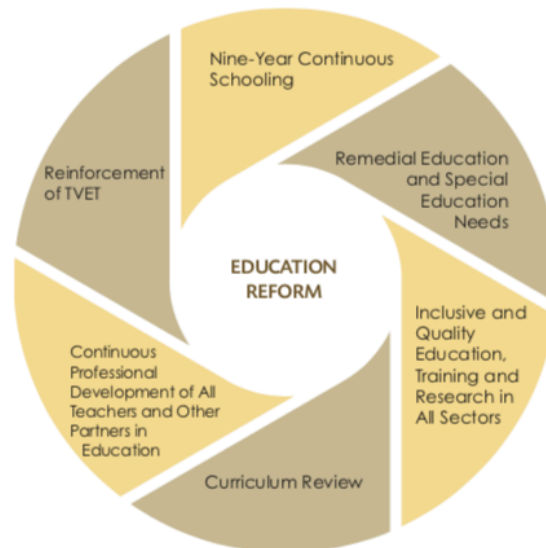


Figure 1: Main Pillars of the Education Reform

The above photo was shared with the participant, following which a few probing questions were asked:

1. Were you aware about these six main pillars of the reform?
2. If yes, how you came to know about it?
3. If no, why do you think you are not informed about it?
4. What stands out to you in this image, and why?
5. One of the pillars is “*Continuous Professional Development of All Teachers and Other Partners in Education.*” What do you have to say about this?
6. What do you see happening in Mauritius in connection to these pillars?

The above prompts helped to uncover emotions, perspectives and contextual understandings that might not have surfaced through verbal questioning alone. For instance, a teacher responded sarcastically about a professional development workshop when she saw the term

‘*continuous professional development*’ and ‘*inclusive education.*’ Furthermore, there were instances when the participant asked me a few questions in response to the photo I shared. For example, one teacher participant inquired:

1. And you, what do you think about “*Inclusive and Quality Education*”?
2. What is happening in your school?

Rather than linear questions and answers format, photo elicitation fostered a more dialogical and reciprocal interaction. This helped me as a researcher to be more reflexive and recognize my own influence on the research process. Because participants prioritized different aspects of the photo than I expected, this challenged my assumptions and encouraged me to be more open-minded. Additionally, this process enabled both the participant and the researcher to critically engage with meaning-making, challenge assumptions, and surface deeper, often unarticulated layers of experience. Lastly, the photos produced did not only help to redirect their responses to the questions asked but also helped reveal stories of participants (Allen, 2011) about TPD within the space of ER that might have been difficult for participants to articulate.

At the end of snowballing, I succeeded in interviewing sixteen participants with a total of thirty-seven interview interventions. That was a tedious task that lasted for almost one year.

#### **4.4.3 Piloting the Study**

Many researchers have defined pilot studies as a small scale research conducted in preparation of a full-scale study (Ismail et al., 2018; Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001; William-McBean, 2019), try-out of the interview protocol for the study (Dikko, 2016) and feasibility study (Thanbane et al., 2010). Pilot study is achieved by pre-testing the research tools on a small number of participants having the same features as those in the focal study. A myriad of researchers have used pilot studies prior to their full-scale studies such as longitudinal study (Kolves&de Leo, 2018), phenomenology (Janghorban et al., 2014), mixed methods(William-McBean, 2019) and many more, have favoured pilot studies because of its numerous advantages. A pilot study has been seen as fundamental as it helps to ascertain to what extent research tools will be feasible in the main study and this is done by identifying possible flaws (Watson, Atkinson & Rose, 2007), problems and areas that may require modifications (Dikko, 2016; Ismail et al., 2018).

Along with refinement of research tools, pilot study also helps in anticipating possible challenges in data collection and analysis (Ismaail et al., 2018; Kim, 2010), developing confidence in the researcher (Ismail et al., 2018) and rapport building between researcher and participants (Nathan et al., 2018).

However, there are the arguments that pilot study is crucial for quantitative research and that it can be avoided in qualitative research. Scholars advanced that pilot study for quantitative research is readily accepted and “piloting” questionnaires is a required step in surveys (Babbie, 2012; Cresswell, 2014) but in qualitative research, its effectiveness has been questioned by many (Harding, 2013). Holloway (1997) even advanced that pilot studies are not necessary in qualitative approaches. There is the argument that in qualitative research, the interviews improve by itself as the interviews progress (Harding, 2013). Teijlingen and Hundley (2001) as well affirm that interviews are progressive, and that the following interviews after the first one should be better as the interviewer gains more insight that are used in the improvement of interview schedules and related questions. Though it is not as important as for quantitative studies, Harding (2013) states that it is distinctly helpful to pilot the interview questions and adjust the interview guide accordingly before embarking into major study, mainly when the researcher is a novice one. After the evidence provided in the literature for and against pilot studies, I took the decision to eventually pilot the interview questions, Word clouds and photo elicitation tools of this study. I was for piloting the study because I was a novice researcher (I am still) and as a novice researcher, I may inadequately perform the interviews (Abdul Majid et al., 2017). The pilot study also aimed to refine the interview prompts in photo elicitation, and determine the potential value of Word clouds in the early stages of data analysis before the second interviews with participants.

In pilot studies, the researcher uses the same criteria for the selection of participants as would be used in the main study (Jacob & Ferguson, 2012). As noted in the sampling section, there are multiple educational stakeholders as participants for this study. Piloting the dialogical interview questions with teachers was done by selecting teachers having the same characteristics as the main teacher participants. However, it is important to note that it was difficult to pilot the study with higher level stakeholders since they were difficult to reach. Therefore, I piloted the interview questions for the higher level stakeholders with my critical study group friends to identify unclear or ambiguous statements or questions in my research protocol (Calitz, 2009). Below, a step-by-step procedure is provided for the pilot study.

### Participants for the pilot study

Two volunteer teachers from two different regional state secondary schools engaged in the ongoing Educational Reform were recruited. The participants had 14 and 17 years of teaching experience respectively. Recruitment was conducted via professional networks. Informed consent was secured, including permission to record interviews.

### Piloting dialogical interviews

Each participant engaged in open-ended, dialogical interviews. The aim was to explore each participant's lived-experiences of TPD in depth, guided by the principle of the 'fusion of horizons' (Gadamer, 1975), where the pre-understandings of both researcher and participant were brought into dialogue. The interviews were conceived as interpretive dialogues, wherein meaning was co-constructed through reflection and reciprocal questioning. This dialogical approach allowed me as a novice researcher to explore how participants engage in extended storytelling of their lived-experiences of TPD and simultaneously engage responsively with emerging insights. Piloting the dialogical interviews confirmed the alignment of the selected methods with the philosophical underpinnings of hermeneutic phenomenology. However, the interview guide was refined to include more prompts that could encourage more reflective sharing of their lived-experiences rather than explanation.

### Piloting photo elicitation

Photo elicitation was employed as a probing and prompting tool during the interviews. A curated selection of photographs, depicting scenes of TPD was presented to participants. At this stage, I observed that the photographs were not generating sufficient relevant prompts, as they were not focused. Therefore, I opted to change the initial photographs to more focused ones that was taken directly from the NCF (2015). That change proved to be more effective in triggering reflective responses and uncovering implicit meanings and lived-experiences that might not have been easily accessible through the previous photographs.

### Piloting Word clouds

Following the first interview transcription, the textual data from each interview were analysed using an online word cloud generator. Key terms, phrases, and recurrent expressions were extracted and visually represented in Word Clouds, which were then shared with the corresponding participants in a follow-up conversation. They were then invited to reflect on

what stood out to them and whether the visualisation captured meaningful aspects of their lived-experiences. In sum, this tool did not need any further adjustments as it was found to be a valuable aid in supporting both researcher and participant reflexivity in the early phases of meaning-making.

By piloting it, I got the opportunity to increase my training and confidence in conducting the interviews with all levels of educational stakeholders involved in this study. Moreover, as an inexperienced researcher, I wanted to practice to feel comfortable and more relaxed with my participants and vice versa (Nathan et al., 2018). Overall, the pilot study served as a valuable phase in confirming the methodological integrity of the study design. The integration of dialogical interviews, photo elicitation and Word clouds proved effective in supporting the central aim of hermeneutic phenomenology.

#### **4.4.3.1 The use of Wordcloud as a reflective tool**

Word clouds also known as Tag clouds are text-based visual representations of document's text (Kaptein, Hiemstra & Kamps, 2010) or simply text (McNaught & Lam, 2010). A word cloud is such a visualisation approach that takes words by the frequency they have been used in a specific text and displays them randomly by highlighting the size, based on the frequencies they have been used (DaPaolo & Wilkinson, 2014; McNaught & Lam, 2010). Word cloud visual representation has been found with numerous advantages in studies. It has been used for the promotion of critical thinking (Paul & Elder, 2000) and assessing learning (DaPaolo & Wilkinson, 2014) and reading and writing skills (Hayes, 2008). It has also been seen that word cloud is a very effective tool in learning environments as it generates more peer interactions, vocabularies and reflections in learners (Baralt, Pemestru & Selvandini, 2011). Apart from these, it has been effectively used in literary studies (Clement, Plaisant & Vuillemont, 2008), studying public speeches (Dann, 2008) and forming summaries within an academic context (Ennis, 2010).

Interestingly, Word cloud has been seen to be useful research tool to aid educational research as well as it demonstrates a visually rich way to enable researchers to have some basic understanding of the data at hand (McNaught & Lam, 2010). The authors advanced that word cloud seems useful in qualitative studies involving thematic analyses of written transcriptions of spoken texts as it can be used as a tool for preliminary analysis and validation of previous

findings (Dann, 2008; McNaught & Lam, 2010) for the purpose of data collection and data generation.

In the current study, Word cloud was employed as both a tool for data collection and a preliminary step in the data analysis process. The number of interview sessions varied depending on the availability of the participants; some interviews were completed across three meetings, while others concluded after two. A preliminary, first-level analysis was conducted following all interviews. Before the last interview with each participant, a Word cloud was generated, which captured the most frequently used words and terms from the preceding dialogical interviews. This visual representation served two primary purposes during the final interview. First, it functioned as a set of prompts to guide the conversation. Second, it acted as a concise summary of the earlier interviews, facilitating participants' reflection and allowing them to identify and share any potentially omitted information during the interview process (Ennis, 2010).

#### **4.4.4 Power Relations as a Prime Factor during Interviews**

Like every interviewer, I was also aware of and attentive to the power differential between the participants and myself as the interviewer. The interviewer sets the agenda and leads the conversation by allowing the participants to have some control over which or what extent they intend to share the information with the researcher but at the end of the day, it is the researcher who is in charge. In my study, power relations with the participants differs since they are diverse and from different levels of the educational hierarchy. The dilemma I got in with higher level participants, for example Ministry's officers, was that I sensed the power coming from them instead from me, the interviewer. The reciprocal conversation between the interviewer and interviewee was amiss to a great extent because the officers were well aware of my status as an educator vis-à-vis them and therefore, they used their position to lead the interview. One officer did not give me the opportunity to ask him/her the planned questions and instead he/she started to relate and narrate what he/she felt like sharing with me about TPD and ER. The dilemma I was in was how balance the power dynamics between us and how to get him/her answer the questions I had in my list of questions because if he/she did not answer the questions, important data that I was expecting from him/her could be inaccessible.

## **4.5 Data Analysis Framework and Presentation**

Qualitative data is known for its well-grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of human processes and its strengths lies mainly on the expertise with which their analysis is performed (Miles et al., 2014). Data Analysis for qualitative methods has its unique steps as data is drawn from multiple sources such as observations, documents, interviews and audiovisuals (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). In this study, the Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and hermeneutic circle for data analysis have been adopted. This section will present and justify IPA and hermeneutic circle as data analysis tools for this study.

### **4.5.1 Using IPA'S for Data Analysis**

Working with the transcripts has been a tedious task which prolonged for more than a year. Initially, the thought of having to work with the interview transcripts of 16 participants and 37 interview transcripts were rendering me in a state of bewilderment as I was disoriented with amount of data that generated during the dialogical interviews. As a supplement of this, the thought of having to work with interview transcripts coming from almost 30 hours of interviews added more complications in terms of the amount of data that I had to manage and analyse. I read a number of articles and books and finally I found the Data Analysis procedure in the book 'Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis: Theory, Method and Research' by Smith et al., (2009) most appropriate for my study. The book is a detailed and step-by-step guide to conducting Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) study. The analytical process of my study is drawn from the analytical processes explained in this book. In this section, I will shed light on my choice to draw from the IPA analytical process by first explaining what is IPA, how it is related to hermeneutics phenomenology and why I have chosen its analytical processes for this study.

IPA is a qualitative research method grounded in two theoretical underpinnings namely phenomenology and hermeneutics. As already discussed in Chapter 3, phenomenology and hermeneutics are closely linked. Phenomenology as a philosophical approach focuses mainly on the exploration of the lived experiences of human beings (Slone & Bowe, 2011). IPA borrowed its phenomenological underpinnings from Husserl to which different phenomenological philosophers like Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Sartre added their

philosophies (Smith et al., 2009). On the other hands, hermeneutics which is the second underpinning of IPA, is the theory of interpretation (Smith et al., 2009). The hermeneutic aspect of IPA is drawn mainly from Heidegger and Gadamer’s position whereby close interpretative engagement from the part of the reader or listener is required to make sense of what is being said or written (Smith et al., 2009). Basically, “IPA is concerned with the detailed examination of human lived experience....and it concurs with Heidegger that phenomenological inquiry is from the outset on interpretive process” (Smith et al., 2009, p.32).

It is important to highlight that, though the researcher engages himself/herself closely with the interpretation of what is being said or written, the preconceptions of the participant or written text is veiled from the latter. To uncover the preconceptions, reflective practices and cyclical approach are required (Smith et al., 2009) and consequently, this leads the way to the hermeneutic circle to complete the analysis process.

#### **4.5.2 Hermeneutic Circle for deeper analysis**

As already discussed in Chapter 3, hermeneutics (from the Greek word ‘to interpret’ or ‘to make clear’) is closely linked with Heideggerian philosophy of interpretation and hermeneutic circle lies at the heart of hermeneutic theory. In the words of Eatough and Smith (2017, p.), “the hermeneutic circle encourages researchers to work with their data in a dynamic, iterative and non-linear manner, examining the while in light of its parts, the parts in light of the whole, and the context in which the whole and parts are embedded and doing so from a stance of being...”. The concept of ‘parts’ and the ‘whole’ was quite problematic for a novice researcher like me but Smith et al., (2009, p.28) tried to represent it in such a way that it facilitated my understanding to apply it in the study. The representation is as follows:

##### The Part

The single word  
 The single extract  
 The particular text  
 The interview  
 The single episode

##### The Whole

The sentence in which the word is embedded.  
 The complete text.  
 The complete oeuvre.  
 The research project  
 The complete life

The process of understanding is non-linear as it involves moving between parts (individual experiences) and the whole (broader context and your pre-understanding). In other words, the hermeneutic circle can be understood as a dialogue between the text and the researcher whereby the researcher uses the parts to make sense of the whole and vice versa. In the next section, I will explain how I used IPA analysis and hermeneutic circle for data analysis.

#### **4.5.3 Analysis procedure using IPA and Hermeneutic Circle**

Hermeneutics phenomenology has been used as the research method for this study and data have been collected through mainly dialogical interviews. After going through the aspects of IPA method, I found that the way data are analysed under it align well with hermeneutics phenomenological approach as it takes into consideration both, the phenomenological and hermeneutical aspects. Therefore, as a best-fit for the research method I engaged with, I opted to use the 6-steps for analysis proposed by Smith et al., (2009) in their book *Interpretive Phenomenological Approach*.

The 6-steps proposed are flexible, modifiable and changeable as the researcher can adapt it as per the requirement of his/her data. Any researcher is free to work closely with this set of steps, and then adapt into the nature of the data. The 6-steps aim to ‘foster a sense of manageability in the analytic process’ (p.81).

##### *Step 1: Reading and Writing*

By reading and re-reading, the researcher gets the opportunity to actively engage with the data and to enter the participant’s world. This practice is also called ‘proofing’ as per Patterson and Williams (2002). The number of times I read the interview transcripts depended on my familiarity to the interviews. Repetitive reading of transcripts of each participant provided a ‘general knowledge’ of the content of the interviews which helped me to step towards coding. This practice informed me about my initial dilemma ‘how to manage’ all the transcripts of the four clusters of educational stakeholders that I was having, namely teachers, rectors, MIE lecturers, and Ministry of Education’s officers. I decided to read and re-read the transcriptions cluster-wise to have a ‘general knowledge’ and build an understanding of the kind of data that was emerging from the participants from each cluster. For example, from the cluster of teachers constituting 8 participants, I got an initial general overview of their conceptions of

TPD, anxieties, likes and dislikes in relation to the NYCBE reform. This practice helped me for my coding process.

### Step 2: Initial noting (coding)

In this step, semantic content and language are examined and explored by maintaining an open-minded approach. At this level, I merged step 1 and 2 because I found myself starting to write notes, codes and comments as I engaged myself in the reading and re-reading process. By doing these two steps simultaneously, it not only helped me stay close to my study focus and participants but it also assisted in doing a close analysis of the transcripts which helped me to stay away from the sort of superficial reading which may lead to insubstantial and meagre codes.

In step 2, Smith et al., (2009) guided researchers to follow three discrete processes for ‘commenting’, which I termed as coding. The three processes are descriptive comments, linguistic comments and conceptual comments. Keeping the focus of my study in mind, I used these three simple processes as and where needed during the coding exercise.

#### Descriptive comments (coding)

First, I wrote down and took note of everything that my participants were sharing related or could be related to TPD and the ER. This practice gave me an idea about the things which made up their world. As per Smith et al., (2009), by doing this, the researcher develops an understanding of the meaning of these descriptive comments (codings). This was indeed the case for me because as I progressed with the descriptions, interpretative questions started to surface naturally for which I started to look for meanings.

#### Linguistic comments (coding)

Secondly, following the 3-processes, I used linguistic comments (coding) also. As Smith et al., (2009) explains, the linguistic comments (coding) is concerned with language use and where the researcher takes into account the way pronouns, pauses, laughter, tone, fluency and metaphors are used by the participants. In the case of this study, this helped me to analyse the ‘silences’ or a ‘long pause’, and various comments like ‘pff!’, ‘hmmm!’, ‘no no no!’ and so on. I would want to share that I experienced various types of silences, which commonly happen in human science research and specifically in hermeneutic phenomenology. As a researcher, this was a tangled phase for me whether to interpret it as a ‘stop’ or ‘pause’. Van Manen (1990) warned of the tendency to fill an awkward space in an interview as a silences of spaces speak just as loudly as words. Therefore, I had to be extremely cautious of this tangled

situation by retaining myself to prompt or probe. Moreover, in this phase of coding, I was able to analyse the sarcasm in their responses as well. For instance, a teacher participant told me:

*...they (the authority) did a great job by this reform. But what happened? A big mountain was dug and what came out of it?...just a little mouse.*

Using the linguistic coding, I was able to recognise the sarcasm in that excerpt and decipher the reality she wanted to share from her perspective. The analysis of this sarcasm has been done in Section A of the analysis chapter.

#### Conceptual comments (coding)

The conceptual comments (coding) is more interpretative in nature and deal with the data at a conceptual level. I can say that this level of coding was already in action when I was involved with descriptive and linguistic coding because as mentioned earlier, interpretative questions made its way naturally. At this stage of coding, personal reflection became inevitable. The interpretations of the emerging codes that the researcher develop at this stage is inexorably drawn on his/her own experiential and/or professional knowledge (Smith et al., 2009). This can be inferred as a ‘Gadamerian dialogue’, meaning a dialogue between the researcher’s own pre-understandings, and his/her newly emerging understanding of the participants’ world. This process was not just coding and commenting for me but it also added depth and sophistication in the analytic process. My positionality and biases came into play during this phase of coding. I was well aware that my understanding of the participants’ lived-experiences of TPD fluctuate between what they lived and my own evolving comprehension of the broader aspects of TPD. By using reflective reading of the transcripts (and listening to audios), noting and summarizing, I became more reflexive and got more involved in the participants.

#### Step 3: Developing emergent themes

After going through the previous two tedious stages, this stage is about dealing with the development of emergent themes from Stage 1 and 2 and also simultaneously attempting to ‘reduce’ the volume of data (Smith et al., 2009). Here, I opt to differ from Smith et al., (2009) on the term ‘reduce’ because I concur with Miles et al., (2014) when they say that this term implies ‘we’re weakening or losing something in the process’ (p.12). Instead, I find it better to adopt the term ‘data condensation’ (Miles et al., 2014) which implies that ‘we’er making data stronger’ (p.12). In this step, I followed the common practice and attempted to map the patterns, relationships and connections between the emergent codes of Stage 2. As Smith et

al., (2009) clearly explains, this process involves the re-organization of data by breaking up and divide the participants' narrative flow of interviews and experiences.

Coding the interview transcripts of approximately 31 hours gave me abundant codes and searching for connections across emergent codes was arduous. I should admit that this phase was the longest one in terms of time, making-sense of the codes and connecting the perspectives of the stakeholders to the study's focus to be able to detect emerging themes. There was the aspect of connecting to the historical aspects of the lived experiences of educational stakeholders as well. Here, hermeneutic circle helped to make the connections. As patterns started to take form, I was tempted to name them as themes as all seemed important and useful to the study. However, I had had to be careful of not losing track in the fascinating emerging themes. Themes are intransitive and provides a way to capture the phenomenon; it is not the phenomenon itself (van Manen, 1990).

Throughout this step, I kept the following questions in mind: "how does the theme relate to the "phenomenon"?" (van Manen, 1990, p.88) so that the themes stay focused to TPD within an ER. I moved iteratively between data and overall thematic patterns, refining the themes as I deepen my analysis and interpretation. At this very specific stage, there is the 'manifestation of hermeneutic circle' (p.91). Interpretation of individual lived-experiences (part of the data) of the participants was done in relation to TPD (the whole), and vice versa. I tried to understand how individual experiences of the educational stakeholders informed the broader understanding of TPD within an ER. Simultaneously, I was also trying to understand how the TPD (whole) was shaping the participants' experiences (part). This phase manifests itself in Chapter 5.

Step 4: Searching for connections across emergent themes and

Step 5: Moving to the next case (Clusters of educational stakeholders)

(Note: Step 4 and 5 were done simultaneously.)

Smith et al., (2009) have left this step entirely upon the researcher to explore and innovate in terms of the organization of the themes. I concur with this statement because in the case of this study, creating connections across emergent themes was done several times until a comprehensive representation of the themes was agreed upon by my supervisors and me. During that phase, writing and re-writing was the only way to be able to get closer to the core

themes. Finally, for each category of participant, the themes are presented in layers, with core themes capturing the essence of TPD and sub-themes elaborating on different aspects/dimensions of those core themes.

Given the four clusters of educational stakeholders, I had emergent themes for each one of them.

*Step 6: Looking for patterns across cases (Looking for patterns across the themes of each cluster of educational stakeholders)*

In this phase, the focus was more on uncovering meaningful relationships between the themes. Instead of considering the themes as isolated ones, I tried to understand how different aspects of lived experiences interact and intra-act with one another. I closely observed contradictions and tensions, similarities and variations, and convergent and divergent between themes to understand how each cluster of educational stakeholders are interpreting TPD. That proved to be quite tedious because these patterns in the themes were not easily obvious. There were instances when a theme in a cluster helped illuminate the theme of a different cluster. At this stage, theorization started to take form.

The 6-steps of the IPA's Data Analysis pulled me out from 'unstructured and messy data to ideas about what is going on in the data' (Richard & Morse, 2007, p.133).

#### **4.5.4 Pre-first-level analysis of data**

It is important to note that there was a 'pre-first level analysis' prior to the second interview. What I mean is that before going for the second interview, I analysed briefly the first interview by listening and re-listening to the audio-recordings and converted it into a WordCloud which was used for member checking, and participant reflection as well. The practice of analysing data concurrently with data collection is largely accepted by many because of its dynamic nature and (Miles et al., 2014). One more reason for using 'pre-first-level analysis' lies in the features of data collection for hermeneutics phenomenology (explain and reference). This practice of 'pre-first level analysis' was done mainly with teachers and rectors who gave me the opportunity for a second and even a third interview with them. As for another group of participants, I did not get the opportunity to interview them a second time because of their

overloaded work schedule. But they made it a must to accord me all their time for the one-shot interview I had with them, and whereby we could engage in a dialogical interview, discussion and reflection simultaneously.

#### **4.5.5 The use of Word Cloud for data analysis**

Word Cloud can be a helpful visual and exploratory technique in qualitative research, particularly during the initial stages of thematic analysis (McNaught & Lam, 2010). For instance, in this study, interview was transcribed. Then, most frequently used terms, words, phrases, and ideas were selected from the transcriptions of each participant, which were inserted in the Word cloud online generator, which automatically calculated word frequencies and produced a visual representation, as shown in Appendix 12. That Word cloud highlighted the most frequently used words, providing a visual summary of recurring concepts and expressions of the participants. The Word cloud was then shared with the participant before their next interview as a summary of the previous interview and as a reflection before the next one.

At this stage, as the researcher, I got the opportunity to reflexively identify initial codes, topics, concerns or areas worth deeper exploration. When the Word cloud was shared with the participant, he/she was given a moment to reflect and ask any questions or clarifications they may have had related to the previous interview. That visualization allowed the participant to reflect on the words and themes that had dominated their discussions and offered them the opportunity to elaborate further or clarify their views. Through this process, the Word cloud acted as a catalyst analytical dialogic engagement as from the very start of the interview. In this study, it functioned as an entry point for interpretive analysis and supported early sense-making and participant validation. It is important to highlight that Word cloud was used as a preliminary tool to analyse interviews, not as a substitute for comprehensive data analysis of this study.

#### **4.6 Trustworthiness of the study**

This section discusses the trustworthiness of the study by highlighting undeniable aspects like rigour, credibility, dependability, conformability and transferability of the study.

### ***Rigour***

Validity and reliability are two key aspects of all research but ‘rigor’ is an aspect that should be given equal importance because without it, according to Morse et al., (2002), research is worthless, becomes fiction, and loses its use. In qualitative research, the term ‘rigor’ is oxymoron and ensuring rigor is difficult when dealing with narratives and people than numbers and statistics (Cypress, 2017). Many researchers assert that rigor of qualitative research equates to the concepts of reliability and validity (Cypress, 2017; Davies&Dodd, 2002; Seal, 1999). Following an array of discussions on ‘rigor’, a number of naturalistic researchers agreed with Guba and Lincoln (1981;1985) who addressed ‘rigor’ in their model of ‘trustworthiness’ by proposing to ensure credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability of qualitative research. As per Cypress (2017), a phenomenological study aligns well with the four above mentioned criteria to ensure reliability, validity and rigor in qualitative research.

### ***Credibility***

After considering the methods suggested by some experts like Guba (1981), Guba&Lincoln (1994) and Bowen (2005) for credibility in qualitative research, I found peer-debriefing, triangulation, prolonged engagement and member-checks to be most appropriate for hermeneutic phenomenology and the instruments that I have chosen for data collection.

Peer-debriefing gave me the opportunity to check and confirm growing insights and to expose myself to searching questions (Golafshani, 2003; Guba, 1981). Following this, I tried to detach myself from the site and participants and sought out, and interact with other professionals (two critical PhD friends of the doctoral programme) who were able and willing to perform the debriefing function. During this function, I as a researcher, I posed my thinking to the ‘jury’ (my critical PhD friends) and dealt with a number of critical questions they posed in terms of clarification or justification of themes, theories, methodology and so on .

Apart from this, prolonged engagement was ensured to get accurate and truthful depiction of participants’ lived experience. Finally, *member checks* also were used whereby data and interpretations was tested continuously as they were derived with participants from which data was solicited (Guba, 1981).

### ***Dependability***

As per Guba and Lincoln (1985), reliability is construed as dependability. The concern of consistency is termed as ‘dependability’ in qualitative research (Cypress, 2017; Guba, 1981). In this study, dependability involved some of the aspects that Guba and Lincoln (1985) proposed, for example, the use of peer debriefing, member checks and reflexive journal. For the purpose of practicing reflexivity, a reflective journal was kept in which a number of elements were documented (Ortlipp, 2009) for example, retrospections and introspections (Dowling, 2006) were recorded on a daily basis, which served me during peer debriefing sessions; the epistemological assumptions which caused me as a researcher to formulate a set of questions in terms of personal, epistemological and critical reflexivity (Palaganas, 2017).

### ***Confirmability***

As per Moon et al., (2016), confirmability in qualitative research is established in the way the researchers categorize the “truth”, that is by elaborating on their ontological and epistemological preferences of the research, to ensure that the results were based on the lived experiences of the participants rather than those of the researcher. Following this, my ontological and epistemological position is presented in Section 4.2.3 by highlighting my predispositions, beliefs, and assumptions so that I enable the reader to determine confirmability, showing how data, and constructs and theories emerging from the research can be accepted (Shenton, 2004).

### ***Transferability***

In qualitative research, the term ‘transferability’ is synonymous with generalizability or external validity in quantitative research. According to Shenton (2004) and Lincoln and Guba (1985), transferability is established by providing readers with evidence that the research study’s findings could be applicable to other contexts, situations, times, and populations. In Lincoln and Guba’s (1985, p.316) words “...it is not the naturalist’s task to provide an index of transferability, it is his or her responsibility to provide the data base that makes transferability judgements possible on the part of potential appliers”. Therefore, in my opinion, if a research is trustworthy then it is transferable.

## **4.7 Ethical considerations**

Ethical considerations were a core of this study. Given the study's focus, I had to address ethical considerations at different levels of the educational hierarchy. Before commencing this study, ethical clearance was obtained from the university (Appendix 1). Following that, I applied for permission to conduct my research/interviews with the ministry's officers (teachers, Rectors and policymakers) and the MIE. Once the gatekeeper's clearance was received (Appendix 2 and 3), I embarked on the fieldwork.

On the field, all participants were provided with an informed consent form (Appendix 4) with detailed information about the research purpose, type of intervention, procedure, confidentiality, and their rights, including the right to withdraw at any stage without repercussions. After receiving their consent in writing, data collection began.

Participants' identities have been protected throughout this study. Firstly, pseudonyms were used in all records, and no identifying information was included in the final report. I took care not to mention the name of any state secondary school as well where the interviews with Rectors were conducted. I also did not mention the subject department of any MIE Lecturers also to protect their identity. The interviews generated heavy critiques concerning the NYCBE Reform and the rigid system. These information was handled with care to avoid unintended consequences for participants.

Given the lengthy dialogical interviews, I made efforts to ensure that participants felt at ease. For this, the interviews were conducted at times and locations convenient to them. Moreover, given the topic of the study, the questions could have different reactions on different groups of educational stakeholders. Therefore, the questions of the interviews were phrased to avoid discomfort or distress of any participant. I tried my maximum best not to cause any potential harm, whether psychological, emotional, or professional. Finally, participants' experiences were treated with sensitivity, and their unique experiences were honoured at each second.

Till the last phase, this study adhered to high ethical standards, ensuring the protection of participants and the integrity of the research process.

## 4.8 Synthesis of chapter

This chapter outlined the research methodology adopted to investigate teacher professional development within the context of educational reform, guided by the philosophical and methodological principles of hermeneutic phenomenology. Rooted in Heideggerian philosophy, hermeneutic phenomenology was chosen to explore the lived experiences of multiple educational stakeholders, emphasizing the dynamic interplay between their perspectives of TPD and the reform's nuances. The methodological approach was carefully tailored to align with the study's objectives, ensuring depth, coherence, and reflexivity in capturing and interpreting participants' experiences.

Hermeneutic phenomenology served as the foundation for this inquiry, facilitating a rich, interpretive exploration of participants' lived experiences. This approach was chosen for its ability to foreground the contextual and relational aspects of meaning-making, central to understanding teacher professional development during reform. By prioritizing an iterative process of interpretation, the study embraced the complexity of individual and collective experiences. The study employed a purposive snowball sampling technique to identify participants. This approach was particularly effective in accessing a diverse range of voices, including teachers, school leaders, policymakers, and professional development facilitators, who were deeply involved in the reform. Initial participants were selected based on their direct engagement with the reform, and subsequent participants were identified through referrals, ensuring the inclusion of voices with varied experiences and insights.

Dialogical interviews formed the primary method of data collection. Designed to encourage open-ended, reflective dialogue, these interviews created a space for participants to narrate their experiences, challenges, and insights regarding professional development in the reform context. The conversational nature of the interviews fostered trust and allowed for the co-construction of meaning between the researcher and participants. Flexibility was maintained to adapt to participants' responses, ensuring that their perspectives were authentically represented. Wordclouds were employed as innovative reflective tools to support data collection and interpretation. Generated from key themes emerging during interviews, wordclouds visually represented frequently mentioned terms and concepts, fostering participant reflection. By presenting participants with these visual summaries, the tool

encouraged deeper engagement, validation of preliminary interpretations, and additional insights into their experiences.

The data analysis was conducted using an Interpretive Phenomenological Approach (IPA), consistent with the study's hermeneutic foundation. IPA was used to identify and interpret emergent themes, emphasizing the contextual and relational dimensions of participants' lived experiences. This process involved iterative cycles of reading, coding, and interpretation, moving from individual accounts to shared meanings across the dataset. The analysis was deeply informed by hermeneutic principles, ensuring that the researcher's preconceptions were continuously examined and reflexively integrated into the interpretive process.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE CONCEPTIONS OF TPD WITHIN THE SPACE OF ER**

Chapter 4 elaborated on the methodology and data analysis procedures for this study. This chapter focuses on the presentation, analysis and interpretation of data generated from the interviews of multiple educational stakeholders namely, teachers, Rectors, MIE lecturers and decision makers (policymakers) at the Ministry level within the space of an ER. The chapter draws together the nuanced perspectives of the educational stakeholders on the way they conceptualise TPD within an ER. However, to represent the perspectives of these diverse stakeholders, I have classified them in a systematised structure to ease readability, comprehensibility and flow of arguments. Given the nested characteristics of the context (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), I capture and focus on the conceptions of TPD from the perspectives of teachers in Section A, Rectors in Section B, MIE lecturers in Section C and Ministry officers in Section D. This collective classification of educational stakeholders provides a more systematic representation of data facilitating clear patterns of similarities and variances that will be interpreted theoretically in Chapter 7.

#### **SECTION A**

##### **TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVE**

###### **5.1 Introduction**

This section analyses the conceptions of TPD within the space of ER from the perspective of teachers, who function in the regional state secondary schools of Mauritius. Regional state secondary schools' teachers work with the mainstream students and have also been enlisted to work with the newly implemented Extended Programme students for the NYCBE Reform. Four major themes emerged from data namely 'Situational conception of TPD', 'Bureaucratic

conception of TPD’, ‘Knowledge-based conception of TPD’ and ‘Agency-based conception of TPD.’

### **5.1.1 Theme 1: Situational Conception of TPD**

The situational context within which teachers work have been known to influence their professional development and hence, conceptions of professional development (Abebe, 2009; Morgan, 2014). For example, in a study by Morgan et al., (2014) within an Australian context focusing on creating flexi-schooling to address the challenges of non-completion of schooling, the complex context within which flexi-schooling is conceptualised influences processes on how teachers can work collaboratively to provide appropriate learning environment for these learners who exited formal schooling. The changed context within which these teachers learnt to work has parallels to the educational reforms under the NYCBE policy frameworks as teachers within the Mauritian context needed to work within a new policy framework guiding school education. Hence, understanding how situational context has an influence on conceptions of TPD is needed to explore how different stakeholders of school education conceptions of TPD are shaped by the contexts that they are working in or have an influence over. Within this theme, I explore how situational context, in its broader sense, influences conceptions of TPD of teachers and the data and analysis is presented within two sub-themes.

#### **5.1.1.1 Sub-theme 1: Demand-Driven conception of TPD Micro-temporal context**

Teachers have been an important stakeholder in policy implementation (Darling-Hammond, 2012) and educational reforms (Nikulochkina et al., 2022) and TPD within these reforming conditions has paramount importance as teachers are responsible for enacting the policy reform. Data suggest that teachers’ conceptions of TPD within the ER context is demand-driven. Recognition for inclusivity in educational opportunities, adaptation to changing context and technologies, and addressing challenges to the old school education system are mostly mentioned for the fulfilment of the ER need. The recognition for change brought about by the NYCBE Reform meant that new ways of educating the students are needed and for which teachers need to be ready and prepared, hence, the need for TPD as per the demands of the ER.

At the same time, the notion of “inclusivity” which is one of the six pillars of the NCF (NCF, 2015) featured in all the interviews of the participants. Therefore, as a main aspect that is being lived by all the educational stakeholders, the demand of “inclusivity” from the ER will be analysed and interpreted to better understand the conception of ‘demand-driven’ TPD within the ER. The following vignette will be considered for the discussion:

Teacher Par

*Par: .... we are as if the captains of our own ship. We were just informed. I don't really know what is expected out of me...*

*... like I have to do Maths in the Extended stream. But I am not aware how to do it because I am not formed to work with these students with other abilities. They don't know basic concepts of Maths. I don't know how to do it, how to deal with this. Suddenly, I am told to go and teach in the extended stream and I went there to face a new world after 21 years of career. So I don't know how to do it. I was just told I have to do class there and then I don't know what is expected from me. We are being sent some textbooks and then we are being told that after 4 years, they are going to take the same exams as the mainstream. So, I don't find the ...I have lots of questions.*

As articulated by teacher Par, the inclusion of the Extended-Programme students in the same syllabus as the mainstream students means that she has an additional responsibility as a Maths teacher to teach the new stream of students. She clearly articulated the need for TPD when she said “*But I am not aware how to do it because I am not formed to work with these students with other abilities.*” The changes imposed on Par by the ER carry significant implications in terms of professional adaptation, particularly as she has not been formally prepared to teach within this new framework. Despite her 21 years of teaching experience, Par feels the need to acquire new pedagogical strategies to effectively teach in the Extended Programme classes for which there were special teachers prior to the NYCBE Reform. In line with Par, Sai, Soo, Cho, Ci and Ros also shared that TPD is needed to teach in the Extended Programme classes. This TPD needs is visible in phrases like “*I am going with the flow with the Extended Programme, not knowing what to do*”, “*If I would have got training on the psychology of these type of students, may be things would be different*”, “*How to teach students with so many family and social issues?*”, “*Doesn't he Ministry know what is going on in the classroom? They know.*”

*They know we are not being able to teach”, “I am trying. You know trial and error? But when an autistic student is in the class, I feel useless. I can’t handle” and “I don’t know what I am doing with these poor students”.* In view of this, the notion of ‘inclusivity’ entails that teachers would have to develop themselves to embrace ‘inclusivity’ in the form of the Extended Programme (Ex-Prevoc) classes. Given that state State Secondary School’s (SSS) teachers have not previously worked with this student demographic, there is a clear imperative for targeted teacher preparedness, reinforcing the need for TPD.

The conception of TPD within the NYCBE Reform is demand-driven as the ER is an ambitious one with major objectives and expectations from teachers. Data show that the demands of the ER weigh heavily on the shoulders of teachers as they are expected to teach in the Extended Programme classes with a completely new category of students and, bring results. TPD becomes crucial for teacher preparedness but as per data, given the unpreparedness of teachers, the well-documented ER seems to be inappropriately implemented in practice. The aspect of *“how it is transacted in the classroom (method); how the learners learn best (process) and how it relates to their life experiences and the environment in which they live and learn (relevance)”* (NCF, 2015) has strong connotations for both the nature and direction of TPD, which must align with the demands introduced by the ER. Consequently, it can be argued that the situational context of the ER ender TPD inherently demand-driven.

Demand-driven conception of TPD indicates that the ER's demand for inclusivity and adaptation to new educational contexts creates a pressing need for targeted TPD. Teachers such as Par and her colleagues are confronted with new pedagogical challenges, including the integration of Extended Programme students into mainstream classrooms. This shift necessitates the adoption of alternative instructional approaches and the acquisition of new pedagogical competencies. The evident lack of preparedness among teachers highlights the critical need for TPD in supporting the successful realisation of the ER’s ambitious goals.

#### **5.1.1.2 Sub-theme 2: Evolutionary conception of TPD**

Within an ER context, TPD is seen to be evolutionary as it follows a naturally progressive process as the ER unfolds gradually. Data shows that in a complexified ER, where educational stakeholders have to keep themselves abreast of all ER developments, TPD also evolves as a matter of the ER course. In this study, an evolutionary conception of TPD within an ER

emerged from the lived-experience of each category of educational stakeholders. They clearly expressed the changing nature of TPD since the inception of the NYCBE Reform till now (that is till the data collection was completed). In this section, the understanding of TPD that teachers had at the inception of the NYCBE Reform is seen to take another turn as the ER unfolded. As the reform progresses, TPD came to be viewed not merely as a series of standardised, one-off workshops, but as an ongoing and continuous development.

Data also suggest that the historicity of TPD within previous ERs in Mauritius renders TPD to be evolutionary in nature. According to the data, within the previous ERs, TPD primarily consisted of one-shot workshops or informative sessions organised by the MoE and the MIE, which were deemed sufficient to meet the demands of those reforms. Consequently, neither teachers nor other educational stakeholders engaged in sustained TPD beyond these isolated sessions. However, a decade later, within the context of the current ER, TPD has undergone significant evolution in both scope and orientation, which will be highlighted during the analysis of data.

The following vignette has been considered for the analysis.

**Teacher Soo:**

*...but unfortunately, those lecturers who were there they were only in science workshops. They will not be in maths or language workshops. It would have been very useful because we are not only science. maybe something about language can help us. something about Arts and design can help us. Just like we have to make a lesson plan on composition of air...but how do I tell students that there are more nitrogen than carbon dioxide? So, then something of colours can help. Let us use colours. the child is going to see much more of nitrogen in red. in REDDD...so, definitely this will come in his mind that there are more of nitrogen than carbon dioxide...*

Teachers' conception of TPD within the ER is found to be evolutionary as it has developed from its earlier conceptions during the decade. Data suggests that TPD was considered as training and workshops a decade ago but with the current ER and following an evolving society, TPD is now considered as an evolving activity that would help teachers to meet the

objectives of teaching and learning. Soo, as a Science teacher, opines that elements from Art and Design as well as Language subjects could enhance her teaching practices within the Extended Programme. She noted that teaching Science to these students requires more than the delivery of theoretical knowledge and practical activities, but it also necessitates additional additional skills. Similarly, Aru, Cimmi, Par, Cho and Ros also articulated a broadened understanding of TPD, asserting that it encompasses far more than conventional workshops and formal training sessions. Aru, Par and Ros shared that in-house training would have helped them to better address the needs of students in the Extended Programme students. Par also expressed her willingness to help in technology-based pedagogy. The remaining participants advocated for a more diverse range of TPD activities, including tailor-made workshops, learn from other countries, go to and learn from other schools, peer sharing, the establishment of Community of Practice culture, and Continuous Professional Development. These forms of TPD, they argued, have often been overlooked or undervalued by educational authorities. Overall, the teachers' conception of TPD suggests a natural and context-driven evolution, which is grounded in the realities of their professional practice and responsive to the demands of ER.

Evolutionary conception of TPD indicates that PD is not a static concept but evolves with the progression of educational reforms. The study highlights that TPD has transitioned from one-off workshops to a more continuous and comprehensive form of professional development. Teachers now recognize the importance of ongoing learning and development, embracing a variety of TPD activities that extend beyond traditional training sessions. This evolutionary approach to TPD reflects a deeper understanding of the continuous nature of educational improvement and the necessity for teachers to adapt to evolving educational demands.

In concluding theme 1, the situational context within which educational reforms occur significantly shapes the conception and implementation of TPD. The emergence of demand-driven and evolutionary perspectives on TPD highlights the necessity for approaches that are flexible, context-sensitive, and responsive to the dynamic realities of educational practice (Kennedy, 2022; Opfer & Pedder, 2023). This study underscores the importance of continuous professional development in equipping educators to navigate shifting pedagogical expectations and reform agendas (Donnelly, 2023; Avalos-Bevan et al., 2022). Accordingly, it is imperative that educational policies move beyond episodic training models and actively support sustained

TPD (Ho & Chan, 2023; Murray & Smith, 2022). Such an orientation ensures that teachers remain adaptable within increasingly complex educational landscapes.

## **5.1.2 Theme 2: Bureaucratic Conception of TPD**

### **Introduction**

This theme focuses on a bureaucratic conception of TPD within the space of an ER from the perspectives of the eight teacher participants working in regional state secondary schools of Mauritius. The theme highlights two key sub-themes namely, *a penchant for policy-oriented TPD* and *policy-regulated TPD*. Recent studies exploring bureaucratic approaches to TPD within reform spaces underscore key constructs such as standardized PD contents (Allen, Menzines & Ford, 2024; Revina et al., 2023), hierarchical decision-making with an emphasis on compliance (Williams, 2020), policy centric approaches (Williams, 2020), curriculum reforms and evaluation metrics tied to the new policy goals. These characteristics identified in the literature are commonly shared by teachers, mainly regarding the implementation of the new Extended Programme curriculum and its associated pedagogical practices.

#### **5.1.2.1 A penchant for Policy-oriented TPD**

This section analysed the sub-theme '*A penchant for policy-oriented TPD*' highlighting how this conception is developed by teachers, who are closer to the field as compared to other educational stakeholders in the educational hierarchy. Data indicates that teachers view TPD as being more policy-driven than policy-oriented. This distinction suggests a preference for TPD activities that are contextually adapted and responsive to policy demands, rather than rigid, standardized programmes imposed by policy mandates. In essence, teachers express a desire for TPD that supports and facilitates policy implementation rather than one that is dictated solely by it. This explains the sub-theme '*a penchant for policy-oriented TPD*'.

The following vignette has been used for the analysis:

**Teacher Aru:**

*We have to be aware of this reform. What is awaiting us? For this I think there was a workshop on NYCBS where we were informed. So, for TPD also...we have to be ready to to to welcome this reform. Look at how there was the series of supposed workshops on the Extended, supposedly they prepared us, TPD....there were workshops for one month....it did not help at all, at all, at all. They tell you here is the book, it will be like this and this and this. But when you face the class, My God! They don't give us any occasion to voice out our problems. When QAID comes to school, we raise the issue...then nothing, nothing. They impose on you and you go and then you go and see what you will do...you should do it. Even in workshops, it is the same. You know, policy makers should take note because teachers...since long teachers have started to talk. Teachers' voice is since always. It is the policy makers who should do their part of work.*

In the above vignette of Teacher Aru, her dissatisfaction for TPD received in connection to NYCBE Reform manifests in her statement *it did not help at all, at all, at all*. Her vignette also suggests that the workshops were imposed, disregarding their issues and needs related to the implementation of the new Extended Programme. Similarly, Teacher Soo, Cho, Ros and Par also shared equal feelings about the policy-driven workshops, focusing more on the implementation of curriculum materials rather than teacher development for this policy. This bureaucratic nature of TPD is also manifested by the omniscient attitude the officers of the Quality Assurance and Inspection Division from the Ministry, whose interactions with teachers often reflect their control, power and hierarchical dominance. Rather than helping teachers in orienting their PD towards the policy, they make the policy drive teachers' PD. This implies that, TPD is faced with under direction as how they should professionally act under the new ER. Teachers' crisped feeling with the policy-driven and bureaucratic system is curtailing their need for a more policy-oriented TPD. The way TPD is structured in the education system denotes a nested structure as explained by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System (1979), displaying the interrelatedness of the micro-, meso-, exo-, macro- and chrono-systems, where teachers' voice located at the micro-level, does not reach the top-levels.

From the above paragraph, the conception of policy-oriented TPD surfaced from teachers' lived experiences of TPD. A bureaucratic conception of TPD emerged from data as a result of teachers' lived-experiences of a rigidly policy-driven TPD that outshines a policy-oriented TPD that considers teachers' needs and development. They expressed their need for a more flexible, comprehensible and tailored TPD that is more policy-oriented. The highly centralized, top-down and imposed workshops in line with the policy directives have rendered TPD to be largely bureaucratic in nature. This bureaucratisation is evident in the workshops' predominant focus on curriculum materials prepared by the MIE, with limited consideration of teachers' contextual and professional realities. Ultimately, there appears to be significant disjunction between teachers' understanding of TPD within the framework of ER and their actual experiences of it. While their experiential reality reflects a system driven by policy compliance, their understanding of TPD is shaped by practical and context-specific professional needs, suggesting a preference for a more policy-oriented, rather than policy-driven, approach to TPD.

#### **5.1.2.2 Policy-regulated TPD**

The top-down prescription of a series of workshops at the beginning of the NYCBE Reform in the form of centralized control by the authority over the design and delivery of TPD indicate that TPD is highly policy-regulated in nature. The vignette of Teacher Aru (in the above section) indicates that a regulated TPD was the basis for all the prescribed workshops she received. The TPD activities provided followed a process starting with policy decisions at higher level, transmission of policy decisions to teachers in the form of standardized workshops and implementation of the policy decision by teachers in their classroom. The design and delivery of TPD appear to have been primarily aimed at disseminating information about the core tenets of the ER policy, rather than fostering meaningful professional growth among teachers. This indicates that TPD was designed with the objective to inform teachers about the main constructs of the ER policy, not for their PD. As such, it reflects a regulated function, structured and constrained by policy mandates. This instrumental approach positions TPD as a conduit for policy delivery, aligning with what Ball (2003) describes as the *performative culture* in education, where teachers are compelled to demonstrate compliance with externally defined targets rather than pursue meaningful, reflective development. Consequently, teachers often engage in TPD not out of intrinsic motivation to self develop, but rather as a form of compliance to meet the expectations of policy makers and Quality Assurance and Inspection

Division of the Ministry. From this perspective, TPD becomes less about cultivating teacher agency or reflective practice (Sachs, 2001) and more about regulatory control. As a result, this risks reducing TPD to a performative exercise, thereby undermining teacher's intrinsic motivation and agency for professionalization.

### **Concluding comments**

This theme explores the bureaucratic conception of Teacher Professional Development (TPD) that emerged from the perspective of teachers. Teachers express a strong need for TPD to be adaptable and tailored to their specific contexts rather than being rigidly policy-driven. They feel that current TPD practices are too bureaucratic and focused on implementing new curriculum mandates rather than addressing their professional development needs. Teachers report dissatisfaction with the workshops and training sessions, which they find unhelpful in their actual teaching practices. The role of the officers from the Quality Assurance Inspection Division from the Ministry are also criticized as overly inspectorial rather than supportive. Overall, teachers advocate for a more flexible, comprehensive, and context-sensitive approach to TPD that better aligns with their understanding and needs.

### **5.1.3 Theme 3: Knowledge-based Conception of TPD**

#### **Introduction**

This section explores the third theme 'Knowledge-based conception of TPD' within an ER from teachers' perspectives, highlighting three sub-themes: TPD based on *Knowledge of practice*, TPD based on *Knowledge for practice*, and TPD based on *Knowledge-from-practice*. Drawing from Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (1990) constructs which categorise knowledge within teaching practices into knowledge-of-practice, knowledge-for-practice, and knowledge from practice, the three sub-themes was a useful way of understanding how teachers conceptualise TPD activities that they received for implementing NYCBE reforms for school education in Mauritius.

#### **5.1.3.1 TPD based on knowledge of practice as expressed by teachers**

The concept of TPD based on what teachers have been exposed to through their initial teacher education programme and any other programmes that focused on TPD is what is referred to as

knowledge of practice. In this sub-theme, I explore what teacher had known about TPD either through their theoretical study of teaching and professionalism or the exposure to TPD. Although teacher participants were not explicitly asked to share their theoretical or observational understanding of TPD, their responses to questions regarding their lived-experiences with TPD in the context of implementing the NYCBE reform implicitly revealed their theoretical knowledge of TPD. Data suggests that teachers' conception of TPD received during the NYCBE Reform transition, based on a knowledge perspective, was that TPD is a set of prescriptive interventions initiated from the ministry of education to assist them (the teachers) to implement a reform agenda.

The following extracts of interviews have been used for analysis and interpretation.

**Teacher Aru:**

*Uhhh...may be the workshops that we go to follow and that help us in our profession. Yes, I think TPD is this....There was a workshop that we got for Art but we no more get this workshop now. It was at the RTI. There were artists who came from India and they were training us. That helped us a lot...it was very long back..uhh don't know which year.*

**Teacher Soo:**

*This term brings to mind, whatttt are the different workshops that the ministry does, provide for us...workshops in terms of syllabus change, our roles. And recently, the past workshop I had had out of the blue... I very much liked that workshop. It was how to deal with multi-intelligence students. How to work with them. I have been looking for such a workshop since more than 10 years. It is now that I got that..and through the form of Extended Stream (ironically)..*

**Teacher Par:**

*... activities, may be to attend a seminar, attend workshops, to have discussions among colleagues of different schools. We can classify like we have low ability schools. So, we can group the low ability schools, their educators, their needs. Am sure that we are facing common problems and we can find some solutions that will help us in these types of schools. Like this we can have some, uhhh workshops, seminars, atelier de travail,...and then we can have some uhh I don't know...some uhh..we can devise something at school level to showcase what are the things we have done like an open day, inviting other educators to see what we educators are doing in our school, like an Open Day. This can help to open up to the community, to other schools, to the surroundings...*

Emerging from the data, conceptions of TPD is in line with the theoretical constructs of what TPD is. Phrases like *helps us in our profession; workshops that the ministry does; attend a seminar* suggests that teachers are aware of what TPD means. More importantly, they were able to make judgements about the value of these forms of TPD and what they might be able to offer teachers in their teaching practices. Their judgements about the TPD received for implementing NYCBE Reform within their schools and in their classrooms revealed a broader conception of TPD which may have arisen out of the past experience of TPD for them (the teacher participants).

Given the previous and current lived-experiences of TPD within ERs in Mauritius, data consistently indicate that the kind of TPD provided to teachers has remained unchanged. Traditional TPD activities like one-shot workshop and trainings continue to dominate the landscape of teacher development programs in Mauritius. And teachers have become highly dependent on these activities for their PD, as other forms of PD like job-embedded, school-based and Lesson-study remain largely uncommon in most state secondary schools. The clear absence of a comprehensive TPD framework for on-site TPD may be one of the major reasons for teachers' limited Knowledge of TPD within the ER.

In summary, the findings suggest that teachers Knowledge of TPD is primarily shaped by their theoretical understanding and past experiences with TPD activities, which were largely conceptualised as prescribed workshops and trainings by the authority. That is, TPD is externally driven and takes the form of workshops and training sessions. Traditional TPD activities persist as a dominant mode of teacher development in Mauritius, making teachers to be heavily reliant on them. The effectiveness of this kind of conception of TPD is also hindered by limited opportunities for practical application, and the absence of a comprehensive on-site TPD framework and much of these kinds of TPD activities are based on the perception of what teachers need, rather than what teachers actually need. Hence the value of these forms of externally driven TPD activities have broadened their notion of TPD and this is what is referred to as knowledge for practice, which the next sub-theme will focus on.

### **5.1.3.2 The conception of TPD based on Knowledge-for-practice**

Using the constructs of 'knowledge-for-practice' (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Cochran & Lytle, 1999), teachers' articulation of what they needed to conform with NYCBE

reforms will be analysed in light of the Mauritian Education context. From the perspectives of Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005), Knowledge-for-practice is understood as theory that will inform practice, or the kind of knowledge teachers may need to rely upon to enhance their professional practice. Cochran and Lytle (1999) similarly presented it as formal knowledge comprising formal courses and certifications, teacher education, training programs, and whole school change effort geared for better practice for both pre-service and in-service teachers. Using these understandings conceptions of TPD may arise out of a formal engagement with this concept theoretically or from past experience. Conceptions of TPD will be looked at as the kind of knowledge for TPD that teachers have acquired as a result of experiencing the TPD previously received or expected as well as what they did not receive but needed it to effect the envisaged changes of the reform agenda.

Within the Mauritian educational context, the reform agenda has placed a particular emphasis on '*inclusive education*'. So, to understand the essence of TPD in this context, teachers needed to be introduced to new approaches of doing things. For example, the use of innovative pedagogies, strategies and other requisites essential for effective implementation of the ER initiatives. This study's data suggest that teachers, having participated in workshops and other TPD activities mandated by the MoE, exhibit a greater degree of being 'informed' about the ER, rather than experiencing significant 'professional development', given that teachers characterises the TPD activities as superficial and normative in nature.

The following extracts of interviews have been used for analysis and interpretation.

**Teacher Pol:**

*Normally, what we were expecting with this educational reform was that we were supposed to get additional 'formations' (workshops and trainings) but we did not get any additional 'formations', apart from those one or two workshops whereby they came and briefed us on how the system will be; there should be innovative teaching and so on. They only said (these are only words) because in practice, there is no application of it. No creative teaching. No 'formations' have been provided on how to use new tools to teach. We would love to get these types of 'formations'...the kind of 'formations' so that we can align ourselves with the reform.*

**Teacher Sai:**

*...we went there (MGI)..we met friends..we talked..we followed the presentation of textbook by some lecturers from MGI..some colleagues asked questions..and we got lunch and we returned home...voila..  
..it was just a presentation...and for the NCE also it was the same...we go, we follow and that's all. Whatever questions we were asking to the XXX officer, he was saying that he will transfer our requests to the ministry because he does not have any answer for us...it was a big joke..big joke..  
What was more uhh more emm irritating and...uhh when he was asked what are the criteria to mark this paper? Again he said he will transfer our request to the ministry...IS THIS A JOKE??????*

**Teacher Cho:**

*Now I am...uhh the development that comes from the seminar or from self, it should be continuous. It should be perpetual. We should not wait for somebody to tell us we should learn this and this. But I think that the teachers and professionals...uhh..adults who live in this world are on constant evolution...at times big changes...and they have to feel it. So here it is, we have to self-inform about what is going on around us.*

Phrases like *Normally, what we were expecting; we went there (MGI); the development that comes from the seminar or from self, it should be continuous* suggests that these teacher participants had some expectations of what TPD should entail for the NYCBE Reform transition to occur. From the above excerpt, Pol's experience of TPD for the ER revealed that he had specific expectations from these TPD (formations). However, the nature of TPD he acquired did not match with his expectations and requirements for the implementation of the ER. Whereas Sai, a language teacher, expressed dissatisfaction with the TPD activities provided by the MIE and MGI, deeming them largely ineffective. As the frontline implementers of the ER, teachers like Sai expected that TPD would address their context-specific, practice-oriented concerns. Given that their expectations were disconnected from realities, Sai perceives the workshops to be ineffective. This disjunction between policy-driven training content and the practical demands of implementation was further exemplified by Aru,

who questioned the relevance of the training when a French language officer was assigned to facilitate an Art workshop, despite lacking the subject expertise to respond meaningfully to teachers' on-spot queried. This situation raises questions about the credibility/position/subject-specific competence of the teacher educators/trainers/lecturers, as well as the extent to which they are effective and efficient in their teacher education initiatives. These shortcomings raise questions about *who* facilitates these PD workshops/training sessions and why they are sent to schools or invited to participate in these training sessions. The question *who facilitates* TPD speaks to a broader conception of TPD that has historically prevailed within the Mauritian context for ERs. This broader conception relates to what TPD was envisaged to be from a bureaucratic perspective, where TPD is externally delivered, typically by individuals positioned outside the teaching community. Teachers' experience about receiving these PD sessions, assumes that expertise lies beyond the profession, reinforcing a passive role for teachers as recipients rather than co-constructors of professional knowledge. However, teachers' lived-experiences of participating in such TPD sessions, where facilitators were unable to respond adequately to context-specific questions, prompted a re-evaluation of this traditional model. Faced with unresolved practical challenges, teachers were compelled to draw on their own professional judgement, thereby recognising their potential as initiators of meaningful professional learning. These experiences suggest that dominant bureaucratic conceptions of TPD are insufficient and require expansion to acknowledge teacher-led, context-driven, and self-initiated forms of TPD. In this way, TPD is reframed not merely as a product delivered to teachers, but as a dynamic process co-constructed by practitioners themselves. Besides Pol and Sai, all the participants shared that they participated in TPD activities like introduction of the NYCBE Reform, new curriculum and a few more activities which were mainly information sharing rather than professional development activities. The knowledge they acquired for their PD emphasized more on the objectives of the ER and its implementation rather than how the policy can be translated into classroom practices.

Data further suggests that teachers did not alter their instructional practice behaviour as they continue to teach in the traditional way despite receive *training* sessions. In the context of the Extended Programme students, teachers are using strategies akin to those used for mainstream students, which do not fulfil the purpose of *inclusive education*. Teacher participants also expressed that even in the mainstream classes featuring mixed-abilities students, teachers are obliged to adopt traditional teaching. They faced notable challenges in their classes and subsequently resorted to self-initiated TPD. This implies that the construction of meaningful

TPD did not take place during the TPD activities. Cho, who equally participated in the prescribed workshops, shared that TPD should be a continuous and perpetual process. This perspective implies the necessity of sustained, context-responsive TPD to enable teachers to meaningfully engage with and implement the intended changes of the ER within their classroom context. Teachers' insights revealed a clear understanding of the type of professional support required, an understanding grounded not only in their prior experiences with TPD, but also in their evolving needs within the specific context of the NYCBE reform agenda. Rather than being passive recipients of reform directives, teachers demonstrated a form of professional *knowledge* that shaped their expectations for TPD. This knowledge-for-TPD emerges from their cumulative engagement with previous reforms and reflected a practical awareness of what was necessary to facilitate effective implementation at the school level. Hence, their knowledge-for-TPD was informed by their past experiences of implementing TPD and by their specific needs within reform agenda and which they were expecting during the ER processes.

Data from the teacher participants also suggests that the expectations from TPD activities as directed by the NYCBE reform agenda was not forthcoming. Noting that this reform agenda required substantial changes to their teaching practices, teachers, drawing on prior experiences, held clear expectations that TPD should largely be directed at empowering the teachers to deliver on the mandate of the ER agenda. However, their current experiences with TPD were perceived as superficial, characterised more by one-way information dissemination than by deep learning enactment of the policy reforms. This realisation of the disjuncture between what teachers expected from TPD activities provided by external agents and what they (the teachers) actually needed could be explained using the construct of knowledge for practice. Teachers knew what TPD they expected and were able to critically evaluate the nature and value of TPD received in relation to what was needed. This highlights a misalignment between policy-driven TPD and the grounded, practice-based knowledge of teachers, thereby calling into question the effectiveness of externally imposed models of TPD in reform contexts. For instance, Soo shared that she works by 'trial and error' with the Extended Programme students, Cimmi drew upon her prevocational training background to teach these students, Cho tries to conduct his classes based on his self-driven PD and others are trying hard to make learning take place in other possible ways, suggesting that the TPD that they (teachers) received was superficial and not material enough to make any substantive difference in their teaching practices.

### **5.1.3.3 The conception of TPD based on Knowledge-from-practice**

A third sub-theme that emerged from the data is the conception of TPD based on Knowledge-from-practice within the ER. In this study, Knowledge-from-practice is conceptualised as the idea of acquisition and application of knowledge from reflection on post-TPD activities that were prescribed for the NYCBE Reform. It encompasses a broad range of learning experiences such as gaining new insights, pedagogical techniques, content knowledge, and effective teaching strategies related to the objectives of the ER. While the preceding sections were analysed using the constructs of ‘knowledge’ as outlined by Cochran and Lytle (1991) and Darling-Hammond (2005), the conception of TPD based on Knowledge-from-practice is largely a reflexive perspective. Either they (teacher participants) benefitted from the TPD activities or did not find them useful for their teaching practices based on their reflections of what they received as TPD. Hence conceptions of TPD based on knowledge-from-practice has the potential to extend notions of TPD, which the teacher participants alluded to.

The following interview extracts will be used for analysis and interpretation of this concept:

**Teacher Soo:**

*uhhh Like the solar system. I had to adopt something contrary to what I was supposed to do with my students. I was asking will my students know which one is the sun, earth, etc? No. They will be confused. I thought over some teaching methods which are helpful to some classes. I rejected what was in the book and I invented my own way.*

**Teacher Pol:**

*Normally, what we were expecting with this educational reform was that we were supposed to get additional 'formations' (workshops and trainings) but we did not get any additional 'formations', apart from those one or two workshops whereby they came and briefed us on how the system will be; there should be innovative teaching and so on. They only said (these are only words) because in practice, there is no application of it. No creative teaching. No 'formations' have been provided on how to use new tools to teach. We would love to get these types of 'formations' ...the kind of 'formations' so that we can align ourselves with the reform.*

**Teacher Sai:**

*...we don't get it. We develop ourselves on our own without knowing if we are doing it the right way or not. We don't have anybody to guide us. No training or workshop. Nobody to develop us in this way. If it is like this then I myself don't know if my PD is good or not.*

**Teacher Aru:**

*...first of all we should be aware about this reform where they inform us...what is awaiting us..hmmm there was a workshop I think for the NYCBE Reform where they informed us. But TPD....we should be ready to welcome this reform. Look at the line of supposedly workshops that there was on Extended Stream...supposedly they prepared our professional development...there were workshops for days...it did not help us at allllllll...they just tell you here are the books, it will be like this and like that...but when you face the class..My God!*

*...books have changed...syllabus has change and we should innovate. You should have different strategies. Teaching style has changed...I am going by the textbooks. We don't get any model classes...they just introduced the books and asked us about our point of view where can we contribute in it.*

*...now if I want to learn something more, I will have to spend my money from my pocket and pay for an additional course...*

Phrases like *I had to adopt something contrary to what I was supposed to do with my students; there should be innovative teaching; we develop ourselves on our own; we should be ready to welcome this reform*, allude to the expanded notion of TPD that includes self-realisation, anticipation of on-going changes and a personal resolve to consistently develop as teachers, all of which emerged from the practicality of the dynamic school environment and the kinds of TPD that is consistently provided to teachers (with or without benefits). Conceptions of TPD

based on knowledge from practice is more enduring as it speaks directly to the realities of a dynamic and changing school context where the knowledge and skills of teachers will be consistently challenged in view of innovations and changing demands made on schools, teaching and learning. This conception of TPD is broader and contributes to the scholarship on TPD that is responsive to the needs of teachers, the needs of the learners and the needs of an education system situationally and progressively evolving.

#### **5.1.4 Theme 4: Agency-driven Conception of TPD**

##### **Introduction**

This section explores the theme ‘agency-driven conception of TPD’ by unfolding the lived-experiences of teachers in terms of ‘agency’ that takes place within a complex spatial and temporal reform context. This theme is also informed by the complexities of an ER wherein teachers, as pivotal change-agents, experience entangling situations at different classroom stances. Data also suggests that experienced teacher participants with well-grounded pedagogical beliefs, moral and values, and rich teaching experiences, exercise TPD through diverse agencies that are developed in a complex micro and macro environment in which they operate.

The theme is analysed through the lenses of Barad’s theory of intra-action and Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) Ecological system theory of agency. Barad (2007) conceptualises Intra-action as a mutual construction of entangled agencies, offering a whole new way of understanding inter-relationship. Intra-action happens in co-constituted ways where the ability to act emerges from within the relationship not outside of it. Within this study’s context, Intra-action is manifested through participants’ varied agency stemming from their TPD lived-experiences and interactions with different educational stakeholders, changing schooling system, new curriculum and beliefs, all within the temporal and spatial constraints of the NYCBE Reform.

##### **5.1.4.1 Sub-theme 1: Reflexive TPD**

The concept of ‘Reflexive TPD’ emerged from teacher-participants’ deep reflection on their everyday instructional practices and classroom challenges encountered particularly in

addressing EP classes, curriculum change and new set of goals of the ER. As change agents, teachers are observed to feel the impact of the challenges directly on their professional development, which remains constrained due to the aforementioned contextual shortcomings previously deliberated in the above section. Given the missing/insufficient contextual TPD initiatives by the authority, teachers took time to reflect on their own classroom lived-experiences and relate to their professional development. Their role as reflexive practitioners is evident as they actively engage in their own development, both professionally and personally, fostering an environment conducive to effective teaching facilitation.

**Teacher Soo:**

*Unfortunately, I don't know if this applies to Mauritius only...when I am a teacher I need to do a a a course only in education. But this may not be helping me. I can go and do a certificate in Art may be or in Music that is going to help my students in Science may be.*

*Most of the time cetaut sur l'etat. Sure l'etat que j'ai eu des idee. Like the solar system. I had to adopt something contrary to what I was supposed to do with my students. I was asking will my students know which one is the sun, earth, etc? No. They will be confused. I thought over some teaching methods which are helpful to some classes. I rejected what was in the book and I invented my own way.*

*If we would have been a bit free for extended stream, things would not have become that serious last year or even with new teachers. I do feel the pressure. Teachers of mainstream going to teach in the extended stream is like our mind is....as if we are blocked with the syllabus. But with extended stream it is difficult...impossible to complete syllabus. With them, you do*

From the above extract, Soo engages in reflexive professional development to enhance her understanding of her role in catering for new classroom responsibilities within the ER. The major challenges associated with working with the EP students provided Soo with the opportunity to take a step back to reflect and question her own actions about their effectiveness for the students. The decisions that she had to make in her everyday teaching demonstrate her moral agency (Biesta, 2020; Campbell, 2013; Socket, 2022; Kelchtermans, 2019) in seeking self-directed TPD. Soo's moral obligation to cater to these students, regardless of the circumstances, is exemplified in her statement, "...will my students know which one is the sun...". Apart from that, functioning in a restricted educational system with minimal professional development opportunities, Soo reflected on the need to learn and acquire

knowledge in subjects such as Visual Arts or Music to facilitate learning of the EP students. Likewise, Aru, Ros, Par and Cho and Cimmi also analysed their teaching of the EP students and engaged in self-reflection to promote effective learning within the ER. This reflexivity led them to recognize the kind of paradoxes between the kind of teachers they were years back before the ER and the challenges they are facing in instructing this new group (EP) of students. Consequently, they are having to evaluate and investigate their own instructional approaches in relation to the expectations associated with teaching within this ER.

Data also suggests that teachers self-examined themselves and became critical about their own goals and purposes in what they do as teachers (Berger, 2015). For instance, Soo, an experienced Science teacher, discussed a set of teaching strategies she adopted for the mainstream students since 22 years but when she faced the EP students for the first time in 2017, she began to understand her prejudiced judgements towards those students (EP), leading to the development of reflexivity in her TPD. This may denote that her TPD emerged from her reflexive endeavours at various classroom experiences. As she became more aware about the reality and background of the students, the moral agency also was developed. She moulded her culture for the sake of these students despite the fact that she felt at lost with them. In a similar manner, Aru also is seen to become more critical as an Art teacher. Given the “messiness”, she started to question her ways of teaching/pedagogies after 19 years of teaching experience at secondary level. Therefore, this reflexivity in TPD emerged as educators like Soo and Aru re-evaluated their pedagogies on their own after encountering challenges within the ER framework.

However, the emergent reflexive TPD that developed within the ER is observed to be obstructed by the authoritarian national curriculum agenda. Given the ambitious ER agenda with a wide set of goals, the reflexivity is often killed by teacher accountability mainly for the EP classes whereby top-down pressure is felt at every stage of the academic term and year. As a result of this, data also shows that teacher autonomy also is killed, consequently, restraining the capacity for teacher agency and the agency for self-initiated TPD. From the above extract, Soo is seen to have agency, reflexivity and moral agency for her TPD when she chose to “*I rejected what was in the book and I invented my own way.*”, however, she feels that her autonomy is hindered and confined within the prescribed EP curriculum, and the pressure from above restricts her agency to give her best as ‘*she does not feel free*’. In the same vein, all teacher participants shared resembling experiences with their EP classes, whereby they look

more inward and what they did, do and can do, taking risks to implement different teaching strategies and being reflexive. Teachers are seen to embrace the “messiness” of the ER while struggling to navigate EP classrooms for the first time in their career. Notably, they were not only focusing on the present, but in transitioning their teaching from how they used to teach and how they should now teach. Despite efforts by educators to adapt and innovate in response to ER challenges, their autonomy is stifled, hampering their ability to exercise agency for TPD.

To sum up, a reflexive conception of TPD within the ER emerged following the dissonance between the realities faced in EP classrooms and the expectations imposed by the ER. Within the moments of ER discomfort, from the lived experiences of teachers, reflexivity is, therefore, seen in the way teachers unpacked their knowledge in TPD though limited, and tried to reflect on their instructional approaches, attempting to cater for the EP students and new set of the ER curriculum. This fact also emerged when teachers’ engagement in reflexivity compelled them to self-examine, challenge and understand their own biases. However, the encroachment on teacher autonomy due to external pressures undermines the full realization of reflexive TPD, impacting teachers’ ability to adapt and cater effectively to the needs of EP students within the ER framework.

### **5.1.5 Synthesis of Section A**

This section of the chapter analysed the conceptions of TPD from the perspectives of teachers within an ER. It delves into four themes, Situational conception of TPD, Bureaucratic conception of TPD, Knowledge-based conception of TPD and Agency-based conception of TPD.

#### Situational conception of TPD

The situational context within which teachers operate significantly influences their professional development and their perceptions of it. Within the NYCBE Reform context, data suggests that teachers’ conception of TPD is demand-driven. The recognition of the need for educational reform is tangled to the need for inclusivity, adaptation to changing contexts, and addressing the challenges of the old education system. TPD within an ER context is also viewed as evolutionary, progressing from isolated workshops to more sustained, process-oriented approaches that better align with evolving educational needs. This shift has led

teachers to regard TPD as an essential, ongoing activity for maintaining effectiveness amid reform.

#### Bureaucratic conception of TPD

The second theme, a bureaucratic conception of TPD explored the policy-oriented conception of Teacher Professional Development (TPD) that emerged from the perspective of teachers. They view TPD as overly bureaucratic and policy-driven, prioritising curriculum mandates over their actual professional needs. Teachers report dissatisfaction with the workshops and training sessions, which they find unhelpful in their actual teaching practices. The role of Quality Assurance officers is also criticized as overly inspectorial rather than supportive. Overall, they advocate for a more flexible, comprehensive, and context-sensitive approach to TPD that better aligns with their understanding and needs.

#### Knowledge-based conception of TPD

The third theme, a knowledge-based conception of TPD delved into three sub-themes: Knowledge-of-TPD, Knowledge-for-TPD, and Knowledge-from-TPD. *Knowledge-of-TPD* is informed by past and present experiences, including workshops, training sessions, job-embedded practices, and self-initiated activities. However, the analysis highlights a lack of opportunities for practical application of this knowledge, with a notable absence of school-based training and continuous workshops. This gap suggests that while teachers possess Knowledge-of-TPD, it is not adequately reinforced or expanded through ongoing professional development activities. The second sub-theme, *Knowledge-for-TPD* indicates that teachers' Knowledge-for-TPD is shaped by their experiences with TPD activities within the ER which are often found to be superficial and normative, focusing more on informing them about the ER rather than contributing to substantial professional development. This shortfall prompted teachers to engage in self-initiated TPD to bridge the gap between the prescribed activities and their practical classroom needs. The third sub-theme, *Knowledge-from-TPD* emerged from teachers' reflections on their post-TPD experiences, involving the acquisition and application of new insights, pedagogical techniques, and teaching strategies. Reflection on TPD experiences also shows gaps in translating new knowledge into practice, underscoring the need for a more robust, structured, and responsive TPD framework to support meaningful professional growth.

### Agency-driven conception of TPD

The fourth and last theme under section is an "agency-driven conception of TPD" illustrating the complex interplay of teacher agency within the context of the ER. Teachers, as central change agents, navigate challenging classroom environments and leverage their rich experiences, pedagogical beliefs, and values to engage in TPD. The sub-theme of "Reflexive TPD" demonstrates how teachers, constrained by inadequate TPD initiatives, rely on deep reflection and self-examination to enhance their professional development. However, the strict national curriculum and top-down pressures stifle teacher autonomy, inhibiting their agency for self-initiated TPD. While teachers strive to adapt and innovate, their efforts are often constrained by external demands, impacting their ability to fully realize reflexive TPD.

## SECTION B

### RECTORS' PERSPECTIVES

#### Introduction

This chapter focuses on the conceptions of TPD within an ER through Rectors' perspective. The participant Rectors who are school leaders within the State Secondary Schools' (SSS) context are from regional schools where the NYCBE Reform is being implemented since 2016. Three Rectors: Patter, Kenly and Remy with 14, 10 and 8 years of Rectorship experiences respectively were deeply and lengthily interviewed. The primary roles of SSS Rectors as articulated in the duties of rectors (Public Service Commission, 2019) emphasize on management of school, curriculum and pedagogy, monitoring of performance, monitoring of resources, and staff management. Thus the Rector, as a school leader, has to manage a variety of aspects and functions pertaining to the intra- and extra-school context.

Rectors have been an important stakeholder in policy implementation (Day, Walker & Leithwood, 2018; Acton, 2021; Ganon-Shilan & Schechter, 2019) and TPD (Sasere, 2023) within reforming conditions at school and national level. Regional SSSs' Rectors who have been implementing the ER since 2016 are facing paramount impact of the ER as they have to cater for the Extended Programme students and NCE that have been newly introduced in the NYCBE Reform. They act as a bridge between their internal and external environments (Johnson, Mirchand & Meznar, 2015; Jarvenpaa, 2014). From a Baradian perspective, Rectors are themselves reconfigured through their entanglements with policy discourses, institutional structures, and relational encounters (Barad, 2007). Functioning in a rigidly top-down reform policy, Rectors as the mediating agents intra-act with the complexities of the ER at different levels with teachers' and students' needs at one end, and the demands of the authority at the other. As such, boundaries between authority mandates and the educational needs are not fixed but continually negotiated. Rather than servicing as static bridges between teachers, students, and policy demands (Johnson, Mirchand & Meznar, 2015), they function through ongoing, dynamic engagements with the material-discursive realities of reform, shaped by hierarchical power and the lived practices and resistances of those within their institutional ecology.

As prominent agents of ER, Rectors are responsible to promote “*good practice*” and “*lead, inspire and ensure the development of staff to secure excellence in teaching, learning...*” (Public Service Commission, 2019). In this regard, they are responsible for the professional development of their teachers as well. In a study exploring the roles of school leaders and teachers in a school-wide adoption of ICT, it was found that the school leader was in an essential position as an initiator and strategic planner in reform (Sun & Gao, 2019). But as ‘bridgers’ and mediators, and as they seek to address changes in an entangled systemic environment, TPD is often under-seen. Therefore, taking into account all the evolving complexities, this section seeks to explore the conceptions of TPD from the perspectives of these Rectors. Two major themes: knowledge-based conceptions of TPD by Rectors and situational conception of TPD emerged from the data, which will be analysed within the ER context.

### **5.2.1 Theme 1: Knowledge-based conception of TPD by Rectors**

#### **Introduction**

Using the constructs of ‘Knowledge’ as engaged with in section 6.1.3, I explore the rector’s conception of TPD in relation to the education reform agenda that they have experienced as school leaders. While there is no consensus on the definition of ‘knowledge’, there are common elements that underpin what is conceptualised as ‘knowledge’. These common elements include justification, belief and adequate evidence (Pollock & Cruz, 1999; Bond, et al., 2018). This section of the data presentation and analysis focuses on the rector participants’ knowledge *of and for* TPD based on how they have experienced or envisaged TPD to have unfolded within their respective schools. Hence, issues of justification, belief and evidence underpin their perspective of TPD within the context of ERs and each of these is explored from the perspective of rectors of State Secondary Schools (SSSs) in Mauritius.

#### **5.2.1.1 Knowledge of TPD based on justification**

Knowledge legitimacy, which Bond et al. (2018) speaks of, underpins how rectors view and conceptualise TPD epistemologically and ontologically based on the activities that have and continue to occur within their respective organisation, in this case their respective schools.

Fundamental to knowledge is what one knows (ontology) and how (epistemology) one come to know (Pollock & Cruz, 1999). Therefore, what rectors know of TPD is very much informed by how they have come to know, that is, what justifies their knowing. Hence, their place-based experiences of teachers going for professional development activities, the outcomes of these training workshops where their teachers have participated in and what they view as what is needed to implement educational reforms informs their perspective (knowledge) of TPD. The data from rectors suggests that their knowledge of TPD is partially drawn from the justification of what they need to implement educational reforms at their respective schools, the essence of which are captured in an extended extract of one of the rectors presented below.

Rector Becker:

*...So, I think that the ministry is trying to uhhh to provide some kind of professional development on a regular basis to teachers mostly in the extended stream with what they call the Community of practice. So, we have teachers going to workshops during the academic year. I am going to tell you, when they come back and when I ask them what they have learnt, they tell me nothing. They have not learnt anything. And I ask them how can you say that you have not been learning much and they tell me that they have been asked not to criticise anything. So, I think that what is happening, there is a policy where the government or the ministry ask to provide professional development, something I don't know how many professional developments a year. They are trying to implement it but what they are not looking at is the need of the teachers. They have not asked the teachers what do you need..*

*...Well, we have been convened to meetings, uhh a number of meetings. We have had literature to read. Uhh and we have had discussions from time to time after rector's meeting about you know..a few issues..just to understand the technical side because we are the technicians of the government but we are not policy makers because we are policy implementers. Just to understand how we should go about policies. So, this has been mainly the kind of uhh exposure we have had. Now, if you are talking about special professional development for rector's to be able to monitor the reform, no...we have not had...*

*...and another thing...you are talking about trainers..uhh in very many effective systems you have mentors at school..a newly recruited educator or a supply teacher is accompanied by a mentor. Here, we have HoDs who are supposed to do that job but they can't do it. Do they know how to do it? They themselves who have never been trained. I was talking about formative assessment, I was talking about a number of concepts like quality and quantity, I have told you about that..i was talking about remedial uhhh..well, a number of concepts which were completely strange for my HoDs...I was talking about peer assessment..you know how you help students you know like think like you implement the assessment in class...the teacher...in fact I think she was scared about what was I going to ask her. She does not know and she is a head of department. She is supposed to mentor the juniors but she can't do it. So, this is also a problem in our system..you just go up the ladder because you have got experience. This does not mean that you are any better. In fact your junior can be better than you.*

The rector(s) knowledge of TPD for ERs, as noted from the above interview extracts, centres around the justification for the needs of the school to implement the reforms. Regarding themselves as technicians, they (the rector's) are expected to implement the reform agenda at their sites of supervision and leadership, and account for the implementation of ERs. They, therefore, have justifiable expectations from the various levels within the implementation process to implement the ERs in their respective schools. They have policy expectations (details, including process details, of the envisaged reforms), external support to teachers to

know and understand what is needed for the reforms, and internal support from school managers as mentors to their teachers. Based on the experiences of the support, both from external sources and from internal school processes, they have a perspective of what TPD (*the ability to teach in an extended programme*) is, how it should be unfolded (*from mentoring*), and what changes are needed (e.g. *new concepts to be learnt; how to assess*).

#### **5.2.1.2 Knowledge of TPD based on belief**

There have been long standing debates on relationship between knowledge and belief. Some argue that one cannot mistake knowledge for belief or vice versa (Malcolm, 1952) where, for example, one might believe in something but there is no justification for that belief; whilst others would argue that knowledge arises from introspective access to their belief (Stalnaker, 2006). The philosophy on knowledge and belief is not the focus of this engagement, rather it alludes to how belief could be linked to. In this thesis, rector's knowledge of TPD is based on their introspection of personal and past experiences of what TPD is. From a Baradian perspective, this implies that Rectors' knowledge of TPD is not simply an outcome of isolated reflection or internal introspection. Rather, it is produced through their intra-actions with prior professional experiences, school-level expectations, and reform discourses. Barad's agential realism posits that knowing is a material practice (a becoming-with the world) and thus, Rectors' understanding of TPD emerges through entangled encounters with policy histories and their own evolving subjectivities, informing their beliefs of TPD. The long extracts from two rectors allude to how belief has contributed to what they have come to know what TDP is and should be for educational reforms.

## Rector Becker

*Uhh but we were not explicitly told that we needed to look into the teaching and learning process in the extended stream. But as school leaders, we know we need to ensure that the process is smooth, that teachers are able to deliver. This is part of our job. Fortunately for me, uhh probably I have training for instructional leadership, so I was able to look a bit into...not that much into the processes of the extended stream but more in the processes of the mainstream. Because like I have told you, performance has not been very good. So, I have been looking at what teachers are doing. And sometimes it came as a shock to see what they were doing for example, a teacher gets into a class, starts correcting a comprehension and students were interacting. I saw something a bit strange while I passed, and I watched the students through the windows. I got in. I checked the copybooks. Not one single student had done the work she was correcting on the blackboard. So you see? And even you ask yourself, how come? These are basic things when a teacher gets into a class, check work before she starts..she did not. This is one thing and then some teachers do beautiful groupwork. They put students in groups and they sit at their table. This is not groupwork. So, yes, they think they are doing the right thing and this is where regular professional development will help, where they know what exactly needs to be done. So, I can tell them you need to do this this and that, it won't help. Beliefs are important. That person must see for herself how collaborative or cooperative learning really transform students then that person will change. My saying ...maybe she will say yes ok for the time being..while I am in front of her. But once my back is turned, she will revert back to what she was doing. You know another thing, we have no accountability...no teacher accountability in Mauritius.*

## Rector Patter

*....if myself I can go and sit in the class of others, I can ask other teachers to come to me, together with me...after some time...going to sit in the class of a teacher and whatever you can say, there can be a lot of criticisms yes, but gradually, if that is normal practice, that is the culture of the school, they will sit down despite the resistance of one or two. With some time, there will be a culture, there will be a normal practice if the HoDs can sit down, the Rector can help..it's ok...everybody has to learn.*

*.... It is not popular things like technology that will change it. There must be change in the culture. There must be a change in the norms. There must be a change in the values. For example, when we started our discussion, I was telling you that why as a rector what I want to do and what I end up doing. Maybe I should be given some more time to train the teachers to change their attitudes...to tell them...but you know they have been teaching for years..some for 18 years, some for 20 years...somebody is frustrated for not being nominated as Senior Educator, is at school, and that person will tell you to teach and the way to teach..he won't change now...it is quite difficult. I was telling you the problem of enactment. What you studied in one place when you take your training and when you come to school, it is different. You could have said now you would start to teach but when you end in the class, then the same stamina, the same ambition, disappears suddenly...that is where you see it is quite difficult.*

In both of these expressions of observational experiences of rectors on their teachers' teaching practices, their knowledge of TPD is based on what they believe TPD to be and should be able to do for them (teachers). In the first extract, the focus was on what the rector believe should be an expectation of being a professional teacher, and that obvious things should happen, that is the teacher should ensure that the learners had done the work before doing collective corrections; that group work requires active engagement with learners whilst they are in their respective groupings. Rector Becker's belief of TPD indicates that she *knows* what TPD is and expects her teachers to enact the basics of what they learnt from PD activities (workshops, PGCE or any other teacher education programmes) according to their real classroom issues and needs. This may also indicate that they (Rectors) view TPD as essential not for compliance but mainly for fostering an adaptable teaching that can drive the complexities of educational change.

However, data suggests that teachers alike have a particular set of beliefs that have been nurtured since decades and these beliefs influence their functions in their classroom (de Varies et al., 2013) and actions (Liou et al., 2019; McMullan, 1999; Richardson et al., 1991). State Secondary Schools' (SSS) teachers have been functioning in their comfort zone since decades without experiencing major changes in their teaching practice and styles within any ER. Beliefs also occur with experience (Duffin, French & Patrick, 2012; Fives & Buehl, 2010). This may justify the teacher's teaching style in Rector Becker's interview extract. However, it should be noted that teachers' teaching style, mainly traditional in nature, is a result of limited TPD within the reform context.

In the second extract, Rector Patter believes in the process of *enculturation* – that it must become a norm for others (teachers) to sit in the classes of their colleagues during their teaching time– to enable teacher reflections and teacher learning. *Enculturation*, according to Ogasu (2024), is the process of learning one's culture where teachers learn imitating, instruction, and influence in the context of formally and informally structured mode. However, the Mauritian education system the culture of learning from peers is almost inexistent due to the enculturation of working in isolation resulting in a negative impact on teachers' personal and professional development.

To conclude, Rectors' knowledge-of-TPD is based on mainly their belief of what they 'know' of TPD. Their belief on what TPD can do for teachers in terms of being a professional and

ensure that they (teachers) actively engage with their students (the Extended Programme students). Additionally, the belief in the process of enculturation also has emerged as Rectors' knowledge of TPD, indicating a change in culture or re-enculturing new forms of school-based professional development is essential.

## **5.2.2 Situational Conception of TPD**

### **Introduction**

This section explores conceptions of TPD from a situational perspective. Sites of where professional development takes place matters (Leibowitz, et al., 2016). The school sites are the situational contexts that can shape professional development based on its particularities and needs. In this theme, I explore rectors' perspective on the professional development that they would have liked to see unfold within their respective schools in response to the educational reforms that they had to implement. Two sub-themes emerged through the data: a demand drive conception of TPD and an evolutionary conception of TPD.

### **5.2.2.1 Demand-driver conception of TPD**

This section explores the sub-theme 'demand-driver' conception of TPD from the perspective of Rectors. Rectors have been important stakeholders in policy implementation (Cohen et al., 2020; Baveni & Bhengu, 2018; Sanders, 2014), educational reforms (Acton, 2021; Ganon-Shilon & Schechter, 2019; Shaked & Schechter, 2017) and TPD requirements within these reforming conditions (Tran et al., 2020; Karacabey, 2021; Bredeson, 2000). Data suggests that Rectors' conception TPD is one of being demand-driven in terms of both what policy requires and what the school requires to meet the agenda of the ERs. Implementing an ER policy at the site of school necessitates change in practice (Nawab & Bissaker, 2021). As such, there are certain expectations from the school and of teachers so that they can respond to the changes needed for implementation. As each school is different in many respects, the proposed TPD envisaged as part of the policy development process may not be sufficient to take into account situational variances. As such the implementation of, for example, the NYCBE reforms, in schools may require additional or different TPD requirements for the school and teachers to effectively implement the new policy prescripts. The school situation, therefore, demands

some form of TPD. This sub-theme focuses on what the rectors view on what TPD is needed for its teachers so that the school can respond to the policy imperatives.

**Rector Becker:**

Becker: *As you...what you have seen..what you have heard...what you have read from policy papers about the NYCBE Reform, about inclusivity, about equity, about parity, about curriculum reform, about putting everybody on board. I have read about the division between regional schools and academies. But, the only thing that I have seen is the change of appellation from Prevoc Department to Extended Programme. And it is going to take time. I have not seen anything. I have not seen any change. What I have seen is reluctance of teachers to go and work into uhh the Extended Stream. So, honestly, for the time being I have not seen anything.*

From the above interview extract by Rector Becker, the type of TPD she identifies as most needed for her school extends beyond conventional pedagogical training, pointing instead to other areas of professional needs. It is rather about encouragement to her teachers to firstly, buy into the envisaged policy changes (to address the *reluctance of teachers*), and secondly to transit into the new policy framework (to take up *teaching in the extended stream*). Hence, the type of TPD responding to her school needs is of collective participation (Nawab & Bissaker, 2021), where, without the collective participation of all of the teachers, the implementation of the NYCBE reform may either not be realised or too slow to be realised. Hence, rectors have the responsibility as leaders of the school, to achieve collective participation and this may require a different kind of TPD to that needed for a change in pedagogy or change in content to be taught.

### **5.2.2.2 Evolutionary TPD conception**

Within an ER context, TPD is seen to be evolutionary as it follows a naturally progressive process as the ER unfolds gradually. Data shows that in a complexified ER, where educational stakeholders have to keep themselves abreast of all ER developments, TPD also evolves as a matter of the ER course. Rectors expressed the evolving nature of TPD since the inception of the NYCBE Reform till now (that is till the data collection was completed). The understanding of TPD that educational stakeholders had at the inception of the NYCBE Reform is seen to take another turn as the ER unfolded. TPD started to be considered not just as standard-based

one-off workshops but as continuous development. This sub-theme analyses the evolutionary nature of TPD within the space of ER.

**Rector Patter:**

*Over and above that there are also those who are carrying out research or those who are helping to write books at the MIE...when they go there, they discuss with other teachers, with other people writing the book, so that also helps. So, there is professional development in that field also and uhhh...I started with..I asked the Maths teachers to do lesson study but unfortunately, that does not work and you need to have more time and you need to have people who know about it. So, that lesson study for the time being is not working. What is working may be is that I have been talking to them about peer-coaching...so, now they told me last time..some teachers said that two years back you said that it is difficult for teachers to go and sit down in the class of others, but now they do it. And they said that has changed the culture...there is a new culture..so, the teachers can come and sit down...in fact, I have seen that myself...I have seen them going to the classes. So, these are the few things that I do in the school here which is helping.*

Drawing from the above extract of Rector Patter's interview, teachers may possess an understanding of the reform's requirements, but this knowledge alone does not necessarily translate into immediate or effective classroom enactment. Rather, what is needed is a process of *enculturation* (Kennedy, 2016). Teachers require both time and structured opportunities to collaborate with others, including subject matter experts such as MIE lecturers, in order to internalise and adapt to new pedagogical expectations. This perspective aligns with the notion that professional development is not merely about acquiring technical skills but about participating in communities of practice where meaning is co-constructed and identities are reshaped (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Over time, such collaborative engagement can foster new teaching norms and cultural shifts within schools, whether through peer observation, so-teaching, or reflective dialogue. As Opfer and Pedder (2011) argue, effective TPD must account for the complex, situated nature of PD, where change emerges not through transmission but through iterative practice and shared sense-making. In this way, the teacher evolves into a new way of doing things (*sit in other teachers' classes*) and hence, a new culture within a school may emerge.

In conclusion, the evolutionary nature of Teacher Professional Development (TPD) within the context of Educational Reform (ER) reflects a gradual and adaptive process that responds to the unfolding demands of the ER. Data indicates that as educational reforms progress, the conception and implementation of TPD shifts from standard-based workshops to continuous, school-based development initiatives. Rectors, such as Patter and Becker, have recognized the need for more dynamic and self-initiated TPD activities, fostering a culture of peer-coaching and developmental meetings. Despite variations in their approaches, Rectors consistently emphasize the importance of evolving TPD to meet the changing needs of teachers and students within the ER framework. This underscores the necessity for ongoing adaptation and support to ensure effective professional growth and educational improvement.

### **5.2.3 Synthesis of Section B**

This section of the chapter analysed the conceptions of TPD from the perspectives of Rectors within an ER. It delves into two main themes, Knowledge-based conception of TPD and Situational conception of TPD.

Knowledge plays a crucial role in the way Rectors conceptualise TPD. In theme 1, the analysis focused on Rectors' knowledge of and for TPD based on how they have experienced TPD as the ER unfolded in their respective schools. Data suggests that their knowledge of TPD is informed by the justification for the needs of the school to implement the reforms. Moreover, their knowledge of TPD is highly based on their belief of 'what is TPD?' and 'what TPD can do for their teachers?' They believe in being a professional after their teachers gained knowledge from TPD.

The second theme, situational conception of TPD is analysed by considering the school sites as the situational contexts that shape TPD based on its specific needs. Demand-driver conception of TPD and Evolutionary TPD conception emerged as two sub-themes. Having to implement the ER at the school site, Rectors struggle between the policy requirements and the school's needs. As each school's situation is different, the prescribed TPD is insufficient to meet these needs and requirements. The school situation, therefore, demands specific TPD. The second sub-theme analysed the evolutionary nature of TPD as the ER evolves. This sub-theme also highlighted the need of enculturation for the reform and the importance of time for TPD. This denotes that teacher evolves with time and simultaneously, their PD also evolves.

## SECTION C

# MAURITIUS INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION'S LECTURERS' PERSPECTIVES

### 5.3 Introduction

The preceding sections concentrated on the conceptions of TPD within an ER from the perspective of State Secondary Schools' teachers and Rectors, respectively. This section addresses the conceptions of TPD from the perspective of the 'Lecturers' of the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE) within the space of an ER. The participants of this study include four lecturers from different departments. Similar to teachers and Rectors, MIE Lecturers are crucial stakeholders in the education system. However, unlike teachers and Rectors, their position as 'Lecturers' in the teacher education institution is a complex one. Therefore, to have a proper and situated understanding of the conceptions of TPD of the Lecturers, it is crucial to first, understand what is the role of the Mauritius Institute of Education in an Educational Reform and who the 'Lecturers' are in reality because from the interviews, I have come to understand that the title 'Lecturer' has multiple connotations. Therefore, it is important to define their 'role' as per this study's focus and context as it significantly informs the analysis and interpretation of data in connection to TPD within the ER context. This will also help to have a better understanding of their perspectives of TPD. Following this, I critically analyse their position as 'Lecturers' in line with the MIE and with regard to TPD and the ER, and secondly present a definition of the term 'Lecturers' in the context of this study.

#### **Situating the MIE Lecturers' within the context of this study**

The Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE) was established through the MIE Act of 1973, afterwards amended in 1984. The institution was set up with three main mandates: Teacher Education, Curriculum Development and Research unit, which remain unchanged to date (MIE Act, 1973:2). The mandate of 'Teacher Education' aligns with the educational priorities and goals set by the government for the country, as well as the latest international trends in the field. It offers a number of pre-service and in-service courses for both primary and secondary

teachers. The second mandate, 'Curriculum Development', involves producing the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) and designing the Teaching and Learning Syllabus for all taught subjects in Mauritius. Within the framework of the NYCBE, it has produced numerous textbooks and curriculum resources from Grade 1 to Grade 9, including the Extended Programme. To note, the adaptation of textbook for Special Education Needs (SEN) learners and curriculum review and evaluation also comprise substantial activities of the curriculum unit. Data confirms that MIE lecturers are deeply engaged in textbook and curriculum design, as well as in designing Teacher Education certification courses for both primary and secondary education. The third mandate, the 'Research Unit', has a set of objectives that is in line with the requirements of the MIE Strategic Plan.

Evidently, MIE lecturers are officers with responsibilities corresponding with the aforementioned three mandates of the MIE (Appendix 16 highlights their detailed duties). During the interviews, each 'Lecturer' was asked to present himself/herself and introduce his/her role at the MIE. Data shows that their title as 'Lecturer' is somewhat unclear, as they shoulder more responsibilities than a 'Lecturer' should normally have. According to the participants, they have two more main roles: 'teacher educators' and 'academics'. Two of the 'Lecturers' expressed a preference for the term 'academics, as it encompasses all their other roles as 'teacher educators' and 'lecturers'. They are responsible for conducting workshops for in-service teachers as needed. In terms of TPD, this may imply that, MIE 'lecturers', who shoulder the responsibilities as a lecturer, teacher educator and academic, are more tilted towards pre-service and in-service certified teacher education courses rather than continuous in-service teacher training.

The gestalt of MIE 'lecturers' within the context of the ER, is that they position themselves as 'academics' and 'lecturers' involved in curriculum development, textbook writing, research, and teacher training simultaneously. Given their multiple-roles, they are not solely responsible to cater for teacher-training or continuous teacher professional development. Continuous Teacher Professional Development in terms of training and workshops, appear to receive limited attention, as TPD is provided to teachers on as-needed basis. For instance, for the current NYCBE Reform, a series of one-shot and short-duration workshops were conducted by the 'Lecturers' to blend with the requirements of the ER. However, there were no follow-ups or monitoring of the knowledge imparted to specific teachers. This justifies their roles as

‘academics’, ‘lecturers’ and ‘teacher educators’ who have limited role in long-term and continuous training of in-service teachers.

### **5.3.1 Situational TPD conception (contextual relevancy)**

#### **Introduction**

As a main aspect of the contextual relevance of this study, situational contexts at different levels of the educational hierarchy play a crucial role in conceptualising TPD by stakeholders. In this section, *situational conception of TPD* has emerged from the perspectives of the lecturers. The section analyses the situational learning for teachers with an emphasis on school-based learning and development by firstly, focusing on the symbiotic relationship between TPD and ERs and secondly, the development needs of teachers and opportunities for development.

#### **5.3.1.1 A symbiotic relationship between TPD and Educational Reforms**

Noting that educational reforms is a globally recognised aspect of systemic education (Sahlberg, 2023), one cannot imagine such reforms being considered without a central focus on teacher development. In this sub-theme, I explore MIE lecturer’s views on TPD within the ER space. Drawing on the extended extracts of interviews with lecturers at MIE, their views of TPD in relation to ER can be characterised as symbiotic. Meaning that one cannot exist independent of each other. For educational reforms to happen, TPD becomes its life blood for implementation.

TPD is an on-going activity with cycles of preparation for reforms, own situational learning and followed by external training and development. It can be argued that one needs to experience the envisaged change to understand what is needed and whether they (teachers) can do what is required of the reform agenda, before any intervention should happen. Hence, TPD is rather a process of identifying the needs of a teacher and providing the required needs to workshops and training sessions

**Lecturer Reddy:**

*...what I have read and what is being done abroad...my understanding is that if there are some kind of educational reform or a reform in health, a reform in any sphere of our society, there will be changes and people will have to be ready for that change. I am taking in the context of the new ENT hospital. It opened its door I think this week. But the launching ceremony was done some months ago. But they did not take any new intake of patients there for months. Why? Because the new ENT hospital is a hospital which is computerized. So, they have not taken any patient for many months because the staff there they needed time to get used to the new system. It is only after having been type of trained, type of being empowered with that new technology and new system, then only they started taking in in-patient. But this is after many months. If we take this logic towards the educational reform, there should have been time for preparation. Only when the teachers are ready, then you move to the implementation of the new policy. This is not the case.. So, for me the change in the structure, the change in policy and change in education landscape happen for a certain period of time, for a certain time the teachers were left by themselves, on their own..and the trainings, the workshops, etc. came afterwards and still ongoing process. So, what should have been first, policy decision, then some kind of uhh piloting and training.*

**Lecturer Derby:**

*...in this stance, it was very important to be having a reform. As I mentioned to you, education cannot remain traditional. There should be evolution. Priorly, our education system was based on a Victorian style of teaching. Okay we train students as per the needs of the society. So, we say for example, we have to train people in uhh Tourism sector...so, that type of teaching was being done. But now, with diversity, everything is changing, everything is dynamic. We are talking about 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching and learning skills, we are talking about modernity, we are talking about ICT, we are talking about so many things, okay. So, we cannot be rooted into the traditional curriculum..the curriculum has to be reviewed. And in fact, it has to be reviewed all the time in order to be dynamic, so that it meets the needs of the society. Because, training/education is the only means through which we can bring that professional development, develop those potentials, those labour in order to be working in the labour market. So, the reform was long awaited, the reform was fair and now, with this reform, everything is trying to evolve. Things are a little difficult for the time being but I think gradually people are going to understand that this shift, this change in curriculum, things have become much more interesting.*

Drawing from the above extended interview extracts, TPD is an on-going activity with cycles of preparation for reforms, own situational learning and followed by external training and development. This view of TPD in the context of ER suggests that the planning for ER must include TPD and argues that it should be a linear process of getting teachers trained and developed before the implementation of ER at the site of schools. The argument advanced by MIE lecturers is that the preparation time for the implementation of ER is needed so that teachers can prepare for the ER rather than having implemented ER in schools and then train teachers in areas where there is a need for such trainings. In this iteration of the relationship between TPD and ER, the process is cyclical meaning that TPD follows a pattern of un-learning and re-learning, which (Saito, 2022) argues is needed in any reform agenda. He (Saito) uses the concept of *disruptive hooks* to explain how, for example, teachers need such moments in their careers to reflect on and draw on their prior learnings to evaluate their usefulness or not of prior practices and beliefs. One such moment is that of the ER where current practices are disrupted and as such, teachers need time to reflect on the envisaged changes to prepare for the implementation of such reforms, which, arguably would include new ways of doing things, in this case, to teaching in inclusive classrooms, which was very different from what they were used to.

### **5.3.1.2 Development needs of teachers and opportunities for development**

While development of teachers is needed prior to implementation, it is not sufficient for teachers to implement the envisaged changes needed. Perhaps the initial development of teachers prior to implementing ER could be conceptualised in terms of strengthening their belief on their (teachers) ability to achieve the intended changes from ER which Salhberg (2016) argues is needed, based on his examination of the key elements that the *Global Educational Reform Movement* identified as enhancing quality school education, one of which is building teacher professionalism. Building teacher professionalism means that teachers will have their reflexive competency to identify areas of strengthening (development) in which they may need external support. It is in this vein of thought that some MIE lecturers feel that programmes beyond qualifications are needed to support teachers implementing needs-based professional learning.

**Lecturer Sassy:**

*uhh..many teachers welcomed the training that we give but unfortunately there are certain areas that they would like to get more training for example, classroom management, learning difficulties , and so on. Mainly teaching students with learning difficulties. In all our workshops and trainings, this comment come again and again, that they are not trained to teach students with learning difficulties. Here we give...our strategies to teach the whole class. How to introduce a concept within a whole class..but within a whole class if you have students who are struggling, therefore we do not cater for that. So, I think that once again, teaching students with learning difficulties should be one of the focus of our training. We have developed modules to teach students with learning difficulties but it is in primary not in the secondary. Yeah we don't have any modules like this..unfortunately this is missing in our teacher training programme.*

**Lecturer Sassy also says that:**

*...yeah it should be a continuous development. That's why we say CPD. And it is not at one point in time that teachers come here, pass the exams to get the increment or promotions. That is why it is challenging for us to change their belief about education and about teaching. So, it should be continuous. Education is not static. It is changing everyday and every minute. So, there are many research going on and it is not at one point in time that a teacher comes and get PD. My belief is that it should be continuous and all along. And one method that is adopted in Japan is Lesson Study.*

**Lecturer Beny:**

*...you know, at the MIE we have courses just like in any tertiary or any higher education institution, leading to certificates, diploma, B.Ed, BSC, PGCE and M.Ed. These are very well designed programmes. But I think more than that, we need to have a teacher education programme which is ongoing and evolving. It should be kind of...it should come from the teachers themselves. About their needs, what are their needs. Needs analysis. What is happening at school? Pour moi c'est les tools. What are the toolS they need? Whether it is teaching strategies, whether it is resources, whether it is ...what are the tools that they are needing. Just look at the situation we just had. Du jour au lendemain (within hours during the covid-19 pandemic), we had to use Zoom and online teaching and what not. So, we should not wait for that kind of situations to arise, then to react. Then we realise teachers don't know how to use it. Teachers doing videos, but they do it as a lecture.... So, these kind of TPD should be ongoing uhhh and sustained also. We should be able to plan beforehand.*

Drawing from the above, there is evidence that educational reforms emerge as an evolving and dynamic phenomenon with no end in sight. Consequently, TPD must also be understood as a continuously evolving phenomenon, inherently linked to broader conceptions of teacher professionalism and shaped by shifting policy, pedagogical, and contextual demands. The rapid pace of change and the exponential rise on technological development (21<sup>st</sup> century characteristics) supports this notion of a constantly evolving nature of educational change and as such teachers need to keep up to such rapid pace of change. Relying on external provisions for empowering teachers to embrace on-going change may not be efficient and possible because those that are and can offer such training also need to keep up to such rapid pace of change. Hence, the burden of rising up to a changing environment is, therefore, left on to oneself as a teacher and as such would be located within their professional ethics to keep up to the demands of the profession. This view of teacher professionalism is in line with Ball (2009) when he argues for authenticity and not by technologies of performativity and managerialism which largely drives education reforms. Teachers in the strive to implement new ways of teaching and learning, through their reflective perspectives, begin to identify areas where they are in need for support and as such, as the MIE lecturers say, they, being the recognised provider of teacher education in Mauritius, need to be agile in responding to the needs of such teachers.

### **5.3.2 Content Specific TPD**

#### **Introduction**

The conceptions of TPD in relation to ER go beyond the practical responsibility of teachers to embrace change. There are also the moral and emotional dimensions of reform, and accountability in respect of the envisaged educational changes affecting TPD. Educational reforms necessitate change as part of the policy making and implementation process. Two key aspects have been raised by MIE lecturers. One relating to the personal motivations and challenges that teachers face and the other relate to the expectations of external stakeholders, including the Ministry of Education in Mauritius, and the second relating to what constitute the contents of the TPD for the new curriculum and reform purpose.

The following extracts have been used for the analysis of this theme:

**Lecturer Rashy:**

*...Like I was telling you earlier, every Educational Reform implies change. And when there is change there is a type of resistance to change. So, when you look at the factors that may lead to that resistance to change, one of the factors which I personally huhhhh was able to witness is that the teachers they themselves do not feel confident about the contents they have to teach, about the way they have to teach... ..Uhh...How to go about. So, these teachers...huhh just now, XYZ (a lecturer) was here...he gave me a number of a teacher. I called that lady. She had called and she wanted to have the teachers' guide because she does not feel confident to teach these new aspects of the curriculum. So then, yes, we at the level of the MIE, it happened, where I conducted along with colleagues a workshop with teachers because there was something new. So in this case, yes, the teachers want that type of professional development...that aspect of their professional development that they feel they are lacking behind...because it is new.*

**Lecturer Sassy:**

*The whole society is oriented towards passing the exams and getting good results. The focus is not whether they are understanding but the focus is on the marks and results. If you take all the stakeholders, the cases of QAID, ministry, head of schools, parents, students, everyone wants good results whether they understand or not it does not matter.*

*.... Sometimes..uhh should I say quite often, when teachers come for workshops and when we are presenting books or anything they are quite hostile as far as assessment is concerned. But unfortunately, for assessment, MIE is not uhh concerned. It is the MES who have to answer those questions that they have. So, they have certain questions that they put to MIE that we are not concerned about.*

**Lecturer Derby:**

*So, we had 3 consultative meetings with educators. Having the ideas..taking the ideas on board...then take them to the final resource and then when the resource is ready, then presenting them, how to use it. .... And when examinations are..specially for grade 9 as you are aware, the NCE exams..even for that also, workshops are carried out and educators are shown how to do preparatory works... I think there will be by December, there will be further workshops about preparatory works, course works etc etc.*

### 5.3.2.1 Emotions at the core of TPD

These interview extracts of MIE lecturers allude to the emotionality of teachers in relation to educational changes. The first alludes to personal anxieties of teachers who then search for guidelines to support their teaching practices which they assume would boost their confidence to implement the envisaged policy changes. The second relates to the accountability issue established largely through assessment regimes. Both of these relate to what Zembylas (2009) refers to as the loss of self-image which he explores as part of exploring the emotions of change for teachers when confronted with educational reforms. The cry out from teacher for guidelines to help boost their confidence do allude to their emotional well-being and as such TPD addressing the well-being of teachers is a key aspect within ER. Another area of concern that teachers present is the intensification of accountability demands, which is largely derived through assessments. In line with this, MIE lecturers says – *everyone wants good results*, placing huge responsibility on teachers to account for the learners’ performances, thereby framing accountability predominantly in terms of results. The emotional strain on teachers is substantial as their accountability is not only limited to their respective learners and schools, rather, it extends to broader institutional and educational stakeholders, including the Ministry of Education. Teachers’ repeated appeals for support from MIE, particularly in the form of targeted workshops on assessment practices, highlight the emotional and professional toll exerted by the accountability culture embedded within educational reform (Lingard et al., 2021). Consequently, the emotional burden on teachers is substantial, as they navigate the dual demands of pedagogical effectiveness and performance justification (Day & Gu, 2023; Schmidt & Datnow, 2022).

### 5.3.2.2 The constitution of the TPD content for the ER

The above interview extracts of the lecturers indicate the importance of TPD content in relation to reforms. Key elements of TPD such as content-focused, incorporation of active learning, constructivist in nature, providing coaching and support, importance of reliable feedback and sustained duration have been vastly researched within different educational contexts (Darling-Hammond, Hyler & Gardner, 2017; Abdal-Haqq, 1996; Sparks, 2002; Richardson, 2003). In the case of this study, two aspects emerged from this sub-theme namely the PD content for the new curriculum implementation in the optic of Grade 7, 8, 9 and the new Extended Programme, and secondly, the TPD content for the NYCBE Reform implementation. The first alludes to

the content of the new curriculum where teachers' lack of confidence in embarking the changes results in their resistance to change. Resistance to change thus, significantly hinders TPD by affecting their (teachers) readiness to engage in the integration of new practices aligned with the ER's goals (Reichenberg & Malmberg, 2021; Çetin & Sezer, 2022). Studies have shown that without sufficient support structures, teachers are likely to adopt a defensive stance, which constrains innovation and slows reform implementation (Avalos & Valenzuela, 2022; O'Sullivan, 2023). This scenario explains the second aspect *TPD content for the NYCBE Reform implementation*. When done well with effective contents, TPD programs allow teachers sufficient time to absorb and develop new knowledge before implementing them in their classroom (Little, 1993). It further develops teachers' individual knowledge and skills grounded on their own strengths and weaknesses (Schiter, 2016). However, it appears from data that TPD for the ER failed in both providing PD for the new curriculum content and PD for the implementation of the ER. This failure suggests that teachers are more likely to disengage from their own professional development as the constitution of the PD contents fail to address the specific challenges they face in their day to day classroom experiences, making them less likely to find value in TPD.

### **5.3.3 Synthesis of Section C**

This section provided the analysis of data from the perspectives of four Lecturers working at the Mauritius Institute of Education, responsible for teacher education and training. Situational contexts for MIE lecturers play a crucial role in the way TPD is conceptualised. The section points at their conception as a symbiotic relationship between TPD and the ER. For educational reforms to happen, TPD becomes its life blood for implementation. This section also highlighted that TPD is mainly a process of identifying the needs of teachers and providing them the needed workshop and training sessions. This process needs time for teachers to learn, reflect and implement new knowledge. Moreover, MIE lecturers feel that programmes beyond qualifications are needed to support teachers implementing needs-based professional learning. Another aspect that emerged is the emotions of teachers which is at the core of TPD. The emotional strain on teachers is substantial as their accountability is not only limited to their respective learners and schools, but to stakeholders beyond the school also. As the last theme, the constitution of the TPD content for the ER act as key element in the way TPD is informed. According to lecturers, teachers' lack of confidence in the new curriculum content and TPD content for the ER implementation impedes their TPD. Lastly, it is concluded that TPD for the

ER failed in both providing PD for the new curriculum and PD for the implementation of the ER.

## **SECTION D**

### **POLICY MAKERS' PERSPECTIVES**

#### **5.4 Introduction**

This section of the chapter delves into the conceptions of Teacher Professional Development (TPD) within the context of Educational Reform (ER) from the perspective of Zamy, a highly positioned Ministry officer involved in policy decisions. The insights gained from him regarding TPD are informed by the top-down structure of the education system and its influence on the autonomy of teachers to engage in TPD.

I find it crucial to mention that policymakers were the most difficult category of educational stakeholders I could reach. Using the snowballing sampling, I tried to reach out six high level officers of the Ministry. After continuously trying to contact their secretaries for a meeting, only one out of responded positively whereas the remaining five never gave me any response. At this point also, I find it important to mention that after a first incomplete meeting with the officer who agreed, I requested for a second meeting to complete the interview but that was never entertained. Therefore, this analysis section will focus on only the amount of data that I could gather from him during the first meeting. However, even missing data is data (Basiri & Brunson, 2022) and in my case I have got enough.

The incomplete interview of officer Zamy and the unresponsiveness of the five remaining Ministry officers, however, in itself becomes powerful data. Furthermore, the 'missingness' of data from this category of educational stakeholders provides more avenues for further research in this domain. As per my observations and experience in the field, in the case of this study, data is not missing due to technicality issues, but rather due to two possible reasons. First, given the topic of my study, I understand that it is directly related to the policymakers and their decisions. They may have abstained from the interview as they often deal with sensitive

information and may be cautious to communicate openly due to confidentiality requirements of their position, especially on such topics like the one of this study, that may query confidential information like government plans, strategies, or decisions could be revealed (Walford, 2005). Second, once again, given my research topic, the Ministry officers may perceive it as risky to participate in such research, fearing that their statements could be leaked, misinterpreted or publicly scrutinized (Berry, 2002). This situation is predominantly applicable for topics like my study, which is sensitive or involves political decisions. Third, following the two above possible reasons, their refusal to participate may be a deliberate tactic, especially if my research topic involves policy areas where the Ministry officers are directly involved and may prefer to control the narrative or avoid critical questions (Goldstein, 20002; Lilleker, 2003; Rhodes, 2015). Missing data are primarily important for understanding the way people construct meaning in different social and cultural contexts (Song & Richards, 2003). This realisation led me to understand why the Ministry officers may have refused to give me their interviews.

The following vignette can give an indication of the policymakers' interview extract:

**Officer Zamy:**

*Yes. A big section that you can use in your Literature Review. There is the inclusive education system. Including learners with different learning styles/aptitudes/capabilities. The extended streams. Different pedagogical approaches have to be used with them. It is for the lower secondary level. The same syllabus has to be completed in 4 years instead of 3 years. There are continuous Community of Practice sessions for educators teaching the extended streams. In the past it was Development Educational Plans. Now it is I... Educational Plans. We do it in collaboration with the MIE.*

*We have continuous meetings for this at the level of the HeadQuarters. There are special committees under the chairmanship of the Permanent Secretary. It is done once in a month. It involves the MIE, project coordinators, Directors of Secondary schools, to gage what is happening at the level of student attainment.*

*There are schools benefitting school-base trainings on the demand. On requests. For example, when we got one, we took experts in the field concerned. Then planned intensive training sessions together on content, teaching methods etc. It was on the demand. We implement the sessions there. There are 10 schools in all where we have done this.*

#### **5.4.1 Top-down dependency on external directions**

Decision makers at the Ministry level have been an important stakeholder in the implementation of TPD for the ER purpose (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Roelke, 1996; Proudford, 1998; Dilworth & Imig, 1995). TPD as a main buttress of an ER is found to be highly controlled by them (decision makers). For instance, participant officer Zamy swaggered about the current plans and future directions of TPD by beautifully sketching what he and his department have achieved and intend to achieve in terms of TPD with the collaboration of the MIE. This clearly indicates a top-down structure of TPD within the NYCBE Reform context where policy directives guide the structure, content, and goals of PD. Notably, that was the situation during the past ER as well. TPD coming from ‘above’ suggests that teachers are being made *dependent* on externally driven TPD such as prescribed workshops and trainings. For example, as analysed in section 5.1.3.1, within the space of the current ER, some teachers become heavily reliant on external structures such as formal training sessions or mandated PD programs to guide their PD decisions. Therefore, the top-down structure has persisted from past to the current ER, resulting in more reliance on external structures, rather than pursuing independent PD or self-initiated (self-directed) TPD. With this persistent systemic trend, teachers may now expect knowledge and skills to be delivered to them, rather than actively seeking out learning opportunities to self-develop. As a result, there appears to be an entrenched expectation among teachers that knowledge and competencies will be transmitted to them through formal mechanisms, rather than actively sought out through reflective engagement. This externally imposed model may imply that the dependent mindset of teachers for PD has been developed by the system where teachers’ creativity and innovative skills are not triggered (Avalos, 2011). Hence, such a paradigm starkly contrasts with the current TPD reality as articulated in the NCF (2015), which emphasized the promotion of innovative pedagogies (Pillar 2) and continuous professional development (Pillar 4). The misalignment between policy rhetoric and practice highlights a systemic contradiction that impedes transformative and sustainable TPD.

#### **5.4.2 Professional autonomy of teachers**

The top-down reform-oriented PD programs (as discussed in Section 6.4.1) as directed by the policy decision makers may have helped in terms of scalability nationally, however, this approach creates tensions with teachers’ professional development autonomy. In other words,

due to their over-dependence on the top-down TPD model, teachers may not engage in their professional growth. The fixed mindset that has developed due to the trending top-down TPD structure, limit their engagement and ownership of their PD processes (Hardy, 2022). In the Mauritian model of TPD, professional autonomy is often sidelined, reducing teachers to passive recipients of externally mandated PD rather than active agents in their own development. For instance, Zamy's attractive plan for TPD lacks clarity on how school-based or teacher-led initiatives will be fostered, or does it outline mechanisms for encouraging self-directed PD. This absence highlights a critical gap in policy design, namely, the failure to reconcile system-level accountability with teacher agency and context-responsive learning (Mockler & Stacey, 2021). In such an environment, professional autonomy seems blurred as the balance between teachers' need for autonomy, guidance for self-directed TPD, and contextually relevant TPD are missing. Therefore, given that the autonomy for self-directed PD remains overlooked and unexploited by the system, the conception of TPD also remains traditional in most cases. Unless systems shift towards empowering teachers as co-constructors of knowledge, the potential for deep, sustained TPD will remain unrealised.

### **5.4.3 Synthesis of Section D**

This section focused on the conceptions of TPD from the perspective of a Ministry Officer working as a highly positioned officer involved in policy making and decision. From his perspective, TPD is found to follow a top-down structure making teacher dependent on external directions for their PD. According to him, decisions for TPD in the context of the NYCBE Reform are well made at higher level. However, this persistent trend (from the past ERs) is impeding teachers' self-initiated PD. The section also highlighted that a top-down structure for TPD hinders teachers' professional development autonomy. While autonomy and contextual responsiveness are widely acknowledged as central to effective PD, top-down frameworks often contradict these principles in practice. It also implies that how even well-intentioned reforms may fall short without explicit strategies for embedding school-based and self-initiated PD.

## **5.5 Synthesis of the chapter**

This chapter presented the analysis — descriptive and evaluative — of data from the perspectives of multiple educational stakeholders, opening nuanced conceptions of TPD within

an ER. Those conceptions were presented in four sections — Section A, B, C and D — representing teachers, Rectors, MIE lecturers and Ministry officers respectively. The chapter indicated that in the current dynamic of educational reform, the conceptions of TPD emerged from the lived experiences of TPD from precedent ERs as well.

Section A of this chapter provided the analysis of data from the perspectives of eight teacher participants working in regional state secondary schools. The situational contexts within which teachers function underscores the needs for TPD to equip them with new knowledge to meet the ambitious objective of the NYCBE Reform. The second theme, an evolutionary conception of TPD indicates that TPD evolves as the ER unfolds. However, though sporadic in nature, TPD has shifted from its complete absence during the previous ER to what it is within the current ER. Bureaucratic conception of TPD as the third theme indicated that TPD is highly informed by the policy, making it a policy-driven TPD which is rigid in nature. This theme also highlighted that a policy-regulated TPD with high accountability to the Quality Assurance Inspection Division unit of the ministry impedes their autonomy. These impeding aspects negatively impact their TPD within an ER. Knowledge based TPD as the fourth theme shows that knowledge-driven TPD is evident within the NYCBE Reform. However, the analysis shows a lack of opportunities for practical application of this knowledge, mainly at school level. An agency-driven conception of TPD as the last theme illustrated the complete interplay of teacher agency within the context of the ER. It shows a reflexive TPD as an emergent conception but the authoritarian national curriculum and top-down pressures suppress teachers' reflexivity.

Section B of this chapter provided the analysis of data from the perspectives of three Rectors working in regional state secondary schools. The section delved into knowledge-based conception and situational conception of TPD. Rectors' knowledge of TPD is informed by how they had experienced TPD in their schools as the ER unfolded highlighting both historical and current contexts. Their knowledge is found to be highly reliant on their belief of 'what TPD is?' and 'what TPD can do for their teachers?', indicating that TPD professionalises teachers. This section also indicated that situational contexts play a crucial role in shaping TPD. Given that each school's situational aspects are different, TPD becomes demand-specific in nature. Moreover, enculturation of TPD at school level for the ER is emphasized.

Section C provided the analysis of data from the perspectives of four MIE lecturers working, responsible for teacher education and training. As a main theme, situational context as per the lecturers plays a crucial role in the way TPD is conceptualised. The symbiotic relationship between TPD and ER has emerged as one of the conceptions within this section. In addition to that, the needs of teachers if unmet, negatively influences their TPD while they disengage in their self-development. Moreover, what constitute the TPD content highly informs teachers' conceptions. Inappropriate TPD for the new curriculum and for the implementation of the ER impedes teachers' conceptions, again leading them to feel demotivated and disengaged in PD.

Section D of this chapter provided the analysis of data from the perspective of a Ministry officer working as a highly positioned officer involved in policy making and decision making. Though brief, this section contributed immensely in the understanding of TPD from higher level officers' perspectives. As suggested by data, TPD takes the form of a *top-down dependency on external directions*, informing teachers' dependency on having PD programmes by the MIE rather than engaging in the self-initiated PD. Perhaps due to this dependent mindset, teachers may not engage in their professional growth.

This chapter helped me to discover a plethora of and nuanced conceptions of TPD within the space of an ER by surfing through and making meaning of the lived experiences of diverse educational stakeholders. How each category of stakeholder views TPD is uniquely informed by the position they hold (as teacher, as rector, as lecturer and as policymaker) and the responsibility they shoulder. Given the multitudinous conceptions of TPD that coincides with and vary from each other, a complex and entangled reality of TPD has emerged. The following chapter will make sense of these conceptions in this complexified entangles reality of educational stakeholders from the lens of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System Theory and Barad's Intra-Action Theory.

# **CHAPTER 6**

## **RECONCEPTUALISING TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **6 Introduction**

The previous chapter presented, analysed and interpreted data generated from the dialogical interviews of teachers, Rectors, MIE lecturers and a policymaker. It revealed complex and overtly entangled realities of each category of stakeholders about the way each conceptualises TPD within an ER space. It also showed multitude variances and similarities among the stakeholders' conceptions of TPD. In the current chapter, these variances and similarities are represented, discussed and interpreted through the lens of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (EST) and Barad's Intra-Action Theory (IAT). Using these two theoretical lenses, this chapter also provides a conceptual abstraction of key findings derived from the emerged themes in Chapter 5. The chapter further moves towards meta conceptual conclusions by regenerated theoretical framework.

### **6.1 Concept 1: Situational dynamics**

Contextual changes within the ER have been a recurrent theme in Section A, B and C, revealing that TPD is a highly sensitive phenomenon with regards to the way it is conceptualised at different levels. ER changes brought about in the form of Equity Driven Education (SDG 4); new curriculum framework; new assessment and examination modes; accountability on summative examinations' performance; and evolving nature of the ER, are the most voiced ones by educational stakeholders during their dialogical interviews, defining their TPD conceptions. However, this study also reveals a recurring pattern of situations within which TPD is conceptualised by diverse educational stakeholders. Deeper analysis and interpretation of data reveals that the situational dynamics of the ER extends beyond the dimensions of contextual factors to a more complex interconnectedness of situations within the ER context. The situational dynamics inhere muddle the rhetoric of TPD in the form of changed contexts at personal, professional, and many different levels of the educational hierarchy. Interpreting

participants' lived-experiences of TPD within the ER revealed deeper meanings that extends beyond interaction of the multi-layered levels of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System Theory and recognises that getting deeper into the lived-experiences is needed to uncover the existential truths about the phenomenon. While digging further to discover hidden meanings of TPD from the perspectives of the educational stakeholders, I had to explore what their conceptions of TPD signify within the broader contextual spaces and themselves, subsequently discovering that there exist hidden situations within the space of the ER that effect their conceptions of TPD more profoundly than contexts do. From a microscopic lens, I can say that these contextual changes situate educational stakeholders into different situations informing their view of TPD within the ER. These situational dynamics will be interpreted in light of the Ecological Systems Theory and Intra-Action Theory.

### **6.1.2 The situational realities**

Teachers, Rectors and MIE lecturers are typically from three different positions (and spaces) in the educational hierarchy, with different roles and responsibilities to shoulder within an ER (as already discussed in Section A, B and C). Despite their distinct positions, they share similar views apropos TPD on the basis of their lived-experiences. Their "Being-in-the-world" (Heidegger, 1927) implies that each one of the stakeholders' experienced TPD within the ER by engaging in different situations that provide meaning to their lived-experiences. Heidegger's concept of "thrownness" (being thrown into situations) explains how they are *thrown* into situations beyond their control. In this study, the three categories of stakeholders are *thrown* into the NYCBE Reform space to navigate it and make meaning within the constraints and opportunities it offers (Heidegger, 1927). The way the policy of inclusive education has been "thrown" on them informs their conceptions of TPD. From teachers' perspectives, "inclusive education" is a welcoming concept, however, its implementation is effecting major challenges in terms of "unpreparedness" and "unreadiness" in the process of teaching and learning. It should be noted that the eight teacher participants' unpreparedness is a consequence of inappropriate TPD activities with regards to *how to teach in an inclusive environment?* as teachers in state secondary schools do not possess any specific qualifications and trainings in teaching students with special needs; and teaching them together with students in the mainstream classes. This exhibits a situational reality that is relatedly experienced by Rectors as well. Given their (Rectors) duties and responsibilities as specified in their Scheme

of Service (Appendix 10), Rectors are required to “lead, inspire and ensure the development of staff to secure excellence in teaching learning...”, which is a meticulous and reflective task demanding specific set of skills and knowledge to initiate TPD at their level. However, according to them, there was hardly any related training provided that could help in the initiation of TPD activities mentioned in their Scheme of service. Though job-embedded, site-based or school-based professional development is vastly celebrated in many countries, Mauritius still lags much behind with it mainly in the state secondary schools. Therefore, given the situations in which Rectors function, its implementation proves to be challenging in the Mauritian education system. This indicates that without effective professional development, anything that is imitative from other countries can be foundering. Firstly, as already mentioned, Rectors lack appropriate professional development to professionally develop their teachers. Secondly, the aspect of *historicity* of the Rectors comes into play (Heidegger, 1962; Gadamer, 2004; van Manen, 1990). The *historicity* of Rectors can be explained by the fact that State secondary schools follow a specific process whereby only State Secondary Schools’ teachers are eligible to postulate for the post of Rectors. Following this process, all Rectors are former teachers who have advanced through this insular system. The critical issue in this context is the most of these Rectors have limited exposure to TPD situated within the framework of ER. Whether in the form of standardized programmes, school-based initiatives or self-directed learning, TPD opportunities appear to have been largely absent from their professional trajectories. Founding on their preceding teacher experiences, they have developed a certain *habitus* typical of the way they received and enacted TPD which are now impeding their agency of executing PD for their teachers (Day & Smethem, 2009). Therefore, their historicity regarding TPD is another situational reality that informs the conceptions of TPD within an ER.

Concomitantly, MIE lecturers who have the duty to provide TPD, find themselves in the same situational dynamic but with a different reality. MIE is a parastatal body operating under the aegis of the Ministry of Education and is responsible for Teacher Education, Curriculum Development and Research (MIE website). Although parastatal bodies operate independently, they are restricted in their ability to take decisions without the approval of the parent Ministry (Ogunode & Akimki, 2023). Notably, MIE lecturers are recognized for their subject-matter expertise, however, they are often criticized by practitioners for being too distant from classroom realities. Teachers and Rectors have jointly deprecated the way TPD is carried out by the MIE lecturers as highly theoretical, lacking practical applicability. However, such

critiques overlook the structural and institutional constraints within which MIE lecturers operate. Rather than functioning autonomously, these lecturers often act as implementers of Ministry-driven agendas, much like teachers and Rectors who also function under policy mandates of the ER. Their situational realities have resemblances with those of teachers and Rectors, who are also functioning according to the demands of the ER (Ministry). These overlapping yet distinct situational realities suggest that TPD practices and their conceptions are deeply embedded in the institutional contexts that shape each educational stakeholder's role. Given the different situational realities of these educational stakeholders, it can be deduced that TPD offered and developed for teachers at different levels are highly founded on situational factors that jointly influence their TPD conceptions (Mockler, 2020).

The different situational realities that prevail in the lives of the educational stakeholders informing their conception TPD are interconnected with the realities of each and everyone in the sense that they (teachers, Rectors and MIE Lecturers) all function within the same ER space. This interconnectedness does not operate in isolation but are co-constitutive, forming a multifaceted “big reality” that influences how TPD is perceived, enacted, and experienced. EST (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) recognizes that TPD is influenced by a constellation of nested systems, from the microsystem of classroom practice to the macro-/chronosystem of national and international policies, each exerting influence and interacting with the others. IAT (Barad, 2007), on the other hand, challenges the idea of separate, pre-existing entities by proposing that phenomenon such as TPD do not pre-exist but emerge through entangles intra-actions of people, policies, discourses, and material conditions.

When considered together, EST and IAT offer a relational ontology for understanding TPD, not as a fixed or isolated process but as one that is continually constituted through the entangled interactions of each stakeholders, institutional structures, reform agendas, and localised contexts. From this standpoint, TPD is not simply shaped by these systems but actively produced within and across them through ongoing intra-actions. These intra-actions generate varied conflicting realities, each reflective of the situated experiences and power dynamics that stakeholders navigate. Such a framing disrupts linear or hierarchical interpretations of policy implementation and instead foregrounds the conception of TPD through everyday engagements with the situational realities of stakeholders.

### 6.1.2 Situational irony

While teachers, Rectors and MIE lecturers' situational realities suggest convergences, conversely, the reality at higher level of the educational hierarchy indicates a significant variation. TPD for the higher level officer of the Ministry is something crucial. He suggested the need to provide '*more and more*' TPD for the ER. He also acknowledged what has been seductively exhibited on paper that "*Qualifications matter but are not a sufficient criterion of teacher effectiveness...Educators hence need to be prepared...empowered...and respond to their changing role...and such empowerment comes from by way of continuous training, support, provision of relevant materials and positive learning environment.*" (NCF, 2017, p.11). At this juncture, the situational irony is that while TPD is ambitiously championed by the Ministry officer during the interview and stylishly presented as one of the main pillars in the policy document (NCF, 2017), the actual conditions reveal a starkly contrasting reality. Chapter 5 (analysis chapter) ironically reveals a contradictory situation within which teachers, Rectors and lecturers function. Despite inclusive education and lifelong professional learning being central to the NCF, teachers and Rectors reported minimal exposure to training or workshops on inclusive practices. Even more paradoxically, MIE lecturers who are tasked with leading TPD, are themselves largely absent in delivering contextually relevant and sustained TPD aligned with the ER goals. This situational irony is therefore, another situation framing the conception of TPD within the ER. It does not simply signal a gap between policy and practice, it reflects a deeper systemic disjuncture that actively shaped how TPD is conceptualised within the ER.

The situational irony has emerged as a result of the interactions of TPD at multiple levels that the EST has put forward and what goes on within these multiple levels of stakeholders is advised by the IAT. It appears that the irony has always been existing between what policy documents exhibit and the complex realities of those who are closer to TPD. Given that policy documents are shaped by policy makers, exhibiting the broad policy goals, the policy maker (Zamy, the higher level officer) speaks matching language, confirming his contribution in the decoration of the policy documents. The décor of the NYCBE policy gives an external view of its beauty. Conversely, the closer one moves from the polished policy façade to the lived realities of teachers and Rectors (those situated at the micro and meso levels of the system), the more the complexity, fragmentation, and entanglement of TPD become apparent.

As EST posits, each layer of the system interacts with the others, but the challenges experienced at the micro (classroom) and meso (school) levels are often obscured from the macro-level vantage point occupied by policymakers (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). From this perspective, the everyday intra-actions that shape TPD are not only rendered invisible, but are often excluded from formal considerations altogether. This creates a deeply ironic situation. The systemic disconnection between the levels of policy production and practice implementation not only distances decision-makers from the realities on the ground but also produces a conception of TPD that is misaligned with the situated, intra-active struggles of teachers and Rectors. Thus, the notion of TPD within the ER context is less a unified strategic initiative and more a product of entangled relations and systemic silences, an ironic outcome for a policy space that supposedly prioritize TPD.

### **6.1.3 Situational absurdities and uncertainties**

On a more complex note, it can be deduced from data that the dearth in PD provided to teachers within the ER situates them in an uncertain situation, not knowing what the truth of TPD is. Should TPD be considered as what has been fashioned in the policy document or should it be understood as what they are experiencing in reality? In other words, one truth is the policy document (NCF, 2017) that beautifully features TPD as a crucial aspect for the ER. The second truth is the lived-experiences of teachers, Rectors and MIE lecturers indicating the dearth of appropriate TPD for the ER. These two blurring truths of TPD “complexify” the situations in which teachers position themselves. This situational uncertainty and absurdity shape their conceptions of TPD as being “uncertain” and “unaware” of the truth within which TPD evolves. Rather than perceiving themselves as empowered agents of reform, teachers increasingly experience themselves as products of fragmented and contradictory policy environments. Drawing on Barad’s (2007) theory of intra-action, this situation is co-constituted by different engagements of teachers. Teachers thus no more *become* the main implementers of the ER, but they *become* what the situations make them to *become*. The unpredictability of policy implementation and the absence of grounded TPD practices intra-act to produce a conception of TPD that is equally ambiguous and unstable. In other words, the uncertain situations (a discursive element) affects teachers’ understanding of TPD (a material activity), and the two are inseparably entangled in shaping their conceptions of TPD.

Adding to the above, the analysis suggests that political influences on the ER is another crucial factor to consider in provoking the situational uncertainty in the conceptualisation of TPD. It is known that the reform agenda has its roots in a broader international space which is in line with the United Nation's SDG 4 and Vision 2030. Deliberating these international demands, a number of countries have adjusted their education system accordingly. In line with these education adjustments, Mauritius also has enthusiastically embraced these international trends by translating it in the form of the NYCBE Reform. However, this ER is mostly a political affair rather than the nation's interest's affair. For instance, as soon as the national general elections starts to manifest, each political party comes up with their specific education agendas enticing the population. Thereof, each changing political party controls the education system. Consequently, with continuously changing political environments and education agendas, teachers have to adapt and re-adapt themselves to meet the new educational demands. For instance, after the ER of 2009, teachers had to re-adapt themselves to the NYCBE Reform agenda in 2017. With SDG 4 as the ruling factor, teachers, Rectors and MIE lecturers find themselves in another shambolic situation with regards to the kind of TPD to fit the purpose of "inclusive education". Another new political driven education reform in less than ten years perhaps has subsequently led to an insouciance in the ER. Given the political conveniences resulting in a muddled situation, educational stakeholders are having to face with situational uncertainty de novo. Bringing educational changes in every political mandate may be convenient for the politicians but on the other hand, it is causing educational stakeholders, mainly teachers to experience a high level of uncertainty in the system. Adapting and re-adapting their teaching to new political demands in the form of reforms leads teachers to absurd and uncertain situations, and 'situational fatigue' (Yang & Wu, 2005). This situational fatigue may act as a demotivating factor in teachers' PD. Hence, this is another situational dynamic that inform educational holders' conceptions of TPD within an ER.

The situational uncertainty informing TPD conceptions is entangled with multiple factors, including policies, realities during classroom interactions, and politics. Barad (2007) uses the concept of *diffraction* to highlight how differences and patterns emerge through these entangled situations. Rather than reflecting on a single reality of TPD within different situations, a diffractive approach explores how each situation uniquely shapes TPD within the ER. Unlike reflection, which assumes the presence of a stable and unified referent, *diffraction* invites us to examine how diverse and situated experiences of TPD produce non-uniform realities which is shaped by the relational dynamics (Barad. 2007). In this sense, there is no singular or universal

truth about TPD within an ER, rather, what emerges are multiple situated truths, each formed through what Barad calls the intra-active “becoming” of actors and systems. Given this, it can be deduced that each situation namely, “situational realities”, “situational irony” and “situational absurdities and uncertainties” informs TPD differently.

## **6.2 Concept 2: Justification of Knowledge of TPD**

Fundamental to knowledge is what one knows (ontology) and how (epistemology) one comes to know (Pollock & Cruz, 1999). What educational stakeholders (the four clusters of this study) know about TPD is very much informed by how they have come to know it. As revealed as a common theme in Section A, B, C and D, knowledge as a main concept of TPD manifests itself in the lived-experiences of all the educational stakeholders. Within the complex and entangled situational realities of the ER, the nature of knowledge framing TPD from the participants’ epistemology is both limited and a posteriori in nature.

### **6.2.1 Limited knowledge of TPD**

As a common theme, educational stakeholders’ knowledge about TPD relates to their multiple interventions regarding TPD activities at different phases of the ER. Teachers commonly shared a fairly static TPD experience during the NYCBE Reform. The kind of knowledge developed during large-scale TPD activities in the form of prescribed short-term workshops implies that TPD is mainly theoretical in nature. This indicates a clear absence of a comprehensive TPD framework within an ER, a major reason for teachers’ limited knowledge of TPD. Similar to teachers, Rectors’ knowledge of TPD also is significantly limited. But contrastingly, their lived-experiences vary in terms of their roles and duties as the leader of the school. Following all the interviews with them, undoubtedly they know what is TPD. For instance, from data it is revealed that they have a perspective of what is TPD (the ability to teach in inclusive classroom and implement the new curriculum), how it should be unfolded (from mentoring and CPD), and what changes are needed (new concepts and skills to be learnt). However, their knowledge of TPD does not go beyond theories (and what is written on paper). Their understanding appears largely abstract, limited to policy rhetoric or academic discourse. There is minimal evidence that their conceptions of TPD are grounded in lived professional practice or informed critical engagement within an ER.

Additionally, there are also the MIE lecturers (also teacher educators), considered as the central “guides” for TPD in Mauritius, have variances in the way they view TPD, hence informing their knowledge of TPD. They have a more theoretically informed and structured knowledge that goes beyond “just knowledge” as they have the responsibility to research and update their knowledge as well. Their emphasis is mostly on scientific and theoretical knowledge in TPD. While such knowledge is important in providing a framework for TPD, it is unfortunately not practically contextualised to effectively address the diverse needs of classroom environments (Kennedy, 2022). Whilst theoretical and scientific knowledge form the basis of TPD, there is a disconnect between this knowledge and the practical needs in varied educational contexts and situations. This misalignment undermines the relevance and impact of TPD, particularly in a rapid and diversified reform context (Avalos-Bevan, 2023).

Educational stakeholders’ limited knowledge of TPD is the result of the nature of relations that exist between different stakeholders, their experiences and their environment (entities) that are co-constituted through their interactions. Through the Intra-Action Theory lens, their limited knowledge of TPD (or simply knowledge) within an ER is a product of continuous intra-actions between different entities. In other words, their limited knowledge of TPD is not something that pre-existed, instead, it emerged through mutual entanglements between the educational stakeholders and the different layers of systems (micro, meso, exo, macro, chrono-systems as per EST). More precisely, their knowledge arises from specific ways in which they are situated (situational dynamics) within specific intra-actions. For instance, teachers’ limited knowledge of TPD is because of the absence of a comprehensive TPD framework. This may be possible because the specific intra-actions (that is a comprehensive framework, resources, contexts or methods of teaching) have not yet been created, due to which the conditions for that (limited) knowledge to emerge. In this view, what may be perceived as (limited) knowledge of TPD is a temporary state that can shift as new intra-actions (Barad, 2007, 2003). In this sense, the recognition of limited knowledge of TPD opens up possibilities for new material-discursive intra-actions (for example, collaborative TPD or engaging in different other TPD activities), which may contribute to the knowledge of TPD. These emergent entanglements do not simply add to pre-existing knowledge but actively reconfigure what TPD comes to mean and so. Thus, recognition of limited knowledge of TPD may act as an opportunity for improvement and reconstituting TPD understandings, not a static shortfall.

### 6.2.2 A posteriori knowledge of TPD

From the analysis chapter, it has been found that educational stakeholders' analysis is highly evidenced by their knowledge of TPD as *a posteriori*, informed by their past and current experiences of TPD within an ER. A posteriori knowledge is about knowing something by experiencing, as something existing and founded in reality (Angeles, 1992). In the context of this study, educational stakeholders' a posteriori knowledge emerged as a result of what they *know* about TPD on the basis of their lived experiences. For instance, from a knowledge perspective, teachers understand TPD as a set of prescriptive interventions initiated from the Ministry (through MIE) to assist them to implement the reform agenda. Their knowledge of TPD has also arisen out of past experience of TPD at different stages of ERs. Given the previous and current experiences of TPD, knowledge of TPD is strictly a posteriori in nature. Therefore, teachers *know* what is TPD because they have evidence from their experiences that support the fact being true. Similarly, Rectors knowledge of TPD also is a posteriori as a direct experiential knowledge of TPD associated with their own historicity and current experiences of TPD.

Using the lens of Intra-Action Theory, educational stakeholders' knowledge of TPD has not emerged as something that has been developed passively by experiences, but as something that has been received/developed actively and relationally generated through intra-actions (Barad, 2007). In other words, knowledge of TPD gained from experience, is not a simple accumulation of facts or sensory input. Rather, drawing from Barad's (2007) IAT, such knowledge is co-constituted through the entanglements of multiple factors (IAT) at multiple levels (EST). Simultaneously, EST provides a complementary lens by illustrating how different levels of the educational system interact systematically, hence affecting the pre-existing conceptions of TPD. In other words, these nested systems (microsystem to chronosystem) exert reciprocal influence, meaning that changes or tensions at one level can reshape pre-existing conceptions of TPD at another. Together, IAT and EST offer a multi-layered and relational understanding of how knowledge of TPD is always in flux. In this study, from IAT and EST perspectives, teachers and Rectors (who were ex-teachers) whose space is the same (school), have equal understanding of TPD. Their understanding is not just merely derived from static observations, but it results from the entanglement of their previous and current understanding of TPD, the TPD experiences they got from the Mauritius Institute of Education, the experience at school and the experiences in the classroom. This also points to

the fact that their knowledge of TPD does not involve just human, but non-human agencies as well. Along with human, TPD is context- and situation-bounded. Everything is co-constituted to give rise to the current knowledge of TPD. And the current knowledge of TPD is interacting with the prior experiences of teachers (Rectors as well) to give rise to another kind of knowledge in the future.

### **6.3 Concept 3: The level of professional discretion of educational stakeholders**

Various studies in TPD have highlighted pressuring forces like lack of teacher autonomy, high level of accountability and policy-driven TPD during a reform context as impeding factors to the understanding of TPD (Kadel, 2020; Lida, 2009; Zhang, Admiraal & Saab, 2022; Stillman, 2011; Webb, 2002; Lillejord & Børte, 2020; Wronowski, 2021; Dulfer, McKernan & Kriewaldt, 2023). Contributing to these factors, a dominant finding that emerged from the four Sections of data analysis indicates that TPD is conceptualised according to the level of *professional discretion* of educational stakeholders during a reform context. This does not mean that they have a high level of professional discretion within the ER, instead, I mean that they are bounded by professional discretion that highly influences their understanding of TPD. Professional discretion is understood as the ability of professionals to make autonomous decisions and judgements within their expertise and responsibilities (Evans, 2018). More precisely, when an ER is introduced, it often brings new policies, curriculum changes and accountability measures, which can either enhance or constrain teachers' professional discretion (Parcerisa & Verger, 2022; Taylor, 2007; Surgrue & Mertkan, 2017). In the context of the NYCBE Reform, I observed recurrent mention of experiences such as *high level of accountability to the Quality Assurance Officers, loss of teacher autonomy, bureaucratic TPD* and *technocratic TPD*, indicating highly bounded professional discretion expressed by teachers, Rectors and MIE lecturers.

#### **6.3.1 Professional discretion and autonomy as critical factors to TPD**

In teaching, professional discretion takes the form of decisions about responding to diverse students' learning needs and applying professional knowledge for responsive teaching practices (Evans, 2018). However, professional discretion is often observed to be bounded by external factors, limiting teachers' autonomy. In this study, bounded by professional discretions, teachers' autonomy is revealed to be limited by external top-down policy mandates

such as the NYCBE Reform's new curriculum mandates, meeting curriculum standards, standardized testing and being accountable for the performance of students, restricting meaningful PD for teachers. Affected by different environmental systems according to the Ecological System Theory, bounded professional discretion emerges as a complex interplay between teachers (and Rectors and MIE lecturers also) and their surrounding contexts that describe how TPD is influenced by different systems (micro, meso, exo, macro and chrono systems). From the lens of Intra-Action Theory, the entanglements between teachers, TPD and different levels of contexts of the Ecological System highlight how bounded professional discretion emerged. For instance, as teachers are compelled to adhere to these mandates and pressured demands of the NYCBE Reform in the form of high accountability on student performance to the Quality Assurance Department of the Ministry, they (teachers) find it tougher to exercise PD autonomy in deciding on and shaping their own learning and growth. Teachers are obliged to balance their teaching with the needs of students (inclusive students) and contextual challenges (Evan, 2016). Moreover, teacher evaluation systems in the form of Performance Appraisal System (PMS) encourage them to prioritise measurable results over more nuanced teaching approaches (Kraft & Glimour, 2016). As such, it can be inferred that TPD initiatives is often a result of compliance with ER demands, rather than teacher-driven (self-initiated) TPD. Additionally, as highlighted in the analysis section, restrained professional autonomy from above hinders teachers to make decisions about their professional needs and apply new knowledge and skills in ways that are meaningful to their situations and contexts. For instance, teachers find it difficult to use their discretion to apply what they learnt in TPD activities conducted by the MIE to their specific classroom contexts. As such, TPD is conceptualised as an inferior and disinterested initiative, informed by the level of professional discretion of teachers. Consequently, TPD, teachers, professional discretion and different contexts co-constitute one another and come together to interact, hatching the conception of TPD.

On a similar argument, Rectors' experience of professional discretion is more bounded than responsive to TPD within the ER. They acknowledged the top-down systemic pressures and heightened accountability demands of the ER initiatives on them, and their teachers as well. In the analysis section, it was found that although Rector Patter and Rector Becker took bold initiatives to initiate TPD at school level, their efforts were quickly complicated by time factor, ministerial pressure, performance accountability, limited knowledge, and teacher resistance. These challenges exposed a persistent tension between policy demands and school level

realities, which make their professional discretion “bounded”. According to them, this *bounded professional discretion* impede their PD initiatives at school as they need to balance discretion with heightened accountability, ensuring that teachers operate within the broader expectations of the school and simultaneously comply with the NYCBE Reform goals and standards. And given the pressure from above, they had the obligation to continue with the implementation of the ER despite their (teachers and rectors) limited knowledge of TPD. As such, TPD became less of a developmental strategy and more of a reactive obligation, driven by external demands. Rectors generally view professional discretion as a crucial aspect for TPD but feel the need to balance it with excessive ER pressure, accountability and time. Ultimately, their understanding of TPD reflects a form of *bounded professional discretion* available to them in an overtly complex reform space, wherein discretion is shaped by the need to comply, perform, and survive within competing demands (Mockler, 2022; Evette, 2021). For a more profound understanding, Rectors’ enactment of professional discretion in relation to TPD is not an autonomous act but one that is continuously reconfigured through entangled material-discursive systemic forces (Barad, 2007) across multiple ecological levels (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Their efforts were diffractively shaped by macro- and chrono- systemic demands. In this sense, their conceptualisation of TPD is informed by bounded professional discretion, where decisions about TPD are not purely strategic but entangled in the broader apparatus of the ER.

As compared to teachers and Rectors, the variances in MIE lecturers’ view about professional discretion depends on their professional status as academics, curriculum developers and teacher educators. Given that they are the curriculum developers, they advocate for a more bounded professional discretion for teachers as part of their PD. Moreover, being assigned as the main “guides” for TPD by the authority, they have the responsibility to guide teachers on balancing autonomy with individual agency of teachers and educational goals. They emphasized professional discretion within the systemic ER, and adhering to accountability simultaneously. Additionally, as the curriculum developers for the NYCBE Reform, therefore, they had to emphasize the importance of teachers’ engagement to complete the curriculum within the timeframe. Ironically, MIE lecturers advocated that teacher autonomy and professional discretion are important aspects of TPD but simultaneously, they also advocate for bounded professional discretion. This contradiction between what they believe and what they “teach” to teachers indicate a visible gap. From an Intra-action and Ecological System’s lens, this gap could be understood in terms of the intra-action taking place between MIE Lecturers, school

(teachers and Rectors) and the authority. Functioning at the MIE, a parastatal institution having monopoly for teacher education in Mauritius, the Lecturers' professional discretion is delimited by the orders of the Ministry. At this point, it is clear that they have a clear understanding of TPD but due to bounded professional discretion, TPD is not enacted the way it should be. Consequently, the manner TPD is enacted within the ER informs their conception of TPD.

A bounded professional discretion and autonomy in TPD understate the role of teachers in actively shaping their self-learning pathways in line with their context-specific challenges. Instead of conceptualising TPD as a context-responsive endeavour, the bounded professional discretion gives rise to generically traditional TPD.

#### **6.4 Concept 4: Fluidity of the Reform Agenda**

Fluidity of the NYCBE Reform agenda features as a recurrent finding from the educational stakeholders (teachers, Rectors and MIE lecturers), manifesting itself in the way TPD is conceptualised at different levels. The concept of “fluidity” in education has been vastly and profoundly researched (Chiang, 2022; Oberlechner, 2019; Källkvist, 2021; Cross, 2021; Atibuni, 2022). It is understood as dialectic movements between different antinomies (Chiang, 2022); a dynamic and adaptable quality within educational contexts (Oberlechner, 2019); a multifaceted quality manifesting itself in shifting contexts and time (Källkvist, 2021); the ability to navigate and adapt seamlessly between different roles and contexts, and to changing professional landscapes with an emphasis on the importance of negotiation (Oberlechner, 2021). In this study's context, fluidity means the capacity of the policy (of TPD) to move to different levels as explained in Ecological System Theory, and then come back to contribute to its own original position to form a “new one”. In other words, it explains the freedom to flow smoothly between different educational realities (at all levels) and taking on board the TPD needs from all levels. Within this study's different systems (EST), the educational reality is understood as a nested structure of systems (EST), for example, the classroom (teacher and student), school (teachers and Rectors), and MIE (teachers and MIE lecturers). It reflects a complex and contradicting space in which these systems in shaping how TPD is both enacted and understood. Deeper interpretation of data also challenges the adequacy of EST's traditionally tiered and bounded model by emphasizing the rigid top-down framework that hinders fluid movement between systems, and between TPD enactment and the way it is

conceptualised. From a critical perspective, while EST highlights the importance of context, it often assumes a relatively stable and structured interaction across layers. In contrast, the reality is more dynamic and entangled within an ER space. However, while the process of the policy implementation is a crucial element informing TPD, the analysis also revealed that the level of plasticity of TPD within the ER is another crucial element that goes beyond the linear process of policy implementation to a more complex and entangled reality of the ER that complexifies the notion of TPD.

This entangled reality goes beyond the Ecological System Theory and recognises the deeper and hidden truths that are explained from an Intra-Action Theory lens. As highlighted earlier, IAT rejects the idea of individual entities acting independently and instead sees agency as emerging through intra-actions, that is, the co-constitutive relationships among educational stakeholders, discourses, materials, and contexts. The “entangled” reality resonates strongly with this view, suggesting that TPD is not merely the product of structured policy directives but is continually reconfigured through the mutual shaping of human and non-human factors such as policy documents, professional norms, teacher subjectivities and school contexts. IAT suggests that EST systems are fluid as they “become” through ongoing intra-actions. For instance, the fluidity of TPD revealed how teacher learning and development are dynamically constituted through iterative engagements with shifting contexts, power structures, and ER expectations. This fluidity complicates the linear policy-to-practice trajectory and highlights the *diffraction* of meaning across contexts (Barad, 2007), where each encounter does not reflect a singular truth but produces different possibilities for TPD. Hence, TPD is not simply situated within systems; it is enacted through processes that blur the boundaries of those systems.

#### **6.4.1 The process of policy implementation as a crucial factor for TPD**

Public policy implementation follows a structured and systematic process (Knoepfel et al., 2011) depending on different countries’ legislative system. In the context of this study, I delimit policy process from an operational perspective (Knoepfel et al., 2011), that is, the actions (steps) that took place in the implementation of the NYCBE Reform and specially TPD. By implementation I mean the set of processes involving decisions and activities carried out by policymakers. According to the analysis chapter, educational stakeholders’ conceptions of TPD is directly impacted by the way the NYCBE Reform and TPD is implemented. At the

initiation of the ER, the authority planned for PD for teachers, mainly those who were targeted by their school Rectors to work with the newly introduced Extended Programme students (Primary school students who did not pass the Grade 6 in all subjects). To enact the plan, MIE, the sole parastatal teacher education institution operating under the aegis Ministry of Education, conducted a set of workshops. To be noted, the workshop was not meant to be continuous as it was either in the form of one-shot workshops or a couple of training sessions without any follow-ups. The next step in the process was the implementation of the NYCBE Reform and TPD enactment at school level, where teachers and Rectors function. Given this brief description of the process of the ER policy implementation, it may appear to be a linear process portraying a success story but the educational reality that informs TPD is more complex than that. Generally, policy implementation requires the concerted participations of multiple agencies (stakeholders). Even if the Ministry is the lead agency, it disperses the responsibility among the educational stakeholders who are directly concerned. In other words, the process can not reach the end without the involvement of teachers, Rectors and MIE Lecturers.

The Four-Year Extended Programme Booklet (2017) presented by the Ministry of Education clearly stated that the Extended Programme necessitates the participation of all educators to work together for the benefit of the students and to share good practices. It also alludes that the educators will be offered necessary assistance and training by the MIE. To add to this, it further hints that capacity building will be sustained through CPD by the Ministry of Education in close collaboration with all stakeholders. The three well groomed points give a seductive impression of the kind of support teachers would gain in terms of PD. However, the educational reality revealed by the participant educational stakeholders is more modest in nature as compared to the one fashioned in the policy documents. They (teachers, Rectors and MIE lecturers) view the implementation process as a rigid top-down structure. Though they are all actors within the same ER context, there are however, a few variances and silences in their TPD conceptions that can be understood from the EST and IAT lens.

Teachers view policy implementation as a fragmented process in terms of what is demanded from them and what is given to them in the form of TPD. The prescribed policy workshops that were mostly informative and one-sided in nature resonated as a dissatisfaction from all stakeholders. There was an absence of a shared plan to sustain TPD efforts. This led to an absolute mismatch between policy (what is written in the NCF) and practice. Subsequently, this mismatch affects their PD initiatives adversely as a shared understanding of policy

implementation constraints and issues also were missing. The analysis reveals that Rectors who are the leaders of schools with the responsibility to implement the ER, are equal victims of the mismatch between policy and practice. They view TPD as a means to equip teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to implement these changes effectively in the classroom. At this level, the legitimation of the policy appears to be a total failure as the buy-in from educational stakeholders (Rectors and teachers) is weak. The two-way traffic between each level of the education system is completely missing. In my view the TPD plan decorated with seducing words is just a way to sustain and promote the NYCBE Reform as a trademark and nothing more. In light of this situation, the conception of TPD is remarkably dependent on the fluidity between policy and practice.

It is understandable that teachers and Rectors have a resembling perspective of TPD as they function within the same space, but MIE Lecturers, whose space is different have a relatively similar perspective about TPD implementation process and the way it informs their conception. The mismatch between policy and its implementation emerges as a significant finding for MIE Lecturers also. Advocacy for alignment between policy, TPD and classroom reality from their lived-experiences confirms a fragmentation in the process of the implementation. Their advocacy silently indicates the poor PD quality being provided to teachers. Their silence about this fact may suggest their 'hidden disapproval' of the way TPD is provided. However, given that they function parastatally with the authority, they are constrained and bounded by the system, and could not unplug their disapproval overtly. The mismatch between TPD implementation and the reality effects a misalignment between PD activities and teachers' actual needs or the realities of their classrooms. If at this level also (MIE Level) TPD does not consider the needs and the situations in which teachers work, teachers' PD may become irrelevant or impractical.

By the way policy and TPD are unfolded at different levels (teachers, Rectors and MIE lecturers) it can be deduced that the concerned educational stakeholders resemble the puppets of the system who are controlled by the superior officers of the hierarchy. Such a policy making and implementation process entangle policy implementers (teachers and Rectors) into a complicated relationship among themselves. Out of these complicated relationships, the conception of TPD becomes a more complex phenomenon that can be interpreted and explained from the lens of Bronfenbrenner's EST and Barad's IAT.

From an EST lens, this emergent concept is a direct outcome of the misalignment between the multiple layers (micro, meso, exo, macro and chrono system) of the education hierarchy. Starting from the top most level of the hierarchy, there is an obvious absence of directives about the plan of TPD which has led to different ways of implementing it at different levels. Consequently, this absence does not result in only inconsistencies between policy and practice but it also extends to different levels in the power hierarchy between the ER goal, policy and TPD implementation. Following this argument, it could mean that inconsistent practices of TPD at different levels of the system with different directives may have caused frustration among teachers who may feel torn within the policy implementation process (Lee & Martinez, 2023; Thompson & Davis, 2022; Johnson, 2023). This may explain the disinterest of teachers in exploring self-directed TPD. Moreover, the mismatch of TPD initiatives with broader goals of the ER, lack of continuous support at all levels, limited interaction and intra-action with different levels has resulted in a superficial engagement with the NYCBE Reform. Through the Intra-Action Theory lens, this reality offers a nuanced understanding of how the policy interact with the complex realities of each layer (EST) of the educational hierarchy. Intra-Action Theory emphasizes that educational stakeholders (teachers, Rectors, and MIE lecturers) do not exist in isolation but rather interact in a way that shapes TPD within the ER context (Barad, 2003, 2007). When the policy implementation process is fragmented, it may have led to unpredictable interactions between them, where TPD is completely disjointed. Instead of co-constructing, educational stakeholders are mostly trying to randomly patch the gaps of the policy implementation, without any focus on the emergent outcome. EST and IAT highlight the importance of contexts in understanding how the effects of the fragmented implementation of the policy may have contributed to blur the needs and realities of TPD. Consequently, this may have perhaps led to the stagnation of the ER, with continuous consequential failures at the level of the Extended Programme classes.

The policy implementation process is informed by the fluidity of the reform agenda. Driven by a strictly rigid top-down policy implementation process, there is evidently no sign of an iterative interaction between the policymakers and other stakeholders as emphasized in the theory of Intra-Action. Directives come from top but the needs of TPD barely reach the top. This lack of negotiations and dialogues between each level is a prominent impeding factor contributing to the conception of TPD. The policymakers may see the trademarked NYCBE Reform policy with its seductive TPD plan desirable but it is not necessary that teachers will

be willing to commit to make TPD happen without adequate support. There should be a fluid space with fluid communication for TPD to be effective.

### **6.5 Concept 5: Emotional dimensions the Reform process**

With the unfolding of the NYCBE Reform, teachers experienced considerable amount of emotional challenges that directly impact their PD. Teacher emotions have been researched by many as a fundamental element in the professional roles of teachers in different contexts (Zembylas, 2003; Chen, 2020; Koysuren & Deryakulu, 2017; Saunders, 2012; Van Veen & Slegers, 2009). In this study's context, teachers have to withstand and cannot escape from the contextual pressures coming from each level (the Ecological Systems Theory) of the educational hierarchy, giving rise to the manifestation of specific emotions that directly impact their professional development. I want to highlight that emotions will not be viewed as psychological trauma nor as individually psychological states but rather as feelings that are experienced in relation to TPD in particular situations within the NYCBE Reform. More precisely, I will adopt a social-psychological lens (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996; Blau, 1964; Emerson, 1976) that focus on the interactions and relations between educational stakeholders, and the environment, and how these relations give rise to different emotions. The Affective Events Theory of Weiss and Cropanzano (1996) and Blau (1964) share key perspectives in the way they emphasize on the interactions between stakeholders and environments in evoking responses in educational contexts. They argue that emotions are framed as socially constructed reactions as they emerge from lived experiences within structured, relational environments. In this study's context, teachers are found to emotionally respond to ERs in a variety of ways. Going beyond the broader ER context, the conception of TPD is found to be informed by more hidden aspects related to different emotional dimensions of the same ER. Following the situational dynamics with complex situational realities and absurdities (Section 6.1), limited knowledge of TPD (Section 6.2), the level of professional discretion affecting professional autonomy (Section 6.3) and the blockages in the fluidity of the reform process (Section 6.4), there seems to have a partnership of particular emotions between teachers, Rectors and MIE lecturers as they all function under a common rubric of the ER. Furthermore, the historicity of each stakeholder plays a crucial role in the way their emotions are triggered once again, though differently. To make sense of this complexity influencing TPD, using the Ecological Systems

(Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and Intra-action (Barad, 2007) frameworks, their varied responses will be interpreted.

### **6.5.1 Manifestation of a multitude of emotions within the ER**

The emotions manifesting at the level of teachers are diverse as they relate to what they are experiencing, have experienced and had experienced during previous ERs. The findings suggest illustrious negative emotions from teachers. However, the only positive emotion that splashed in all teacher participants' experiences is '*hope*'. With the materializing of the NYCBE Reform, teachers *hoped* to get more support for what they were already getting in the form of TPD (large-scale, inadequate, informative workshops). Despite realizing the impracticability of the ER, they wanted to be empowered to face the newly introduced Extended Programme and inclusive classes. Against this backdrop, the *hope* was alive even four years' after the implementation (they were interviewed after 4-5 years after the implementation). Data suggest that teachers were ready to embrace PD to help themselves conducting, and more importantly, in handling and managing the students with poor academic potentials, often accompanied by diverse social backgrounds and traumatic experiences (the Extended programme students and special needs students). Teachers *hoped* to be empowered through effective TPD as they never experienced this category of students previously. However, as a consequence of poorly implemented ER at all levels (as discussed in the preceding sections), their *hope* was not met. Prior studies have linked individual differences (teachers' unique differences) in hope to various aspects such as better academic outcomes, health, and psychological adaptations (Gallagher et al., 2019; Rand & Touza, 2021; Synder, 2002; Touza & Rand, 2021). Many studies have also revealed that hope is notably related to job performance across many career types (Peterson & Byron, 2008; Mishra, Patnalk & Mishra, 2016; Yotsidi, 2018). Dissimilarly, when *hopeful* teachers had to face the rigid ER situations, they developed a disappointment in the unsupportive system. Despite the emotion of disappointment, studies have shown that teachers can employ and live by *hope* even within challenging circumstances (McMillan, Walker & Hope, 2014; Niles et al., 2010; Veldwijk-Rouwenhorst et al., 2022). But in the context of this study, instead of developing a positive mindset that encouraged them to innovate their teaching to overcome the challenges of the "inclusive education" policy, their hopeless *hope* led them to adopt a 'laissez-aller' behaviour. Moreover, instead of showing resilience by helping themselves to maintain a favourable stance

in those challenging situations, they became resistant and bounced-back to their traditional teaching style. It appears that teachers' *hope* operates in a self-fulfilling prophecy where those with more *hope* construct higher opportunities for success (Touza & Rand, 2021), which contributes to motivate them in their self-directed PD, further feeding their PD. From a microscopic lens, I can say that teachers' resistance to adapt their teaching to the ER has not resulted in a volatile manner, but it resulted from a long awaited *hope* that was unmet.

As a consequence of *unmet hope* that surfaced due to unrealized expectations of teachers, their PD has been negatively impacted. If TPD support was inadequate from the MIE and the authority, teachers could have engaged themselves in self-initiated TPD but contrarily, when their *hopes* for support and growth remained unfulfilled, it resulted in adverse effects on their motivation to engage in their self-directed PD initiatives (Freeman & Johnson, 2021). Repetitively experiencing *unmet hopes*, both in the context of previous and current reforms, has fostered disbelief about TPD (Kelchtermans, 2005). Here, I want to accentuate that if TPD has been taken for granted by the authority since so many years, teachers may have become cynical about its value and relevance in their professional life, thus affecting their self-initiated TPD motives. This worrisome fact is visible in teachers' *silence* about hybrid TPD that was evoked during interviews, and their continuous professional studies in education. This fact is not necessarily a rejection of hybrid TPD or further professional development, but a reflection of deep-seated professional disillusionment, built over time. When *silence* surrounds their PD initiatives, it may indicate not apathy, but a strategic withdrawal in the form of a defensive response to repeated reform impositions that offer little room for support to TPD (Kelchtermans, 2005; Opfer & Pedder, 2011).

At the same time, the concept of *hope* as a key element in TPD has emerged from Rectors' and MIE lecturers' perspectives equally. They recognize teachers' *hope* for TPD as a crucial asset. The fact that teachers expressed constant criticisms about insufficient and inadequate TPD does not denote negative emotions. Instead, it indicates teachers' resilience and readiness amidst the ER challenges, and their wish to acquire support in the form of TPD to be able to implement the ER at their level. As Rector Patter detailed in his interview, this positive attitude is destroyed when teachers "cry" for TPD and support from the authority is unheard and unmet. In this situation, investing in new training and learning opportunities becomes futile for many, rendering them to bounce-back to their traditional teaching, that goes against the "inclusive education" goal. Parallel with this, Rectors find themselves helpless vis-à-vis teachers' *hope*

for TPD as they (Rectors) do not possess sufficient knowledge to align the reform with realistic and achievable TPD. Whereas MIE Lecturers, who are more distanced from teachers' everyday classroom routines, also acknowledge the emotion of *hope* as a central motivator for teacher engagement in their PD. As the main resource persons for TPD, MIE Lecturers have the responsibility to cultivate this hope by fostering supportive learning. However, they (lecturers) are found to lag behind in this matter. The restricted and rigid policy implementation at their level shows the lecturers' helplessness towards the *hope* of teachers although they understand that responding to this *hope* is key to fostering a sustainable, positive approach to TPD that is reform driven.

Teacher Professional Development conceptualised as the manifestation of teachers' emotions, is a result of unmet *hopes* for PD from different levels of the system. These distinctive levels (environments) of the system have been explained by Bronfenbrenner in his Ecological System framework. From an Ecological lens, TPD environments consisting of micro-, meso-, exo-, macro-, and chrono-systems are seen as complex and nested. Within this framework, the *cry* and *hope* for TPD, which is experienced at the micro-level by teachers is seen not to reach those who function at the highest level of the system. EST emphasized on the interaction of the five systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). It emphasizes the importance of interactions of the multiple layers of the systems (teachers, Rectors, MIE and the Ministry) with each other, ranging from close to distant (Tissington, 2008). However, from the findings of this study, the level of interactions and connections that exists between different categories of educational stakeholders appear to be almost invisible. The restricted and rigid top-down policy mechanisms that gave rise to a wave of emotions such as hopeless hopes, disappointment due to inadequate TPD and support, disillusionment of the attractive policy proposals, frustration and anger due to unheard cries for TPD, discouragement to self-initiate PD proves that there is a serious lack of interaction between each level of the Ecological systems. This lack of interactions can be understood from Barad's notion of co-construction of entities (different elements of the system), emphasizing that interactions are dynamic and entangled processes. Within these entangled processes of the policy implementation, relationships between each level of the ecological system (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) are co-constituted through their ongoing relationality (Barad, 2007). Teachers' negative emotions surfaced from intra-actions with top-down policies that appears incoherent from their realities. From these lenses, teacher emotions with regard to TPD within the NYCBE Reform become an emergent affair resulting from their (teachers) ongoing engagements with their contextual environments that comprises of

classroom, school, MIE, policies and the broader educational system. In other words, the manifestation of emotions has been co-produced through the intra-action with restrictive reform policies and limited TPD support at different levels. In this way, manifestation of emotions is seen to be as agencies that influence teachers' actions and engagement in TPD. For instance, positive emotions may drive teachers towards their self-initiated PD (Chen, 2020; Gallo, 2016) but with negative emotions this agency is obstructed (Zysberg & Maskit, 2017) leading them towards a resistance to grow professionally. In sum, it can be concluded that the manifestation of emotions towards reform-driven TPD is a cumulative experience comprising of both past and current intra-actions with their contexts.

At this stage, the findings can be understood as per the following Figure that I created, representing a conceptual framework of TPD within the space of an ER.

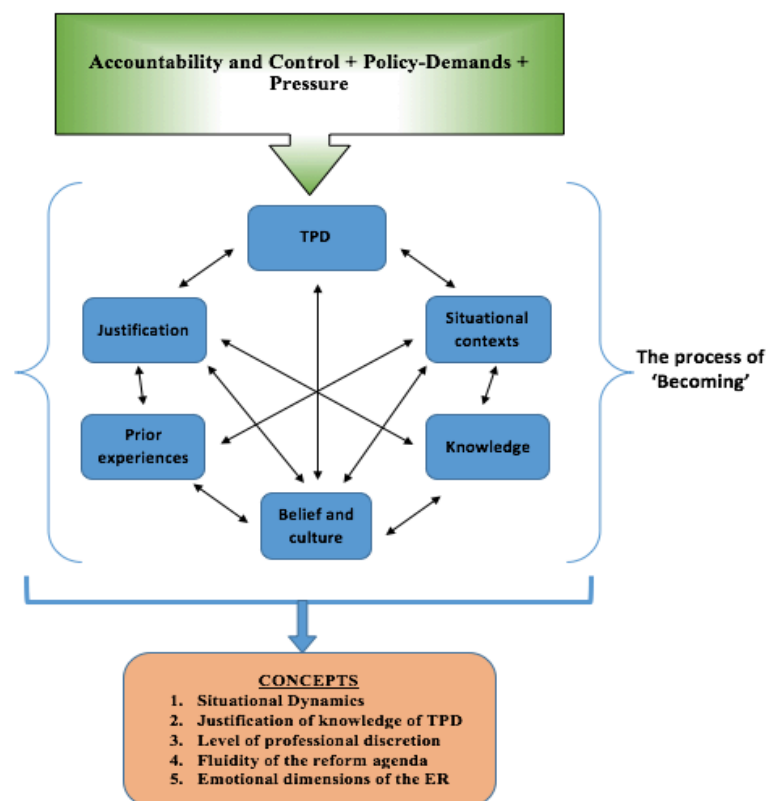


Figure 4: Conceptual framework of TPD within an ER

## 6.6 Synthesis of the chapter

Supported by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System Theory and Barad's Intra-Action Theory, this chapter attempted to answer the third critical question *Why TPD is conceptualized in the*

way it is by educational stakeholders within the space of educational reform? As a complement to each other, these two key theories of this study generated profound and multi-dimensional insights in the way TPD is conceptualised within the context of an ER. Five overarching conceptions of TPD emerged from the complex and entangled interplay of different perspectives of the educational stakeholders. *Situational dynamics* of TPD as the first conception of TPD provides a thorough understanding of the influences of different situations on the way TPD is conceptualised at different levels. The second concept *Justification of knowledge of TPD* provides fundamental insights how the kind of knowledge of TPD that educational stakeholders develop in the course of their career informs their understanding of TPD. The third concept that emphasizes the *Level of professional discretion of educational stakeholders*, specifying how pressuring forces like lack of teacher autonomy, high level of accountability and an inadequate policy-driven TPD act as impeding factors to the understanding of TPD. The fourth concept *Fluidity of the reform agenda*, indicates the overtly entangled and rigid connections between the micro level stakeholders and the macro levels one. It shows how the fragmented process of the policy implementation acts as a crucial factor in the conceptualisation of TPD. The last concept *Emotional dimensions of the reform processes* resulted from the rigid policy framework provides profound insights on the way teachers' emotions like *hope* occasioning heterogeneous emotions such as hopeless hopes, disappointment due to inadequate TPD and support, disillusionment of the attractive policy proposals, frustration and anger due to unheard cries for TPD, discouragement to self-initiate PD. The manifestation of these emotions, resulting from cumulative past and current TPD experiences informs the way TPD is conceptualised within the ER.

The philosophical abstraction of the conceptions of TPD developed in this chapter lays the foundation for the next chapter where the thesis will be discussed. It will also provide an extended understanding of the conceptions of TPD within an ER by providing an amalgamation of the Ecological System Theory and Intra-Action Theory.

# **CHAPTER 7**

## **EXTENDING THE BOUNDARIES OF EXISTING KNOWLEDGE**

### **7.1 Introduction**

In the preceding chapter (Chapter 6), I discussed the key findings from the data analysis chapter (Chapter 5) in light of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System Theory and Barad's Intra-Action Theory to make sense of how different levels of the educational hierarchy interact with each other, and understand the entanglements of TPD within the NYCBE Reform through educational stakeholders live-experiences of the phenomenon. In the current chapter, I approach the conclusion of this thesis. In Section A of this chapter, I firstly provide a critical reflection of the key findings of Chapter 6 by simultaneously highlighting how the critical questions of this study have been answered. Secondly, it outlines the study's final conclusions against the backdrop of the original theoretical lenses by examining key constructs that were confirmed, thus paving the way for new contributions to existing knowledge. In Section B of this chapter, I discuss the implications of the study in relation to theoretical, methodological, contextual and policy implications. The section then provides the limitations of the study. It ends by a self-reflection on this study's journey, highlighting the transition from who I was to who I am now.

### **SECTION A**

#### **FROM 'BEING' TO 'BECOMING'**

##### **7.2.1 Synthesis of the study and response to the critical questions**

The focus of this study, Teacher Professional Development within the space of an ER, surfaced due to a plethora of complexities and confusions in relation to TPD within the current NYCBE Reform. Despite the temporality of the ER space, teachers' micro-level classroom challenges, especially those involving Extended Programme students and new curriculum implementation,

were significantly influenced by their underlying conceptions of TPD. A reform-oriented TPD as a crucial factor within an ER (Penuel et al., 2007) was notably absent from all the training and workshops delivered to teachers. The *truth* was that there was a notable “absence” and it was important to understand how that *truth* emanated. TPD is not only *about* teachers, *of* teachers, *for* teachers or *from* teachers, rather it is a phenomenon that goes beyond the level of teachers to higher levels of the educational hierarchy, complexifying the understanding of the phenomenon. Therefore, in light of the nature of TPD provided, it became necessary to understand and unpack the underlying conceptions held by the educational stakeholders directly involved in TPD within the context of ER.

Adopting a hermeneutic phenomenological approach, the lived experiences of TPD within the ER was explored from the perspectives of teachers, Rectors, MIE Lecturers and policy/decision makers at the Ministry. Data were generated through dialogical interviews, policy document analysis, photo elicitation, and the use of WordClouds, yielding a rich corpus for subsequent analysis. The data were analysed following the Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). To uncover the preconceptions, reflective practices and cyclical approach are required (Smith et al., 2009) that consequently led the way to the employment of hermeneutic circle to inform my understanding of participants’ understanding of TPD within the ER.

Current literature on TPD within the space of educational reforms features a growing accentuation towards topics such as teacher professionalization and professional identity, teacher agency, impacts of the reform on teachers’ instructional practices, models of TPD and its challenges, technology oriented and responsive pedagogies, and challenges of implementing new reforms. Chapter 2 indicated that the core focus of this study remains largely underexplored in existing literature. Firstly, there is a notable scarcity of studies centring on the conceptions of TPD from the perspectives of different stakeholders. Constructing arguments for this study required extensive review and careful selection of literature across disparate educational stakeholder categories, highlighting the fragmented and limited nature of available scholarship. Moreover, the existing body of work is heavily skewed toward studies conducted in large states, whether developed or developing, with minimal attention given to small island developing states (SIDS) such as Mauritius, underscoring a significant contextual gap in the literature. This suggests that the number of publications is critically limited in providing a backing to this study.

The Data analysis chapter was divided into four sections, centring on each group of educational stakeholders' perspectives of TPD. It allowed me to surf on and dive into each group of stakeholders' perspectives of TPD, answering the first and second critical questions. Interestingly, a number of key themes emerged from the perspectives of teachers, Rectors and MIE Lecturers that helped me to confirm similarities, variances, uncertainties, silences and gaps in the way they each view TPD. However, while analysing the same theme from different perspectives, I did not take time to precipitate the realisation of the level of complexities that exists behind the way stakeholders understand TPD.

At the initial level of my study, my understanding of TPD was relatively linear, conceptualising it as merely in terms of what is being given to teachers by the MIE. However, as I immersed myself in this study, I felt that TPD within the ER is more like a *mirage*, meaning that from far it looked like a complicated *hub* but the closer I got to data analysis, I discovered that the complicated *hub* was, in fact, another complex entangled one (represented by the blue dots in Figure 5) comprising of the micro-, meso-,exo-, macro- and chrono- systems (EST) where each system represents the environment within which TPD interacts. Following data analysis from the perspectives of teachers, Rectors, MIE Lecturers and policy/decision makers, at that stage of the study, I employed the theoretical lenses of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System Theory and Barad's Intra Action Theory to interpret data for further abstraction and theorisation of the concepts of TPD that emerged. In that chapter, I further highlighted key concepts of TPD and the multiple, interrelated and entangled dimensions that underscores further complexities in the way TPD is understood within an ER context.

In the previous chapter, it was observed that TPD within the space of an ER is an overtly complex phenomenon representing a *knot*, signifying multiple interconnected entities intra-acting with each other. What the main findings highlight is that the *knot* cannot be disentangled, however, it can be made sense of by understanding why it is "knotted". From EST and IAT lenses, the *knot* was interpreted which was then represented in the conceptual framework (Figure 4) presented in Chapter 6 that provided a conceptual understanding of the entanglements and complexities within which TPD 'exists'. Another key aspect that emerged is that how TPD is conceptualised within the space of an ER is not a linear undertaking but rather a process. However, this process is in itself is another entanglement involving a plethora of co-constituted elements such as policies, practices, beliefs, schools, classroom, teachers, Rectors, and socio-material conditions, that are continually *knotted* together. I have termed the

process as “The Process of Becoming” (Figure 5), underscoring that the making of TPD within reform is itself a site of ongoing negotiation, reconfiguration, and complexity rather than a fixed or universally transferable model.

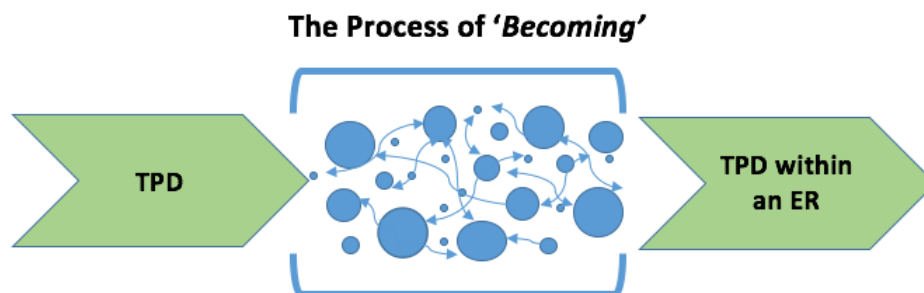


Figure 5: The process of ‘*becoming*’

The notion of “being” as conceptualised by Heidegger in Chapter three (Methodology chapter) of this study emphasised that “being” is not only about existence but to the fundamental situations that allows “being” (that is TPD) to be understood and experienced. In this study, the notion of “being” suggests that TPD is situated within the ER context, interacting with different other situations and forces around it. This implies that the existence of TPD (being) within an ER is not stationary but is always in a state of “becoming” (Heidegger, 1962) as it connects to broader entities like the context, situations, lived-experiences, school environment and belief systems. This Heideggerian philosophy of “being” and “becoming” is further abstracted by Barad’s concept of “becoming” which is integral to her IAT. The process of “becoming” according to Barad is dynamic and continuous in nature. In this process, TPD does not simply exist, instead it shapes itself through its interactions and relationships with one another. As illustrated in the above Figure, before TPD is conceptualised within the ER, it followed the “process of becoming”, where entities co-constitute each other in their entangled relationships (represented by the multiple blue circles and the connecting arrows). There, TPD is shaped and continuously redefined through ongoing intra-actions within and across multiple layers of their contextual environment (classroom, staffroom, school, MIE). This suggests that this “process of becoming” is not a linear process, rather it resembles the entangled relations found in a quantum field (Barad, 2007), where meaning and practice emerge through the continual reconfiguring of relational forces. Such a perspective foregrounds the constitutive role of context, power, materiality, and discourse in shaping TPD. This highlights its inherent

instability and the need to attend to the complex assemblages through which it is continually redefined within reform processes.

In the same way, the concepts abstracted in Chapter 6, went through the process of “becoming”. Various forces such as policy-demands, rigid educational system’s structure, high level of performance accountability, reduced teacher autonomy for PD, lack of professional discretion and, unstable contexts due to political forces are observed to influence TPD within the ER. These forces do not merely act in isolation but intra-act to co-constitute the conditions under which TPD emerges. However, as I moved deeper in the interpretation of data, I discovered that despite the interactions between the forces, the fluidity between different levels of educational stakeholders where these forces are manifested is missing. In other words, the lack of fluidity indicates that the “process of becoming” is itself uneven and contested, shaped as much by sites of friction and disconnection as by collaboration and entanglement.

Another fact is that, as I approached the *mirage* during data analysis and interpretation, I discovered that there are multiple realities that are co-existing. Initially, as a researcher using hermeneutic phenomenology, I was aware that there existed multiple realities that I intended to analyse. However, my epistemological assumption was surprisingly disrupted when I realised that there were other realities also that were not visible unless I infiltrated behind the Ecological System Theory’s wheel and Intra-Action Theory’s lens. It was behind these theories that multiple entities (as already mentioned above) were discovered to be messily entangled. At that stage, the five key conceptions of TPD emerged in Chapter 6 namely:

- Situational dynamics
- Justification of knowledge of TPD
- The level of professional discretion of educational stakeholders
- Fluidity of the reform agenda
- Emotional dimensions of the reform process

To conclude, “the process of becoming” is a continuous process that keeps on evolving where TPD within the ER context is always in a state of flux. This means that the concepts emerged within this study are never fixed or complete. They will continue to evolve through new interactions with new emergent entities. The process from “being” to “becoming” act as a framework in the understanding of TPD within the ER context. This framework highlights how different elements are entangled; how their intra-actions produce effects, differences, and

new realities; and how knowledge practices are not neutral reflections but interventions that help shape TPD. However, this theoretical understanding of TPD pushed me to further reflect on two crucial elements that are fundamental in the understanding of the phenomenon which are discussed in the next section as my key contribution to the knowledge domain around TPD and ER.

## **7.2.2 Theorising Bounded Teacher Professional Development**

Reforms rarely progress in a straight line. This study is in itself an exemplar of the entanglements and complexities within an ER space, and within which TPD evolves as another overtly complex and entangled phenomenon. Thus, as both the context and the phenomenon are complex, the entanglements between the two were further reflected on to make sense of and understand TPD. As a response to my reflection on data analysis, key findings and discussions, two more concepts emerged namely “temporality” and “context” of the ER that relate to TPD as a *bounded* phenomenon. In other words, TPD is bounded by “time” and “context” which are discussed and theorised in Section 7.3.1 and Section 7.3.2.

### **7.2.2.1 Bounded- Temporality**

Further abstraction of the five conceptions of TPD in Chapter 6 led me to reflect on two questions: *What nature of TPD is needed in understanding the policy agenda?* and *What nature of TPD is in planning for teaching during the space of the ER?* These two questions pushed me to reflect on the aspect of “temporality” as a crucial element for TPD. “Temporality” emerged with regard to the nature of TPD needed for the ER. The nature of TPD needed within a specific temporal phase depends on the process from policy conceptualisation to policy implementation. Therefore, the nature of TPD needed goes alongside the nature of TPD needed at each phase of the ER process. This realisation led to further abstraction of TPD by conceptualising it in terms of “temporality” of the ER. The sequencing events of the ER, from policy conceptualisation to policy implementation to policy in reality (classroom) indicates a progression that is *time-bounded*. I have designed the following Figure to facilitate the understanding of this concept.

**Identity function representing the temporality of each phase as the ER progresses.**

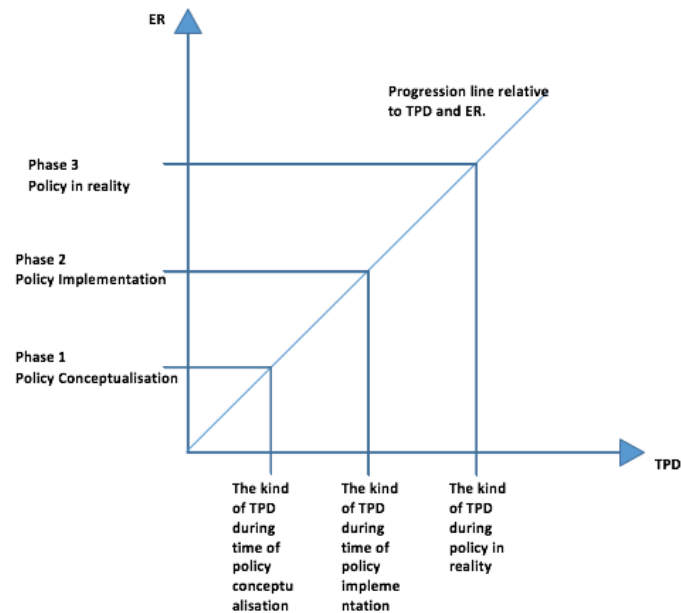


Figure 6

The above Figure marks *time* at each phase by specific milestone of the ER, represented by Phase 1, 2 and 3. It shows time as a progressive sequence in understanding TPD relative to the reform progress. The character and focus of TPD are not uniform, but instead are shaped by the distinct temporal phases of the reform process, from initial policy conceptualisation through formal policy implementation to the enactment of policy in everyday classroom practices. Each phase is marked by its own priorities, challenges, and demands for teacher development, suggesting that TPD is inherently *time-bounded* and dependent on the evolving goals and logics of reform.

- *Phase 1: Policy conceptualisation*

As adapted from Taylor et al., (1997), educational policy is the process and product of defining goals, allocating resources, and establishing rules for the organisation and delivery of education. It is the formal articulation of goals and regulations intended to shape the education system (Ball, 1993). At this phase of conceptualisation where the policy is given shape, defined, and theoretical grounding of ideas, the kind of adaptive TPD framework required for the local context becomes essential. This is where the process becomes complex by the ambiguities in policy language, limited teacher involvement, power dynamics, and emotional responses. During this complex phase of policy communication to teachers, the nature of TPD provision becomes the foundation of ER. In the context of this study, this phase was marked by the large scaled standardized workshops provided to teachers at the inception of the NYCBE

Reform. The kind of TPD given aimed to target a maximum number of teachers to disseminate the introduction of the new reform agenda.

- *Phase 2: Policy implementation*

At the time of policy implementation marked by Phase 2 of the ER, the kind of TPD should focus on the buy-in of the ER. TPD should be given to facilitate the understanding of the teachers about the changes in view. This phase can also be called the phase of teacher preparation when TPD focuses to provide knowledge to teachers about the changes in curriculum, pedagogy, new evaluation means, and expectations from them. This specific “time” prepare teachers to understand what they need to understand, what they need to embrace of the new policy agenda.

As the ER progresses, during this specific “time”, teachers may self-reflect and ask themselves what do they need to consider now? For instance, in the context of the NYCBE Reform, the emphasis was on “inclusivity”. In the name of “inclusivity”, they needed to care for the Extended Programme and special needs students, a totally new set of learners. Therefore, in that case, teachers needed more information on the specifications, information, pedagogy and philosophy of “inclusivity” to serve their teaching. They needed knowledge on what kind of knowledge to integrate in their teaching and learning process.

- *Phase 3: Policy in action (reality)*

The *time* at which policy is enacted in practice represents the phase in which teachers actively live the “realities” of ER within their classroom as a result of the TPD received. At this stage, policy ceases to be an abstract directive and becomes embedded in the daily routines, interactions, and challenges that define teaching practice (Ball et al., 2012). This “implementation reality” is highly contextualised, leaving no other frame of reference but the immediate classroom environment where teachers must navigate diverse student needs and systematic expectations (Spillane et al., 2002). Having received PD from MIE, teachers are now in a position to ask “How can I address the challenges faced with learners who are very different from others?” This reflective dimension of PD is the phase where teachers start to reflect critically, adopting self-regulated PD to adapt and personalise policy intentions in ways that support inclusive, responsive pedagogy (Avalos, 2011). While policy often assumes that simply delivering a few PD sessions will produce desired changes, research underscores that genuine reflection requires sustained, structured support (Kennedy, 2014; Avalos, 2011). Teachers need safe spaces and facilitated opportunities to question assumptions and share their

challenges. Ultimately, if ER is to succeed at the classroom level, policy must move beyond transmission models of PD and invest in fostering the critical, context-sensitive reflection that enables teachers to adapt reforms to their learners' needs.

The recognition of “bounded temporality” theorises TPD as an unfolding, situated process that is embedded in the sequencing of reform events. Rather than treating TPD as a universal set of practices, this perspective foregrounds how it is staged and reconfigured over *time* in response to shifting policy initiatives, pressure, and classroom realities. Moreover, the concept of “temporality” suggests that the progress of the ER is relative to the kind of PD teachers require. It also indicates that reforms often follow identifiable phases that are *time-bounded*. From the EST perspective, reforms progresses depend on how different systems (micro to chrono) interact over time, emphasizing the importance of timing and synchrony across levels. And from the IAT lens, “time” represents the evolving relationship between entities (different phases of the ER and stakeholders) as they interact within the reform process. Therefore, the implementation of TPD at different “time” may also give an understanding of the effectiveness of TPD within the ER. The speed of progression through these stages may reflect how quickly and effectively TPD was implemented. Understanding TPD with respect to “temporality” may also give an indication how teachers are evolving as the reform progresses. For instance, at the initial phase of the ER, teachers may express resistance, but later adopt and refine their TPD initiatives (later phase), indicating temporal progress.

#### **7.2.2.2 Bounded-TPD Contexts**

Context has been vastly researched by scholars in various domains. The term is over-toned with different connotations depending on different contexts. In this section, I abstract context as a “bounded context” influencing the way TPD is conceptualised within it. I also extend the understanding of “context” relative to multiple other contexts within an ER space. I further explain why it is important to consider TPD in the ER space relative to three main bounded-contexts namely: bounded-political context, bounded-school context and bounded-classroom context.

## Representation of Bounded-TPD-Contexts

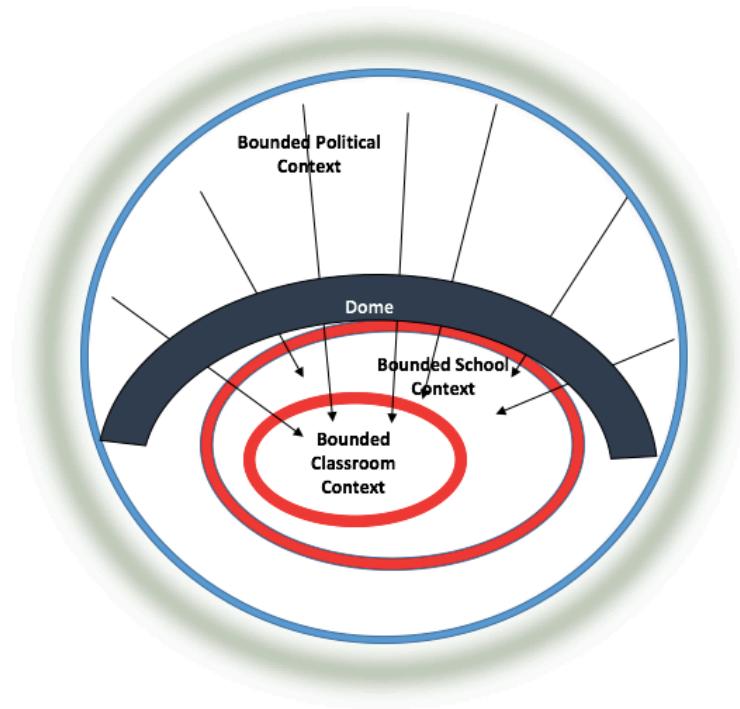


Figure 7

Figure 7 represents the ER space where the internal contexts bounded in RED boundaries are controlled by external pressures coming from outside the boundaries. It also represents the school and classroom within a bigger *Dome* boundary in BLACK to illustrate the idea of external control (the black arrows) coming inside but given that the school and classroom are bounded by the dome, their voices remain bounded and do not go outside. It is within these bounded contexts that TPD evolves and is understood within and ER.

### 7.2.2.2.1 Bounded-Political context

A key context that may be considered as the driver of all other educational contexts is the political contexts of a country. During an ER, the political context of a country plays a critical role in influencing its conceptions, implementation, and outcomes. It also contributes in shaping TPD during ERs. This intricate interplay between political agendas, ERs and TPD depicts a broader global context playing another critical role in the way politicians politicise reform agendas.

Global think tanks like the World Bank and UNESCO highly influence Mauritius in the formation of its national educational policies. These global influences serve the politicians as their political agendas to entice the population for the elections. This may include applying fast policies and often policy borrowing from other countries as well. For example, in 2015, there was the policy of Tablet Project that was introduced in secondary schools for the Grade 10 students at national level. It was a borrowed project that could not fit in the Mauritian education context as there was a serious lack of resource persons to create educational resources for the educational Tablets, absence of internet facilities in schools for teachers and students to use the Tablets, and not a single teacher trained on how and when to implement it in the classroom. Millions of rupees, resources and valuable times were lost within just one year. In the same way, it appears that for the purpose of elections, policies are selected and used “off-the-shelf”, to the detriment of all the those involved. This trend has always been present which leads to ERs being rushed to be poorly designed to showcase immediate political objectives.

Having voiced out about the political forces on ER, it is now not difficult to situate TPD in that given context. In the case of the NYCBE Reform agenda, driven by the UNESCO’s SDG 4, it is also politically and globally dominated. With regard to this reform agenda, the then Minister of Education emphasized on the Professional Development of teachers as one of the main pillars of the ER. Notably, PD is mentioned in the National Curriculum Framework (2017), but the nature of training is not considered by the think tanks of the Ministry. TPD was focused on broad understanding of it because perhaps the broad idea was that teachers must be in charge to develop themselves for the policy changes. Teachers were left to research their own practice as morally informed. Teachers being left on their own may explain the kind of trainings and workshops they received at the initiation of the NYCBE Reform in 2018, which were large-scaled, standardized, mostly informative and inadequate for the implementation of the new ER agenda (Extended Programme and Inclusive education).

TPD is not immune to political influences. The kind of TPD that generates within an ER showcases how political ideologies and context prioritize policy agendas rather than improving the system. Therefore, driven by an intricate political context, TPD is thus understood as a broad concept by the Minister and the Ministry, without specific roadmap for TPD within the ER.

#### **7.2.2.2.2 Bounded-School context**

The way political agenda contribute in the understanding of TPD within an ER is discussed in the above section. In this section, the school context is observed as another crucial context in the understanding of TPD within an ER. The school context is the setting/environment where education takes place; education which is mandated, formal, structured according to prescribed curricula, standardized learning, and nationally imposed curricula like the NYCBE curricula focusing on uniform learning outcomes. In this defined school context, leadership role is extremely important in improving educational outcomes and student achievement (Leithwood et al., 2004; Wahlstrom et al., 2010). Within the unique school contexts school leaders shape, guide, and sustain ER. Acting as a bridge between the Ministry (policy directives) and practical implementation of the policy, they hold critical accountability across multiple dimensions of the system. This suggests that school leaders' accountability within the broader framework of ER is a complicated element, that contributes in their understanding of TPD.

First and foremost, after a top-down and rigid policy agenda like the NYCBE agenda, school leaders (Rectors) have to comply with all its objectives and timelines. They have the responsibility to ensure that reforms align with the national policies and standards. At this point, they are seen to be accountable for the execution of the ER agenda at school, by adhering to prescribed timelines, processes, and outcomes (of the EP students, other inclusive students, and NCE). Shadowed by compliance with the reform policy, they often need to provide regular updates and documentations to the governing bodies through the Zone Directorates of the Ministry and Quality Assurance Inspection Division (acting as an interface between the Ministry and State Secondary Schools). A fact is that, leaders are judged on whether they have achieved the specific goals set out in the reform plan. In this situation, the accountability context of Rectors is intricately delicate in maintaining their reputation as professionals.

Another dimension of accountability of a Rector is based on reporting for his/her students' performance in relation to standardized testing. As a main stakeholder for the ER, Rectors are held accountable for ensuring that reforms lead to measurable student achievement, for instance in the National Certificate Examinations (NCE). They are also accountable for the performance of the EP students who are the main focus of the ER. To maintain "inclusion" they are accountable that there are no disparities between students at school level.

In the momentum of the multiple dimensions of accountability, the question here is that “are school leaders accountable for TPD in their respective schools?” to account in what way they are equipping staff with necessary knowledge to implement the ER. With the motive to operationalize the top-down ER process, the accountability agenda for TPD turns out to be blurred. While they are busy implementing the policy, their conceptions of TPD rest on the way they can achieve support and get teachers to meet the policy objectives of the ER, rather than developing it at the site. School leaders’ priorities during the ER directly exhibit how TPD is understood. This conception is justified by the pressure they have on their shoulders to achieve reform-related outcomes that make them focus more on measurable results (such as the NCE, end of year exams test scores), without shaping PD towards teachers’ needs. This focus limits TPD opportunities that address teachers’ broader developmental needs for the ER implementation.

In closing, at school level, the “accountability agenda” of Rectors (school leaders) for implementing the ER significantly influences their understanding and the way they perceive TPD. Increased accountability to meet the ER mandates make them more visible and vulnerable during an ER (Spiri, 2001), ignoring that they also need time to adequately prepare themselves for new responsibilities, amongst which is TPD. Hence, the school context is a complex and entangled one as it is shaped by a complicated ER initiation with another complicate “temporal context” as discussed in the above section.

#### **7.2.2.2.3 Bounded-Classroom context**

While school context is the setting where education takes place, classroom context is the setting where teaching and learning take place. More complex than the political and school contexts, classroom context encompasses the dynamic interplay of teachers and teachers’ teaching, and learners and learners’ learning that collectively respond to the ER agenda. In other words, this is where teachers are in direct contact with learners and are mediating the reform policy. Responding to the ER, being at the forefront for concretising the implementation of the agenda, they have to adapt with new standards, curricula, assessment and evaluation modes, and new category of students (for example, the EP and special needs students). To develop this adaptation ability, they necessitate targeted TPD to ensure that they are equipped to meet these new expectations and demands of the ER. Their necessity of TPD indicates the kind of PD they need for mediating the policy intentions with the realities of the classroom. Therefore,

they view TPD in terms of their teaching needs according to the realities of the classroom, indicating that TPD in the ER context is bounded by the classroom context.

Springing from global, political and school contexts to classroom context, the ER takes its real form between the four walls of the classroom where the teacher translates the policy into practice. This context ensures the alignment with the reform goals. For instance, in the NYCBE Reform context that emphasizes “inclusivity”, it is teachers who have to address the educational disparities in the form of the EP and SEN students. In order to achieve this, teachers rely on specific and targeted PD as an immediate need. Secondly, teachers have to translate new curricula with new contents at their level. The NYCBE came up with a new set of national and standard curriculum for Grade 7 to 9 which all teachers have to implement irrespective of their classroom contexts. In order to realise this, teachers need PD in the way they should implement the curricula in varied classroom contexts. The need for PD in terms of the pedagogical content knowledge is crucial. The National Curriculum Framework (2017) emphasizes innovative pedagogical innovations as a main focus to achieve the goal of the ER. For this to be achieved, teachers need to get PD on innovative teaching methods to ensure that it aligns with reform goals, and are practical within their specific classroom contexts. However, from data analysis it was found that, these needs were unmet. Consequently, teachers were indirectly obliged to continue with traditional teaching that target only a specific group of students, excluding the most vulnerable ones (EP and SEN students in State Secondary Schools).

Further reflections on the needs of teachers as a crucial element of TPD, suggest that they may not need to be reliant on external TPD provided by teacher education institutions (like the MIE) when they may guide their self-directed PD, as a personally driven initiative (Simegn, 2019; Mushayikwa & Lubben, 2009; vanEekelen et al., 2006)). My observation is that unmet PD needs becomes another need to guide self-initiated TPD (Utami & Prestridge, 2018). However, Porter & Freeman (2020) indicate that there is the need to guide and help some educators in identifying their professional learning needs and plan their self-directed activities. Consequently, without any guidance and monitoring from the Ministry and school leaders, self-directed TPD becomes challenging. Bounded within external contexts, teachers also remain blocked within their classroom boundary, with few limited opportunities for their PD. In such rigidly structured system, policymakers take control of the large-scale standardized TPD but fails to take control of teachers’ individual needs.

The classroom context is a multifaceted construct that shape the ER through teachers' lived experiences as they navigate the complexities and entangled policy implementation, and simultaneously trying to adapt their teaching practices. The absence of the alignment of professional development with classroom context impede sustainable educational growth (Chukwunemerem, 2023; Ogegbo et al., 2019; Ajani, 2022; Govender & Ajani, 2021). According to Govender et al. (2023), the needs and contexts of the classroom influence teachers' perspectives on professional development activities. Therefore, indicative of the challenges, how teachers understand TPD is highly informed by their unmet needs within the ER. The 'bounded-ness' of the classroom therefore, directly results in a bounded-TPD.

EST suggests a multi-layered system where each layer is interconnected whereas IAT explains the 'entangle-ness' by the way entities intra-act with each other. My contribution to knowledge suggests that the ecological-system layers represent specific contexts, each cohesively bounded by specific realities such as political agendas, school level agendas and classroom level agendas.

## **SECTION B**

### **CONCLUDING THE THESIS**

#### **7.3.1 Implications and Contributions of the study**

This section highlights four major implications of the study namely: theoretical, methodological, contextual and literature. While policy implications may seem to be missing in this section, this does not mean that it has not been included. Given its implications at all levels of the education system, I opted to address it while highlighting the theoretical, methodological and contextual implications.

##### **7.3.1.1 Theoretical implications**

This study advocated EST and IAT as its core theoretical frameworks in the understanding of TPD within the space of an ER. Using the core principles of these two frameworks and by

integrating hermeneutic phenomenological approach, the findings of this study offered a deeper interpretive lens in the exploration of the interplay between reform initiatives and the lived experiences of educational stakeholders. The insights generated were deeply rooted in the participants' historical and current experiences of TPD, demonstrating the evolving nature of the phenomenon, that consequently inform their conceptions of TPD in a reform era. However, on reflection after the study, I realised that the "multiple-micro-contexts" that exist within the bigger macro-context have fundamental roles in the way TPD is conceptualised from the perspectives of diverse stakeholders. Another realisation was that "multiple-micro-times" that exist within the bigger temporality of the ER have another crucial role in understanding how TPD is understood at different "specific times" within the ER. These two realisations generated the "bounded-temporality" and "bounded-TPD-contexts" of an ER that consequently leads to a bounded-TPD.

By examining TPD through the perspectives of different educational stakeholders, including teachers, Rectors, MIE lecturers and policymakers, this study provides a multi-faceted lens on how "bounded temporality" and "bounded-TPD-contexts" shape TPD at each level of the educational hierarchy. This study therefore, has implications to the theoretical understanding of TPD by realising "Bounded-temporality" and "Bounded-TPD-contexts" as central theoretical contributions during an ER space.

This study offers a new perspective of understanding TPD. Rather than attempting to close the study with the proposed TPD framework presented after the findings of study, I allowed the understanding of that framework to be disrupted by contributing the emergent theoretical lenses to the initial EST and IAT frameworks.

Context, in Bronfenbrenner's theory is not static; it is dynamic and reciprocal. The interconnected complex environment systems (the five systems as discussed in Chapter 3), forming layers of environments (contexts), shape how participants experience, develop and grow. However, the new perspective that emerged suggests that each context is "bounded" and that "bounded-ness" offers a novel way of viewing TPD. This does not mean that EST does not provide a comprehensive lens in the understanding of TPD but instead, it contributed in the generation of the "bounded-context" perspective. This novel perspective not only advances theoretical discourses about the interplay of TPD in a reform context but also offers

practical guidance for designing TPD programs/activities that are adaptive to the bounded-contextual needs of teachers.

“Bounded-temporality” suggests that the progress of the ER is relative to the nature of TPD required at distinct phases of the reform process. That is, the nature of TPD needed corresponds to the particular phase of the ER (as illustrated in Figure 6). These temporalities are simultaneously negotiated at different levels (EST) and at different “times” of the ER, from policy conceptualisation to policy implementation to policy in reality (classroom). This new perspective assists in the conceptions of TPD at these distinct ‘times’ of the policy processes, contributing in smoothing the understanding of the entanglements IAT explains. This contribution may bridge the gap between academic theory and real world implementation.

### **7.3.1.2 Methodological implications**

This study is underpinned by hermeneutic phenomenological paradigm, as informed by the work of Heidegger (1962). This approach was used to capture deep insight by interpreting and understanding the lived-experiences of educational stakeholders as being socially-constructed. This approach was well-suited for exploring the nuanced realities of TPD from a driver’s perspective. It went beyond surface-level “views” and tunnelled deeper into the lived-experiences of diverse stakeholders to uncover the meanings associated with TPD in a complexly entangled ER space. Not only the meanings were uncovered using dialogical interviews, but their emotions in the form of anger, frustrations, disappointments and different other feelings also were captured. This “capture” gave me the opportunity to go beyond my positionality and got into the shoes of other stakeholders to understand their experiences on the way they conceptualise TPD within the space of an ER. This means that the conceptions were not mere findings that emerged from data rather they were findings that were enrobed with feelings, emotions and deep meaning making from educational stakeholders’ perspectives. These deep insights may be useful to policymakers and MIE lecturers to design TPD programs that can be more responsive to the professional realities of schools and classrooms. As for teachers and Rectors, they can use these insights to understand how TPD and ER are negotiated at higher levels of the educational hierarchy, and what needs to be planned and be prepared for at ground level (school and classroom).

Moreover, as this methodology provides a rich interpretation of how diverse stakeholders understand TPD, these varied voices and understandings can inform more inclusive approaches to TPD ensuring that the voices of all concerned stakeholders are heard and integrated into the reform initiatives and implementations. Additionally, there is the co-constitution of meaning by engaging with diverse stakeholders. These co-constitutions may help to co-create TPD programs that balance reform goals with teachers' needs, "bounded-temporality" and "bounded-TPD-contexts" within which TPD evolves.

In addition to the above, my methodological choice provided a theoretical framework that integrated context, lived experiences, times, and reform dynamics into a cohesive understanding of TPD. It emphasized the interplay between educational stakeholders and their specific contexts (bounded-contexts). For instance, in teachers' classroom context, TPD is interpreted as the immediate needs of teachers and students within the ER. Different experiences enabled the study to reveal how different contexts shape their conceptions of TPD. Such insights may guide policymakers in tailoring PD programs to the realities depicted in the form of "bounded-temporality" and "bounded-TPD-contexts".

### **7.3.1.3 Contextual implications**

This study explored teacher professional development within the context of educational reform, focusing on the perspectives of various educational stakeholders. The findings suggest that the conceptions of TPD vary depending on micro-contextual realities as the "bounded contexts" within an ER. Each context has unique implications for TPD. For instance, as a micro context, the classroom is revealed as a "bounded context" where theories are translated into practice. However, due to inadequate TPD opportunities, it is revealed that teachers' voice remains within that "bounded" space, continuing to teach in the way they have been teaching before the ER, and within the previous ER. This has implications to the micro-contextual realities of TPD.

Furthermore, as revealed in the study, while TPD is a phenomenon that concerns all educational stakeholders, more pressure is laid on teachers for their PD. This could have been concretised only if teachers had been guided in their self-initiated TPD. The contextual realities, however, suggest that there is a serious mismatch between the different EST levels of the education system where interactions and co-constructions between entities are missing. Therefore, this

study advocates for a bounded-contextualised understanding of TPD. It is within these “bounded-contexts” that experiences occur, aligning directly with the study’s findings. Future research may further explore the concept of “bounded-TPD-contexts” within an ER to deepen the understanding of the interplay between TPD experiences and their specific contexts.

#### **7.3.1.4 Literature implications**

While existing Literature has emphasized generic conceptions of TPD (as discussed in Chapter 2), this study underscores the importance of understanding TPD within an ER in the form of sequencing, each sequence bounded by specific “bounded temporality” (moments). The study also underscores the necessity of contextualising TPD within specific “bounded-contexts” like political, school and classroom. These two novel conceptions of TPD contribute in the broader discourse of knowledge around TPD and ER. These contributions call for a more nuanced exploration of “bounded-TPD” in a “bounded-context” and “bounded-temporality” within an ER.

Moreover, the inclusion of different educational stakeholders’ perspectives in the study has immensely contributed to the literature where till now, stakeholder’s diversity has been insufficiently addressed. Current reviews (discussed in Chapter 2) often tend to focus on one specific educational stakeholder at a time within reform contexts. This suggests a need for studies that critically examine the interplay of diverse stakeholders in the understanding of TPD. Therefore, the shared and divergent meanings attributed to TPD during ERs add an additional feature in the way TPD has been conceptualised till date.

Additionally, exploring multiple educational stakeholders’ conceptions of TPD simultaneously for a more robust understanding of TPD by using hermeneutic phenomenological approach has not surfaced in the Literature till date. The study highlights an integrated approach by examining how reforms and TPD interact dynamically, and reciprocally over time. In this regard, this study adds another ingredient in Literature.

#### **7.3.2 Limitations of the study**

The first limitation is linked to hermeneutic phenomenology as the methodological approach for this study. Though it was carefully chosen to get deep insights into educational stakeholders’ lived-experiences of TPD, it does not spare the researchers from being

subjectively bias at crucial points of data analysis. As far as I could, I acknowledged my positionality at every step to avoid mixing my perspectives and assumptions with those of the educational stakeholders'. For instance, acknowledging my positionality as a state secondary school teacher experiencing TPD within the NYCBE Reform context, I refrained from analysing Rectors', MIE lecturers' and policymaker's perspectives from teacher's perspective. I removed my teacher's hat and put on my researcher's hat ensuring that it remained firm till the end of the thesis, while, still ensuring that I remained engaged in the research process (Laverty, 2003). Nevertheless, despite my researcher's hat, the study may have slight glimpses of my teacher's biasness.

Similar to most qualitative studies, the findings of this study cannot be generalized to a larger population. However, as a premeditated research method for this study, I didn't intend to generalize it but rather, I wanted to get focused, rich and detailed description of unique experiences of the participants on TPD within the ER context. However, getting participants to share their lived-experiences was extremely challenging. Unlike other methodologies, hermeneutic phenomenology is dependent on the lived-experiences of participants on the phenomenon. My experiences as a researcher indicate that participants were reluctant in the way they were sharing their "lived-experiences". This happened because they did not have the notion of "lived-experience" as a research approach to data collection. In that case, probing and prompting helped to get the required responses. However, at certain specific times when probing was difficult, I had to depend myself on their views and reflections to be able to associate meanings to TPD.

Hermeneutic phenomenology explores how experiences unfold over time making it ideal for examining the dynamic interactions between reform processes and TPD. For example, teachers may resist reform-driven TPD but later self-develop as they adapt new practices to the EP classes. A limitation in this regard may be that, data collection was done four years after the ER was implemented. A limitation in this regard may be that if data would have been captured after five to six years, this study would have benefitted richer data in terms of the participants' experiences. However, given this study's space is "within the ER", it could capture enough data to address the research questions of the study.

Lastly, the study intended to get insights from educational stakeholders who were directly concerned with the phenomenon. However, after much struggles and refusals at higher level

of the Ministry (as elaborated in Chapter 5), I could get only one policymaker's half interview. The study could have benefited from assorted and profounder insights if more policymakers had been agreeable to participate. However, despite the limited responses and silences from many policymakers/decision-makers at the Ministry level, this study could generate valuable data by interpreting their unresponsiveness and silences.

### **7.3.3 Concluding reflections - from a teacher to a researcher**

As I reach the last stage of my thesis journey, I reflect on the transition I have gone through from being a teacher to a researcher. Acknowledging the fact that it was riddled with challenging experiences, yet this journey has profoundly contributed in my personal, professional and scholarly development. At every step, it required me to challenge my assumptions, embrace complexity, and persist through moments of total confusions.

When I started this study, my primary focus was on the immediate challenges teachers were facing in terms of TPD within the NYCBE Reform context. My intention and motivation to engage in this study was guided by my personal and professional realities of TPD in a rigidly structured education system. However, as I moved further with this study, I learned to step back and adapt a more critical and analytical lens to the problematic of the study. This transition allowed me to interrogate the systemic, contextual and other uncontrolled factors influencing TPD in ways I had not previously considered. Arriving at this stage, I now see how theory and practice are deeply interconnected. First of all, as a teacher, I have a better understanding of "What, How and Why" TPD is understood in the way they are. As a researcher, I understand my research by grounding it in the real-world contexts, as I expanded new perspectives of TPD within the space of an ER.

As a teacher, I was curiously wondering why we (teachers) were compelled to step into the unknowns without any training or without being cared about how were we going to teach these students (Extended Program and SEN). I sometimes felt frustrated with policies that seemed detached from classroom realities. Through this research, I came to develop insight into the complexity of PD, during times of reforms. By examining it from the perspectives of diverse stakeholders (teachers, Rectors, MIE lecturers and a policy maker), I realized how

interconnected and independent these entities are in shaping TPD. I gained insight into the pressures and priorities faced by policymakers in terms of global forces; the powerlessness of MIE lecturers to go against the requirements of the policymakers in terms of the kind of in-service TPD to be provided during the NYCBE Reform; and the pressure of rectors to be accountable for the implementation of the ER in their respective schools. This shift in perspective required me to step outside my immediate teacher experiences and embrace a more holistic view. However, this study has also taught me that while each group of educational stakeholders' roles may differ, their goals are often shared, that is the SDG 4 for inclusive education.

One of the most significant insights from my study was the way context is understood in TPD within a reform era. As a teacher, I often encountered “one-size-fits-all” standardized short duration TPD activities. During the NYCBE Reform context also, that trend continued and again failed to address the unique challenges and realities of my classroom. Through this study, my findings confirmed that the ER context is not just one context acting as a backdrop for TPD but it is the “main” context within which different micro-contexts exist. These micro-contexts are in the form of bounded-contexts, within which each group of stakeholders understand TPD. This realisation deepened my understanding of why the kind of TPD feels misaligned with teachers' needs within the ER.

Completing this study has reinforced my commitment to education. I see myself as a bridge between research and practice, advocating for TPD that is grounded in research but responsive to the voices and needs of teachers. I also aim to encourage dialogue among stakeholders to guide and assist teachers in exploring their practice in ways of action-research and build a community of teacher researchers to share their insights and contributions.

#### **7.3.4 Synthesis of the chapter**

This chapter synthesized the key findings in light of EST and IAT by highlighting TPD as an overtly complex phenomenon that evolves in another complex ER space. However, the understanding TPD expanded as two novel perspectives as “bounded-temporality” and “bounded-TPD-contexts” within an ER, contribute to the broader body of knowledge. It highlights the centrality of “bounded contexts” and “bounded-temporality” in the way educational stakeholders make sense of TPD at their respective levels in the educational

hierarchy. The chapter also highlights the implications of the study theoretically, methodologically, contextually and for the Literature, offering actionable insights for policymakers, teachers, Rectors and teacher educators (Lecturers). While highlighting the implications of the study, the chapter discusses the contributions and future research simultaneously. However, this study is not spared from a few limitations that can be addressed in future studies. The chapter comes to a halt by my concluding reflections on my transition from a teacher to a researcher.

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# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1



25 June 2019

Ms MB Heetun 218046885  
School of Education  
Edgewood Campus

Dear Ms Heetun

**Protocol reference number:** HSS/0478/019D

**Project Title:** An exploration of Teacher Professional Development from educational stakeholders' perspectives within the space of Educational Reform.

### Full Approval – Expedited Application

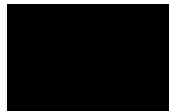
Your application dated 25 April 2019, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

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 discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 1 year from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

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

Yours faithfully



.....  
**Dr Rosemary Sibanda (Chair)**

/px

cc Supervisor: Prof L Ramrathan and Dr T Mohabeer  
cc. Academic Leader Research: Dr A Pillay  
cc. School Administrator: Ms S Jeenarain, Ms M Ngcobo, Ms N Dlamini and Mr SN Mthembu

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Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Dr Rosemary Sibanda (Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/8350/4557 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4609 Email: [ximbap@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:ximbap@ukzn.ac.za) / [snymnm@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:snymnm@ukzn.ac.za) / [mohunp@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:mohunp@ukzn.ac.za)

Website: [www.ukzn.ac.za](http://www.ukzn.ac.za)



Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

## APPENDIX 2



REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN RESOURCES, TERTIARY  
EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH**

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ME/305/3 T14

21 December 2018

Mrs Moohktaseemah HEETUN  
Riverwalk Street  
Rivière du Rempart

Dear Madam,

Request for permission to conduct PhD research with educational stakeholders at the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research

Please refer to your letter dated 9 November 2018 addressed to the Senior Chief Executive on the above subject.

After having studied your request, I am directed to inform you that stakeholders listed in your letter can be contacted on a personal basis. With regards to documents required, you are hereby informed that these are already on the web and made public. Personal documents to stakeholders would have to be negotiated at your level.

Yours faithfully,

**Text**  
D. Doma  
for Senior Chief Executive

## APPENDIX 3



THE UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL  
in collaboration with  
THE MAURITIUS INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION  
Réduit – Tel: 401 6555 Ext: 401  
Higher Studies Office

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Date: 25 March 2019

**Ms Heetun Moohktaseemah Beebee**  
Riverwalk Street  
Rivière Du Rempart

Dear Ms Heetun,

**“Request for permission to conduct PhD research at the MIE”**

We refer to your letter dated 09 November 2018 regarding above.

We wish to inform you that your request to conduct research work at the Mauritius Institute of Education from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 till 29<sup>th</sup> Feb 2020, regarding your PhD course with the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) run in collaboration with the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE), has been granted.

**Text**  
B Bheem Singh (Mrs)  
Assistant Registrar

## APPENDIX 4

### Informed consent for participants

Date: 15.04.19

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am Moohktaseemah B. Heetun, a PhD candidate studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in collaboration with the Mauritius Institute of Education. You are being invited to take part in this research because I feel that your experience as a (policy maker, curriculum developer, zone director, school leader or teacher) can contribute much to my understanding and knowledge about the conceptions of Teacher Professional Development within the space of an Educational Reform.

Title of the study:

*An exploration of Teacher Professional Development through the perspectives of different educational stakeholders within the space of Educational Reform.*

Through this study, I intend to have an in-depth understanding of the ‘‘how’’ and ‘‘why’’ different educational stakeholders’ conceptions of TPD differ by exploring the lived experiences of educational stakeholders. This study can contribute to the education system of Mauritius in various ways such as:

- Building a constructive understanding of TPD from the perspective of different educational stakeholders whenever there is an ER and using this understanding to better plan TPD programs for a better implementation of an educational reform.
- Exploring the gaps between the constructions of TPD of different stakeholders which can help in finding ways in bridging them constructively.
- Helping in framing TPD programs within the space of ER to reduce resistance and increase positive participation of teachers for a contented and successful implementation of the reform.

#### **Type of intervention and Procedure**

If you accept to be a participant of this study, you will be asked to participate in:

- A dialogue with me based on some photos and pictures that I will give you in connection with TPD and ER. I want you to rest assured that your descriptions of the photos/pictures will not be judged at any moment.
- Dialogical interviews. Each interview will last between 45mins to one hour. Three to five interviews for each participant will be carried out in a lapse of one year.

**Please note that:**

- your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. It is your choice to whether to participate or not.
- The interviews will be done in a very comfortable manner whereby I will also add to your experiences by sharing mine.
- The interviews will take place at your workplace or any other secured place proposed by you whereby your identity is kept confidential.
- If you do not wish to answer any question during the interview (and if you find it risky for you and your profession), you may say so and I will divert on to the next questions.
- With your consent, the entire conversation will be audio recorded. The tape will be kept safely in my possession. The information recorded is confidential and no one else except 'Me' will have access to the audio recordings. After 3 years of the completion of this study, the audio recordings will be destroyed.
- Your identity will be kept anonymous and I will not include any information in any report we may publish that would make it possible to identify you.
- no direct benefit to you, but your participation is likely to help me in my understanding and to contribute to the education system of Mauritius.

In the event of any problem or concern/question, you may contact:

- Me  
Miss Moohktaseemah B. HEETUN  
Riverwalk Street,  
Riviere-du-Rempart.  
Email address: [seemaheetun1@yahoo.com](mailto:seemaheetun1@yahoo.com)  
Mobile phone number: +230-59213783
- My Supervisors  
Professor Labby Ramrathan,  
University of KwaZulu-Natal.  
Education  
email: [ramrathanp@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:ramrathanp@ukzn.ac.za)
- Dr Tejwant Mohabeer  
Mauritius institute of  
Education  
Email: [t.mohabeer@mieonline.org](mailto:t.mohabeer@mieonline.org)

Or

- The UKZN Humanities&Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee  
HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION  
Tel: 27 31 2604557  
Fax: 27 31 2604609  
Email: [HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za)

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

Sincerely,  
Moohktaseemah Heteun

**Kindly complete and return this page.**  
Keep the letter above for future reference

---

## **INFORMED CONSENT LETTER**

I.....(full name of participant) hereby confirm that:

- I have read the foregoing information, or it has been read to me.
- I understand the purpose and procedure of the study.
- I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.
- I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.
- I have been informed about any available compensation as a result of study-related procedures.

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview    **YES / NO**

Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Date : \_\_\_\_\_

**Statement by the researcher taking consent**

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

A copy of this form has been provided to the participant.

Name of Researcher taking the consent: Moohktaseemah B. Heetun

Signature of Researcher taking the consent \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Day/month/year

## **APPENDIX 5A**

### **Research title:**

An exploration of educational stakeholders' conceptions of Teacher Professional Development (TPD) within the space of Educational Reform(ER).

### **Critical research questions:**

1. What are the conceptions of educational stakeholders about TPD within the space of ER?
2. How have these educational stakeholders developed their conceptions of TPD within the space of educational reform?
3. Why do different educational stakeholders have such conceptions of TPD within the space of educational reform?

## **List of interview questions for teachers**

### **Being a teacher**

Given the number of years of teaching experience you have, can you please tell me what does it mean to be a teacher for you?

Can you share with me the story of your teaching journey since you were newly appointed till now?

Do you think that there is a change in your identity as a teacher since then till now? How? Why?

### **TPD**

We have talked around you being a teacher. Now, let's talk a bit around TPD.

What is your understanding about TPD? What does the term bring to mind? How have you come to this understanding?

What are the activities you consider as TPD? How have you come to this understanding?

Can you tell me more about your experiences about TPD in your teaching career? How has this impacted/shaped your profession?

To what extent do you think that TPD is important? How have you come to this understanding?

### **TPD within ER**

What is your understanding about the NYCBE Reform? How have you come to this understanding?

We have been hearing about the NYCBE Reform since 2015 till its implementation in January 2018 and it is ongoing till date. A new set of objectives have been set up in accordance with the reform. Were you aware about the new goals and objectives of the NYCBE Reform? How you came to know about it?  
If you were not aware, then why do you think you are not informed?

And about what has been set up for TPD...are you aware what is being expected from teachers for this reform? (Discussion)

You said that TPD is... Now, can you tell me about your understanding about TPD **within** the space of this ER? What does TPD mean for you during ER? How have you come to this perspective/view?

How important do you think TPD is during an ER? Please explain your perspective.

Can you tell me how have you been developed in terms of TPD to welcome this reform? What kind of TPD activities have been carried out in support of teachers? Can you share with me some of your experiences?

Who are the training bodies from whom you have/are carrying out TPD activities? Can you share with me how TPD is done by the (Ministry/MIE)? How many days/hours of training/TPD activities? The trainings were/are based on what? Can you share some examples with me please?

One of the 6 pillars of this reform is 'innovative pedagogical approaches' where teaching is curriculum-based not assessment-driven.

What are you doing in terms of 'innovative pedagogical approaches'?

Can you tell me how are you being trained for 'innovative pedagogical approaches'?

The 4<sup>th</sup> pillar of the reform is based on 'continuous professional development' of teachers whereby it has been said that teachers must be empowered to cope with students' learning demands, step into the digital learning environment with confidence, embed 21<sup>st</sup> century

knowledge and skills in their practice, adopt new assessment strategies and respond to their changing role and responsibilities as society evolves. To what extent do you think TPD is being carried out to achieve this pillar? Any experience you want to share with me?

To what extent do you feel prepared for this reform? To what extent have the TPD activities helped you for this reform? Please explain.

### **The school – TPD – and ER**

As you are aware, the implementation of the reform is done by teachers in the schools and with the students.

Can you tell me about how your school has addressed TPD for the ER?  
In what way has your school prepared you in terms of TPD within the space of this reform?  
How? Why? An experience?  
What kind of support would you prefer to get in your school in terms of TPD?

### **Closing questions**

During climate of educational reform, teachers are expected to unlearn and relearn to be able to adapt to the new set of goals. Can you share an experience whereby this has happened?

Has there been any transformation in you as a teacher and in terms of TPD? If yes, how and why? Please explain. If no, how and why? Please explain.

## **APPENDIX 5B**

### **Research title:**

An exploration of educational stakeholders' conceptions of Teacher Professional Development (TPD) within the space of Educational Reform(ER).

### **Critical research questions:**

4. What are the conceptions of educational stakeholders about TPD within the space of ER?
5. How have these educational stakeholders developed their conceptions of TPD within the space of educational reform?
6. Why do different educational stakeholders have such conceptions of TPD within the space of educational reform?

## **List of interview questions for Rectors**

### **Being a Rector**

- 1) Could you please share with me your journey in the field of education? From where you started to where you are now.
- 2) How many years of experience do you have as a Rector?
- 3) In how many schools have you already experienced Rectorship?
- 4) What does it mean to be a Rector for you?
- 5) What is your identity as a Rector?

### **TPD**

- 6) We have talked around you being a Rector. Now, let's talk a bit around TPD.
- 7) As a Rector, what is your understanding about TPD?  
What does the term bring to mind?  
How have you come to this understanding?
- 8) What are the activities you consider as TPD?  
How have you come to this understanding?

### **TPD and ER**

Now we are going to talk a bit around the NYCBE Reform and TPD.

- 9) May I know what is your understanding about the NYCBE Reform?  
How have you come to this understanding?
- 10) There is a new set of goals and objectives for this Reform, among which one is concerned with TPD. To what extent do you think the pillar of TPD is being met within this reform?
- 11) Can you please tell me what is being expected from teachers for this reform?  
(Discussion)
- 12) You said TPD is..... Now, can you tell me about your understanding about TPD within the space of this ER?  
What does TPD mean for you during this ER?  
How have you come to this perspective/view?  
What does your experience say about this?
- 13) As a Rector with X number of years of experience, and having experienced quite a number of changes in your educational career, could you please tell me how important do you think TPD is during an ER? Could you please explain your perspective?

### **TPD, ER and BEING A RECTOR**

- 14) The reform/A reform takes on board all the stakeholders. Each one is concerned in their own role and capacity. For example, teachers in their role as teachers are concerned, parents in their role, students in their role, ministry officers in their role. Could you please tell me how have you been formed for this reform as a Rector?  
How have you been trained to meet the pillars of this reform? Training by whom?  
What are the frequency of training you have got?
- 15) How TPD is being planned at Rectors' level? Could you please share an experience with me?
- 16) Is there any type of framework or plan for TPD at Rectors' level?
- 17) From a Rector's perspective, could you please tell me how are teachers taking this reform? How do they consider this reform?
- 18) What do you think about the kind of PD trainings that teachers are getting at MIE/Ministry level? Why do you think so?
- 19) How motivated teachers are for this reform? Why?
- 20) How motivated are they in terms of PD for this reform? Any kind of PD or change in them that you have noticed? Could you please give me an example?

- 21) Can you please tell me to what extent teachers are being developed in terms of TPD to welcome this reform at school level?  
What kind of TPD activities have been carried out at school level?  
Can you share some of your experiences?
- 22) To what extent do you feel educators are prepared for this reform? Why? Could you please share your experience?
- 23) What kind of support would you prefer to get in your school in terms of TPD? Why? How do you think this will help in terms of TPD?
- 24) One of the 6 pillars of this reform is ‘innovative pedagogical approaches’ where teaching is curriculum-based not assessment-driven.  
What are educators doing in terms of ‘innovative pedagogical approaches’?  
Can you please give me some examples?  
What makes them do it the way they do?
- 25) As you are aware of, HoDs play a great role in the planning and management of their respective department. How are the HoDs of your school are helping their teachers in terms of PD? An experience you could share please? Why? How?
- 26) To what extent do you feel prepared as a Rector for TPD in your school? Why you say so? Could you please share your experience?

### **Closing questions**

- 27) During climate of educational reform, teachers are expected to unlearn and relearn to be able to adapt to the new set of goals. Can you share an experience whereby this has happened?
- 28) Has there been any transformation in teachers and in terms of their TPD? If yes, how and why? Please explain. If no, how and why? Please explain.
- 29) If you are given an opportunity to propose a plan for TPD, what would you propose? Why?

## **APPENDIX 5C**

### **Research title:**

An exploration of educational stakeholders' conceptions of Teacher Professional Development (TPD) within the space of Educational Reform(ER).

### **List of interview questions for MIE Officers**

#### **Trainer**

1. Could you please tell me a bit about yourself? A bit about your career, work experience?
2. How do you call yourself at the MIE (Teacher Trainer, Teacher Educator, Academics, Lecturers?). Why? Given the number of years of experience you have, could you please tell me what does it mean to be a 'teacher trainer' at the MIE?

#### **TPD**

3. What is your understanding of TPD?  
How have you come to this understanding?

#### **TPD and ER**

4. Could you please tell me about your understanding of the NYCBE Reform?
5. Following what you have told me about your understanding of TPD, could you please tell me how do you perceive TPD within the space of this ER?
  - How have you come to this perception?
6. Could you tell me about the TPD framework that MIE is following within the space of this reform?
  - Is there any type of reform-oriented based TPD activities/programmes have been designed for the purpose of this reform? What about for secondary educators?
7. From a teacher trainer(lecturer's) perspective, how do you view the effectiveness of the trainings/support given to teachers in terms of TPD for this reform? Why? Can you share your experience please?
8. During the climate of an ER, teachers are expected to unlearn and relearn to be able to teach according to the set goals. What is your view about this? What makes you say this? Could you describe an event/situation?

- How are secondary educators welcoming the trainings given to them in line with the reform? what makes you say this? An experience?
- Change in belief is something crucial when we talk of change/reform. To what extent do you think that there has been a change in teachers belief through the TPD activities?

### **TPD and Rectors**

9. Given that Rectors play a major role in teachers' life, could you please tell me in what way Rectors are being trained for the promotion of TPD at school level within the space of this reform?

### **TPD and Ministry**

10. Since the Ministry of Education and the MIE work in collaboration, can you please share with me the role that the Ministry of Education play in TPD for this reform?

### **Concluding questions**

11. Whenever there is a reform or a change, we talk of transformation, for example, transformation in practice, in the way things are done, in pedagogy, etc. In an Educational reform context, could you please tell me to what extent there has been a transformation in teachers and in TPD? What makes you say this?

### **Reflective:**

12. How do you view the reaction of teachers when they come for workshops at the MIE for the purpose of this reform?  
What makes you say this?
13. After experiencing the reaction of secondary school educators around the curriculum changes, what would you like to add in terms of your experience?
14. In what way is the TPD of the current reform differs from previous reforms or previous curriculum changes?
15. If you have to propose something, what type of TPD would you propose in the teacher education programmes?

## **APPENDIX 5D**

### **Research title:**

An exploration of educational stakeholders' conceptions of Teacher Professional Development (TPD) within the space of Educational Reform(ER).

### **Critical research questions:**

1. What are the conceptions of educational stakeholders about TPD within the space of ER?
2. How have these educational stakeholders developed their conceptions of TPD within the space of educational reform?
3. Why do different educational stakeholders have such conceptions of TPD within the space of educational reform?

## **List of interview questions for Ministry officers/planners**

### **Being an officer/planner**

Given the number of years of experience you have, can you please tell me what does it mean to be a ... for you? A bit about your job.

Can you share with me the story of your professional journey? From where you started to where you are now.

Can you share your experience as a zone director/planner?

### **TPD**

We have talked around you being a planner/director. Now let's talk a bit around TPD.

What is your understanding about TPD? **Or** What does the term bring to mind?  
How have you come to this understanding?

What are the activities you consider as TPD?  
How have you come to this understanding?

### **TPD and ER**

We have the NYCBE Reform which is ongoing.

What do you think about TPD within the space of an ER? (Your understanding)  
Why do you think so?  
How have you come to this understanding?  
Could you please share your experience?

To what extent are you involved in TPD activities within the space of ER?  
(Personal, professional and organizational level TPD planning)

How do you perceive the TPD activities developed for teachers?

Does the Ministry have a TPD plan/framework?  
Can you share it with me please?  
Can we talk a bit about the plan/framework?  
How has it been planned? Who were involved in the planning? What are the main factors that are considered during the planning?

### **TPD, Rectors and ER**

To what extent do you think rectors are prepared for this reform?

How have they been formed in terms of TPD activities for their schools/teachers?

How do you keep track of what is being done in terms of TPD at school level?

### **Conclusion**

During the climate of ER, teachers are expected to unlearn and relearn to be able to adapt to the new set of goals.

To what extent do you think the unlearning and relearning has been successful?  
Why?  
Your experience.

If you have to propose something for TPD, what would you propose? How? Why?

## APPENDIX 6

### An example of interview transcript

06.11.19

Rajcoomar Gijadhur SSS

1 hr 35 mins

Me: The interviewer

T2: The teacher (participant)

.....  
Me: We shall start with the questions as you being a teacher first, then we will move further with the interview.

T2: Nodding (Yes)

Me: Given the number of years of teaching experience that you have, can you please tell me what does it mean to be a teacher for you?

T2: (Thinking)

Me: If my question is not clear, I can rephrase.

T2: My teaching experience, 21 years in government service, plus two years in private school. Teaching is first of all be friends with the students and promise them to inculcate values and then you prepare the child.

Me: Okay. So, you have mentioned uhh the term “values”. What does “value” mean for you?

T2: It is my job to inculcate values in my students. It is important. Officially, it is my job. Experientially, it is not my job because we need to prepare the child for the exams and if I do not end up my syllabus, the problem will be mine. Where to find time to inculcate values? But, personally I do think that values are important. By the le trajet que j’aifais dans la vie, I would have liked people to tell me, to give me certain values that moi j’ai appris sur l’etat. So, this is the main reason why I inculcate values in my students. It is important.

Me: Thank you for your response. Can you please share your teaching journey with me since you were newly appointed to where you are now? I know you have already shared it in our informal meeting but it was not an interview...(didn’t get time to complete when the participant started to talk..)

T2: Should I start from the private sector or...

Me: Yeah yeah it would be very helpful for me.

T2: (thinking). The first thing I remember from my first interview was ‘are you going to speak as calmly as you are doing right now?’ I was taken aback. The manager was expecting

## APPENDIX 7

### PROFILE OF EXTENDED PROGRAMME STUDENTS

(SOURCE: Ministry of Education Website)

#### 7. KEY CHALLENGES

Students joining the Foundation Year in 2018 would be those who have not made the grades at PSAC Assessment 2017 and would most probably have a similar profile as the existing students of the Prevocational Stream. Experience in the Prevocational Education and interaction with practitioners in schools tend to show that the profile of these students is generally characterised by a number of factors, social and other including negative school experiences and health problems in some cases, that have led to coping difficulties, lack of motivation and self-confidence.

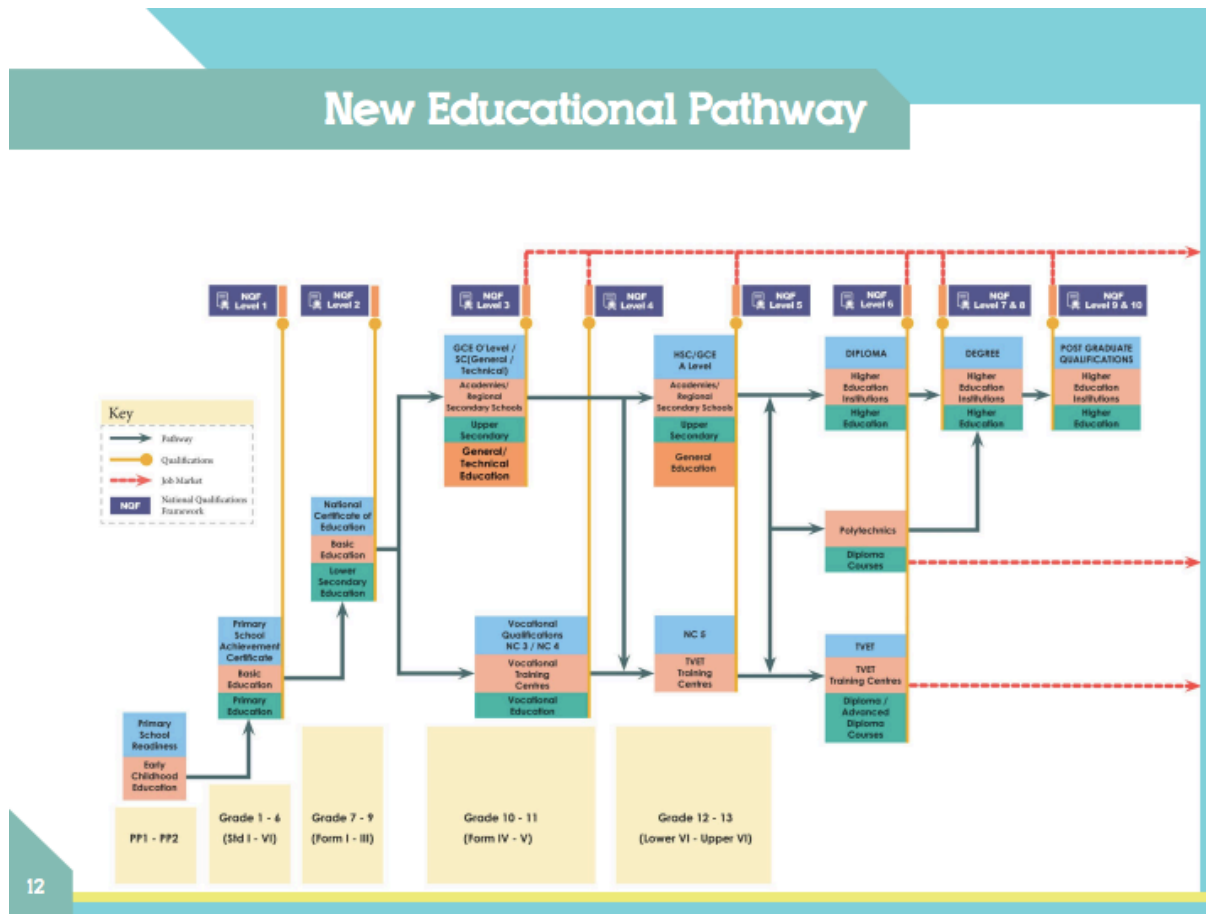
Students concerned may function in a stressed mode, may not have basic scholastic/social skills and executive functions, may not be fluent/proficient in any languages necessary for lessons and assessments, may sometimes not have the pre-requisites to understand the ongoing lesson, may generally, have difficulties to build up meaningful relationships with peers and the Educators.

It is felt that, prior to getting the students to embark on learning their subject matter, they must be provided with positive experiences that would contribute to develop in them vital personal skills, ensure their psychological and emotional well-being and restore their self-confidence and self-esteem. Developing a greater interest in school would certainly trigger in them a new motivation to learn and succeed. As importantly, they should feel supported on all sides whether at school or at home.

# APPENDIX 8

## NEW ROUTE TO NYCBE

(SOURCE: Ministry of Education website)



## **APPENDIX 9**

### **SCHEME OF SERVICE OF TEACHERS**

#### **DUTIES AND SALARY**

1. To teach in State Secondary Schools or any State Post-Primary institution. Holders of a joint degree in the relevant subjects will be required to teach either of the two subjects in which they are qualified as and when required.
2. To prepare scheme of work, weekly plan of work, lesson plans to be submitted for inspection and lesson notes in respect of subjects and classes under his/her responsibility.
3. To conduct examinations, continuous assessment, extension classes, vacation courses, and such other extra curricular activities as directed.
4. To take charge of laboratories, workshops or specialist rooms as and when required.
5. To keep a record of pupils' performance to include same in pupils' report book, and to report to Head of Department, Deputy Rector or Rector on such matters as and when required.
6. To help in the preparation and the writing of curriculum for Secondary Schools or other Post-Primary institutions and to make recommendations for the use of appropriate textbooks.
7. To ensure the overall development of students – intellectual, emotional and moral.
8. To maintain discipline inside and outside the classroom.
9. To participate in workshops and seminars to improve the teaching/learning process and to keep abreast with new trends and developments in education as and when required.
10. To give advice on matters connected with educational principles and practices at all levels and promote relevant activities.
11. To service the E-Govt Unit (formerly the National Computer and Information Technology Resource Centre) as and when required.
12. To attend regular meetings with Heads of Department, Deputy Rectors

## **APPENDIX 10**

### **SCHEME OF SERVICE OF RECTORS**

#### **DUTIES AND SALARY**

#### **MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOLS/COLLEGES**

- (i) To be responsible for the overall management of a State Secondary School/State College including Pre-Vocational Education Stream.
- (ii) To prepare School Development Plans.
- (iii) To prepare school time-tables with due respect to optimal utilisation of human resources.
- (iv) To monitor the rate of absenteeism of students and staff and come up with corrective measures.
- (v) To devise strategies to maintain overall discipline at school level and beyond school premises regarding participation of students in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- (vi) To be responsible for all internal examinations.
- (vii) To ensure that all school/college related data, records, files and correspondence are collected, maintained and updated.
- (viii) To ensure that the standards of Occupational Safety and Health in schools/colleges are properly maintained.

#### **CURRICULUM AND PEDAGOGY**

- (i) To plan, organise and monitor educational activities, including sports and co-curricular activities of the school/college and to report thereupon to the Director of the Zone, as and when required.
- (ii) To keep abreast of current educational thinking and developments, relevant to secondary schooling in order to promote good practice.
- (iii) To develop a high standard of cultural and social values.
- (iv) To monitor and review the special learning needs policy for all students.
- (v) To oversee the implementation of the curriculum such that it responds to the needs of students with varying abilities of learning.

#### **MONITORING OF PERFORMANCE**

- (i) To monitor and to report on performance of personnel and students and to provide necessary assistance and support.
- (ii) To seek through close collaboration of parents and the Zone Directorate, ways and means for the effective assessment of student progress, both formative and summative.
- (iii) To oversee progress in all areas of School Performance through agreed indicators and monitoring progress towards their achievement.

#### MANAGEMENT OF RESOURCES

- (i) To be responsible for the overall provision, auditing and maintenance of equipment, materials and furniture.
- (ii) To develop and implement a yearly performance schedule for the school/college infrastructure, in collaboration with the Directorate.
- (iii) To ensure optimum utilisation of human, financial, material and infrastructural resources of the school/college to continuously improve the quality of education and secure value for money.
- (iv) To seek opportunities for contributing to the sustainable development of the school environment.

#### 3. STAFF MANAGEMENT

- (i) To lead, inspire and ensure the development of staff to secure excellence in teaching, learning and pastoral care.
- (ii) To ensure that newly appointed staff have appropriate induction and support.
- (iii) To prepare schedule of duties of non-teaching staff, allocate and clarify responsibilities assigned and provide necessary technical assistance.

6. To establish effective liaison with different stakeholders.

7. To be accountable to the Director of the Zone for the effectiveness of the school/college.

8. To use ICT in the performance of his duties.

9. To perform such other duties directly related to the main duties listed above or related to the delivery of the output and results expected from the Rector in the roles ascribed to him.

# APPENDIX 11

EXTENDED PROGRAMME NCE RESULTS (Source: MES website)

MAURITIUS EXAMINATIONS SYNDICATE  
 NATIONAL CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION ASSESSMENT - 2021/2022  
 Subjectwise/Gradewise performance of School Candidates - Extended Stream

Subject Code	Subject Description	Grade Achieved						Total Examined	% Pass
		1	2	3	4	5	6		
NS00	English	0	1	7	29	71	156	1950	264
		.0%	.1%	.4%	1.5%	3.6%	8.0%		13.5%
NS10	Mathematics	0	0	1	0	47	140	1923	188
		.0%	.0%	.1%	.0%	2.4%	7.3%		9.8%
NS30	French	0	23	94	179	240	249	1956	785
		.0%	1.2%	4.8%	9.2%	12.3%	12.7%		40.1%
NS30	Science	0	0	0	9	27	87	619	123
		.0%	.0%	.0%	1.5%	4.4%	14.1%		19.9%
NS40	Information And Communications Technology	0	5	14	34	113	260	1185	426
		.0%	.4%	1.2%	2.9%	9.5%	21.9%		35.9%
NS50	Technology Studies	0	0	4	8	44	93	897	149
		.0%	.0%	.4%	.9%	4.9%	10.4%		16.6%
NS60	Business And Entrepreneurship Education	1	3	6	16	40	168	1273	234
		.1%	.2%	.5%	1.3%	3.1%	13.2%		18.4%
NS70	Social And Modern Studies	0	0	4	16	38	188	649	246
		.0%	.0%	.6%	2.5%	5.9%	29.0%		37.9%
NS80	Art And Design	5	29	54	162	244	214	909	708
		.6%	3.2%	5.9%	17.8%	26.8%	28.5%		77.9%
NS60	Hindi	0	0	0	3	4	17	235	24
		.0%	.0%	.0%	1.3%	1.7%	7.2%		10.2%
NS10	Urdu	0	0	1	0	1	2	39	4
		.0%	.0%	2.6%	.0%	2.6%	5.1%		10.3%
NS20	Tamil	0	0	0	0	0	4	20	4
		.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	20.0%		20.0%



## **ANNEX 13**

### **DUTIES OF HEADS OF DEPARTMENT**

Heads of department will have to work for approximately 840 minutes (24 periods) weekly and they will be required to carry out the list of duties listed below.

- (i) Lead their department and hold departmental meetings at least twice per term. Agenda to be circulated in the department and minutes of meeting to be recorded, a copy of which to be forwarded to the Rector.
- (ii) Monitor and implementation of the curriculum and classroom pedagogy.
- (iii) Actively assist the Head of School in ensuring, through proper interaction and dialogue with the class teachers, that professional practice, high working standards and good quality teaching are taking place. Accompany the Rector during class visits and advise members of the department of innovative pedagogies to improve teaching methods.
- (iv) Act as mentors to newly recruited Educators in their department.
- (v) Plan, implement and monitor strategies for improvement in teaching standards in close connection with the syllabus.
- (vi) Prescribe textbooks, reference books and other teaching aids for effective teaching of the subject.
- (vii) Plan allocation of classes in consultation with the Rector and members of the department.
- (viii) Set examination papers, vet papers and marking schemes prepared by members of the department, and monitor internal examinations and assessment processes.
- (ix) Ensure that all members of the department: (a) prepare weekly plan of work; (b) have a weekly scheme of scheme work for each term, including revision scheme as appropriate. (c) record achievement of students in assessments.
- (x) Conduct performance audit on the basis of assessment results.
- (xi) Ensure that homework is set as per approved Standards and Students' exercise books marked.
- (xii) Be in charge where appropriate, of all equipment and materials in Science Laboratories, Workshops, P.E. Department Home Economics Department and other specialist rooms; keep ledgers up to date, maintain inventory control and arrange for the repair and maintenance of department equipment.
- (xiii) Train newly recruited Laboratory Attendants, Workshop Assistants, Home Economics Attendant and Computer Attendants where applicable.
- (xiv) Support Professional Development by advising the Rector on school based training for

Educators and other staff in the department and by participating in such programmes.

(xv) Organise co-curricular/ extracurricular activities and encourage participation of all students in such activities.

(xvi) Participate in the school budget development process.

(xvii) Be directly involved in school Development Plan.

(xviii) Submit monthly feedback/ status reports to the rector on activities carried out in the department.

(xix) Submit yearly plans for the improvement of the performance of department, with clearly defined targets and outcomes.

Date: 31 March 2017

## **ANNEX 14**

### **PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION CIRCULAR NOTE NO. 87 OF 2019**

#### **DUTIES AND SALARY**

1. To be responsible for –
  - (i) the introduction of pedagogical programmes for quality enhancement in student and teacher performance;
  - (ii) the co-ordination of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities;
  - (iii) counselling students;
  - (iv) the reinforcement of discipline inside the classroom and within the school premises; and
  - (v) pastoral care.
2. To provide careers guidance to students.
3. To teach subject(s) of specialisation for a minimum of 400 minutes weekly.
4. To prepare scheme of work, weekly plan of work, lesson plans to be submitted for inspection and lesson notes in respect of subjects and classes under his responsibility.
5. To set examination papers, conduct examinations and continuous assessment, and carry out extension classes and vacation courses, and mark scripts.
6. To take charge of laboratories, workshops or specialist rooms, as and when required.
7. To ensure safe and efficient utilisation of equipment and resources located in any school department such as specialist rooms, workshops, laboratories and libraries.
8. To monitor and improve pupils' performance by recording of marks in the Educator's mark book and in pupils' report books and to report on pupils' performance trends to Head of Department, Deputy Rector or Rector on such matters, as and when required.
9. To help in the preparation and the writing of curriculum for Secondary Schools or other Post-Primary institutions and to make recommendations for the use of appropriate textbooks.
10. To educate and motivate students with a view to unleash their intellectual, moral and emotional potential for their overall development.

11. To record and monitor attendance of students.
12. To attend training courses, seminars, talks and workshops organised during school vacation so as to improve the teaching/learning process and to keep abreast of new trends and developments in education.
13. To attend regular meetings with Heads of Department, Deputy Rectors and Rectors.
14. To participate in Parents Teachers' Associations (PTA) meetings and activities.
15. To establish links with other partners in society and actively participate in community outreach activities organised by the school and the PTA.
4. To continuously innovate with a view to enhancing teaching methods so as to meet the requirements of students.
5. To provide feedback on the continuous improvement of school curriculum at all levels.
6. To carry out such activities as may be assigned by the Rector with a view to aligning school performance with the objectives set out in the Performance Management System and Programme-Based Budget.
7. To organise and run in-service training courses.
8. To advise on the improvement of teaching methods and education programmes, and on new trends in education.
9. To submit a daily report to the Rector on activities performed.
10. To facilitate interaction between the school, parents and students so that they are all accountable for the success of the students whether academic or behavioural.
11. To use ICT in the performance of his duties.
12. To perform such other duties directly related to the main duties listed above or related to the delivery of the output and results expected from Senior Educators (Secondary) in the roles ascribed to them.

## APPENDIX 18

### Letter from copy editor for Chapters 1, 5, 6 and 7

**Morcellement Koonjo  
Plaine Des Papayes  
Mauritius  
Tel: 2662319  
Email: [Khugputhdevi@gmail.com](mailto:Khugputhdevi@gmail.com)**

30 November 2024

This serves to confirm that I have edited chapters 1, 5, 6 and 7 of the thesis, “An exploration of the conceptions of Teacher Professional Development within the space of an Education Reform,” by Moohktaseemah Beebee Heetun, student number: 218046885.

**DISCLAIMER: The editor cannot be held responsible for any errors introduced due to changes being made to the document after the editing is complete.**

Yours sincerely,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Mrs Devi Khugputh.

Mrs Devi Khugputh

## APPENDIX 19



### Digital Receipt

This receipt acknowledges that Turnitin received your paper. Below you will find the receipt information regarding your submission.

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