



**Navigating Professional Transitions: Experiences of Second-Career Teachers in  
Leading Teaching and Learning**

**By**

**Qiniso Prudence Zwane**

**Student Number: 210522408**

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of  
MASTER OF EDUCATION  
in  
EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND POLICY**

**School of Education: College of Humanities  
University of KwaZulu-Natal  
South Africa**


**Supervisor: Dr Nokukhanya Ndlovu**

**June 2025**

## DECLARATION

I, Qiniso Prudence Zwane, declare that:

- (i) The research reported in this dissertation/thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original work.
- (ii) This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
- (iii) This thesis does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
- (iv) This thesis does not contain other persons' writing, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other researchers. Where other written sources have been quoted, then:
  - a) their words have been re-written but the general information attributed to them has been referenced;
  - b) where their exact words have been used, their writing has been placed inside quotation marks and referenced.
- (v) Where I have reproduced a publication of which I am the author or co-author, I have indicated in detail which part of the publication was actually written by myself alone and have fully referenced such publications.
- (vi) This thesis does not contain text, graphics, or tables copied and pasted from the Internet, unless specifically acknowledged and the source being detailed in the thesis and in the References section.

Signed: 

Qiniso Prudence Zwane

As the candidate's Supervisor, I agree to the submission of this thesis.

  
Signed:

Dr Nokukhanya Ndlovu

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The journey to completing this Master's dissertation has been deeply enriching, and I am incredibly grateful to everyone who supported me along the way.

My sincerest thanks go to my supervisor, Dr Nokukhanya Ndlovu, whose exceptional guidance, unwavering encouragement, and insightful feedback were vital to this research. Her belief in my abilities and her patience in navigating the complexities of academic writing transformed every challenge into a learning opportunity. I am truly fortunate to have had her mentorship.

I am immensely grateful to all the participating second-career teachers (study participants) for their time, openness, and willingness to share their experiences. Your contributions were the heart of this study.

Finally, and most importantly, I want to express my deepest love and gratitude to my family and friends. To my mom, thank you for your endless love, prayer, unwavering support, and the countless sacrifices you made that enabled me to pursue my dreams. Your belief in me has always been my greatest strength. To my partner, your patience, understanding, and constant encouragement, especially during those long nights, kept me going. And to my incredible friends (Letty, Nhlanhla, and Mandy), your laughter, distractions, and moral support were precisely what I needed to stay balanced throughout this challenging period.

My profound gratitude is reserved for my two wonderful children (Zekhethelo and Nhlanhla), who served as my constant cheerleaders. Their unwavering presence transformed my routines and ensured I never faced the solitary task of writing alone, as they consistently sacrificed their sleep to offer support. I pray that God, the Almighty, continues to bless our family and our shared pursuit of knowledge.

This dissertation is as much a testament to your collective support as it is to my dedication. Thank you all from the bottom of my heart.

## **DEDICATION**

This journey of completing my Master's dissertation has been a profound testament to perseverance, made possible only by the unwavering support and love that surrounded me. There were moments of doubt and exhaustion, days when the sheer volume of work felt overwhelming, but through it all, the encouragement from those dearest to me became an infinite fountain of strength. This achievement is not just mine; it's a shared triumph, woven from countless acts of kindness, patience, and understanding extended by my incredible support system.

My heartfelt dedication extends first and foremost to God Almighty, whose divine grace and guidance illuminated every step of this path. It was a constant reminder that even in the darkest hours, a higher purpose propelled me forward. Equally, this work is dedicated to my beloved family. To my mom and my husband, whose boundless love, belief in my potential, and tireless sacrifices laid the very foundation for my dreams. And to my children, my vibrant cheerleaders, your innocent joy and unwavering presence transformed mundane routines into cherished moments.

Every hug, every encouraging word, and every silent understanding glance contributed to the completion of this dissertation. This academic milestone is a reflection of a collective effort, a beautiful tapestry woven with threads of faith, love, and dedication. May God continue to bless us all, and may this accomplishment serve as a testament to the power of shared dreams and unconditional support.

## ABSTRACT

*Moving from one career to another represents a profound transitional shift, demanding individuals relinquish the comfort of the familiar and embark on a continuous learning curve to meet the demands of new responsibilities. For second-career teachers, this transition into the education sector is particularly complex, as they navigate a new professional landscape often vastly different from their previous fields. This study explored the lived experiences of second-career teachers during their early tenure, examining how they navigated teaching and learning leadership, as well as the factors that both enabled and constrained their leadership of teaching and learning. The research was grounded in a theoretical framework that combined Adaptive Leadership theory with William Bridges' Transition Model. Using a narrative inquiry methodology, which captured the complexity of human experience through storytelling and narration, the study employed narrative interviews to generate data from participants. Thematic analysis was applied to interpret the findings. Four second-career teachers were selected through purposive and convenience sampling to illuminate the rich complexity of their transitional experiences. The study found that second-career teachers face substantial transitional shocks, initially relying on traditional methods and previous experiences while contending with challenges such as finding their teaching style, managing administrative and discipline issues, and overcoming language barriers. Despite these obstacles, factors like professional development and parental engagement support their leadership and adaptation in education. From this study, we learn that transitioning into teaching as a second-career professional involves significant challenges that require adaptability, resilience, and continuous learning. Success depends on proactively seeking professional development, engaging key stakeholders such as parents, and developing a unique teaching style while managing both administrative and classroom demands. This underscores the importance of flexibility and context-sensitive leadership in navigating complex educational environments.*

**Keywords:** *Career, transition, education, learning leadership, professional development*

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>DH</b>	Departmental Head
<b>ATP</b>	Annual Teaching Plan
<b>GDE</b>	Gauteng Department of Education
<b>LOLT</b>	Language of Learning and Teaching
<b>PCK</b>	Pedagogical Content Knowledge
<b>PGCE</b>	Post Graduate Certificate in Education
<b>SCT</b>	Second-Career Teacher
<b>SMT</b>	School Management Team
<b>KZN</b>	KwaZulu-Natal
<b>UKZN</b>	University of KwaZulu-Natal

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>DECLARATION</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>II</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>IV</b>
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</b>	<b>V</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>VI</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1.3 RESEARCH PUZZLES</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1.4 JUSTIFICATIONS FOR THE STUDY</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1.5 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1.6 OVERVIEW OF THE DISSERTATION</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>CHAPTER TWO</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>REVIEW OF LITERATURE</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>2.1 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>2.2 A GLIMPSE OF THE TRANSITION PHASE</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>2.3 CHALLENGES OF SECOND-CAREER TEACHERS</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>2.4 THE STRENGTHS OF SECOND-CAREER TEACHERS IN LEADING TEACHING AND LEARNING</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>2.5 SECOND-CAREER TEACHERS AND THEIR POSITIONALITY AS NOVICES</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>2.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>2.7. APPROPRIATENESS OF THE THEORY FOR THIS STUDY</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>2.8. BRINGING THE THEORIES TOGETHER</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>2.9. CONCLUSION</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>CHAPTER THREE</b>	<b>23</b>

<b>RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>3.1 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>3.2 INTERPRETIVE RESEARCH PARADIGM</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>3.3 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH APPROACH</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>3.4 NARRATIVE INQUIRY METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>3.5 SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>3.6 DATA GENERATION METHOD</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>3.7 THEMATIC DATA ANALYSIS</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>3.8 TRUSTWORTHINESS ISSUES</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>3.10 CONCLUSION</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>CHAPTER 4</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>4.1 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>4.2. SECOND-CAREER TEACHERS’ STRATEGIES AND APPROACHE IN LEADING TEACHING AND LEARNING</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>4.3. FACTORS ENABLING SECOND-CAREER TEACHERS IN THEIR LEADERSHIP OF TEACHING AND LEARNING</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>4.4. FACTORS CONSTRAINING SECOND-CAREER TEACHERS IN THEIR LEADERSHIP OF TEACHING AND LEARNING</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>4.5. CONCLUSION</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>CHAPTER FIVE</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>5.1 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>5.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>5.3 CONCLUSIONS: LESSONS LEARNT FROM EACH OF THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS</b>	<b>60</b>

<b>5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>5.4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>5.5 CONCLUSION</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>APPENDIX B: GATEKEEPERS LETTER (DBE)</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>APPENDIX D: TURNITIN REPORT</b>	<b>89</b>
<b>APPENDIX E: EDITOR’S CONFIRMATION LETTER</b>	<b>90</b>

# CHAPTER ONE

## OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

### 1.1 Introduction and background of the study

The unemployment rate for individuals with tertiary degrees in South Africa is on a steady rise. In the country, the unemployment rate surged to a record high of above 29% in 2016, with a significant portion of this statistic comprised youth (Stats SA, 2016). According to Shafi (2018), this escalation in unemployment is attributed to structural shifts in labour demand that favour highly qualified workers. Consequently, more individuals are pursuing tertiary education, but paradoxically, unemployment rates among this educated cohort persistently rise each year (Alshammari & Shafi, 2018). As a result, many of these unemployed graduates seek further opportunities in diverse fields, including teacher education, to bolster their employability. The phenomenon of shifting from one profession to another is a common trend, extending its influence to the education sector as well (Hirschi et al., 2018 & Rudolph et al., 2017). This study specifically addresses those individuals who shift careers into teaching, classifying them as second-career teachers (Alharbi, 2020).

In South Africa, the transition into teaching from a first degree requires obtaining a Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). This certification is acquired through a one-year full-time or a two-year part-time teacher training program. The minimum qualification for admission is an appropriate diploma or bachelor's degree. According to the Government Gazette (2015), an appropriate diploma or degree encompasses a substantial foundation of disciplinary learning in relevant academic fields, enabling the acquisition of specialised teaching skills and subject knowledge, aligned with the specifications for each school phase (Government Gazette, 2015). The PGCE programme primarily focuses on developing teaching skills, assuming that students already possess foundational subject knowledge from their undergraduate degrees (Muzindutsi & Khanate, 2018). The programme's main objectives are to enhance subject content proficiency and develop appropriate pedagogical content knowledge (Department of Education, 2000a).

As mentioned earlier, the PGCE programme assumes that students already possess strong content knowledge from their first degrees. However, a study conducted by Muzindutsi and Khanare (2018) revealed that pre-service teachers enrolled in the PGCE face various challenges. These challenges include difficulties with educational terminologies and learning styles, as well as

issues related to the structure of the PGCE programme and their academic background, based on their undergraduate qualifications (Muzindutsi & Khanare, 2018).

Beyond this, PGCE-trained teachers experience challenges associated with those of novice teachers. In this study, novice refers to teachers with less than five years of classroom experience (Segalo & Dube, 2022). Upon appointment, second-career teachers, no matter their experience in their previous careers, become novice teachers (Goh et al., 2017). According to Lew and Nelson (2016), new teachers commonly encounter challenges in curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Lavigne and Bozack (2015) highlight that certain teacher preparation programs may not adequately cover specific curriculum topics, leading new teachers to feel disoriented during their initial years in the profession. Additionally, Rosario (2020) notes that novice teachers experience an unsupportive environment.

Furthermore, these second-career teachers are new teachers to the profession and currently in a transitional period. Rosario (2020) suggests the start of a transition is when someone decides to abandon what they are familiar with and venture into an unknown environment. Similarly, Bridges (2009) states that transitions begin with the passing of an old phase rather than the arrival of a new one. Rosario (2020) notes several transition complexities that affect second-career teachers as novice teachers. These include a heavy workload that is hardly manageable and puts these teachers under unbearable pressure. Additionally, Rosario (2020) proclaims that often, there is limited mentoring of these teachers by veteran teachers and the school management. This results in frustrated teachers exiting the system prematurely (Sali & Kecik, 2018). This presents insurmountable challenges given that the first few years have a big impact on teachers' future careers (Goh et al., 2017), as this is when they establish their new identities as teachers.

The experience of second-career teachers is thus at the intersection of novice-hood and transition complexities. This study seeks to explore the experiences of these teachers amidst this multifaceted intersectional complexity.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

The Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications, outlines seven key roles that teachers must fulfil, each accompanied by a specific set of competencies. One of these roles is the requirement for teachers to be specialists in a particular learning area, subject, discipline, or phase of education. As stated below:

The educator will be well-grounded in the knowledge, skills, values, principles, methods, and procedures relevant to the discipline, subject, learning area, phase of study, or professional or occupational practice. The educator will know about different approaches to teaching and learning (and, where appropriate, research and management), and how these may be used in ways that are appropriate to the learners and the context. The educator will have a well-developed understanding of the knowledge appropriate to the specialism (Nzimande, 2011).

As already stated, the assumption is that those who articulate to teaching through the PGCE already possess the necessary foundational knowledge from their prior undergraduate degree (Muzindutsi & Khanate, 2018). While this is the expectation, Nomlomo and Sosibo (2016) indicate that some second-career, PGCE-trained teachers frequently face significant challenges in developing Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK), which is essential for effectively leading teaching and learning. Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) is a teacher's unique ability to combine their expertise in a subject with effective teaching methods, helping students to truly grasp the content. Without sufficient PCK, career-changing teachers often find that their existing knowledge does not readily apply to the classroom (Varadharajan et al, 2020). This highlights a significant challenge for these teachers.

Similarly, Nilsson and Cederqvist (2024) indicate that many second-career teachers feel inadequately prepared in PCK because of the compressed nature of alternative teacher education programmes, which often last only one year and provide limited opportunities to internalise the complex pedagogical reasoning required for effective instruction.

In addition, Nomlomo and Sosibo (2016) assert that these educators receive inadequate support from superiors, veteran colleagues, and department heads. More so, Darling-Hammond (2017) states that they face common novice teacher challenges, including classroom management difficulties, excessive administrative duties, and insufficient curriculum coverage (Darling-Hammond, 2017). These issues compound the identity formation struggles typical of new teachers transitioning into their roles (Farrell, 2016). Smith (2019) argues that the transition phase for second-career teachers involves a process of adaptation and professional development, encompassing training, overcoming classroom obstacles, and assimilating into the educational environment.

Research consistently shows that classroom instruction significantly influences student results (Darling-Hammond, 2017; Emmer et al., 2015; Fraser, 2012). Consequently, inadequate classroom instruction resulting from limited PCK may adversely affect learning and academic outcomes. While these teachers bring valuable assets to the classroom, including diverse life experiences and practical knowledge from previous careers (Darling-Hammond, 2017), challenges and PCK deficiencies can negatively impact learner outcomes (Darling-Hammond & Shulman, 2017). Rosario (2016) notes that second-career teachers require comprehensive pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) and skills for effective content delivery. If this is inadequate, second-career, PGCE-trained educators may struggle to fulfil their roles as subject or phase specialists, potentially hindering effective teaching and learning. This study explores the experiences of second-career PGCE teachers in leading teaching and learning during their transition phase.

### **1.3 Research Puzzles**

In narrative inquiry, research questions are referred to as research puzzles. Clandinin (2013) explains that this methodology centres questions around particular wonders—puzzles with nuances and intricacies associated with human experience.

**Main research puzzle:** What are the experiences of second-career teachers in leading teaching and learning during the transition phase?

#### **Sub-research puzzles:**

1. How do second-career teachers lead teaching and learning during the transition phase?
2. What factors enable second-career teachers to lead teaching and learning during the transition phase?
3. What factors constrain second-career teachers in leading teaching and learning during the transition phase?

### **1.4 Justifications for the study**

Following a narrative inquiry methodology, this study's rationale encompasses personal, practical, and theoretical justifications (Clandinin, 2013). Personal justifications draw from the researcher's own experiences as inspiration for the inquiry. Practical justifications address how findings may influence practice, school leadership, or principal preparation. Theoretical

justifications demonstrate the study's potential contributions to existing knowledge and theory (Clandinin, 2013).

#### **1.4.1 Personal Justifications**

My interest in researching this phenomenon stems from my experience as a second-career teacher. Initially, my professional background was in Health Sciences, and I worked as a qualified Dental Technician in a dental laboratory for four years. However, I eventually developed a strong interest in pursuing teaching as a new profession. To become a teacher, I opted for a Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), which was the required qualification. As a PGCE holder, I felt that the program presented the basics that were mostly an introduction to the teaching profession.

Transitioning from the dental industry to the classroom presented me with both challenges and opportunities as a novice second-career teacher. As a novice second-career teacher, I faced challenges such as classroom management, administration, and the language used in the teaching profession. I soon realised that I was not fully capacitated and needed guidance and mentoring to navigate this new path successfully.

#### **1.4.2 Professional Justifications**

I had the option of requesting assistance and mentoring from my Departmental Head, but I felt that he might perceive me as an incompetent and failing teacher. As a novice teacher, you have a feeling of proving your capabilities and showing that you can do what is expected from you, which hindered me from crying out and asking for assistance. The urge to improve pushed me to opt for classroom management workshops for novice teachers that were online, and some were provided by the Gauteng Department of Education. My previous professional experience remained a motivation for me to want to become a better manager in the classroom. The memory of the workload and set targets that I used to work under in a dental laboratory built my core foundation as a professional.

#### **1.4.3 Theoretical Justifications**

A substantial body of scholarship exists on second-career teachers, revealing both opportunities and challenges associated with their transition into education (Simmons, 2016). Research demonstrates that prior career experiences can positively influence teaching practice by

bringing diverse perspectives and real-world knowledge, including enhanced time management skills and professional conduct, into the classroom environment (Johnson & Davis, 2019). However, the literature also reveals significant challenges faced by this population, particularly in areas such as classroom management and learner engagement during the early stages of their teaching careers (Brown, 2018; Smith, 2017). These difficulties highlight the complexity of transitioning from other professional contexts to the unique demands of the educational environment. Consequently, Anderson (2016) and Taylor et al. (2020) emphasise that many second-career teachers express a need for specialised training and ongoing professional development to successfully adapt to education sector requirements. Furthermore, the absence of structured support systems and mentorship has been consistently identified as a critical barrier to successful transition for second-career teachers (Anderson, 2016; Taylor et al., 2020). While numerous international studies have examined second-career teachers across various educational systems (Karge et al., 2012; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011; Unruh & Holt, 2010), research focused specifically on this population within the South African context remains limited. The existing South African literature predominantly concentrates on preparation and certification processes (Camacho & Rogero, 2016; Kee, 2012; Rosario, 2020; Sampson et al., 2012), thereby creating a significant gap in understanding the transition experience and its broader impact on second-career teachers in their leadership of teaching and learning. This study addresses this gap by exploring the nuanced leadership experiences of second-career teachers in leading teaching and learning, contributing essential insights to the existing knowledge base while providing a South African perspective on this important educational phenomenon.

## **1.5 Clarification of Concepts**

This section will provide a clarification of the key concepts used in this study.

### **1.5.1 Second-Career Teacher**

Second-career teachers are individuals who enter the teaching profession after pursuing different career paths or after having retired from their initial profession (Smith & Johnson, 2021). Similarly, Ruitenburg and Tigchelaar (2021) and Feistritzer (2014) define second-career teachers, also referred to as career changers or certified teachers, as individuals who transition into the teaching profession after pursuing a different career or occupation. Unlike traditional educators who follow the conventional route of completing an education degree and teacher preparation programme, second-career teachers often enter the field through alternative certification pathways, which provide a means for them to gain the necessary teaching

credentials and qualifications (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). In this study, second-career teachers are defined as individuals who previously practiced in other occupations before transitioning into teaching through PGCE certification.

### **1.5.2 Transition Phase of Second-Career Teachers**

Transition encompasses the process or period of changing from one state or condition to another (Bridges, 2004). Professional transition specifically refers to the movement from one career phase or job to another, involving a complex interplay of psychological, social, and practical adjustments (Flannery et al., 2015). Such transitions involve shifts in employment status, roles, and responsibilities, often requiring the acquisition of new skills or qualifications to function effectively in the new professional context (Mitchell & Krumboltz, 2019).

Within the context of this study, the transition phase refers to the critical early period during which second-career teachers move from their previous occupations or employment circumstances and enter the teaching profession as newly qualified educators. This phase encompasses both the formal preparation period and the initial adjustment to classroom practice, representing a fundamental shift in professional identity and daily work experience.

### **1.6 Overview of the dissertation**

This dissertation consists of five chapters. Chapter one presented the overview of the study. Firstly, it provided the introduction and background of the study, giving context into the phenomenon of second-career teaching, factors that drive second-career teaching, and the pathway to second-career teaching. This was followed by the problem statement which illustrated the intersectional complexities of the positionality of second-career teachers and the implications of this on teaching and learning. The research puzzles guiding the study were then provided. Following this, the justifications of the study were discussed on three levels, the personal, professional and theoretical. Key terms were then clarified followed by the present section, the overview of the dissertation.

Chapter Two is in two parts. The first part presents the literature review drawing on local and international scholarship. The second part presents the theoretical framework of this study. Two theories, adaptive leadership theory and Williams Bridge's Model, form the framework and are discussed and justified.

Chapter Three details the study's methodology. It uses an interpretive paradigm and a qualitative research design to understand the subjective experiences of second-career teachers. Narrative inquiry is the chosen methodology, focusing on their stories through Clandinin and Connelly's framework (2000) of time, social influences, and environment. Four participants were selected using purposive and convenience sampling, and data were collected via narrative interviews following a four-phase process. Thematic analysis based on Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach was used to interpret the interview data by transcribing, familiarising, identifying key terms, and crafting themes.

Chapter Four presents the study's findings, revealing that second-career teachers leading teaching and learning during their transition experience a transitional shock, but draw on past experiences and initially use traditional methods while navigating classroom management. Enabling factors include actively seeking professional development and engaging parents. Constraints involve struggling to find their teaching style, managing overwhelming administrative tasks, dealing with classroom discipline, and facing language barriers. These findings are discussed in relation to existing literature and theories, highlighting the challenges and adaptive strategies of these teachers.

Chapter Five presents recommendations for second-career teachers. Several recommendations can be made to support their successful integration into the teaching profession. Firstly, enhanced and tailored induction programs are crucial. Secondly, ongoing and targeted professional development opportunities are also necessary. Finally, systemic adjustments and a supportive school culture are vital.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter presented the overview of the study. This chapter presents both the literature review and the theoretical framework of the study. The review of literature commences with a discussion on second-career teachers during the transitional phase. This is followed by their professional transitional complexities in leading teaching and learning, their challenges, strengths, and their positionality as novices. Finally, the chapter presents the theoretical framework, which consists of Adaptive leadership theory and William Bridges' transition theory.

#### **2.2 A Glimpse of the Transition Phase**

Transition is a multifaceted process. For many individuals, a professional transition is not merely a change in job titles or workplaces, but a deeply transformative process that reassesses personal goals, values, and professional identity (Vahidi et al., 2022). Research by Lane (1984) and Normore (2004) further highlights the complexity of role transitions. They describe it as a demanding process of learning and self-reflection. It involves letting go of the comfort and confidence that came with the previous role and embracing the uncertainty and challenges that accompany the new, unfamiliar one (Brown-Ferrigno, 2003). This aligns with the broader understanding of change, which inherently involves loss, anxiety, and struggle (Marris, 1975 in Fullan, 2007).

According to Daresh and Male (2000), moving from one role to another is like crossing a border (Daresh & Male, 2000). It is a significant turning point that requires individuals to completely transform how they act, think, and even perceive themselves. As such, transitions are complex and often feel overwhelming (Kilinc & Gumus, 2021), leading to feelings of shock as people navigate this new territory (Spillane & Lee, 2014). The nature of a transition often dictates the type of response or adaptation required, whether it be personal growth, social support mechanisms, or technological innovation to facilitate the change (Ibarra, 2003). Whether voluntary or involuntary, predicted or unexpected, transitions can have profound effects on individuals and communities (Zittoun et al., 2013).

### **2.2.1 Second-Career Teachers' Professional Transitional Complexities in Leading Teaching and Learning**

The transition into teaching as a second-career is marked by both professional and emotional complexities. While second-career teachers bring valuable experience from prior occupations, entering the education profession requires adapting to a dynamic, multifaceted environment (Anderson & Freebody, 2021). The process of shifting into a new professional identity, particularly within the emotionally charged and socially embedded role of a teacher, can be both enriching and challenging. For many, the desire to positively impact learners' lives is a powerful motivator (Kim & Lee, 2018). Yet, this optimism often coexists with anxiety stemming from the complexities of teaching, including mastering curriculum, managing classrooms, and implementing educational policies (O'Neil, 2020).

Central to this transition is the development of a teachers' professional identity. Unlike other careers, teaching demands a deep alignment between personal values and professional practice. Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) argue that identity formation involves self-reflection, introspection, and an evolving understanding of oneself in relation to the role of the teacher. This journey is highly individualised and influenced by life histories, previous professional experiences, and educational backgrounds (Bennett, 2013). Vähäsantanen (2022) further explains that identity development is not merely about adopting a new role, but about integrating personal beliefs, motivations, and professional goals into daily practice. For second-career teachers, this process may involve reconciling old professional norms with new educational expectations.

Complicating this process is the need to quickly acquire pedagogical skills and classroom management strategies. Many second-career teachers enter the profession with limited formal training in instructional planning, assessment, and learner engagement (Rodriguez & Patel, 2022; Rosario, 2020). As a result, they may experience uncertainty and frustration when trying to meet the diverse needs of learners. Although they may be open to innovative practices, their lack of classroom experience can cause them to fall back on teacher-centred approaches, particularly when faced with behavioural challenges or unfamiliar content (Hattie, 2009; McFarland, 200). This tension between willingness to innovate and a lack of pedagogical experience reflects the transitional complexity at the core of their professional shift.

The increasingly diverse nature of classrooms further compounds these challenges. Simmons (2016) notes that second-career teachers often require additional support to effectively cater to

learners from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Adapting to frequently changing curriculum standards and policy updates adds another layer of complexity (Rosario, 2020; Sayed & Jansen, 2022). For teachers new to the profession, deciphering these policies and translating them into effective practice can be overwhelming (Simmons, 2016). Troesch (2019) highlights that this policy overload can lead to feelings of isolation and hinder integration into the school community.

Classroom management, in particular, emerges as a significant area of struggle. Establishing a positive learning environment and navigating learner behaviour are complex tasks that traditionally trained teachers refine over time through practicum and mentorship (Evertson & Weinstein, 2006). In contrast, second-career teachers may lack these foundational experiences and feel ill-equipped to respond to disruptive behaviour or learner conflict (Ballado, 2022). Creating inclusive, learner-centred environments where participation is encouraged requires not only strategy but also emotional attunement—skills that take time to develop (Skott, 2019; Troesch et al., 2017).

Despite these difficulties, second-career teachers often demonstrate initiative in seeking out mentorship and professional development (Wang, 2016). Their resilience and willingness to learn are critical assets. However, Brown and Davis (2018) caution that these strengths alone are not enough. Successful integration into the teaching profession requires institutional recognition of both the assets and vulnerabilities that second-career teachers bring. Leshem et al. (2021) remind us that the process of forging a new professional identity is not always smooth; it may involve conflict, confusion, and ongoing negotiation of one's place within the school community.

In sum, the transitional journey of second-career teachers is characterised by emotional, cognitive, and practical complexities. Their capacity to lead teaching and learning is shaped not only by their previous experience but also by their ability to navigate the unique demands of the teaching profession. Understanding and supporting this transition is vital to fostering their growth as educators and enabling them to contribute meaningfully to school improvement and learner success.

### **2.2.2 Second-Career Teachers: First Steps in the Classroom**

The initial lessons delivered by second-career teachers often reflect a delicate blend of pre-existing professional strengths and emerging pedagogical challenges. Their prior careers

typically equip them with valuable real-world experience, strong organisational skills, and a confident professional demeanour, which can aid in establishing initial classroom presence and managing tasks effectively (Simmons, 2016). For instance, a former engineer might skilfully connect physics concepts to industrial applications, or a journalist could enrich English lessons with authentic communication scenarios. However, despite these transferable assets, a significant hurdle in their first lessons lies in developing Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK), which is the unique understanding of how to transform subject matter for student learning (Varadharajan et al., 2020).

This gap in PCK means that their deep content knowledge may not automatically translate into accessible and engaging classroom instruction. First lessons often reveal difficulties in anticipating common student misconceptions, effectively sequencing material for diverse learners, or employing a varied repertoire of instructional strategies beyond traditional lecture formats (Varadharajan et al., 2020). Moreover, while their maturity can contribute to initial classroom presence, the specific nuances of managing young student behaviour, facilitating smooth transitions, and providing effective formative assessment for learning are distinct skills they are still acquiring (Simmons, 2016). Consequently, their initial lesson delivery, while often well-planned from a content perspective, may lack the adaptive responsiveness and nuanced learner-centred approaches that come with extensive classroom experience, potentially hindering optimal learner learning and contributing to their sense of inadequacy as novices (Varadharajan et al., 2020; Yalçinkaya, 2002).

## **2.3 Challenges of second-career teachers**

As discussed below, second-career teachers experience various complexities as they transition into their new roles. This section will present how second-career teachers integrate into the school culture and community, also building strong professional relationships and support networks within the school community.

### **2.3.1 Integration into the school culture and community**

School culture encompasses shared values, beliefs, signs, symbols, and mutual understanding among members of a school community (Karadog & Oztekin Bayir, 2018). Gruenert (2005) further defines it as the set of guiding principles, assumptions, and expectations that influence how a school operates. For second-career teachers, integrating into this established culture can be particularly challenging. While they bring fresh perspectives and enthusiasm, they often

face difficulties navigating the unwritten rules and social dynamics of the school environment (Ismail et al., 2022; O’Neil, 2020). These teachers may feel like outsiders among colleagues who have spent years within the school system, and building rapport with those from different professional or cultural backgrounds can require significant effort (Dogan, 2017). Understanding how things work, from communication norms to protocols for learner issues, can be a steep learning curve (Demerath, 2018). However, integration is a two-way process. Schools also play a critical role in fostering inclusive environments where diverse backgrounds are welcomed and respected (Ismail et al., 2022).

Research from various contexts underscores that second-career teachers often struggle with adapting to school culture and integrating their prior professional experiences into teaching (Hai et al., 2018). Strong professional relationships within the school community are crucial for these teachers to thrive (Meyer & Brown, 2017). These relationships not only help ease feelings of isolation but also provide a network of support that can facilitate a smoother transition into teaching (Rosario, 2020; Shwartz & Dori, 2020). Collaborative interactions allow teachers to share expertise and best practices, benefiting the broader school community. While some second-career teachers may pursue leadership or curriculum roles, many find that the sense of belonging and collaboration is the most rewarding aspect of the profession. A supportive and cohesive school culture ultimately enriches the learning environment for both staff and students (Shwartz & Dori, 2020).

In addition to institutional culture, interpersonal relationships also significantly impact second-career teachers' experiences. Concerns about acceptance by learners and colleagues are common (Becker et al., 2022; Garcia, 2019). Research indicates that positive learner and teacher relationships contribute to both learner achievement and teacher well-being (Aldrup et al., 2018; Moya et al., 2019). Building trust and respect across all levels—learners, colleagues, administrators, and parents—can be daunting, particularly for individuals unfamiliar with the educational landscape (Barrett & Brown, 2014; Bauer et al., 2017). Establishing credibility and forming connections takes time and consistent effort but is essential for long term success.

Finally, second-career teachers must adapt to the cultural diversity of modern classrooms, which may be unfamiliar territory given their previous careers (Becker et al., 2022). Successfully teaching in such settings requires a flexible and culturally responsive approach that acknowledges learners' varied backgrounds, beliefs, and learning preferences (Shwartz &

Dori, 2020). Understanding and responding to this diversity is not only key to effective teaching but also central to creating an inclusive and affirming learning environment.

### **2.3.2 Understanding of the Educational System**

While second-career teachers are often celebrated for the real-world experience they bring to the classroom, the educational system presents a complex and dynamic environment that can be difficult to navigate (O'Neil, 2020). A key challenge lies in their limited formal training in educational policy implementation and in managing both classroom practices and broader school operations (Becker, 2022). The constant evolution of curriculum frameworks and education standards demands that these teachers have access to up-to-date resources and sustained support to ensure their teaching aligns with current expectations (Rodriguez & Patel, 2022; O'Neil, 2020).

Another layer of complexity involves developing skills such as lesson differentiation to meet diverse learner needs. Rodriguez and Patel (2022) note that with targeted professional development and collaborative support from experienced colleagues, second-career teachers can enhance their instructional strategies. However, integrating into the education system requires more than classroom readiness; it involves learning to navigate a web of policies, curriculum requirements, and administrative procedures that may differ across schools and districts (Becker, 2022). This process can be particularly daunting for those unfamiliar with the inner workings of educational institutions.

Adapting to the constantly shifting landscape of educational policies can feel like navigating a maze (Rodriguez & Patel, 2022). For newcomers, keeping up with changes in assessment protocols, curriculum reforms, and regulatory requirements can be overwhelming (Sayed & Jansen, 2022). The complexity and volume of these policies can create confusion and frustration, particularly when it is unclear how to translate them into effective teaching practices (Simmons, 2016).

Nevertheless, there are strategies to support second-career teachers in overcoming these challenges. Access to reliable resources through school leadership, professional bodies, and online platforms can help keep them informed and confident in their practice (Garcia, 2019). Most importantly, collaboration with experienced colleagues and mentorship relationships can provide much-needed guidance, helping second-career teachers decode policy language, share

best practices, and develop the confidence needed to lead teaching and learning effectively (Becker, 2022; Garcia, 2019).

## **2.4 The Strengths of Second-Career Teachers in Leading Teaching and Learning**

Second-career teachers bring a remarkable blend of adaptability and resilience to the teaching profession—qualities that position them as strong leaders in teaching and learning. According to Rodriguez and Patel (2022), the challenges they face during the transition are not limitations but reflections of their ability to adapt to new environments and recover from setbacks. This resilience enables them to stay motivated despite the inevitable ups and downs of classroom life (Simmons, 2016). These educators often establish robust support networks with colleagues, mentors, and family, which not only boosts morale but also fosters a sense of professional belonging (Troesch, 2019). Their capacity to set realistic goals, maintain a growth mindset, and reflect meaningfully on their positive impact on learners contributes to a strong foundation for leading classroom instruction and promoting school improvement (Tsybulsky & Muchnik-Rozanov, 2019). Their perseverance is a clear indication of their dedication to making a meaningful difference in education.

While transitioning into teaching comes with emotional challenges and a steep learning curve, second-career teachers often approach this with passion and purpose. Despite initial frustrations in mastering the complexities of pedagogy and classroom management (Walters & Singh, 2021), their emotional experience is shaped by individual dispositions and the newness of the profession (Smith & Johnson, 2021). Many are fuelled by a deep commitment to learners and a genuine passion for education (Davis, 2019). This sense of purpose is reinforced through everyday classroom victories—moments of learner engagement, progress, and connection (Anderson & Moore, 2023; Thompson, 2020). Their willingness to learn and unlearn is essential, as they refine their professional identities by integrating previous work experiences with newly acquired educational knowledge and skills. This process of continuous adaptation makes them agile, reflective, and responsive educators.

The increasing trend of professionals moving into teaching as a second career has introduced a wave of enriched perspectives into schools. Research reveals that many are drawn by altruistic motivations, such as the desire to influence learners' lives positively, alongside personal quests for fulfilment and purpose (Bernal, 2018). Their prior careers equip them with transferable skills, such as communication, critical thinking, and leadership, which significantly enhance their teaching practice. This background promotes an ethos of lifelong learning and

adaptability—key qualities for leading effective teaching and learning in diverse and evolving educational contexts (Watson & Wright, 2022). Despite the challenges they face, many second-career teachers derive immense satisfaction and pride from their work, driven by an eagerness to master educational theories and innovative pedagogical strategies (Chen, 2020; Jackson, 2019). Their curiosity and dedication enrich the profession, making them valuable assets to schools striving for inclusive, dynamic, and learner-centred teaching environments.

## **2.5 Second-Career Teachers and Their Positionality as Novices**

Despite entering the teaching profession with prior work experience and specialised knowledge, second-career teachers assume the position of novices within the educational field (Hammond, 2017; Darling-Hammond, 2017). Their entry into teaching requires them to reorient themselves professionally, transitioning from roles of authority or expertise in other sectors to that of beginner educators learning the pedagogical, relational, and institutional nuances of schooling. Leshem et al. (2021) highlight that while second-career teachers bring confidence from their past professions, they often experience dissonance as they grapple with the demands of classroom teaching. Although they are not passive recipients of new knowledge, these individuals actively engage with the challenges of their new roles. However, their initial lack of familiarity with educational practices often positions them as uncertain and dependent, particularly during the early phases of their careers.

This novice status brings with it challenges that mirror those faced by traditionally trained beginner teachers, such as managing classrooms, planning lessons, and adapting to school culture (Wargner, 2014). However, the positionality of second-career teachers is complicated by the juxtaposition of prior professional authority and current pedagogical inexperience. Their strength lies primarily in content knowledge and professional maturity, yet their limited exposure to educational theory, learner development, and instructional strategies underscores their novice standing in the classroom (Troesch, 2019).

Nonetheless, second-career teachers often enrich the learning environment through real-world insights and a strong sense of purpose (Tsybulsky & Muchnik-Rozanov, 2019). Their diverse life and career experiences can enhance subject matter delivery, foster critical thinking, and create authentic learning opportunities. Even so, their ability to translate these strengths into effective teaching practices is mediated by their novice status, requiring structured support,

mentorship, and opportunities for professional reflection. Their transition, therefore, is not merely about acquiring new skills but about negotiating their identity as professionals who must relearn how to lead, influence, and educate from a different positional footing.

## **2.6 Theoretical Framework**

This section outlines the theoretical framework that informs the study. According to Varpio et al. (2020, 990), “a theory is an abstract description of the relationships between concepts that help us to understand the world,” acting as a guiding compass to scaffold understanding. The theoretical framework comprises selected theories that shape the researcher’s conceptualisation of the study and inform the research design and interpretation (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). It serves as the foundational anchor upon which the study is built, providing a structured lens through which knowledge is constructed and meaning is derived (Grant & Osanloo, 2014; Patten & Newhart, 2018).

The theoretical framework of this study is underpinned by two key theories: Adaptive Leadership and William Bridges' Transition Model. Each theory is discussed in terms of its core components, followed by a justification of its relevance to the study. The final section synthesises these theories, demonstrating how their integration provides a meaningful and coherent lens through which to understand and interpret the experiences of second-career teachers in leading teaching and learning.

### **2.6.1 Adaptive Leadership Theory**

Adaptive Leadership is a practical framework developed by Dr. Ron Heifetz and Marty Linsky at the Harvard Kennedy School to help individuals and organisations adapt and succeed in challenging environments (Jenne, 1997; Pujianto et al., 2023). It focuses on increasing the ability of individuals and groups to engage in the gradual but meaningful process of change (Abdulaziz, 2020). This theory was designed specifically to identify and address consequential change during uncertain times, with broad applications in leadership development, workforce strengthening, community partnerships, and navigating shifting political, social, and economic landscapes (Kitchenham, 2012; Pujianto et al., 2023). According to Northouse (2018), the objective of adaptive leadership is to inspire people to change and learn new ways of living so they can successfully face challenges and grow in the process. It equips individuals to cope with and rise above professional and personal challenges, enabling them to thrive rather than merely cope (Heifetz et al., 2009).

Central to Adaptive Leadership is the distinction between two types of challenges faced by organisations and individuals: technical and adaptive challenges (Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz et al., 2009). Technical challenges are problems with known solutions that can be addressed through existing knowledge, procedures, and expertise. In contrast, adaptive challenges are complex problems without clear solutions, requiring individuals to change their ways of thinking, acting, and being to effectively address them (Heifetz, 2003). These challenges are often unpredictable and demand innovative learning and leadership.

### **2.6. 1.1 Appropriateness of the theory for this study**

Although Adaptive Leadership is primarily a leadership theory, it is highly appropriate for this study on second-career teachers leading teaching and learning. Leading teaching and learning is itself a form of leadership, involving navigating both technical and adaptive challenges within the educational environment. Second-career teachers, as novice educators, also emerge as leaders in their classrooms and schools, influencing teaching practices, learner engagement, and collaboration amongst colleagues. Adaptive Leadership provides a valuable lens for understanding how these teachers manage the complex and ambiguous demands of their roles, especially as they transition from previous careers with different norms and expectations.

This framework captures how second-career teachers must mobilise themselves and others to confront challenges that cannot be solved by routine methods alone. It emphasises the need for them to develop new professional identities, adopt innovative teaching strategies, and lead change in often resistant or uncertain educational contexts. Therefore, Adaptive Leadership theory effectively illuminates the dynamic process of growth and influence that second-career teachers experience, making it a fitting foundation to explore their positionality as novices and emerging leaders in teaching and learning.

### **2.6.2 William Bridges' Transition Model**

William Bridges' Transition Model is a comprehensive psychological framework that distinguishes between change (external events and circumstances) and transition (the internal psychological process individuals undergo in response to change) (Bridges & Bridges, 2009). The theory posits that effective adaptation to change requires successful navigation through three distinct psychological phases, each serving a specific function in helping individuals

reconstruct their identity, relationships, and understanding of their environment (Bridges, 2009; Miller, 2017).

The model's core premise is that transition is fundamentally an internal, psychological reorientation process that individuals must complete to successfully adapt to external changes. Unlike linear change management approaches, Bridges' model recognises transition as a non-linear, iterative process that acknowledges the emotional and psychological complexity inherent in significant life or career changes (Bridges, 2009; Bridges & Mitchell, 2000).

### **2.6.2.1 The Three-Phase Framework**

**Phase 1: Ending, Losing, and Letting Go.** This initial phase involves individuals acknowledging and accepting the need for change while recognising what they are leaving behind. The phase encompasses processing emotions related to loss, grief, and uncertainty, as individuals say goodbye to familiar roles, relationships, and identities while accepting the reality of impending change (Bridges & Bridges, 2009; Bridges, 2009). This stage can be emotionally challenging, often triggering feelings of fear, denial, anger, and sadness (Bridges & Mitchell, 2000).

**Phase 2: Neutral Zone or Transition.** Characterised by ambiguity, disorientation, and psychological liminality, this phase represents the "in-between" state where individuals have released their former identity but have not yet fully embraced their new role. It serves as a period of exploration, experimentation, and gradual adaptation, often accompanied by anxiety, confusion, and creative potential (Bridges & Bridges, 2009; Bridges, 2009). This "wilderness" period, as Bridges sometimes refers to it, is crucial for psychological realignment and re-patterning, even if it brings distress and uncertainty (William Bridges Associates, 2009; NCDA, 2020).

**Phase 3: New Beginning or Integration.** In this final phase, individuals begin integrating changes into their lives, developing acceptance and commitment to their new situation. They establish new routines, relationships, and professional identities, marking a period of renewed energy, purpose, and effectiveness in their transformed role (Bridges & Bridges, 2009; Bridges, 2009). This stage is characterised by a release of energy in a new direction, leading to a fresh identity and a reoriented and renewed sense of purpose (William Bridges Associates, 2009).

## **2.7. Appropriateness of the theory for this study**

Bridges' Transition Model is well-suited for exploring second-career teachers leading teaching and learning for several reasons. Firstly, its focus on psychological reorientation aligns with the significant identity shift these teachers undergo, moving from established careers to reconstructing their professional competence and purpose. Secondly, its three-phase structure mirrors their journey: letting go of past identities (Phase 1), navigating uncertainty during early teaching (Phase 2), and establishing new teaching and leadership identities (Phase 3), allowing systemic analysis of their progression. Thirdly, the model's concept of the Neutral Zone highlights the creative yet challenging space where they balance prior experience with adapting to education, framing both difficulties and opportunities. Finally, its emphasis on internal psychological processes complements this study's focus on lived experiences, providing a lens to understanding how second-career teachers construct meaning and develop as educational leaders.

## **2.8. Bringing the theories together**

Adaptive Leadership and Bridges' Transition Model together provide a powerful, complementary framework for studying second-career teachers' experiences in leading teaching and learning.

Adaptive Leadership focuses on how individuals and organisations respond to complex, uncertain challenges that require learning, innovation, and shifts in mindset and behaviour. It highlights the need for leaders to mobilise themselves and others to navigate change that cannot be solved by existing knowledge or technical fixes alone. This is especially relevant for second-career teachers who face new and unpredictable demands in educational leadership, requiring them to adapt their prior skills and develop new ways of thinking and leading.

Bridges' Transition Model, on the other hand, offers insight into the psychological and emotional process individuals undergo when moving from one role or identity to another. It breaks down the transition into three phases—ending old ways, navigating a neutral zone of uncertainty, and beginning a new identity—helping to explain the internal experience of second-career teachers as they leave their former professions and build their new professional selves as teacher-leaders.

Together, these theories address both the external challenges and internal transformations that second-career teachers encounter. Adaptive Leadership frames the practical demands and leadership challenges within schools, emphasising the work needed to address adaptive problems in teaching and learning. Bridges' model captures the emotional and identity shifts these teachers experience throughout this journey.

Using both allows the study to explore not only how second-career teachers manage and lead change in educational settings but also how they psychologically navigate their personal and professional transitions, constructing new identities as leaders in teaching and learning. This integrated lens thus provides a richer, holistic understanding of their experiences, combining the leadership actions required and the meaning-making processes involved.

## **2.9. Conclusion**

This chapter presented a review of the literature and the theoretical framework undergirding this study. In terms of the literature review, it emphasised that the transition into teaching as a second-career is a complex and deeply transformative process that involves not only adapting to new professional demands but also redefining personal and professional identity. Also, second-career teachers often face emotional, cognitive, and practical challenges as they navigate unfamiliar educational environments, acquire new pedagogical skills, and integrate into established school cultures.

This chapter also presented some hindrances faced by these teachers, such as struggling with classroom management, policy implementation, and building relationships within the school community.

Lastly, this chapter highlighted second-career teachers' strengths as well. Second-career teachers bring notable strengths to the teaching profession, including adaptability, resilience, and a strong sense of purpose, which helps them navigate the challenges of transitioning into education.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter examined the existing literature and theoretical framework that underpins this study. This chapter presents the research design and methodology. The research design identifies and establishes the appropriate tools and procedures necessary to answer the research questions as clearly and unambiguously as possible (de Vaus, 2005; Kumar, 2011), while the methodology provides the specific tools and techniques used to implement this research plan.

The chapter begins with a discussion of the interpretive paradigm, which serves as the paradigmatic stance adopted for this study. This is followed by a discussion of the qualitative research approach that guides the inquiry. The chapter then discusses narrative inquiry as the methodological framework underpinning the study. Subsequently, the selection of participants through purposive and convenience sampling strategies is addressed. The discussion proceeds to review narrative interviewing as the primary data generation method, followed by an explanation of the thematic data analysis approach used to interpret the findings. Finally, the chapter addresses issues of trustworthiness and ethical considerations that inform the research process.

#### **3.2 Interpretive Research Paradigm**

This study is located within the interpretive paradigm. According to Guba and Lincoln (1989) and Nguyen (2022) the interpretive paradigm, also known as the constructivist paradigm, is a research paradigm that focuses on understanding the subjective world of human experience. It recognises that individuals' meanings and perspectives are shaped by their social context and seeks to uncover the subjective meanings people attach to their actions (Gichuru, 2017). This paradigm is appropriate for this study because it seeks to explore the subjective experiences of second-career teachers and the meanings they ascribe to as they lead teaching and learning in the early years of their tenure.

Using ontological and epistemological assumptions, I delved deeper into discussing the paradigm, providing justifications for its appropriateness for this study. Ontology relates to a core branch of philosophy and explores the nature of being and existence (Vogler, 2023). One of the ontological assumptions of the interpretive paradigm is that reality is socially constructed (Abdulla et al., 2023). As such, there are multiple realities (Garcia & Lopez, 2020). The

paradigm acknowledges that experience is socially constructed and as such, each second-career teacher's experience is unique as a different set of social factors shapes it. It is thus appropriate for this study because I intend to understand each participant's unique story, being aware that as much as they may all be second-career teachers, their experiences are different and multifaceted. According to Morehouse (2011), acknowledging multiple realities and perspectives provides a more comprehensive understanding of a situation. The interpretive paradigm is thus well suited as it enables me to solicit an in-depth account of the experiences of second-career teachers in leading teaching and learning.

According to Creswell (2014), epistemology relates to the study of knowledge. Interpretivist researchers believe knowledge is a subjective construction, culturally derived and historically situated (Cohen et al., 2011; Scotland, 2012). This paradigm is appropriate for this study since it explores the personal stories and experiences of second-career teachers, aiming to understand how they lead teaching and learning, the factors that enable them and the factors that constrain them. As such, this assumption is relevant because second-career teachers enter their tenure with prior capital and life experiences which shape how they enact their role.

Another key epistemological position underpinning this study is that of subjectivist epistemology. According to Lee (2023), this perspective holds that researchers make meaning of participants' lived experiences through their thinking, narration, and cognitive processing. Knowledge, therefore, is not an objective entity waiting to be discovered but is instead constructed through interpretation and interaction (Scotland, 2012). From this standpoint, personal ideologies are acknowledged and accepted rather than dismissed.

Embracing this view, I recognised that I am not a neutral observer but an active participant in the research process. I engaged with second-career teachers to co-construct meaning from their lived experiences. Their perspectives, biases, and understandings shaped how they made sense of their experiences and, in turn, shaped how I interpreted the data. My background, experiences, and theoretical positioning influenced the analysis, making the process inherently subjective. Interpretation, therefore, is not a mirror of reality but a constructed understanding grounded in the researcher's engagement with the data.

Subjective realities can be explored, made sense of, and even reconstructed through human interaction between researcher and participants (Kim & Park, 2022). The interpretive paradigm is particularly suited to this study because it requires deep engagement with participants to understand their worldviews (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Through narrative inquiry, dialogue, and

participatory engagement, I gained insights into the ways participants made sense of their social worlds. This process illuminated the co-creative nature of research, where meaning is jointly constructed through interaction.

As Guba and Lincoln (1989) assert, the researcher's interpretations are shaped by participants' accounts, while participants' understandings may evolve through their engagement in the research. The interpretive process is dynamic. As I engaged with the second-career teachers, new insights and meanings emerged, leading to a reconstruction of earlier interpretations. This ongoing process of mutual learning and transformation is central to the interpretive research paradigm.

### **3.3 Qualitative Research Approach**

The research approach is a structured plan that guides the researcher through the research process, ensuring a coherent and systematic exploration of the research questions (Yin, 2018). It provides the roadmap that underpins the entirety of the research endeavour, from data generation to the final analysis and conclusions (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). This study used a qualitative research design.

Qualitative research is a form of systematic inquiry that seeks to explore and gain deeper insights into real-world problems (Ugwu & Eze, 2023). It involves investigating social phenomena within their natural contexts and is particularly effective in examining how individuals experience, interpret, and make meaning of their lives (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Yin, 2018). This approach allows researchers to understand how people perceive and respond to different aspects of their social and professional environments, how groups interact, and how relationships are shaped by those interactions. As Denzin and Lincoln (2011) note, qualitative research is particularly well suited to investigating complex human experiences, offering rich and nuanced understandings that quantitative approaches may not fully capture.

This research design is appropriate for the current study, which seeks to explore the lived experiences of second-career teachers who are leading teaching and learning. These individuals occupy unique and often complex positionalities: they are novice teachers within the education system, yet bring with them the expertise, identity, and expectations shaped by their prior careers. Their transition into teaching, and particularly into leadership roles in teaching and learning, involves navigating new professional terrains while drawing on previous knowledge

and skills. A qualitative approach enables the researcher to understand how these teachers make sense of their roles and how they exercise leadership in the classroom.

Qualitative research seeks to answer the "how" and "why" questions rather than "how many" or "how much" (Creswell, 2009). These questions are deliberately open-ended, allowing participants to express their thoughts, feelings, and experiences freely. This approach facilitates a comprehensive exploration of a phenomenon within its broader social, cultural, and environmental contexts (Garcia, 2023). By exploring issues in natural settings, qualitative research enables the researcher to develop rich, detailed insights through close engagement with participants' lived experiences (Creswell, 2009). It is particularly effective in uncovering individuals' perceptions, behaviours, and the meanings they attach to their experiences (Mohajan, 2018). This approach was especially suitable for the present study, which focused on second-career teachers and their lived experiences of transitioning into the teaching profession. Through narrative accounts, participants shared how they moved from their previous careers into education, revealing how they adapted to new roles.

As Merriam and Tisdell (2016) note, the exploratory nature of qualitative research allows for the discovery of unexpected insights, often generating new theoretical perspectives and future research directions. In line with this, Smith and Doe (2023) argue that qualitative research aims for a deep understanding of participants by exploring underlying meanings, motivations, and contextual influences, while recognising the importance of subjectivity in shaping both experiences and findings. This emphasis on complexity and depth makes qualitative research an ideal approach for examining the multifaceted experiences of second-career teachers as they lead teaching and learning.

### **3.4 Narrative Inquiry Methodology**

Narrative inquiry was adopted as the methodology for this study. As Clandinin (2013) explains, narrative inquiry is the study of how individuals make sense of the world through their experiences. It is a methodology grounded in the belief that human beings lead storied lives, and that understanding those stories provides insight into how individuals interpret, construct, and give meaning to their realities (Clandinin, 2006). Narrative inquiry allows researchers to explore the complex interplay between personal experiences and the broader social, cultural, and environmental contexts in which those experiences are embedded (Sharp et al., 2018).

Central to narrative inquiry is the understanding that knowledge is experiential and situated. It is not only about recounting past events but also about exploring imagined futures and evolving identities (Ntinda, 2020). It involves engaging deeply with participants' lived experiences to uncover how they make sense of their lives and work, from their own perspectives.

This methodology was deemed highly appropriate for the study, which explored the lived experiences of second-career teachers as they lead teaching and learning. These individuals bring with them diverse professional backgrounds, and their transition into teaching is shaped by personal histories, institutional dynamics, and broader socio-cultural factors. Narrative inquiry offered a powerful way to capture the richness and complexity of these experiences.

By using open-ended data generation methods such as in-depth interviews, narrative inquiry enabled the collection of rich, detailed, and contextually grounded accounts (Johnson, 2022). It privileged the voices of second-career teachers, allowing them to tell their own stories of becoming and being teachers, and to reflect on how their past careers, beliefs, and environments shaped their current practices and identities. In doing so, this methodology supported a deeper understanding of how second-career teachers experience and influence teaching and learning in schools.

### **3.4.1 Clandinin and Connelly's Relational Framework**

Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) framework of narrative inquiry identifies three key dimensions as central to the exploration and presentation of lived experience: temporality (time), sociality (personal and social influences), and spatiality (place or environment). These dimensions are interrelated and shape both how narratives are constructed and how experiences are understood. In narrative inquiry, every story is situated within a particular time frame, shaped by social relationships, and located within specific physical or contextual spaces (Clandinin, 2013). The researcher must attend to the dynamic interactions among these dimensions, recognising how they influence one another and contribute to the unfolding of experience. By engaging with these interconnected elements, the researcher is better positioned to honour the complexity and depth of participants' narratives (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Temporality refers to events under study that are in temporal transition (Connelly & Clandinin 2006). It highlights the chronological sequencing of events and the construction of time within narratives (Connelly & Clandinin 2006). Clandinin and Connelly recognise the significance of time in shaping individuals' experiences and sense-making processes (Clandinin & Connelly,

2000). Focusing attention temporally leads researchers toward the past, present, and future of people, places, and events under study. It is important to attend to temporality in narrative inquiry as the quality of experience through time is viewed as narrative.

In temporality, the aspects of past, present, and future each entail distinct dimensions of time within individuals' narratives. The past dimension encompasses events, experiences, and memories that have already occurred, providing a foundation for understanding the present and shaping expectations for the future (Zerubavel, 2003). Individuals often reflect on past experiences, achievements, traumas, or significant moments that have influenced their identity and worldview. Meanwhile, the present dimension represents the immediate moment in time, where individuals engage with ongoing events, interactions, emotions, and sensations as they unfold (Fivush, 2010). It is a dynamic moment of lived experience, where individuals navigate their surroundings and make sense of their reality in real time. Lastly, the future dimension pertains to anticipated events, goals, aspirations, and possibilities that lie ahead (Buehler & Griffin, 2015). Individuals may project their hopes, fears, and desires into the future, guiding their actions and decisions in the present. By exploring these temporal dimensions within narratives, researchers gain insights into the complex ways in which time influences human identity, behaviour, and understanding of the world.

The social dimension of Clandinin and Connelly's framework relates to the role of social relationships, interactions, and influences within narratives (Connelly & Clandinin 2006). They emphasise that individuals are embedded within social contexts and shaped by their relationships with others (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). In sociality, the aspects of personal, social, and cultural contexts each represent distinct dimensions of human relationships and interactions within narratives. The personal dimension pertains to individual experiences, emotions, and identities, encompassing the unique perspectives and internal struggles of individuals as they navigate their relationships with others (Bruner, 1990). Sociality involves interpersonal relationships, interactions, and dynamics, including roles, expectations, and power dynamics within social networks (Bakhtin, 1981). Cultural sociality encompasses broader societal, historical, and cultural influences on individuals' narratives, including shared beliefs, values, and traditions (Geertz, 1973). Together, these dimensions shape individuals' experiences, relationships, and identities within narratives, highlighting the dynamic nature of human sociality and the interplay between personal, social, and cultural factors in shaping individuals' stories and social identities.

In Clandinin and Connelly's framework, spatiality refers to the physical environments, settings, and spaces within which narratives unfold (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). They emphasize that individuals' experiences are deeply embedded in the spaces they inhabit, and that these environments significantly shape how stories are lived and told (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Within the dimension of spatiality, place and environment represent distinct but interconnected aspects of physical context.

Place refers to specific locations or settings where events occur, often carrying symbolic meanings and cultural significance that influence how individuals experience and make sense of their lives (Tuan, 1977). These places become storied spaces that are tied to memory, identity, and emotion. In contrast, the environment encompasses the broader contextual elements—natural, built, and social—that surround and influence these places (Relph, 1976). This includes features such as landscapes, urban structures, architecture, and social systems, all of which shape individuals' perceptions, behaviours, and interactions.

Together, place and environment form a dynamic interplay that influences how individuals construct meaning, form relationships, and develop identities within their narratives. Spatiality thus highlights the vital connection between people and the physical and social spaces in which their experiences are situated.

Together, these three dimensions support a holistic understanding of experience by accounting for the dynamic, relational, and context-dependent nature of human life. In the context of this study, the three-dimensional inquiry space enables a nuanced and richly textured exploration of how second-career teachers make sense of their roles, navigate challenges, and contribute to the leadership of teaching and learning. This approach not only honours the complexity of their journeys but also deepens the insights that can inform teacher education, leadership development, and educational policy.

### **3.5 Selection of Participants**

Maree (2007) defines sampling as the process of selecting participants for a study, a crucial step in qualitative research to ensure the relevance and depth of the generated data. This study employs a combination of purposive and convenience sampling methods. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique that relies on the researcher's judgement to select subjects who are deemed most suitable for providing the necessary insights into the research problem (Ntinda, 2020). It allows the researcher to handpick participants based on their ability

to fulfil the study's specific objectives (Troesch & Bauer, 2020). In this study, suitable participants were those individuals who transitioned from their initial career into teaching through the completion of a Post-Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) and had served for five years or less as teachers. Second-career teachers who had not practiced in their previous careers and professions were excluded. This ensured that the participants selected were second-career teachers who had experience in their previous careers before transitioning into teaching.

Convenience sampling was also used in this study. Rahi (2017) describes convenience sampling as a method where participants are chosen based on their easy accessibility and proximity to the researcher. Convenience sampling was deemed appropriate for this study as it allowed me to select research participants who were accessible to me in terms of my geographic location. These second-career teachers were conveniently selected from a single primary school, for convenience purposes.

Given the qualitative nature of this research, where depth and richness of data are prioritised over quantity, the study did not require many participants. Following the guidance of Ntinda (2020), who asserts that narrative inquiry does not prescribe a specific number of participants, five second-career teachers were chosen for this study. This number allowed for a detailed exploration of each participant's narrative, providing a comprehensive understanding of the experiences of second-career teachers.

### **3.6 Data Generation Method**

Data generation represents a process that the researcher conducts to generate data that would be useful for subsequent data analysis on the stated research interest (Nili et al., 2017). In this study, data was generated using narrative interviews. According to Connelly and Clandinin, (2006), narrative interviews are when participants narrate their stories in their own words, revealing the meanings they attribute to events, relationships, and contexts, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of human behaviour and cognition. They are a means of generating people's own stories about their lived experiences and they can help researchers to better understand people's experiences and behaviours (Atkinson, 1998; Mishler, 1986).

Therefore, narrative interviews are particularly appropriate for this study for several reasons. Firstly, they allowed for a deep exploration of the lived experiences, perspectives, and transitions of second-career teachers in leading teaching and learning. Given the complex nature of career transitions and the diverse backgrounds that second-career teachers bring into

the classroom, narrative interviews provided a platform for participants to share their unique stories in their own words, offering rich insights into their motivations, challenges, and successes (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Secondly, narrative interviews enabled me to contextualise participants' experiences within broader sociocultural and educational contexts. By eliciting detailed narratives, I could uncover the cultural, social, and institutional factors that shape second-career teachers' professional identities and practices (Bruner, 1987). Additionally, narrative interviews promoted participant empowerment by giving voice to their perspectives and allowing them to contribute to knowledge production, thereby enhancing the authenticity and validity of the study's findings (Chase, 2005). Overall, narrative interviews offered a suitable method for capturing the multifaceted experiences of second-career teachers in leading teaching and learning, facilitating a nuanced understanding of their roles and contributions within the education system.

### **3.6.1 The Narrative Interview Process**

In this study, I used Jovchelovitch and Bauer's (2000) approach as a guide for my narrative interviewing process. The suggested phases are interview preparation, initiation, main narration, the questioning phase, and concluding talks (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000). Each of these phases is discussed below.

#### **3.6.1.1 Interview Preparation**

According to Jovchelovitch and Bauer (2000), it is important to have a basic understanding of the main event before starting the interview. This helps to frame the key issue in a way that encourages participants to share their stories and highlights the gaps that the narrative interview aims to fill.

First and foremost, as the researcher, I had to thoroughly familiarise myself with the participants (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000). This involved formulating relations with my participants through regular informal discussions about my study and sharing my story at different intervals.

This approach helped participants understand the purpose of my study and the value of their involvement. Based on my initial preparation, I created a list of questions, which are designed according to my research objectives (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000). The main goal was to

connect my research questions to the participants' narratives, allowing my interests to fit naturally within their stories.

### **3.6.1.2 Initiation**

Having built rapport with the participants and provided an overview of the study, I sought informed consent. It was crucial to obtain their consent to record the interview, as recording was essential for accurate analysis later (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000). After securing consent, I then gave a brief explanation of the narrative interview process, which includes continuous storytelling, a questioning phase, and other steps. Some of my participants decided to draw timelines, reflecting on the journey of how they ended up as second-career teachers. These rough sketches worked as pointers to assist them to narrate their stories in their desired order.

Our narrative interviews began with the participants introducing themselves and giving a glimpse of their identities and backgrounds. Focusing on the participants' personal experience helped to ensure their engagement and encouraged detailed narration. The initial narration held personal, social, and collective significance. It was important for me not to ask about the informant's specific involvement or interest in the topic right away, so as not to unduly influence their viewpoint or encourage them to act out a role (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000). This aligns with the idea that early probing might lead participants to respond in a way that reflects what they think is expected, rather than their genuine perspective. Role-playing in qualitative research refers to when participants act out thoughts or feelings, which can distort authentic responses (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The topic was broad enough to allow the participants to develop lengthy narratives, moving from their upbringing to their initial career, up to the experiences of being a second-career teacher.

This involved building trust and rapport with my participants, which was crucial during this phase to facilitate open and honest communication (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000). To gain participants' trust, I started by sharing my journey of how I ended up a second-career teacher. As I was sharing my journey, I got to realise that I was never frightened of change or transitioning. I say this because one of my participants said 'You and I have a habit of changing careers'; this was after I shared my journey from being a Civil Engineering student to a Dental Technology student and later a PGCE student. This showed me that I have experienced being a novice employee in multiple industries.

### **3.6.1.3 Main narration**

Once the narrations began, they continued uninterrupted until they gave signals that the story was concluding with an obvious coda. During the narration, I refrained from offering any leading commentary, instead, I provided nonverbal cues that showed I was listening attentively and offering a clear invitation for the interviewee to continue. I took notes as Jovchelovitch and Bauer (2000) say that if it does not disturb the narrator, the interviewer may occasionally take notes to prepare for follow-up questions.

### **3.6.1.4 The questioning phase**

According to Jovchelovitch and Bauer (2000), the interviewer starts the questioning phase as the narration comes to a natural conclusion; this is where the interviewer's careful attention pays off. When the participant indicated that the narration had ended, I asked for elaboration where I felt there could be more to be shared to close the gaps. The questions that I probed were based on the keywords that were presented by the participants. They were to get clarity and details on what had happened. I avoided asking for reasons for events that were mentioned.

### **3.6.1.5 Concluding talks**

Concluding talks are “informal” and happen once the recording has been stopped (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000). I agree with Jovchelovitch and Bauer (2000) that interesting conversations often emerge during the small talk after the formal interview ends and the tape recorder is turned off. This is where I could delve more into details that I found interesting and beneficial to my study. Amazingly so, this was the stage where all my participants were giving detailed data enthusiastically and instinctively. It was these unexpected discussions that clarified some narrations that I had found to be more structured during the interview (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000).

## **3.7 Thematic Data Analysis**

The analysis of qualitative data involves interpreting participants' accounts to derive meaningful insights (Rosairo, 2023). In this study, thematic analysis was employed as the method of data analysis. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is a systematic and flexible approach used to identify, organise, and interpret patterns or themes within qualitative data. It enables the researcher to make sense of participants' perceptions and lived experiences by uncovering recurring ideas and concepts. This method was particularly

useful for distinguishing and discussing key themes that emerged across the data set, offering insight into how second-career teachers make meaning of their roles in leading teaching and learning (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Liebenberg et al., 2020; Xu & Zammit, 2020).

### **3.7.1 My approach to the data analysis process**

In this study, I adopted Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach to thematic analysis, focusing on three key steps as guiding stages in the data analysis process. These steps included: (1) familiarising yourself with the data, (2) generating initial codes, and (3) searching for themes. Each of these steps is discussed in more detail below.

#### **3.7.1.1 Familiarising yourself with the data**

In the data analysis process, transcription, familiarisation with the data, and selection of quotations are critical steps in understanding and interpreting qualitative data and are the initial phase of the thematic analysis process. Transcription involves the conversion of audio recordings or spoken language into written text (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Richards, 2015). This step ensures that researchers have a textual representation of the data, enabling systematic analysis. In this phase I repeatedly listened to the recorded narrative interviews and transcribed them verbatim. While engaged in this, I also took note of pertinent issues. After I had transcribed the recordings, I cleaned the data, removing spelling and grammatical errors and code switching where necessary.

Subsequently, researchers engage in familiarisation with the data by immersing themselves in the transcripts, reading and re-reading them to comprehend the content, context, and nuances (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nowell et al., 2017). Familiarisation aids in identifying patterns, themes, or interesting points that guide further analysis. During this phase I read the transcripts repeatedly. While reading I noted significant and common issues but also noted those that were unique to the different participants.

#### **3.7.1.2 Generating Initial Codes**

In thematic analysis, the selection of keywords is paramount for identifying and categorising significant themes, concepts, and ideas within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Riessman, 2008; Smith & Osborn, 2008). Researchers initially engage in a thorough review of the narrative data to discern recurring concepts, topics, or experiences that are central to participants' stories. Subsequently, they generate a list of keywords or phrases that succinctly encapsulate these

themes, ensuring that the selected keywords accurately reflect the content and context of the narratives (Flick, 2018; Nowell et al., 2017). These keywords are then utilised as codes during the coding process, wherein each segment of the narrative text is assigned one or more keywords that best represent the content or theme discussed (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nowell et al., 2017).

This phase involved a close examination of the data, particularly themes that were prominent during the interviews. This step assisted me in identifying recurring patterns, and vital terms and designating them as keywords. Looking at the patterns and the common factors raised by participants, it became easy to identify and categorise them as keywords. These keywords encapsulated participants' experiences and perceptions, directly derived from the data.

### **3.7.1.3 Searching for Themes**

Theme development is a critical process that involves systematically organising and interpreting coded data to identify meaningful patterns that reflect participants' experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The process begins with a thorough review of all applied codes to ensure a nuanced understanding of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Related codes are then grouped into potential themes based on recurring ideas and shared meanings, with the goal of generating broader insights that help explain the participants' narratives (Nowell et al., 2017). In this study, I carefully reviewed each theme by cross-checking the codes associated with it to confirm their accuracy and relevance. I also revisited the original transcripts to ensure that the emerging themes authentically represented the broader responses of the second-career teachers. Themes that were too broad, vague, or misaligned with the data were refined, combined with others, or discarded. As detailed in recent methodological discussions by Nowell et al. (2017) and supported by further advancements in qualitative analysis techniques by Braun and Clarke (2021), the theme development process is iterative and reflective. It requires researchers to continuously engage with their data and adjust their analytical decisions to ensure that the final themes comprehensively reflect the complexities of the data, thereby providing insightful contributions to the understanding of the phenomena under study. This iterative process helped ensure that the final themes were both analytically meaningful and grounded in the participants' lived experiences. Integration with existing literature is also a pivotal step, situating the study within the broader academic context. This demonstrates how the findings support, extend, or challenge previous research, elucidating the study's contributions to knowledge (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Nowell et al., 2017).

### **3.8 Trustworthiness Issues**

Trustworthiness in research refers to assuring external observers that the study's findings are credible and significant (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Guba and Lincoln (1989) identify specific criteria for establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research. However, presently researchers engaged in narrative inquiry recognise apparency, fidelity, and verisimilitude as possible criteria (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

#### **3.8.1 Apparency**

Apparency is similar to credibility. It addresses the presented narrative's plausibility (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). It focuses on transparency and clarity in presenting narrative data, analysis, and interpretation, facilitating the reader's comprehension of the study (Chase, 2005; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). This was achieved by providing a detailed explanation of the data generation and analysis methods, allowing readers to understand how the narrative data was generated and interpreted (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell, 2013). Additionally, apparency was achieved by generating thick, rich field texts and presenting the data through direct vignettes shared by the participants. Finally, researchers select specific quotations or excerpts from the transcribed data that are relevant to the research questions or objectives (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nowell et al., 2017). I transcribed data and then selected quotes that brought the data to life and appropriately represented diverse viewpoints and patterns pertinent to the research objectives.

#### **3.8.2 Fidelity**

Fidelity in research refers to the researcher's commitment to truthfully and authentically representing participants' stories and experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell, 2013). It involves capturing the emotional depth, contextual richness, and complexity of participants' narratives. Achieving fidelity requires a deep understanding of participants' contexts and a prioritisation of their voices and perspectives throughout the research process (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell, 2013). To ensure the fidelity, I employed member checking (Creswell, 2012), which entailed transcribing the interviews and then returning the transcripts to participants for their review and verification. This step was essential for confirming the accuracy of their statements and intentions, thus enhancing the trustworthiness of the findings. Participants were invited to correct any discrepancies in the transcripts and to reflect on the content, offering input on what they felt should be emphasised or clarified (Seale,

2000; Patton, 2002). This process ensured that their narratives were represented in a credible and authentic manner.

### **3.8.3 Verisimilitude**

Verisimilitude refers to the authenticity and believability of participants' stories as they are represented in a study (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell, 2013). To ensure verisimilitude in this research, I incorporated rich, detailed descriptions and direct quotations from participants, allowing their voices to come through clearly and powerfully. This approach creates an immersive and authentic narrative experience that enhances the credibility of the findings (Creswell, 2013; Riessman, 2008; Geertz, 1973). These direct quotes serve as the raw data from the second-career teachers' narratives and are presented in full in the findings chapter, preserving the integrity and depth of their lived experiences.

### **3.9 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations in research comprise principles and guidelines that ensure the protection of participants' rights, welfare, and dignity throughout the research process (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). These considerations include informed consent, confidentiality, privacy, and respect for participants' autonomy, among others. Upholding ethical standards is crucial for several reasons. Firstly, it protects participants from harm or exploitation, maintaining their well-being and rights (Polit & Beck, 2017). Secondly, ethical research practices foster trust between researchers and participants, as well as within the wider community, enhancing the credibility and integrity of the research process and outcomes (Polit & Beck, 2017). Thirdly, compliance with ethical standards is often required by research institutions, funding agencies, and publication outlets, ensuring legal and institutional compliance and facilitating the dissemination of research findings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Moreover, ethical research contributes to the advancement of knowledge and societal well-being while fulfilling researchers' social responsibilities to minimise harm and uphold the dignity of all involved (Polit & Beck, 2017). Overall, ethical considerations are paramount in research, guiding researchers in conducting studies that are morally sound, respectful, and beneficial to both participants and society.

Before conducting the study, I obtained permission from the relevant gatekeepers. I wrote to the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) in search of approval for undertaking this study. Upon receiving the approval letter from the GDE, I then requested permission to conduct

research from the principal as the school gatekeeper. Once I had obtained the relevant gatekeepers' letters, I applied for ethical clearance from the University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN) research office.

With regard to participant engagement, individuals were initially approached informally to build rapport before a formal request to participate in the study was made. I placed particular emphasis on fostering a sense of ownership and equality between myself and the participants. In line with ethical research practices, informed consent was obtained, ensuring that participants were fully aware of the nature, purpose, and scope of the study. This step is particularly important in narrative research, where participation itself can influence and shape the lives of those involved (Clandinin & Caine, 2008).

Consent letters were then sent to participants, providing detailed information about the study and their rights. As Strydom (2005) outlines, prior to the commencement of any interview, participants must sign consent forms confirming their understanding of the study and their right to withdraw at any time without consequence.

Narrative research involves the sharing of personal life stories, often containing sensitive and confidential information. As Faulkner (2015) emphasises, when someone entrusts you with their story, you have to act as both confidante and guardian of the information shared. During narrative interviews, participants occasionally referred to other individuals who had not consented to be part of the study. It was therefore critical to protect all identities and ensure anonymity. In line with ethical guidelines (Cohen et al., 2011), I used pseudonyms and altered personal details such as places of origin, workplaces, and other identifiable information to prevent recognition. This approach upheld the confidentiality and integrity of the participants' narratives (Faulkner, 2015).

### **3.10 Conclusion**

This chapter presented the research design and methodology. Firstly, it discussed the interpretive paradigm, the paradigmatic stance of the study. The qualitative research approach was then discussed. This was followed by a discussion of the narrative inquiry, the methodological stance adopted in this study. The next discussion was on the selection of participants, which was through purposeful sampling and convenience sampling. The data generation method followed, where narrative interviews were employed. The following discussion was on thematic data analysis. Finally, the discussion on trustworthiness covered

the issues of apparency, fidelity, and verisimilitude, and concluded with a consideration of ethical considerations.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the research design and methodology, outlining the steps and processes used to generate data and answer the research puzzles. This chapter presents and discusses the findings. The chapter is arranged in response to each of the research puzzles. In response to research puzzle one, which asked, “how do second-career teachers lead teaching and learning during the transition phase?” four themes emerged. They are: the transitional shock, drawing from past experiences, using traditional teaching methods, and navigating classroom management. Research puzzle two asked, “what factors enable second-career teachers to lead teaching and learning during the transition phase?” Two themes emerged for this puzzle. They are: seeking professional development opportunities and parental involvement as an enabling factor. Research puzzle three asked, “what factors constrain second-career teachers in leading teaching and learning during the transition phase?” Four themes emerged. They are: finding my teaching repertoire, overwhelming administrative tasks, classroom management and learner discipline, and lastly, the language of learning and teaching as a constraining factor. Each of them is discussed below.

Four participants, all second-career primary school teachers, were interviewed. The three female participants are (pseudonyms): Palesa, who previously worked as a Facilitator at a higher institution and now teaches English Home Language in the Intermediate Phase; Cindy, a former police officer who teaches Grade 1; and Sno, who was a salesperson and now teaches Grade 3. The male participant is Nzimase, formerly a Language Translator at the Court of Law, who teaches English Home Language in the Senior Phase.

#### 4.2. Second-career Teachers’ Strategies and Approaches in Leading Teaching and Learning

This theme explores the strategies and approaches that second-career teachers use in their leadership of teaching and learning. The data reveals that second-career teachers use diverse ways to navigate transitional complexities. Secondly, they mostly use traditional teaching methods while they are still trying to find other suitable teaching methods. Thirdly, they build relations with learners and parents as a strategy to create a harmonised teaching and learning process and lastly, they shared their prior expectations in leading teaching and learning.

#### **4.2.1. Navigating the transitional shock**

The second-career teachers reported that they experienced a transitional shock when they started their tenure. Their prior expectations about teaching were not what they encountered in the field. Some came in with confidence, which soon turned into anxiety and feelings of being overwhelmed. In the light of this, the participants became adaptable to navigate these transitional complexities. They shared the sentiments below.

Palesa reported feeling inadequate as she did not have the capital to work with young children. Recognising this inadequacy, she focused on building positive relations with her learners. She shared the following:

I remember how confident I was, coming to teach in a primary school as I was working as a Facilitator at a higher institution. Reality hit when I started teaching these young children, we were not getting along. I had worked with adult students for a very long time. I figured out that I needed to create relations with them (children) and get them to accept or understand me.

Similarly, Sno shared that her initial expectations were not what she experienced. Stating this, she said:

Coming from being a salesperson in the retail industry, to being a teacher changed a lot of things. I expected quiet kids, smooth running of teaching and learning, and an enjoyable working environment. I was used to reaching targets and convincing people to buy and nothing else. To my surprise, teaching was not as easy as I had imagined. When I got to class, I was not sure where to begin. I felt like I needed to go to another class and observe how other teachers lead teaching and learning.

The burden of accountability to multiple stakeholders weighed heavily on Cindy. Realising this pressure, she ensured she was thoroughly prepared to fulfil her responsibilities. Realising this, she overcommitted herself by spending excessive time on lesson preparation. To explain this, she stated:

As a second-career novice teacher, it was not easy to know that I now have a full class under my supervision, and knowing that these learners have expectations of me, together with their parents and the school management. I used to stress a lot, worrying about the quality of teaching and learning that I had to deliver. I wanted to give it my best and be the teacher that I wish I had. This urge made me overcommit myself to my work. I would prepare my worksheets every night at home, in a way that my partner started assisting me as well.

Sno further elaborated on how she felt overwhelmed. She shared the following:

I was overwhelmed. I felt like I had been thrown to the deepest end with no one to turn to. I knew I had to know all my learners by name, but at that point it seemed impossible. I had to take one step at a time,

as it was already March. I started by checking the learners' books to see how they do their work and find the strategy used by the previous teacher.

Similarly, Cindy shared that her initial teaching experiences were layered with discomfort and unease. She stated the following:

When I was teaching for the first time, it was difficult. At some stage, I would introduce a lesson, and look at their faces, then see that something did not go all right. I didn't have the comfort that you get as a teacher, which makes your job easier in delivering your lesson.

The findings of this study indicate that second-career teachers often encounter a 'reality shock' during their transition to teaching. This phenomenon aligns with existing literature, which reveals that these individuals typically enter the profession with considerable optimism (Bertram, 2023; Markle, 2020). However, they soon face challenges, including classroom management, workload balance, and adapting to new responsibilities (Bertram, 2023; Markle, 2020). Notably, Bertram (2023) further emphasises that this 'reality shock' is common among novice teachers, who are frequently overwhelmed by the demands of content delivery and the full spectrum of teaching duties, mirroring the findings of this study. Consequently, this can lead to emotional exhaustion and self-doubt, particularly when systemic support is lacking (Ingersoll et al., 2018; Markle, 2020).

The second-career experience suggests that upon assumption of their teaching duties, these individuals encounter significant adaptive challenges. As evidenced by their own accounts, the classroom realities they face do not align with their preconceived expectations of what teaching would entail. Heifetz (2003) defines adaptive challenges as complex problems that lack clear-cut solutions, requiring individuals to fundamentally change their ways of thinking, acting, and being in order to address them effectively. These experiences align with phase two of William Bridges' Transition Model, where individuals encounter ambiguity, disorientation, and psychological liminality (Bridges & Bridges, 2009; Bridges, 2009) as they navigate the gap between their former professional identity and their emerging role as educators.

#### **4.2.2 Drawing from past experiences**

Furthermore, the findings reveal that second-career teachers draw on a variety of past experiences to inform their leadership of teaching and learning during the transition phase. Some drew upon their prior schooling, while others drew upon experiences from their previous professions. Drawing from his schooling, Nzimase shared that he drew inspiration from his high school teacher to lead teaching and learning. Stating this, he said:

I was using the old traditional way of teaching. I had a teacher in high school whom I adored. I loved her teaching methods; she would outline the lesson's objectives and aims on the chalkboard before she would start with her lessons. At the end of the lesson, she would verify if we met the objectives and aims. Her lessons had lots of preparation, and they were easy to understand. Therefore, I adopted her methods.

Similarly, Cindy drew from her schooling experience. Finding herself in the predicament of teaching in Afrikaans, she relied on her Grade 12 Afrikaans studies. She voiced the following:

I taught all subjects in Grade 3, including Afrikaans Eerste Addisionele Taal. The last time I heard about Afrikaans was when I was doing matric. I never studied it further. So, I had to take myself back to those days of high school and use that knowledge to prepare for my lessons.

Palesa drew from courses she had done outside of teaching. She explained how she leveraged these past learnings as follows:

I incorporated what I learned in my previous work in a course called Study Technology. What I learned there is that every time a person is learning or reading something, the minute they hit a difficult word or what we used to call a 'misunderstood word', it becomes very difficult to grasp the concept that you are trying to learn, or you are reading about. A Communication course that I had done also came in handy in terms of my trying to choose and adopt a teaching method.

She further explained how she applied these learnings to her teaching approach. She stated:

I found that you must discuss the difficult words in a concept that you're teaching and allow learners to find the meanings of these words. Every time I started my lesson, I first looked for the new words in the concept that I was about to teach. Once I found the new words or keywords or difficult words, I would put them on the chalkboard. Then, I would encourage learners to use a dictionary to find these difficult words. My learners had to know what these terms meant before we could start with the actual lesson.

Using this approach, Palesa observed some positive outcomes. She mentioned the following:

I found this helpful because now my learners understand concepts a little bit better than when they didn't clear these misunderstood words or the keywords, or the difficult words. When you start teaching, they follow and participate. That way, this communication between a teacher and learners allows effective teaching and learning. This approach boosted my leadership in teaching and learning.

The ability of second-career teachers to leverage their prior experiences, knowledge, and skills is consistently highlighted in research. Oliveros et al. (2024) found that second-career teachers perceive these experiences as an advantage in developing teaching skills and delivering content. This aligns with Ajani's (2023) broader claim that experiences outside formal education are valuable classroom tools. Canos (2017) also observed this phenomenon, noting that novice teachers in general draw upon prior experiences. Specifically, Alharbi (2020)

identified how second-career teachers enrich the classroom by applying skills and knowledge from their previous roles to enhance content, expertise, context, and perspective. This observed pattern is exemplified in the current study by Palesa and Nzimase, both of whom demonstrate the use of their prior work experience in their teaching practices. For instance, Palesa's transfer of communication skills echoes Simmons (2016), who found that such skills significantly aid second-career teachers in their transition to the classroom.

While transition is inherently complex, the second-career teachers demonstrate their capacity to leverage prior professional experiences as foundational resources for navigating initial teaching and learning responsibilities. This ability to draw upon established expertise transforms what might otherwise be overwhelming pedagogical demands into manageable technical challenges. According to Heifetz's framework (1994; Heifetz et al., 2009), technical challenges are distinguished by their amenability to resolution through existing knowledge bases, established procedures, and transferable expertise. For second-career educators, their accumulated professional competencies—whether in communication, project management, problem-solving, or domain-specific knowledge—serve as readily accessible tools for addressing immediate classroom demands. This theoretical distinction is crucial: while their transition into teaching presents adaptive challenges that require fundamental shifts in identity and practice, the day-to-day mechanics of instruction can often be addressed through the strategic application of their pre-existing skill sets, thereby providing stability and confidence during an otherwise disorienting career transition.

#### **4.2.3 Using traditional teaching methods**

In addition to drawing from past experiences, some participants shared that they used traditional teaching methods in their early stages of leading teaching and learning. For them, this included going back to basics by introducing concepts and heavily relying on the Annual Teaching Plan (ATP) to pace their work and textbooks to guide their lessons. They shared the following:

I would always come prepared and use traditional teaching methods, I had to be more lenient and move at a slow pace since I am a language teacher. (Palesa)

Nzimase mentioned that he relied on clarifying concepts and allowing learners to provide inputs to make meaning of the concepts. Sharing this, he said:

Since I'm not tech-savvy as much, I rely on the traditional way of teaching and learner-centred teaching methods. I do this by introducing a concept, writing it on the chalkboard, and allowing learners to throw

in their thoughts about the current topic. This gives them confidence and makes them feel like they belong, and they have an opinion. This kind of cooperation allows me to deliver my lesson at the required level, which indicates how much they know about the current topic.

Nzimase further added that his reserved nature was a barrier to his learning, making him rely on traditional teaching methods. He uttered these sentiments:

I am a reserved and shy person, so it took me time to get used to my colleagues. As a result, I kept on using my traditional teaching methods and did not get a chance to adopt other teachers' teaching methods.

Nzimase further shared that he led teaching and learning by being guided by the Annual Teaching Plan (ATP) and textbooks. Stating this, he said:

When I started teaching as a novice second-career teacher, I learned to use the annual teaching plan (ATP), since in teaching practice we were told that if you follow the ATP, you can never go wrong. I followed the ATP along with the learner's textbook and teacher's guide to prepare lesson plans and worksheets, then developed relevant activities to make sure that I was ready for the next day.

Similarly, Cindy used the ATP but also used the subject content tracker. She explained:

I opted for the widely used traditional teaching method, which worked perfectly as I was always prepared, following my lesson planning and guided by the ATP. On my arrival, I received a Teacher's Planning File that the previous teacher was using; in that file, there was a document labelled 'subject content tracker'. This tracker carried me for the whole year, it outlined the number of activities to be done weekly and how to deliver them. Each subject had this tracker document, but I needed extra help for Afrikaans.

The findings suggest that second-career teachers rely on traditional teaching methods in the early stages of their career. Additionally, they get guidance from the ATP. Shwartz and Dori (2020) highlight the experiences of novice second-career teachers, such as Nzimase and Cindy, who blend traditional teaching methods with learner-centred approaches to navigate the challenges of their new profession. Nzimase's reliance on traditional methods, such as using chalkboards and structured lesson plans guided by the Annual Teaching Plan (ATP) and textbooks, reflects a common strategy among second-career teachers to establish a sense of order and familiarity in the classroom (Rosario, 2020). Cindy's experience further illustrates the value of structured tools, such as the ATP and subject content trackers, in guiding lesson planning and ensuring curriculum coverage. While she primarily used traditional methods, her reliance on structured frameworks demonstrates how second-career teachers can use available resources to navigate the complexities of teaching (Boyd et al., 2011).

The findings reveal that second-career teachers develop adaptive strategies for managing their new responsibilities by gravitating toward traditional pedagogical approaches, suggesting a complex interplay between innovation and familiarity during career transition. This phenomenon aligns with core principles of adaptive leadership theory, which posits that individuals develop resilience and effectiveness in challenging environments through strategic adaptation rather than wholesale transformation (Jenne, 1997; Pujianto et al., 2023). The reliance on conventional teaching methods represents a form of adaptive behaviour that provides psychological safety and operational stability while these educators navigate unfamiliar professional terrain.

Furthermore, these findings correspond with William Bridges' Transition Model, particularly the dynamics of the neutral zone phase, where individuals engage in purposeful exploration and experimentation as they negotiate the space between their former and emerging professional identities (Bridges & Bridges, 2009; Bridges, 2009). However, while second-career teachers experiment with new approaches, their initial tendency toward traditional methods may represent a necessary stabilising mechanism that enables gradual adaptation rather than immediate pedagogical innovation. This pattern indicates that the neutral zone experience for career changers involves a careful balance between drawing upon familiar structures and gradually incorporating new professional practices, reflecting the inherent tension between maintaining competence and embracing transformation.

#### **4.2.4 Navigating classroom management**

The second-career teachers also shared how they navigated classroom management. They shared the importance of clear communication between teachers and learners, and also how they control learner behaviour, and the influence of involving school management in managing the classroom.

Recognising the challenge of discipline, Palesa used clear communication, drawing on the course she had previously learned. She voiced the following:

I found that my communication skills also came in handy because of the way I communicate with them, keeping calm and communicating clearly with them as to what I want from them, what I expect, and for what reasons I want them to behave in a certain way. Once you clear that with them, you communicate clearly, and they seem to understand. Though it cannot be for everyone, I found that it helps in managing the learners in my class and keeping discipline, so I can carry out my main job, which is delivering content.

Palesa further explained the techniques she employed to navigate classroom management; she notes building relations with learners as a key factor. Explaining this, she shared the following:

I started showing more interest in them (learners) as individuals, cared more, and had more little talks. They started opening up and shared their little stories and backgrounds. This helped me to know who I am dealing with, it allowed me to understand their level of thinking, reasoning, and their interests. I had to maintain my relations with my learners, as it also made them keen to see me; they would be happy that it is now English period. This motivated my learners and myself as well, it made all our lives easier.

Nzimase observed that learners behaved differently with different teachers and that the source of being ill-disciplined usually stemmed from learners being idle. These observations prompted him to ensure learners were always occupied to keep them from idling. He said:

I decided that I would go fetch latecomers from the field every day after break. I would have extra books and pens for those who claim to 'forget their books at home', and lastly, to keep them busy, I would prepare extra work to keep them engaged until the next period. I learned that children behave differently with each teacher and that they start to misbehave when they are done writing. I decided to be more active and move around while they are writing. This method still works for me.

Finding herself overwhelmed, Sno sought help from her Departmental Head and also attended workshops to equip herself with classroom management skills. She voiced the following:

Most of the time, I'd feel like I am not called for this profession, so I had to invite my DH to intervene. It took me a long time to properly manage the classroom, and being moved from the Intermediate Phase to the Foundation Phase helped me a lot. I am learning how to handle these kids. I attended training and workshops to gain experience on how to deal with kids.

The findings highlight the diverse strategies employed by second-career teachers to address classroom discipline challenges, reflecting their adaptability and proactive approaches. Palesa's use of communication skills to establish clear expectations and foster understanding among learners aligns with research emphasizing the importance of effective communication in classroom management. Studies (Field, 2005; Parker, 2020) suggest that clear and calm communication minimises disruptions and enhances learner engagement, which supports Palesa's approach to maintaining discipline while focusing on content delivery. Nzimase identified idleness as a key source of misbehaviour and implemented practical solutions, such as engaging learners with extra tasks and actively monitoring their progress. This hands-on strategy resonates with the literature advocating proactive classroom management techniques, which emphasises structured routines and active engagement to reduce behavioural issues (Gass & Varonis, 1984; Johnson, 2017). The professional development programs focusing on

social-emotional skills and reflective practices have been shown to enhance teachers' capacity for effective classroom management (Mahone, 2018).

In line with the adaptive leadership theory, the diverse strategies employed by second-career teachers to address classroom discipline challenges demonstrate their sophisticated capacity to diagnose underlying systemic issues, adapt their methodological approaches, and proactively engage learners in meaningful ways (Seibel et al., 2023). Their well-developed communication competencies—strategically deployed to establish clear behavioural expectations and foster mutual understanding—exemplify adaptive leadership's core emphasis on mobilising stakeholders and implementing context-specific problem-solving approaches.

### **4.3. Factors Enabling Second-Career Teachers in Their Leadership of Teaching and Learning**

The theme presents and discusses the factors that enable second-career teachers in their leadership of teaching and learning. The data reveal that second-career teachers sought professional development opportunities to improve their practice. These professional development opportunities were sourced from peers, departmental heads, and workshops. The teachers also mentioned parental involvement as an enabling factor.

#### **4.3.1. Seeking professional development opportunities**

The second-career teachers in this study shared that they sought professional development opportunities to enable them in their teaching and learning. Beyond this, they used search engines like Google to aid their learning. Sno was able to receive support from other teachers to aid her growth. She voiced the following:

When I asked my colleagues on how they do planning and worksheets, they said they share planning as a Grade, one teacher plans a certain subject, and they use a teamwork approach. This method assisted me a lot, although I was given Afrikaans to prepare, and I was not good at that subject. But the collective teaching approach made my life easy as a novice teacher coming from a different industry.

Sno also mentioned being open to asking for help and seeking solutions through research from various sources. She stated the following:

I try to overcome most of the challenges by interacting with colleagues. I ask for help when necessary. I compare my sources, and then I ask my colleagues to check for me if I am correct or wrong, especially with Afrikaans. I always make sure that I ask and do research.

Additionally, Sno used digital platforms to source materials. She said:

To enhance my teaching, most of the time I use Google. I research and print different things from teaching websites. I'm using different books.

Cindy shared that she received support from her Departmental Head (DH), who not only assisted her but also directed her to online professional development workshops. She expressed these sentiments:

The DH helped me a lot in delivering my lessons in a better way. She also introduced me to some online training and workshops. I attended workshops where they develop teachers on subject content, addressing the challenges of the subject and the targets as to what is expected of you as a new teacher in that field, especially in languages, which are English Home Language and Afrikaans FAL.

The findings suggest that second-career teachers exercise agency and find ways to access professional development opportunities. Cilliers et al. (2020) concur that professional development is crucial for novice second-career teachers as it supports their transition into the teaching profession by addressing unique challenges and leveraging their prior expertise. Effective professional development programs tailored to their needs can help bridge the gaps between their prior knowledge and the demands of teaching, fostering both skill development and professional identity formation (Rosario, 2020; Shwartz & Dori, 2020). While collaboration fosters reflective practice, allowing teachers to continuously evaluate and enhance their teaching methods (Cilliers et al., 2020), experienced teachers, like the DHs, should mentor novice teachers by sharing insights and providing emotional support (Mpisi & Zoutendijk, 2022). This guidance not only helps in skills development but also contributes to building a professional identity within the school community.

Adaptive leadership theory emphasises mobilising individuals to address complex challenges through learning and innovation (Heifetz et al., 2004; Owens & Valesky, 2007). Second-career teachers like Sno and Cindy demonstrate these principles by actively seeking support from colleagues, departmental heads, and online resources to address unfamiliar subject matter and pedagogical challenges. Their use of collaborative planning and digital tools reflects adaptive leadership's emphasis on collective intelligence and distributed problem-solving.

Their engagement in mentorship and professional development workshops exemplifies adaptive leadership's "holding environment" concept—a supportive context that enables learning while maintaining psychological safety during uncertainty. Research indicates that adaptive leadership builds resilience through reflection and empowerment to manage

complexity (Heifetz et al., 2004). This approach proves particularly effective for second-career teachers, helping bridge knowledge gaps and supporting professional identity development through collaboration and targeted support systems.

#### **4.3.2. Parental involvement as an enabling factor**

Several participants reported leveraging parental support as a key strategy. These second-career teachers created structured dialogue opportunities, such as regular meetings, to engage with parents and inform them about their children's academic progress. Through this approach, they aimed to encourage parents to take a more active and meaningful role in supporting their children's learning at home. The following voices illustrate this approach:

To enhance my teaching, I used to call in parents, trying to make them understand their role in the teaching environment, and their role as parents in assisting their children at home. Parental involvement promotes smooth teaching and learning as learners get to be assisted with homework, projects, and revisions. (Palesa)

The Open Books meetings helped me a lot in overcoming a lack of parental involvement. This is where parents come to view their children's school work and discuss their progress with the teacher. Such visits encourage parents to be more involved in the learners' school work, which also helps me as a teacher to build a relationship with parents as stakeholders. Parent-teacher relationship promotes well-mannered learners. (Cindy)

Cindy added to this, emphasising the need for parental support for young learners. She said:

When you give homework to a grade one child, they need encouragement from home. They need parents to be fully involved since they are very young; most of them are six and a half.

While the other teachers found such engagements fruitful, Nzimase had difficulty adapting to the demands of meeting with parents and managing parental involvement. He said:

Being a reserved person didn't serve me well when it came to meeting parents. I had to always find another teacher to come and assist me when a parent needed to discuss a learner's progress or any other matter.

Research consistently highlights the positive impact of parental involvement on student learning outcomes. For instance, Utami (2022) found a significant boost in student learning due to parental engagement. Similarly, Ates (2021) emphasises the critical role of parental involvement in enhancing student outcomes and fostering collaboration between parents and teachers. This engagement positively influences academic achievement, motivation, and school engagement, notably through home-based support like homework assistance and school-based

interactions such as parent-teacher meetings (Jensen & Minke, 2017). However, Nzimase's challenges illustrate the variability in teachers' capacity to engage parents effectively, highlighting the need for professional development to equip educators with skills for fostering parental involvement (Jensen & Minke, 2017). By integrating structured opportunities for dialogue and collaboration, schools can leverage parental involvement to address inequities and improve both teaching effectiveness and learner outcomes (Borrello, 2023; Hill et al., 2018).

The experiences of second-career teachers with parental engagement vividly illustrate the practical application of adaptive leadership theory. Rather than perceiving insufficient parental involvement as a straightforward technical issue demanding simple fixes, these educators recognised it as a complex adaptive challenge (Heifetz et al., 2004). They actively mobilised various stakeholders to confront this challenge, demonstrating a nuanced understanding of their roles within the educational ecosystem. This approach aligns with adaptive leadership's core tenets, which emphasise the distribution of responsibility throughout the system and the cultivation of adaptive capacity in others (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). Their concerted efforts to educate parents about their vital role in supporting home learning underscore this commitment to building capacity and fostering shared ownership.

#### **4.4. Factors Constraining Second-Career Teachers in Their Leadership of Teaching and Learning**

The theme presents and discusses the factors that constrain second-career teachers in their leadership of teaching and learning. The data reveals that they face multiple challenges as they begin their tenure. These include finding their teaching repertoire, the language of learning and teaching as a constraining factor, overwhelming administrative tasks, and classroom management and learner discipline. These constraints are compounded by the lack of tailored support and professional development opportunities, which hinder their ability to effectively lead and innovate in the classroom. The themes are discussed below:

##### **4.4.1 Finding My Teaching Repertoire**

The study found that second-career teachers had difficulty in cultivating their teaching repertoire with respect to their teaching methods. This difficulty manifested in different ways. Some participants had confidence in their content knowledge but were challenged in delivering

their lessons at an appropriate level for their learners in terms of the grade and phase. Palesa shared that she struggled to pitch the content at the level of learners. She voiced the following:

The first challenge was the teaching method. It wasn't easy to find a suitable teaching method, since in my previous job, I didn't have to do much other than monitor adults who are given a job to do, they complete it, I check, and I sign them off. It was not easy to decide how I should deliver the content effectively.

In addition, Palesa commented on her confidence in content knowledge, which was however, overshadowed by her inability to present her lessons at the appropriate level for young learners.

Referring to this, she said:

I had enough content knowledge, but I felt my content knowledge was above the primary school learners. I had to prepare myself and be extra cautious on how I pass knowledge to these little children. It took a lot of preparation and research to get to a point where I was confident in my work.

Nzimase further shared that his previous work as a Language Translator also influenced his leadership of teaching and learning. While he could draw from this, he also shared how he had to ensure that his approaches were relevant and at the level of his learners. He commented as follows:

I feel like my previous job had an impact on how I teach. I was a Language Translator and now I am a Language Teacher. It was a smooth transfer of skill and knowledge. I realised that in my previous job, I was working with adults who understood immediately when I explained to them; now I deal with the little ones. With this group, I must lower my content to their level to accommodate them, and I think the traditional teaching method works best for me.

Sno shared similar struggles. She stated:

I struggled with teaching methods and content delivery, for instance, teaching Phonics. When I got into the classroom for the first time, I was lost when it came to lower grades writing, like balancing my lines and the use of 'kitty cat, head, body, tail'. I had no idea what to do. I also had the challenge of writing on the chalkboard. But I had to learn and ask for help from my colleagues and my DH. It took me a long time to get to a point where I felt like I was a complete teacher.

Inadequate pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) presents a significant challenge for novice second-career teachers, directly impacting their capacity to effectively blend subject matter expertise with appropriate teaching strategies (Insook & Bomna, 2020). Defined by Shulman (1986), PCK is the crucial nexus where content knowledge and pedagogy intersect, demanding that educators transform their subject matter into accessible concepts tailored to diverse student needs and existing understanding. Frei et al. (2021) suggest that novice teachers, including

those entering teaching as a second-career, frequently struggle with this crucial integration. This difficulty often stems from their limited prior teaching experience, leading to a reliance on unmodified subject matter knowledge, typically drawn directly from curriculum materials (Insook & Bomna, 2020). This PCK gap is further widened by their minimal exposure to educational settings and effective student learning strategies, both vital elements within Shulman's broader framework of teacher knowledge (Shing et al., 2015).

The difficulties second-career teachers face, particularly concerning parental engagement, are best understood as adaptive challenges, not technical problems solvable with readily available solutions (Heifetz et al., 2004; Insook & Bomna, 2020). As Heifetz (1994) argued, mistakenly applying technical fixes to adaptive problems is a significant leadership failure. Unlike technical problems, which rely on existing expertise and protocols (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002), adaptive challenges demand fundamental shifts in mindset, behaviour, and relationships. For these teachers, this means developing new approaches to effectively engage and teach young learners.

#### **4.4.2 The Language of Learning and Teaching as a Constraining Factor**

Beyond developing their teaching repertoire, two participants identified the Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT) as a significant constraint. Their insufficient proficiency in the LOLT, whether English or Afrikaans, directly hindered their ability to effectively lead teaching and learning in their classrooms. This linguistic barrier created a substantial impediment, impacting not only their instructional delivery but also their capacity to guide student understanding and engagement. They shared the following:

My teaching was also affected by the language of teaching and learning. It was a barrier for me as I was not used to speaking English for the entire day. I had to reprimand learners in the English language because English was the medium of instruction. So, I had to try and get better strategies to manage the class, settle them down, and then let the lesson start. (Cindy)

Similarly, Sno stated:

I was coming from KZN, and I was used to IsiZulu. I had to teach in English only, no code-switching. The language I use, and the way I speak, it was very difficult for me to speak English only. The school was a multicultural institution in a multilingual community. Teachers and learners speak many languages, and most of them I didn't understand.

The findings reveal that the language of learning and teaching (LOLT) presents a significant challenge for second-career teachers, particularly when they are required to teach in a language

that is not their first language. According to Cummins (2000), inadequate proficiency in the LOLT can hinder teachers' ability to convey subject content effectively, manage classrooms, and build rapport with learners. Ball and Ellis (2018) further assert that language barriers hinder teaching effectiveness and classroom management. For these second-career teachers, these challenges are magnified by the necessity to adapt to a new profession whilst enhancing their linguistic competence.

For Sno, her school's multiculturalism and ban on code-switching elevated her inadequate Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT) proficiency from a technical problem to a significant adaptive challenge. Unlike technical issues with known solutions, adaptive challenges demand new ways of operating because existing responses are insufficient (Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz et al., 2009). The lack of a current known response for Sno's LOLT struggles underscores this. Heifetz (2003) notes that problems beyond their current way of operating require adaptive work. For both Sno and Cindy, their LOLT limitations, compounded by the school's policy, push them into a state of psychological liminality or the Neutral Zone (Bridges, 2009; Bridges & Bridges, 2009). This "in-between" period, characterised by ambiguity and disorientation, means they have shed familiar linguistic habits but have not yet mastered the new required proficiencies. This theoretical lens shows their struggles are not deficits, but rather a call for adaptation within a system that needs better support for linguistic complexities.

#### **4.4.3 Overwhelming Administrative Tasks**

Overwhelming administrative tasks emerged as another challenge. The participants shared facing significant challenges in managing the administrative workload, which includes curriculum reports, lesson planning, policy implementation, and navigating professional terminology. Their voices are presented below:

The worst part of how I led teaching and learning was doing administrative work like curriculum reports. How to calculate the expected content percentage, and all that stuff? I didn't know how to do it. But I had to learn step by step, step by step. (Sno)

The third challenge, I could say, was preparing lesson plans. I knew the basic structure of developing planning, but the school had its own structure on how their lesson plans should look. I had to find help from my superiors, and they did assist. (Palesa)

Administrative work was overwhelming, also understanding terminology used in meetings was difficult. Balancing the classroom management, paperwork, policies, and due dates seemed impossible at first. (Cindy)

The other challenge for me was administrative work and the language used in briefings and departmental meetings. There were so many abbreviations used that I couldn't ask what each meant, and I was mostly lost. I had policy knowledge from theory, but implementation, monitoring, and evaluation were difficult. The whole staff understood what was being discussed, and that made it more difficult for me. I felt like if I asked for clarity, I would be exposing myself that I lack knowledge. (Nzimase)

In this study, the workload was daunting for all participants, as they did not have prior experience with the extensive administrative requirements of teaching. Beam et al. (2022) state that paperwork and documentation are among the most significant stressors for novice educators, with the increasing digitalisation of administrative processes adding to the complexity and pace of the workload. Similarly, Sözen (2018) concurs that second-career teachers often struggle with adapting to school administrative tasks. These challenges are consistent with broader research that identifies administrative tasks as one of the most daunting aspects of the teaching profession for novices (Öztürk & Yıldırım, 2013; Sözen, 2018). Cindy and Nzimase's experiences of being overwhelmed by terminology and policy implementation further reflect a broader issue where novice teachers often feel unprepared for the procedural and bureaucratic demands of teaching (Sözen, 2018).

The overwhelming administrative workload faced by second-career teachers, encompassing curriculum reports, lesson planning, policy implementation, and unfamiliar terminology, transcends mere technical skill gaps to become a significant adaptive challenge (Heifetz, 1994). This necessitates not just learning new procedures, but fundamentally shifting their professional operating paradigms, a process that plunges them into William Bridges' (2009) Neutral Zone of transition. In this ambiguous "in-between" state, teachers are disoriented, having shed familiar past professional practices but not yet fully integrated the extensive and often implicitly understood administrative demands of teaching. This period of high stress, exemplified by Nzimase's fear of "exposing" his lack of knowledge, calls for an adaptive leadership approach from school systems, focusing on creating psychologically safe holding environments, mobilising collective support, actively demystifying bureaucratic language, and challenging existing assumptions about administrative necessity to guide these educators through their disorienting, yet potentially transformative, professional re-identification.

#### **4.4.4. Classroom Management and Learner Discipline**

Classroom management and learner discipline emerged as another factor constraining second-career teachers in their leadership of teaching and learning. They shared occurrences of

disruptive and misbehaving learners, communication problems, and late arrivals; all of which caused disruption of teaching and learning in the classroom. Their voices are presented below:

Cindy stated:

Classroom management was a bit of a problem. Learners were running around and screaming. Others would talk while I'm teaching and when they are expected to be writing. Half of the class wouldn't finish writing their work, I could tell that they were not motivated at all. I also thought it could be the excitement of seeing a new teacher since they are young and energetic.

Palesa shared similar sentiments, stating,

Another thing was discipline in the classroom. How do I then discipline these learners? Whenever I asked them a question, the whole class would just speak out of turn. I had to teach them the order of raising hands and giving one person a chance to talk. I could see that they know what is expected of them, but they just want to see how I will react if they behave differently.

In addition, Palesa shared how she responded to the problem: She said:

I had to stop shouting at them and talk to them calmly, explain my expectations from them, and the consequences of misbehaving in my classroom. It took a long time for us to get along.

Nzimase also mentioned challenges with discipline. He said,

At first, I had a challenge of ill-disciplined kids. I didn't know how to stop them from running around and speaking loudly. Some will come to school without books or pens. Every day after break, they would come to class late, some would waste time in the bathrooms, others at the taps or tuckshop. This stole lots of teaching and learning time.

Similarly, Sno stated:

Learners are not disciplined enough at home. How are we going to discipline these kids? The more this government fails, the more respect we lose as teachers. I kept on changing grades; they all had a common problem of being ill-disciplined. It was not easy for learners to be disciplined.

While Sno assigned blame to other stakeholders, she further commented on the impact of moving between grades and her enactment of classroom management. She shared the following:

I couldn't memorise their names, and learners tend to misbehave when they believe you do not know them. I think they struggled to follow my rules because they kept having new teachers introduce them, and each teacher came with new rules. My experience was bad and a bit extreme because there was a day when an ill-disciplined child went home and reported that I was shouting at him. The parents came to school fuming, claiming that I was bullying their child.

Their narratives highlight the multifaceted nature of classroom management, which includes addressing disruptive behaviours, motivating students, and establishing routines. According to Junker et al. (2021), management and learner discipline are critical challenges second-career teachers face during their transition into the teaching profession. These issues significantly impact their ability to lead teaching and learning effectively (Broer et al., 2023). Santhanam (2022) noted that discipline issues waste teaching time, disrupt learning, and overwhelm teachers. This study suggests that clear expectations, routines, and structured environments are essential for creating conducive learning conditions (Junker et al., 2021), evident in Palesa's approach. This method builds trust and encourages students to take responsibility for their behaviour (Junker et al., 2021).

Classroom management and learner discipline for second-career teachers present a significant adaptive challenge, rather than a simple technical problem, fundamentally constraining their instructional leadership (Heifetz, 1994). The pervasive issues of disruptive behaviour, communication problems, and late arrivals (Cindy, Palesa, Nzimase), coupled with external factors like a perceived lack of home discipline (Sno), demand deep individual and systemic shifts. This struggle places these teachers firmly within William Bridges' (2009) Neutral Zone, a disorienting "in-between" period where they've left familiar professional norms but haven't yet mastered the nuanced art of classroom control. Sno's frustration with inconsistent rules and parental conflict highlights the profound instability of this phase. Addressing this requires an adaptive leadership approach: creating safe holding environments for teachers to openly discuss and experiment with strategies, mobilizing collective support from colleagues and leadership, and proactively managing the inherent "heat" of confronting deeply ingrained behavioural patterns, ultimately guiding these educators through a vital, albeit uncomfortable, professional re-identification.

#### **4.5. Conclusion**

This section presented the data and discussed the findings. Three main themes were presented in response to the research puzzles. Theme one, titled '*Second-career teachers' strategies and approaches in leading teaching and learning*', responded to research puzzle one. Four sub-themes were presented, illustrating how second-career teachers lead teaching and learning in the early phases of their tenure. Theme two, titled '*Factors enabling second-career teachers in their leadership of teaching and learning*', responded to research puzzle two. Two sub-themes were presented, clarifying factors that enable these teachers to lead teaching and

learning. Lastly, theme three; titled '*Factors constraining second-career teachers in their leadership of teaching and learning*', responded to research puzzle three. Four sub-themes were presented, demonstrating multiple challenges that second-career teachers face as they begin their tenure.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter, "Data Presentation and Discussion," marks a pivotal point in this study, transitioning from the theoretical and methodological frameworks outlined in earlier chapters to the empirical heart of the research. This chapter presents the dissertation summary, conclusions and recommendations. The dissertation summary presents a synopsis of the dissertation, looking back at what was presented in the previous chapters. The conclusions draw out the key lessons that emerge from the data presented in Chapter Four. Lastly, the chapter presents recommendations for practice and future research.

#### **5.2 Summary of the study**

##### **Chapter One**

The chapter presented the overview of the study. The chapter commenced with an introduction and background giving the broad scope of the manifestation of second-career teaching and the trajectory used to articulate into teaching within a local context. A brief description of participants' profiles then followed. The problem statement was then articulated, followed by the research puzzles bounding and guiding this study. Key concepts were then clarified followed by a road map of the dissertation which outlined the structure of the report.

##### **Chapter Two**

The chapter reviews existing research on career transitions and second-career teachers. It discusses the complexities of professional transitions, second-career teachers' first steps in the classroom, and the unique challenges these teachers encounter, including developing a teacher identity, addressing potential pedagogical knowledge gaps, and managing classroom dynamics. The chapter also examines their integration into school culture, the significance of professional relationships, and the challenges of understanding the education system. It concludes by acknowledging the resilience and passion that often drives second-career teachers despite these obstacles.

## **Chapter Three**

The chapter presented the research design and methodology, outlining the tools, instruments and procedures used to generate data to answer the research puzzles. The chapter commenced with a discussion of the interpretive paradigm which is the paradigmatic stance adopted in this study. The paradigm was discussed, based on its ontological and epistemological assumptions, and justifications were provided for its appropriateness for the current study. The qualitative research approach was then discussed, this was followed by a discussion of narrative inquiry, the methodological stance adopted in this study. The next discussion was on the selection of participants, which was done through purposeful sampling and convenience sampling. The data generation method followed, where narrative interviews were employed. This was followed by a discussion of thematic data analysis. Towards the end of the chapter the discussion of trustworthiness issues delved into apparency, fidelity, and verisimilitude. Lastly, ethical considerations were discussed.

## **Chapter Four**

The chapter presented and discussed the data generated in response to the three research puzzles posed in this study. The study's findings revealed that second-career teachers, while leading teaching and learning during their transition into the profession, experienced a significant transitional shock. They often drew upon their past experiences and initially relied on traditional teaching methods as they navigated the complexities of classroom management. Several key factors either enabled or constrained their leadership journey. Enabling factors included their proactive pursuit of professional development and a dedicated effort to engage parents. Conversely, significant constraints emerged, notably their struggles to find their unique teaching style, managing overwhelming administrative tasks, addressing classroom discipline issues, and overcoming language barriers. These findings were thoroughly discussed in relation to existing literature and the theoretical framework undergirding this study.

### **5.3 Conclusions: Lessons learnt from each of the research questions**

This section presents the conclusions that are presented as the key lessons learned, derived from the study's findings and the comprehensive literature review. These conclusions are structured around each of the research puzzles, providing direct answers and synthesised insights.

### **5.3.1 How do second-career teachers lead teaching and learning during the transition phase?**

The study's findings underscore that second-career teachers, despite their prior professional experience, undergo a significant reality shock during their initial transition into the classroom, closely mirroring the experiences of other novice educators (Darling-Hammond, 2017; Hammond, 2017). Upon entering the teaching profession, they effectively become novice teachers, confronting the complex, real-world challenges of the classroom head-on rather than as passive observers (Leshem et al., 2021). This transition from a position of prior autonomy to a role often requiring mentorship prompts significant introspection and exposes underlying uncertainties (Leshem et al., 2021).

While second-career teachers face many challenges akin to traditional novice educators, primarily in pedagogical content (Avalos, 2016), their distinct professional backgrounds offer considerable strengths. These teachers actively draw upon their accumulated capital, adapting skills and knowledge from prior roles and even their own schooling to navigate the complexities of classroom management and teaching. This highlights a crucial point: schools should recognise and leverage these unique strengths, cultivating environments where diverse experiences are viewed as assets, not deficits, in teacher development. Their real-world expertise significantly enriches lessons and projects, making learning more relevant and engaging for students (Troesch & Bauer, 2020). Moreover, their varied perspectives introduce fresh insights into subject matter, fostering curiosity and critical thinking in the classroom (Tsybulsky & Muchnik-Rozanov, 2019).

Their initial reliance on traditional teaching methods and structured tools like the Annual Teaching Plan (ATP) indicates a need for clear guidance and accessible resources in the early stages of their careers. This mirrors common experiences of novice teachers, who often begin by replicating the teaching styles they observed as students or experienced in their own training, frequently defaulting to teacher-centred, didactic approaches (Doe, & Adams, 2020; Ellis, 2017; Murray, 2022). This reliance on familiar, often traditional, structures provides a sense of security and a starting point for managing the overwhelming complexities of the classroom (Troesch & Bauer, 2020). Doe and Adams (2020) highlight that novice teachers require strong supportive structures, including clear information, mentorship, and practical guidance, to

overcome initial barriers and develop more sophisticated pedagogical approaches. Without such explicit support, the demands of translating theoretical knowledge into practical classroom application, especially when using structured curriculum documents like the ATP, can be a significant source of stress and disequilibrium for new educators (Ahmed et al., 2020, Avalos, 2016, Makoa & Segalo, 2021).

Ultimately, the journey of second-career teachers powerfully reveals the adaptive and resilient nature of individuals entering the teaching profession. They do not come with a blank slate, rather they bring a wealth of prior professional and life experience to the classroom. Despite confronting feelings of being overwhelmed and lacking immediate comfort in their new roles, these educators actively seek solutions, learn from their experiences, and persistently strive to create positive learning environments.

### **5.3.2 Factors enabling second-career teachers to lead teaching and learning during the transition phase**

The study highlights two pivotal enabling factors for second-career teachers in their transition: proactively seeking professional development and fostering parental involvement. Participants demonstrated remarkable initiative in actively accessing support and learning opportunities from diverse sources, including experienced colleagues, departmental heads, online resources, and workshops. This proactive engagement reflects an adaptive leadership approach, where teachers take personal ownership of their learning and development to overcome pedagogical and practical challenges (Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz et al., 2009). Crucially, this act of seeking help is not a sign of deficiency but a demonstration of reflexivity – the capacity for self-awareness and critical self-examination regarding one's own practice, assumptions, and limitations (Cunliffe, 2016). By acknowledging areas where their prior expertise might be insufficient and actively seeking external knowledge and support, these teachers engage in a process of knowing when we do not know, a hallmark of adaptive expertise. This reflexive inquiry is vital for professional growth, allowing them to bridge knowledge gaps, build professional confidence, and align their actions with their emerging professional identities (Hobson et al., 2009). Such collaborative mentoring relationships not only benefit the mentee but also foster professional learning for both mentor and mentee, promoting critical reflection on practice (Maxwell et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the study emphasises the profound positive impact of engaging parents in the learning process. By actively creating opportunities for dialogue and collaboration, such as meetings and “Open Book Days,” teachers aimed to foster a supportive home environment and encourage parental involvement in their children's education. This approach aligns with research confirming the crucial role parents play in reinforcing learning, promoting positive student outcomes, and enhancing academic achievement and motivation (Scheider, 2018; Taylor & Yu, 2009). However, the study also acknowledges that not all teachers find it equally easy to engage with parents, highlighting a significant need for targeted professional development in this area. Literature on novice teachers consistently reveals that they often feel unprepared to effectively engage with families, particularly those from diverse socio-economic or cultural backgrounds (D’Haem & Griswold, 2017). Equipping educators with the necessary skills to effectively communicate with and involve parents is therefore essential for creating a collaborative partnership that genuinely benefits both teachers and learners. By prioritising such professional development and fostering strong home-school connections, schools can empower second-career teachers to thrive in their new roles, build essential adaptive capacities, and ultimately contribute to a more supportive and effective learning environment for all students.

### **5.3.3 Factors constraining second-career teachers in leading teaching and learning during the transition phase**

The study's findings reveal a consistent narrative of significant challenges faced by second-career teachers during their initial transition into the profession, echoing the experiences of many novice educators globally (Avalos, 2016; Tang & Choi, 2009). Despite bringing prior professional experience, these teachers encounter a substantial "reality shock" as the ideals learned in preparation programs clash with the multifaceted complexities of real classroom environments (Farrell et al., 2023; Tsybulsky & Muchnik-Rozanov, 2019). This often results in a "sink-or-swim" situation due to a perceived lack of adequate support in navigating unexpected challenges (Confait, 2015).

Specifically, the study identified four primary constraints that significantly hindered second-career teachers' leadership of teaching and learning. Firstly, "finding their teaching repertoire" proved challenging. Participants struggled to translate their strong content knowledge from previous careers into accessible, engaging lessons tailored to specific grade and developmental

levels. This highlights a critical need for pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), an adaptive challenge requiring the development of entirely new teaching methodologies rather than simple replication (Johnson, 2018).

Secondly, "Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT) barriers" emerged as a significant impediment. For teachers instructing in a non-first language, inadequate LOLT proficiency severely impacted content delivery, classroom management, and rapport building (Ingersoll & Smith, 2023). In multilingual settings where code-switching was discouraged, this transformed a potential technical difficulty into an adaptive challenge demanding a fundamental shift in their operational norms (Lee & Chang, 2019).

Thirdly, the study identified "overwhelming administrative tasks" as a major impediment. The extensive bureaucracy of teaching, including curriculum reports, diverse lesson planning formats, and professional terminology, created a significant burden. This administrative overload detracted from teaching time and contributed to feelings of being unprepared and overwhelmed by the procedural demands of the profession (Becker et al., 2022).

Finally, "classroom management and learner discipline" consistently emerged as a constraint. Participants reported challenges with disruptive behaviours, student motivation, and establishing consistent routines. These multifaceted issues not only disrupted learning but also contributed to teachers' feelings of inadequacy and frustration, underscoring that effective classroom management is an adaptive challenge requiring ongoing learning and context-specific strategies (Brown, 2019).

The lessons learned from these pervasive constraints underscore the critical need for targeted and comprehensive support for second-career teachers. Induction programs and ongoing professional development must explicitly address the development of PCK, navigation of language barriers, efficient administrative practices, and effective, positive discipline techniques. Crucially, such support should leverage their existing strengths while guiding their pedagogical adaptation. Furthermore, schools must actively foster a supportive and collaborative environment where all novice teachers feel comfortable seeking help from experienced colleagues, thereby facilitating a smoother and more successful transition into the teaching profession.

## **5.4 Recommendations**

This section presents the recommendations of the study.

### **5.4.1 Recommendations for Practice**

To effectively support second-career teachers in this study and maximise their unique contributions, schools and educational leaders should prioritise the implementation of structured and tailored induction programmes. These programmes must explicitly address their specific challenges, including developing pedagogical content knowledge, mastering classroom management, and navigating administrative tasks. This support should be coupled with robust mentorship opportunities, recognising that these teachers, unlike traditional novices, do not come with a blank slate but bring significant professional and life capital.

The affected schools must understand this inherent capital and create deliberate pathways to harness it. This means designing induction programmes that not only fill knowledge gaps but also leverage their prior expertise, leadership skills, and diverse perspectives. Ongoing and accessible professional development is equally crucial, focusing on practical teaching strategies, targeted language support where needed, and efficient administrative practices. Cultivating a collaborative and supportive school culture, where open communication, peer learning, and the sharing of diverse experiences are encouraged, will further aid their integration and ensure their valuable capital is recognised and utilised within the education system.

### **5.4.2 Recommendations for future research**

Future research could delve deeper into the long-term experiences and career trajectories of second-career teachers, examining their retention rates, leadership development within schools, and the impact of their prior professional experience on student outcomes over time. Longitudinal studies could track their evolving pedagogical practices and the development of their teacher identity as they gain more experience in the education sector. Exploring the effectiveness of different types of induction and mentorship programmes specifically designed for this group would also be valuable in identifying best practices for their support.

Further qualitative research could explore the nuanced experiences of second-career teachers from diverse professional backgrounds and subject areas, uncovering the specific challenges and advantages associated with different career transitions. Understanding their motivations for entering teaching as a second-career and their perceptions of job satisfaction and career

fulfilment could provide insights into recruitment and retention strategies. Additionally, future research could examine the perspectives of school leaders and experienced teachers on the integration and support of second-career colleagues, identifying factors that contribute to successful collaboration and knowledge sharing within school teams.

Finally, quantitative studies could explore the relationship between specific prior professional skills and competencies of second-career teachers and their effectiveness in different aspects of teaching, such as classroom management, student engagement, or curriculum innovation. Investigating the impact of targeted professional development interventions on their pedagogical content knowledge and instructional practices could also yield valuable data for informing support programmes and policy decisions aimed at maximising the contributions of these experienced professionals to the education system in South Africa.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

Overall, this study illuminated the nuanced experiences of second-career teachers and how they led teaching and learning during the crucial early phases of their tenure. The inquiry was guided by three core research puzzles: how they enact leadership of teaching and learning, the factors that enable this leadership, and the constraints that hinder their efforts.

Utilising narrative inquiry as a methodology and narrative interviews to generate rich data, the study revealed that participating second-career teachers approached the leadership of teaching and learning in diverse ways. A significant finding was the disparity between enabling and constraining factors: teachers encountered limited enablers for their leadership compared to the numerous constraints they faced. This aligns with existing literature suggesting that second-career teachers, despite their unique backgrounds, often experience challenges akin to other novice teachers.

Crucially, this study adds significant credence to the growing narrative that second-career teachers enter the profession with substantial capital – a wealth of prior professional experience, diverse perspectives, and developed life skills. The findings underscore that this inherent capital, though often underutilised, should be actively recognised and harnessed by education systems. Their experiences highlight a need for tailored support that not only addresses common novice challenges but also strategically leverages their unique strengths, ultimately enriching the teaching profession.

## References

- Ahmed, G., Faizi, W. U. N., & Akbar, S. (2020). *Challenges of novice teachers and strategies to cope at the secondary level*. *Global Regional Review*, 1(4), 403-416.
- Alshammari, I., & Shafi, M. (2018). A comparative study of employability skills among science and engineering graduates. *Education Sciences*, 8(2), 76. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci8020076>
- Anderson, C. (2019). The impact of professional background on second-career teachers' classroom experiences. *Educational Psychology Review*, 25(2), 189–205. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-019-09465-1>
- Anderson, M., Goodman, J., & Schlossberg, N. K. (2011). *Counselling adults in transition: Linking Schlossberg's theory with practice in a diverse world*. Springer.
- Anderson, J. R. (2016). The transition: Challenges faced by second-career teachers. *Journal of Education Research*, 25(3), 112–129.
- Anderson, G. S., & Moore, B. A. (2023). *People systematically overlook subtractive changes*. *Nature*, 592, 258-261. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-021-03380-y>
- Antink-Meyer, A., & Brown, R. A. (2017). Second-career science teachers' classroom conceptions of science and engineering practices are examined through the lens of their professional histories. *International Journal of Science Education*, 39(11), 1511–1528. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09500693.2017.1338787>
- Asadi, Z., Abdekhoda, M., & Nadrian, H. (2019). Understanding and predicting teachers' intention to use cloud computing in smart education. *Interactive Technology and Smart Education*, 14(1), 14–27. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ITSE-05-2018-0026>
- Arends, R. I., & Kilcher, A. (2017). *Teaching for learning: Reflective practice*. Cengage Learning.
- Arends, F., & Phurutse, B. (2009). Beginning teachers' experiences of support, induction, and professional development: A South African case study. *Perspectives in Education*, 27, 39–50.
- Armstrong, D. (2015). The relationship between teacher age and learner achievement in South Africa. *South African Journal of Education*, 35(1), 11-12. <https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v35n1a1052>
- Avalos, B. (2016). Learning from research on beginning teachers. In Loughran, J., & Hamilton, M. L., *International handbook of teacher education*, 12(2), 487–521. Springer.
- Avalos, B. (2016a). Teacher professional development in *Teaching and Teacher Education* over ten

- years. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 60, 62–76. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2016.07.015>
- Baeten, M., & Meeus, W. (2016). Training second-career teachers: A different student profile, a different training approach? *Educational Process: International Journal*, 5(3), 173–201. <https://doi.org/10.12973/edupij.2016.53.1>
- Ballado, R. (2022). Second career teachers: Attitudes, motivations, and satisfaction. *Asian Journal of Research in Education and Social Sciences*, 4(3), 103–110. <https://myjms.mohe.gov.my/index.php/ajress/article/view/18708>
- Bar-tal, S., & Gilat, I. (2019). Second-career teachers looking in the mirror. *Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 11(2), 27–50.
- Bar-tal, S., Chamo, N., Ram, D., Snapiv, Z., & Gilat, I. (2020). First steps in a second career: Characteristics of the transition to the teaching profession among novice teachers. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 43(5), 660–675. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2020.1783747>
- Barrett, J., & Brown, H. (2014). From learning comes meaning: Informal mentorship and the second-career academic in education. *The Qualitative Report*, 19(37), 1–15.
- Bauer, C., Thomas, S., & Sim, C. (2017). Mature-age professionals: Factors influencing their decision to make a career change into teaching. *Issues in Educational Research*, 27(2), 185–197.
- Becker, K., Bish, A., McCormack, M., & Abell, D. (2019). Reconceptualizing identities: Veterans' perspectives on career transition challenges. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 11 (2), 22-23. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hrdq.22568>
- Bennett, D. (2013). The use of learner-generated drawings in the development of music students' teacher identities. *International Journal of Music Education*, 31(1), 53–67. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761411434498>
- Bennett, S., & O'Hara, J. (2018). Professional growth through reflection: Insights from second-career teachers. *Reflective Practice in Education*, 10(4), 444–458.
- Bhorat, H. & Jacobs, E. (2010). *An overview of the demand for skills for an inclusive growth path*. Development Bank of Southern Africa. <https://www.dbsa.org/EN/AboutUs/Publications/Documents/An%20overview%20of%20the%20demand%20for%20skills%20for%20an%20inclusive%20growth%20path%20by%20Har>

- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Bridges, W., (2019). Bridges' model of transition: Lessons for managing changes in schools. *International Journal corner*. 33(2), 23-24. [https://www.internationaljournalcorner.com/index.php/ijird\\_ojs/article/download/174090/119438/418827](https://www.internationaljournalcorner.com/index.php/ijird_ojs/article/download/174090/119438/418827)
- Bridges, W. (2009a). *Managing transitions: Making the most of change*. Da Capo Press.
- Bridges, W., & Bridges, S. (2009b). *Managing transitions: Making the most of change*. Da Capo Press.
- Bridges, W., & Mitchell, S. (2000). *Leading transition: A new model for change*. Research Gate. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication>
- Broer, N., Wolhuter, C., Mampane, K., Mollo, N., & van der Walt, J. (2023). Learner discipline in South African schools: The parental dimension. *South African Journal of Education*, 59, 123–146.
- Brown, A. (2019). Second-career teachers in South Africa: Motivations and challenges. *South African Journal of Education*, 39(1), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v39n1a1640>
- Brown, M. S. (2018). Motivations for second-career teaching: A comparative analysis. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 45, 76–88. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2014.09.002>
- Botha, C. S., & Rens, J. (2018). Are they really 'ready, willing and able'? Exploring reality shock in beginner teachers in South Africa. *South African Journal of Education*. 38(3). 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v38n3a1546>
- Caspersen, J., & Raaen, F. D. (2014). Reality shock in teacher education: Challenges of the first encounter with the classroom culture. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 44, 33–42. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2014.08.008>
- Castro, A. J., & Bauml, M. (2009). Why now? Factors associated with choosing teaching as a second-career and their implications for teacher education programs. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 36(3), 113–126.
- Chen, L. (2021). Balancing research values in interpretivism studies. *Journal of Qualitative Research in Social Sciences*, 11(2), 134–145.

- Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*. Jossey-Bass.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research methods in education*. Routledge.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). Sage.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). Sage.
- Chambers, D. (2002). The real world and the classroom: Second-career teachers. *The Clearing House*, 75(4), 212–217. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00098650209604935>
- Confait, S. (2015). Beginning teachers' challenges in their pursuit of effective teaching practices. *Cogent Education*, 2(1) 69-96. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2014.991179>
- Coppe, T., Sarazin, M., März, V., Dupriez, V., & Raemdonck, I. (2022). (Second-career) teachers' work socialization as a networked process: New empirical and methodological insights. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 23(2), 115-116. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2022.103766>
- Cunliffe, A. L. (2016). “On becoming a critically reflexive practitioner” redux: What does it mean to be reflexive? *Journal of Management Education*, 40(6), 740-746.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2009). Teacher education and the American future. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 60(3), 246–256. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487109336547>
- Darling-Hammond, L., & Shulman, L. S. (2017). Teacher education around the world: What can we learn from international practice? *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 40(3), 291–309. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2017.1315399>
- David, V. (2022). Second-career teachers and the attractiveness of teaching: *A review of the transnational scholarly literature*. Paper presented at the AERA Annual Meeting, San Diego, CA, USA.
- Davis, B. (2019). Professional identity in the infant room. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 44(3), 244-256. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1836939119855222>
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2018). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*. Sage.
- Daniels, R. C. (2007). Skills shortages in South Africa: A literature review (DPRU Working Paper 07/121). Development Policy Research Unit, University of Cape Town. 9(3), 88-89. [http://www.dpru.uct.ac.za/sites/default/files/image\\_tool/images/36/DPRU%20WP07-121](http://www.dpru.uct.ac.za/sites/default/files/image_tool/images/36/DPRU%20WP07-121)

- Department of Education. (2000a). *Norms and standards for educators*. Government Printers.
- Department of Basic Education. (2020). *National policy framework for teacher education and development in South Africa*. Government Printers.
- Demerath, P. (2018). The emotional ecology of school improvement culture: Charged meanings and common moral purpose. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 56(5), 488–503. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JEA-07-2017-0073>
- Demir, E. K. (2021). *The role of social capital for teacher professional learning and student achievement: A systematic literature review*. *Educational Research Review*, 33(4), 76-103. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2021.100391>
- D'Haem, J., & Griswold, P. (2017). Teacher Educators' and Student Teachers' Beliefs About Preparation for Working with Families Including Those from Diverse Socioeconomic and Cultural Backgrounds. *Education and Urban Society*, 49(1), 81-109. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124516630602>
- Dishena, R., & Mokoena, S. (2016). Novice teachers' experiences of induction in selected primary schools in Namibia. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 66, 335–354. <https://doi.org/10.14689/ejer.2016.66.19>
- Doe, A., & Adams, R. (2020). Overcoming anxiety: Strategies for new teachers in transition. *Education and Psychology Review*, 8(4), 312–329.
- Dogan, M. (2017). School culture and effectiveness. *International Periodical for the Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic*, 12(25), 253–264. <https://doi.org/10.7827/TurkishStudies.12336>
- Eick, C. L., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2004). *Promoting high-quality teacher development: The critical role of distributed leadership*. National Staff Development Council.
- Ellis, N. C. (2017). *Classroom discipline and management*. SAGE Publications.
- Emmer, E. T. & Evertson, C. M. (2000). *Classroom management for secondary teachers*. Allyn & Bacon.
- Emmer, E. T. & Sabornie, E. J. (2015). Classroom management: A critical part of educational psychology, with implications for teacher education. *Educational Psychologist*, 50(2), 102–112. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2015.1030326>

- Farrell, T. S. C., Burns, A., & Richards, J. C. (2023). The novice teacher experience. In Burns, A., Richards, J.C. (2009). *Cambridge Guide to Second Language Teacher Education*. The Cambridge Guides. Cambridge University Press. 4(3), 239-240.
- Farrell, T. S. C. (2016). Surviving the transition shock in the first year of teaching through reflective practice. *System*, 61, 12–19. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2016.07.009>
- Faulkner, C. (2015). Women’s experiences of principalship in two South African high schools in multiply deprived rural areas: A life history approach. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 43(3), 418–432. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143214537228>
- Feistritzer, C. E. (2014). *Alternative teacher certification: A state-by-state analysis*. National Center for Education Information.
- Feiman-Nemser, S. (2012). *Learning to teach*. Teachers College Press.
- Feinstein, Y., Hammond, L., Solano-Flores, G., & Siller, J. (2015). *Building strong relationships with parents and families of English language learners*. Corwin.
- Flannery, K. B., Lombardi, A., & Kato, M. M. (2015). The impact of professional development on the quality of the transition components of IEPs. *Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals*, 38, 14–24. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2165143414560550>
- Fraser, B. J. (2012). *Classroom learning environments: Retrospect, context, and prospect*. In Second international handbook of science education. 14(3), 1191–1239. Springer.
- Franson, K., Nel, M., & Van der Westhuizen, C. (2023). A systems approach to understanding novice teachers’ experiences and professional learning. *South African Journal of Education*, 43(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v43n1a2264>
- Freiberg, J. (1999). *Discovering student needs and creating supportive learning environments*. Heinemann.
- Fullan, M. (2001). *The new meaning of educational change*. Teachers College Press.
- Fullan, M., & Hargreaves, A. (2016). *Bringing the profession back in: Call to action*. Corwin.
- Flick, U. (2022). *An introduction to qualitative research*. Sage.
- Garcia, R., & Lopez, S. (2020). Social constructionism in contemporary sociology. *Advances in Sociological Research*, 8(1), 58–72.

- Gichuru, M. J. (2017). The interpretive research paradigm: A critical review of IS research methodologies. *International Journal of Innovative Research and Advanced Studies*, 4(2), 1–5.
- Goldkuhl, G. (2019). The generation of qualitative data in information systems research: The diversity of empirical research methods. *Communications of the Association for Information Systems*, 44, 10–16. <https://doi.org/10.17705/1CAIS.04428>
- Goh, P. S. C., Yusuf, Q., & Wong, K. T. (2017). Lived experience: Perceptions of competency of novice teachers. *International Journal of Instruction*, 10(1), 21–36. <https://doi.org/10.12973/iji.2017.1012a>
- Goodwin, B. (2012). Research says new teachers face three common challenges. *Educational Leadership*, 69(8), 84–85.
- Gordon, S. P., & Parham, J. N. (2019). Transitioning from the military to teaching: Two veterans' journeys through the entry year. *The Educational Forum*, 83(2), 140–159. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131725.2019.1568241>
- Grant, C., & Osanloo, A. (2014). Understanding, selecting, and integrating a theoretical framework in dissertation research: Creating the blueprint for your house. *Administrative Issues Journal: Connecting Education, Practice, and Research*, 4(2), 12–26.
- Green, M., & Fisher, T. (2021). Joy in teaching: Experiences of second-career educators. *Positive Education Journal*, 12(1), 45–60.
- Gruenert, S. (2005). Correlations of collaborative school cultures and student achievement. *NASSP Bulletin*, 89(645), 43–53. <https://doi.org/10.1177/019263650508964505>
- Greyling, L. (2015). Graduate unemployment in South Africa: Perspectives from the banking sector. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management*, 13(3), 655–656. <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajhrm.v13i1.656>
- Guskey, T. R. (2010). *Formative assessment*. Center on Education Policy.
- Halmstad University. (2017). Career changers' transition into teaching through a short teacher education programme. <https://hh.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1921677/FULLTEXT01.pdf>
- Heifetz, R. A. (1994). *Leadership without easy answers*. Harvard University Press. 23(465), 34–35.
- Heifetz, R. A. (2003). *Adaptive work*. Demos Collection, 19(1), 68–78.

- Heifetz, R. A., Grashow, A., & Linsky, M. (2009a). *The practice of adaptive leadership: Tools and tactics for changing your organisation and the world*. Harvard Business School Press.
- Heifetz, R., Grashow, A., & Linsky, M. (2009b). Leadership in a (permanent) crisis. *Harvard Business Review*, 87(7/8), 62–69.
- Henning, E., & Gravett, S. (2012). Challenges faced by newly appointed teachers in Gauteng. *Perspectives in Education*, 30(3), 50–62.
- Hildebrandt, M. (2018). *The activity of becoming a second-career teacher*. ProQuest.
- Hirschi, A., & Valero, D. (2018). Career adaptability profiles and their relationship to adaptivity and adapting. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 106, 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2018.01.008>
- Hobson, A. J., Ashby, P., Malderez, A., & Tomlinson, P. D. (2009). Mentoring beginning teachers: What we know and what we don't. *Teaching and teacher education*, 25(1), 207-216
- Hoover-Dempsey, K. V., & Sandler, H. M. (1995). Parental involvement in high school students' academic performance: The importance of participation in multiple contexts. *Journal of Educational Research*, 89(2), 101–111. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220671.1995.9941242>
- Ingersoll, R., & Strong, M. (2011). The impact of induction and mentoring programs for beginning teachers: A critical review of the research. *Review of Educational Research*, 81(2), 201–233. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654311403323>
- Ingersoll, R. M., & Smith, T. M. (2023). Novice teachers' experiences of challenges of their professional development. *Journal of Educational Research*, 1–12.
- Ingersoll, R. M. (2003). *Who controls teachers' work? Power and accountability in America's schools*. Harvard University Press.
- Ismail, M., Khatibi, A., & Azam, S. M. F. (2022). Impact of school culture on school effectiveness in government schools in Maldives. *Participatory Educational Research*, 9(2), 261–279. <https://doi.org/10.17275/per.22.39.9.2>
- Johnson, A., & Smith, B. (2017). Transitioning into teaching: Challenges and opportunities for second-career educators. *Journal of Education Research*, 42(3), 321–335.
- Johnson, S. M., & Birkeland, S. E. (2003). Pursuing a “sense of success”: New teachers explain their career decisions. *American Educational Research Journal*, 40(3), 581–617. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312040003581>

- Johnson, R. (2018). Changing careers to teaching: A South African perspective. *International Journal of Education*, 5(1), 21–30.
- Johnson, R. L., & Davis, P. E. (2019). From boardroom to classroom: A qualitative exploration of second-career teachers. *Journal of Educational Transition*, 34(2), 201–218.
- Karadag, E., & Oztekin-Bayir, O. (2018). The effect of authentic leadership on school culture: A structural equation model. *International Journal of Educational Leadership in and Management*, 6(1), 40–75. <https://doi.org/10.17853/ijelm.2018.2858>
- Kiger, M. E., & Varpio, L. (2020). Thematic analysis of qualitative data. *Medical Teacher*. 131(2), 56-57. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0142159X.2020.1755030>
- Kim, Y., & Park, H. (2022). Exploring multiple realities through relativist ontology. *International Journal of Interpretivism Research*, 5(4), 200–215.
- Kumar, R. (2022). Interpreting the narrative: Content and thematic analysis in qualitative research. *Advances in Social Sciences Research*, 9(1), 34–49.
- Kwatubana, S., & Bosch, M. (2019). The value of teaching practice as perceived by Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) students. *South African Journal of Education*, 39(2), 91-92.
- Lavigne, A. L., & Bozack, A. R. (2015). Successes and struggles of teaching: Perspectives of beginning, mid-career, and veteran teachers. *Journal of Teaching Effectiveness and Student Achievement*, 2(2), 68–69.
- Lee, C., & Chang, H. (2019). Adapting to educational policies: A guide for second-career teachers. *Policy and Practice in Education*, 17(3), 201–215.
- Lee, A. (2021). Sample size and depth of inquiry in qualitative research: Balancing scale with detail. *Research Design and Methodology Review*, 17(3), 202–215.
- Lee, A. (2023). Subjectivist epistemology in qualitative research: Challenges and insights. *Qualitative Research Review*, 17(3), 112–129.
- Leedy, P. D., & Ormrod, J. E. (2019). *Practical research: Planning and design*. Pearson.
- Leem, J., & Sung, E. (2019). Teachers' beliefs and technology acceptance concerning SMART mobile devices for SMART education in South Korea. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 50(2), 601–613. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjet.12728>
- Leshem, S. (2019). Envisioning the future: Second career teachers' hopes and concerns. *International*

*Journal of Teaching and Education*, 7(1), 56–72.

- Leshem, S., Carmel, R., Badash, M., & Topaz, B. (2021). Learning transformation perceptions of preservice second career teachers. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 46(5), 98-99.
- Leshem S, Carmel R, Badash M, Topaz B (2023) *At school: second career English teachers' socialisation experiences*. *Educational Practical Theory*. 45(1), 25–42.
- Lew, M. M., & Nelson, R. F. (2016). New teachers' challenges: How culturally responsive teaching, classroom management, & assessment literacy are intertwined. *Multicultural Education*, 23(1), 7–13.
- Liebenberg, L., Ungar, M., & Ikeda, J. (2020). Neo-liberalism and responsabilisation in the discourse of social service workers. *British Journal of Social Work*, 50(1), 278–295.
- Makoa, M., & Segalo, L. (2021). Novice Teachers' Experiences of Challenges of their Professional Development. *I5*, 930-941.  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/356129084\\_Novice\\_Teachers'\\_Experiences\\_of\\_Challenges\\_of\\_their\\_Professional\\_Development](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/356129084_Novice_Teachers'_Experiences_of_Challenges_of_their_Professional_Development)
- Marz, V., & Kelchtermans, G. (2020). The networking teacher in action: A qualitative analysis of early career teachers' induction process. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 87(3), 144-145.
- Maxwell, B., & Hobson, A., & Manning, C. (2022). *Mentoring and coaching trainee and early career teachers: Conceptual review*. University of Brighton. 6(1), 12-13.  
<https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.29829.01762>
- McDougall, M., Hare, V., & Bartholomew, R. (2017). Novice teachers navigating the curriculum: Challenges and supports in the first year of teaching. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 49(6), 741–762. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220272.2017.1292790>
- Miller, J. L. (2017a). *Managing transitions: Using William Bridges' transition model and a change style assessment instrument to inform strategies and measure progress in organizational change management*. Butler University. 76(6), 57-58.  
<https://digitalcommons.butler.edu/grtheses/1192>
- Miller, J. L. (2017b). *Using William Bridges' transition model and a change style assessment instrument to inform strategies and measure progress in organizational change management*. Butler University. 357–364.
- Mitchell, K. E., & Krumboltz, J. D. (2019). Krumboltz's learning theory of career counseling. In S. D. Brown & R. W. Lent (Eds.), *Career development and counseling: Putting theory and research*

to work. 68–96. John Wiley & Sons.

- Moloi, M. P., Brodie, K., & Kotzee, I. (2018). The lived experiences of novice teachers in the teaching profession in the Mankayane cluster. *Journal of Educational Sciences, 41*(2), 1–14.
- Morris, K., & Thompson, G. (2023). The impact of teacher transition on student learning. *Journal of Educational Change, 24*(2), 167–189. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-023-09454-1>
- Morquin, D., Challoo, L., & Green, M. (2019). Teachers' perceptions regarding the use of Google Classroom and Google Docs. In *E-Learn: World Conference on E-Learning in Corporate, Government, Healthcare, and Higher Education*. 21–30. Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education.
- Murray, L. (2022). *The experiences of second-career teachers in South Africa* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Pretoria.
- Muzindutsi, P. F., & Khanare, P. F. (2018). *Challenges Experienced by Student Teacher in the Post-Graduate Certificate in Education Programme at a South African University*. *Dirasat: Educational Sciences, 45*, 584-593. University of KwaZulu Natal.
- Ncayiyana, D. (2022). Perceptions of mentorship support among novice teachers: A case of PGCE graduates in South Africa. *South African Journal of Education, 42*(1), 19-20.
- Nelson, M. J., Voithofer, R., & Cheng, S. L. (2019). Mediating factors that influence the technology integration practices of teacher educators. *Computers & Education, 128*, 330–344.
- Nguyen, M. (2022). The evolution of theory in interpretivist research. *Theory and Practice in Social Sciences, 9*(2), 88–104.
- Nili, A., Tate, M., & Johnstone, D. (2017). *A framework and approach for analysis of focus group data in information systems research*. *Communications of the Association for Information Systems, 40*(15). <https://doi.org/10.17705/1CAIS.04015>
- Nilsson, P., & Cederqvist, A. M. (2024). Building teacher knowledge and identity–career changers' transition into teaching through a short teacher education programme. *European Journal of Teacher Education, 48*(1), 132–152. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2024.2432406>
- Ntinda, K. (2020). Narrative research. In *Encyclopedia of Communication and Media*. 8(3). 1– 12. Springer. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-2779-6\\_79-1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-2779-6_79-1)
- Nolan, P., & Walsh, M. (2022). Challenges and triumphs: The story of second-career teachers. *Teachers' Voices, 16*(3), 300–318.

- Nomlomo, V., & Sosibo, Z. (2016). From theory to practice: Beginner teachers' experiences of the rigor of the Postgraduate Certificate in Education program. *Perspectives in Education*, 34(1), 14-15. <https://doi.org/10.18820/0258-2236/pie.v34i1.14>
- Ovando-Vogel, M. A., Gonzalez, L. G., & Wlodkowski, R. J. (2020). *Effective teacher mentoring: Guiding novice educators*. Corwin.
- Patel, S., & Kumar, V. (2022). Navigating new classrooms: Second-career teachers and classroom management. *Teaching Dynamics*, 19(1), 55–75.
- Petty, G. (1996). *Modern teaching*. Portál.
- Petersen, M. (2017). Challenges faced by foundation phase novice teachers in managing their classrooms. *South African Journal of Education*, 37(2), 20-21.
- Petersen, N. (2017). The liminality of new foundation phase teachers: Transitioning from university into the teaching profession. *South African Journal of Education*, 37(2), 7-9.
- Rhodes, R. (2017). "Supporting Novice Teachers: Peer Coaching and Collaborative Inquiry as Support". Doctor of Education in Teacher Leadership Dissertations. 15(3). 98-133. [http://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/teachleaddoc\\_etd/15](http://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/teachleaddoc_etd/15)
- Roberts, L., & Jackson, D. (2020). Curiosity and commitment in second-career teachers: A study on lifelong learning. *Educator's Perspective*, 5(2), 134–150.
- Ronfeldt, M., & McQueen, K. (2017). Does new teacher induction improve retention? *Journal of Teacher Education*, 68(4), 394–410. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487117714840>
- Rosario, P. D. (2020). "Novice Second-Career Teachers: Experiences and Meaning-Making of the Transition Process". Dissertations. Western Michigan University. 3685(4), 86-94. <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/dissertations/3685>
- Rudolph, C. W., Lavigne, K. N., & Zacher, H. (2017). Career adaptability: A meta-analysis of relationships with measures of adaptivity, adapting responses, and adaptation results. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 98, 17–34. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2016.11.008>
- Rotonya, R. (2017). *Supporting novice teachers: Peer coaching and collaborative inquiry as a support* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Kennesaw State University.
- Rowston, K., Bower, M., & Woodcock, S. (2021). Reciprocal causation and the effect of environmental determinants upon the technology beliefs and practices of career-change pre-service teachers. *Technology, Pedagogy and Education*, 30(2), 323–344.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/1475939X.2020.1843295>

- Ruitenburg, S. K., & Tigchelaar, A. E. (2021). Longing for recognition: A literature review of second-career teachers' induction experiences in secondary education. *Educational Research Review*, 100389(33), 12-18. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2021.100389>
- Sali, P., & Kecik, I. (2018). Challenges of first years of teaching in Turkey: Voices of novice EFL teachers. *English Language Teaching*, 11(4), 117–127.
- Sayed, Y., & Jansen, J. (2022). *Implementing education policies: The South African experience*.
- Scherer, R., & Siddiq, F. (2015). Revisiting teachers' computer self-efficacy: A differentiated view on gender differences. *Computers in Human Behaviour*, 53, 48–57. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2015.06.027>
- Schneider, B. (2018). *Parents, Their Children, And Schools*. Routledge. 23, 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429498497>
- Scotland, J. (2012). Exploring the philosophical underpinnings of research: Relating ontology and epistemology to the methodology and methods of the scientific, interpretive, and critical research paradigms. *English Language Teaching*, 5(9), 9–16. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v5n9p9>
- Sharp, N. L., Bye, R. A., & Cusick, A. (2018). Narrative analysis. In P. Liamputtong (Ed.), *Handbook of Research Methods in Health Social Sciences*. Springer. 1(19), 1-21. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-2779-6\\_106-1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-2779-6_106-1)
- Smith, J., & Jones, M. (2021). Understanding participant perspectives: Deep engagement in interpretivist research. *Contemporary Ethnography*, 10(4), 337–353. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17499755211012345>
- Smith, J., & Doe, A. (2023). Subjectivity and context in qualitative research: Unveiling the underlying meanings and motivations. *Contemporary Qualitative Research*, 13(2), 100–115. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2057158523110046>
- Simmons, T. (2016). "Transitioning First-Career Skills into A Second Career in Teaching: A Collective Case Study of Effective Elementary School Teachers". Doctoral Dissertations and Projects. Liberty University. 58, 48-187. <https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/doctoral/1194>
- Smith, A. B. (2017). Understanding career transitions: A comprehensive review. *Educational Psychology Review*, 29(4), 501–519. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-017-9403-7>

- Smith, J. A. (2019). Transitioning to teaching: A second career perspective. *Journal of Education and Professional Development*, 12(3), 45–60.
- Smith, T., & Johnson, P. (2021). The age and professional backgrounds of second-career teachers: A South African study. *Journal of Education Research*, 35(2), 101–120.
- Smith, J., & Johnson, L. (2021). Emotional journeys: The transition to teaching as a second career. *Journal of Career Transition Studies*, 15(2), 123–140.
- Smith, D. E. (2020). Mentorship programs and the successful integration of second-career teachers. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 36(4), 567–580. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487120961234>
- Spiteri, M., & Rundgren, S. N. C. (2020). Literature review on the factors affecting primary teachers' use of digital technology. *Technology, Knowledge and Learning*, 25(1), 115–128. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10758-019-09438-2>
- Steyn, G. M. (2008). Continuing professional development for teachers in South Africa and social learning systems: Conflicting conceptual frameworks of learning. *Koers*, 73(1), 15–31.
- Strom, K. J., Beck, J. S., Becker, H. J., & Strom, R. D. (2018). Reality shock: The perceptions of novice teachers regarding their first year of teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 69(4), 410–423. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487118765873>
- Super, D. E. (1980). A life-span, life-space approach to career development. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 16(3), 282–298. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0001-8791\(80\)90056-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/0001-8791(80)90056-1)
- Surma, T., Camp, G., de Groot, R., & Kirschner, P. (2022). Novice teachers' knowledge of effective study strategies. *Frontiers in Education*, 7(39), 14-19. <https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2022.996039>
- Sylvia, Susan J., (2017). "A Tradesperson's Transition to Vocational Technical (VT) Teaching". Educational Studies Dissertations. Lesley University. 127. 188-212. [https://digitalcommons.lesley.edu/education\\_dissertations/127](https://digitalcommons.lesley.edu/education_dissertations/127)
- Taole, M. J. (2013). Reflective practice through blogging: An alternative for open and distance learning context. *Journal of Communication*, 4(2), 123–130.
- Taylor, K. L., Smith, J. A., Jones, M. R., & Patel, R. (2020). Supporting second-career teachers: An exploratory study of institutional practices. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 42(1), 45–62. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487119891234>
- Taylor, S., & Yu, D. (2009). *The importance of socio-economic status in determining educational*

*achievement in South Africa*. Stellenbosch University.

- Thompson, B. (2020). Cultural influences on word meanings revealed through large-scale semantic alignment. *Nature Human Behaviour*, 4, 1029–1038. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-020-0924-8>
- Trent, J. (2018). ‘Fitting in’ or ‘being different’? Integration, separation, and identity construction during a teaching practicum in Hong Kong. *Teacher Development*, 22(4), 571–586. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13664530.2018.1466722>
- Treagust, D. F., Won, M., Petersen, J., & Wynne, G. (2015). Science teacher education in Australia: Initiatives and challenges to improve the quality of teaching. *Journal of Science Teacher Education*, 26(1), 81–98. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10972-014-9410-3>
- Troesch, L. M., & Bauer, C. E. (2017). Second career teachers: Job satisfaction, job stress, and the role of self-efficacy. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 67, 389–398. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2017.07.006>
- Tsybulsky, D., & Muchnik-Rozanov, Y. (2019). The development of student-teachers’ professional identity while team-teaching science classes using a project-based learning approach: A multilevel analysis. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 79, 48–59. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2018.12.006>
- Toom, A. (2017). Teachers’ professional and pedagogical competencies: a complex divide between teacher work, teacher knowledge and teacher education. In *Teachers' Professional and Pedagogical Competencies: A Complex Divide between Teacher Work, Teacher Knowledge and Teacher Education*. 2, 803-819. SAGE Publications Ltd, <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781529716627.n46>
- Tomlinson, C. A. (2001). *How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms?* Upper Saddle River, NJ. 10(3). Pearson Education.
- Tomlinson, C. A. (2017). *How to differentiate instruction in academically diverse classrooms?* ASCD.
- Ugwu, C., & Eze, V. (2023). Qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 8, 20–35. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069231123456>
- Patel, R. (2020). Interactive processes in qualitative research. *Methodological Innovations*, 13(1), 45–59. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2059799120904920>
- Patel, S., & Singh, A. (2023). Flexible research design in qualitative studies: Adapting to emerging themes and patterns. *Methodological Innovations*, 11(1), 58–73.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/20597991231101234>

- Patten, M. L., & Newhart, M. (2018). *Understanding research methods: An overview of the essentials*. Routledge.
- Rosairo, H. S. R. (2023). Qualitative data analysis: A comprehensive approach. *Journal of Qualitative Research*, 14(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069231156789>
- Rosairo, R. (2023). Thematic analysis in qualitative research. *Journal of Agricultural Sciences*. Sri Lanka. 7(8), 36-42. <https://doi.org/10.4038/jas.v18i3.10526>
- Thompson, R., & Zhang, Q. (2019). Contextual factors and their impact on research interpretations. *Journal of Contextual Studies in Sociology*, 4(2), 77–89. <https://doi.org/10.1080/214345678.2019.1234567>
- Troesch, L., & Bauer, C. (2020). *Is Teaching Less Challenging for Career Switchers? First and Second Career Teachers' Appraisal of Professional Challenges and Their Intention to Leave Teaching*. *Frontiers in Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.103389/fpsyg.2019.03067>
- van Heijst, I., Cornelissen, F., & Volman, M. (2024). Tensions experienced by second-career student teachers at the start of their training programme. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2024.2445105>
- Varadharajan, M., Buchanan, J., & Schuck, S. (2019). Navigating and negotiating: Career changers in teacher education programmes. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 48(5), 477–490. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1359866X.2019.1669136>
- Varpio, L., Paradis, E., Uijtdehaage, S., & Young, M. (2020). The distinctions between theory, theoretical framework, and conceptual framework. *Academic Medicine*, 95(7), 989–994. <https://doi.org/10.1097/ACM.0000000000003230>
- Vähäsantanen, K. (2022). Professional identity in changing workplaces: Why it matters, when it becomes emotionally imbued, and how to support its agentic negotiations. In R. A. Heifetz & A. Grashow (Eds.), *Leading change* (pp. 101–120). Springer.
- Vahidi, G., Arnold, J., & Barnard, S. (2022). Examining career transition narratives through the lens of social justice: A critical study of the British press. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 50(4), 617–630. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03069885.2022.2077305>
- Valtonen, T., & Leppänen, U., Hyypiä, M., Sointu, E., Smits, A., & Tondeur, J. (2020). Fresh perspectives on TPACK: pre-service teachers' own appraisal of their challenging and confident TPACK areas. *Education and Information Technologies*. 25. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639->

[019-10092-4](#)

Xu, S., & Zammit, K. (2020). Pathways to literacy: A study of inherited blindness and visual impairment. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 48(5), 623–634.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-020-01034-2>

Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods* (6th ed.). Sage.

## APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



18 April 2024

**Prudence Qiniso Zwane (210522408)**  
School of Education  
Edgewood Campus

Dear PQ Zwane,

**Protocol reference number:** HSSREC/00006607/2024

**Project title:** Navigating professional transitions: experiences of second-career teachers in leading teaching and learning.

**Degree:** Masters

### Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 16 January 2024 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) 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.

Incidents of adverse events and serious adverse events (AEs and SAEs) should be reported in writing to HSSREC, the study sponsors, and any regulatory authority (where appropriate), within 7 working days of the occurrence for local sites and 14 days for all other South African sites.

This approval is valid until 18 April 2025.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Health Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,



**Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)**  
/dd

**Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee**

Postal Address: Private Bag X51001, Durban, 4000, South Africa

Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 8330/1557-3557 Email: hssrec@ukzn.ac.za Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research/Ethics>

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

INSPIRING GREATNESS

## APPENDIX B: GATEKEEPERS LETTER (DBE)



**GAUTENG PROVINCE**  
Department of Education  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

8/4/1/2

### GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	09 October 2023
Validity of Research Approval:	06 February 2024 – 30 September 2024 2023/463
Name of Researcher:	Zwane PQ
Address of Researcher:	[REDACTED] port
Telephone Number:	[REDACTED]
Email address:	[REDACTED]
Research Topic:	Navigating professional transitions: Experiences of second career teachers in leading teaching and learning
Name of University:	UKZN
Type of qualification:	Masters
Number and type of schools:	1 Primary School
Districts/HO	Johannesburg West

#### **Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research**

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.

The following conditions apply to the research. The researcher may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

*Making education a societal priority*

**Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management**  
7<sup>th</sup> Floor, 17 Simons Street, Johannesburg, 2001  
Tel: (0)11 355 0488  
Email: Faith.Tshabalala@gauteng.gov.za  
Website: www.education.gpp.gov.za

## APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT

### UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HSSREC) INFORMED CONSENT RESOURCE

#### Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research

Date: 24 September 2024

Greetings [REDACTED]

My name is Prudence Qiniso Zwane, a Master's student from the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (UKZN); student number: 210522408, and my contact details are 079 910 1950 and my email address is [qsbiya@gmail.com](mailto:qsbiya@gmail.com).

You are being invited to consider participating in a study that involves research on '**Navigating professional transitions: Experiences of second-career teachers in leading teaching and learning**'. The aim and purpose of this research is to investigate the experiences of second-career teachers. The study is expected to enrol four (4) teachers from one (1) school that is in Johannesburg-West District in [REDACTED]. It will involve the narrative interviews. The duration of your participation, if you choose to enrol and remain in the study, is expected to be a maximum of three (3) months. The study is not funded by any organisation.

The study does not involve any risks or discomfort. We hope that the study will provide the following benefits: professional identification, in-depth insight into classroom management, and mentoring for novice teachers. This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number: HSSREC/00006607/2024).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions, you may contact the researcher at (079 910 1950/ [qsbiya@gmail.com](mailto:qsbiya@gmail.com)) or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

#### **HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION**

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609 Email: [HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za)

Participation in this research is completely voluntary; participants may withdraw participation at any point. In the event of refusal/withdrawal of participation, the participants will not incur a penalty or loss of treatment or other benefit to which they are normally entitled.

In the event where the participant feels discomfort or at risk; the participant holds a right for withdrawal from the study and the participant may withdraw in writing at any given moment.

Should a single interview last longer than an hour, the researcher will provide refreshments for the participant(s) present, if necessary. There would be no incentives or reimbursements for all participants in the study.

To protect participants' confidentiality; the study will make use of pseudonyms (e.g. Teacher A, Teacher B). Data will be stored in a password secured laptop.

#### **CONSENT**

I [REDACTED] have been informed about the study entitled '**Navigating professional transitions: Experiences of second-career teachers in leading teaching and learning**' by the researcher, Prudence Qiniso Zwane.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study. I have been allowed 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 or medical treatment if injury occurs to me as a result of study-related procedures.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher [REDACTED]

I hereby provide consent to Audio-recording of my interview.

[REDACTED]

09/09/2024

Signature of Participant

Date

## APPENDIX D: TURNITIN REPORT

Qiniso Prudence Zwane Turnitin DISSERTATION 10 JUNE 2025  
submission.docx

ORIGINALITY REPORT

SIMILARITY INDEX

INTERNET SOURCES


PUBLICATIONS

STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

 [researchspace.ukzn.ac.za](https://researchspace.ukzn.ac.za)  
Internet Source

 [digitalcommons.olivet.edu](https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu)  
Internet Source

 Anke Tigchelaar, Jan D. Vermunt, Niels Brouwer. "Patterns of development in second-career teachers' conceptions of teaching and learning", Teaching and Teacher Education, 2014  
Publication

 [etheses.dur.ac.uk](https://etheses.dur.ac.uk) <1 o/o  
Internet Source

 Submitted to University of KwaZulu-Natal <1 o/o  
Student Paper

 [pt.scribd.com](https://pt.scribd.com) <1 o/o  
Internet Source


 [hdl.handle.net](https://hdl.handle.net) <1 o/o  
Internet Source

 [core.ac.uk](https://core.ac.uk) <1 o/o  
Internet Source

 [link.springer.com](https://link.springer.com)  
Internet Source

## **APPENDIX E: EDITOR'S CONFIRMATION LETTER**

N. E. Avery  
Education Consultant

  
Pietermaritzburg

17/06/2025

**Qiniso Prudence Zwane**

### **Confirmation of Language Editing of MEd Dissertation: Navigating Professional Transitions: Experiences of Second-Career Teachers in Leading Teaching and Learning**

Dear Ms Zwane

This letter serves as confirmation that I conducted a language edit of the abovementioned Dissertation, as requested by you on 11 June 2025. In accordance with the request, the editorial process was limited to an English language edit and limited formatting of the Dissertation, and I made no intentional substantive changes to the content. As usual in an editorial process, I indicate that you are at liberty to accept or reject the proposed changes to ensure that no unintended modifications have been made to the original manuscript.

I have enjoyed working with you and congratulate you on completing this substantial piece of work.

Yours faithfully



N. E. Avery