NOVICE TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF TEACHING LITERACY IN THE FOUNDATION PHASE

By

MERLE ANDREA BAKER

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Education in the discipline of Teacher Development Studies

University of KwaZulu-Natal

SUPERVISORS

Dr Nyna Amin

Dr Jayaluxmi Naidoo

2014

DECLARATION

I, Merle Andrea Baker, hereby declare that:

i.   The research reported in this dissertation, except where otherwise stated, is my original work.

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

iii. All sources used or cited have been referenced in the text.

Signed_____

     M. A. Baker **(Student no: 200402235)**

I declare that this information has been submitted with my approval.

Signed_____   Signed _____

Dr N. Amin (Supervisor)   Dr J. Naidoo (Supervisor)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved parents, who passed away before the completion of the dissertation.

My father, Edington Joubert Baker

And

My mother, Mary Baker

I am eternally grateful for their unconditional support, guidance, inspiration and love through the years.

ABSTRACT

South Africa has become synonymous with disparaging headlines regarding the dismal literacy performance of learners. Most reports and research on the country's educational progress have displayed negative headlines regarding the literacy levels of the learners. The teaching of literacy has been under discussion in this country due to the low literacy levels that have been highlighted in both media and research. The results of the Annual National Assessment and the Progress in international reading literacy studies bear testimony to this. Consequently, this study focuses one aspect of teaching literacy from the perspective of novice literacy teachers.

A qualitative study, located in the interpretative paradigm was used, to explore novice teachers' experiences of teaching literacy in the foundation phase. A case study was employed, using semi-structured interviews of the experiences of teaching literacy by three novice teachers in the foundation phase at one school in Durban. The study firstly, reviewed literature on novice teachers, secondly, the teaching of literacy in the foundation phase and thirdly, presented Kolb's experiential learning theory as the framework, which underpinned this study. The experiential learning theory documented the learning cycles of the three novice teachers by describing their feelings, their reflections, thinking, and doing.

Data emerging from the findings, suggested that, given the history of South Africa, teachers in the foundation phase encounter a plethora of challenges and contextual factors that impact on their teaching of literacy. The novice teachers in this study employed teaching strategies to cope with the challenges, by engaging in a process of experiential learning. This research study, therefore advocates a need for a more sustainable development of novice teachers as intellectuals, who will be capacitated to develop strategies to cope with the literacy challenges in this country.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CAPS : Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements

ELT : Experiential learning theory

PIRLS : Progress in International Reading Literacy Studies

NCS : National Curriculum Statement

OBE : Outcomes Based Education

LiEP : Language- in- Education Policy

LOLT : Language of learning and teaching

NEEDU : National Education Evaluation and Development Unit

DoE : Department of Education

FP : Foundation Phase

HOD : Head of Department

ISPFTED : Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FIGURES

1.1 Background to the study

The post-1994 period heralded a transformed educational system which was driven by democracy, liberation, freedom and equality for all. These values were shaped by new policies which advocated for the ideals of a democratic society. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) provided a basis for curriculum transformation and development. South Africa has since emerged from Curriculum 2005, introduced in 1997, which was an outcomes based approach, followed by the Revised National Curriculum Statement (Department of Education, 2002) and currently Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (DoE 2011). However, it is alarming that in spite of policy changes designed to meet the needs of the new democracy, South Africa is still a country plagued by education problems.

It has been reported that the majority of the learners in this country, cannot read and write as reflected in the Progress in International Literacy Studies (PIRLS, 2006 & 2011). There are numerous factors that impact on these low levels of attainment. The Annual National Assessment results for 2011, (ANA) which were released on the 28 June 2011 by the Minister of Basic Education, Mrs Angie Motsheka, reinforced the low literacy and numeracy levels in the South African primary schools. While the 2012 ANA results indicated a slight improvement, the minister indicates that … " *we still have a long way to go towards realising the desired 60% threshold of learners mastering the minimum Language and Mathematics competencies by end of grade 3, 6 and 9,"* (Report on the Annual National Assessment, 2012,p.1).

The release of the NEEDU National Report (2012) on the state of literacy teaching and learning in the foundation phase highlights the low literacy levels and indicates that schools are still performing below expectations. For many years, educationalists have been observing the matriculation results in order to address the problems experienced in education; however, recently there has been a shift of focus to the foundation phase. The strengthening of foundation phase provisioning and the development of novice teachers to meet this need are some of the key factors highlighted in the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa

2011-2025 (DoE, 2011). I believe that in order for this plan to be reached, it should be informed by an examination of how novice teachers are teaching in school contexts against the actual experiences of novice teachers who learn to teach in the foundation phase.

1.2 Rationale for the study

This study was based on my own experience as a teacher with twenty- seven years of experience. During my teaching years I have witnessed many changes in the educational department. My journey as a teacher has been influenced by much upheaval in education. My initial training began before 1994 and as a person of coloured descent, I was compelled to attend a college and teach in school specifically designed for coloured persons as recounted by Sayed (2004), "by the early seventies teachers were trained in racially and ethnically- separate colleges and universities…each type of college and university trained teachers for specific schools" (p.247).

The new democratic South Africa, in 1994, was anticipated with great joy and excitement. New policies which have been constantly changing over the past twenty years were introduced. The Norms and Standards for educators (DoE, 2000) became the ruling policy for teacher education and it identified seven roles that described a competent teacher (Morrow, 2007).

As a head of department in the foundation phase, I am tasked with assisting novice teachers. I believe that in order to assist novice teachers' professional development, more insight needs to be gained with regard to their experiences of learning to teach; hence the focus on novice teachers' experiences. This study allowed for the voices of the novice teachers to be heard and was therefore useful, firstly, in providing a platform for them to express their views on their experiences of learning to teach and, secondly, to gain insight about novice teacher professional development.

My interest in this study has been to capture how the process of learning to teach literacy by novice teachers occurs in the foundation phase. Through the many years that I have worked with novice teachers, I have witnessed the challenges and difficulties that they experience in their teaching. The challenges are related to teaching in schools without a mentor or supervisor to guide them and their inability to adapt appropriate

methods for the diversity of learners in the classrooms. More importantly, I have noticed that some novice teachers lack the practical experience that is required to teach the basic literacy skills in the foundation phase. I have also been impressed by novice teachers who seemed to know what to do and how to teach effectively. This study is a systematic inquiry to discover how novice teachers become teachers of literacy. In my role as head of department, I hope to be able to gain and use the insights into how they learn in order to assist them more effectively.

1.3 Context of the study

1.3.1 School context

This section describes the context of the study. The research site was a school I have named Rainbow Primary, situated in Newlands East, in Durban. Newlands East is a suburb in the eastern areas of Durban in the province of KwaZulu- Natal. This area was originally developed in the apartheid era to provide houses for coloured people and comprised flats and semi -detached homesteads. This school was opened in 1988 and initially only catered for coloured children in the area, where the majority of the teachers were coloured. However, after 1994, there were changes in the demographics of both learners and teachers. The school currently, consists of learners who come from the nearby township, Kwa Mashu, the neighbouring settlement, Quarry Heights and the surrounding area of Newlands East adjacent to the school.

There has been an influx of learners from Kwa Mashu, who commute daily by public transport to school. The school is bordered by Quarry Heights, which is a low cost housing development and the majority of the learners from this area attend Rainbow primary school as it is within walking distance. The school comprises 1333 learners. There are 656 foundation phase learners, including grade R and 667 intermediate and senior primary learners. The demographics of the learners comprise 90% black and 10% coloured. The staff component comprises 40 educators including the principal and school management team. The school management team comprises of six staff members: two deputy principals, two intermediate and senior phase heads of departments and two foundation phase heads of departments.

The language of learning and teaching at the school is English. IsiZulu and Afrikaans are offered as first additional languages. The majority of the learners speak isiZulu as their home-language.

This study explores how novice teachers learn to teach literacy within the context described above.

1.4 The focus of the study

The focus of this study is to explore novice teachers' experiences of teaching literacy in the foundation phase. This will include their experiences as novice teachers and how this impacts on the teaching of literacy. According to Arends & Phurutse (2009) beginning teachers are defined as newly qualified teachers who have recently joined the profession and have less than four years of teaching experience. The study, therefore, provides a trajectory of novice teachers' experiences of teaching literacy as they embark on the teaching journey in the foundation phase. Their journey begins with their initial experiences as they enter their first years of teaching. They arrive from higher education institutions where they received their training and acquired pedagogical and content knowledge and it is assumed that they will be able to teach literacy.

The teaching of literacy is very important in the foundation phase and in this study the focus is on how novice teachers learn to teach literacy in context as opposed to what they have learnt about the teaching of literacy in higher education institutions, which could be considered to be relatively theory learning contexts.

1.5 Significance of the study

The main aim of the study was to explore the experiences of novice teachers' literacy teaching in the foundation phase. Novice teachers are faced with conflicting emotions due to expectations of society and the profession. Morrow (2007) highlighted the seven roles of a teacher in South Africa as stipulated in the Norms & Standards for educators (DoE, 2000) and the contextual factors that impact on teaching in South African schools. Most research refers to novice teachers as having, "to sink or swim" (Feiman-Nemser, 2001, p.2) to survive their initial years. My intention has been to explore the experiences of the novice teachers and the teaching of literacy in the foundation phase,

given the literacy education crisis in South Africa, in order to observe how novice teachers survive or thrive in context.

1.6 Key Research Questions

This research inquiry was guided by only one research question: What are novice teachers' experiences of learning to teach literacy in the foundation phase?

I considered this question to be very relevant in our educational context. Based on the interviews, the research question produced very valuable insights regarding novice teachers' experiences of teaching literacy.

1.7 Research design, methodology and paradigm

The focus of this study was to explore novice teachers' experiences of teaching literacy in the foundation phase. To guide the study, it was framed within an interpretative paradigm.

The fundamental aim of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of novice teachers' experiences. Therefore, the interpretative paradigm was appropriately chosen as it focuses on "understanding the subjective world of human experience" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2011, p. 17). The suitability of this paradigm for this study is based on Henning, van Rensburg & Smit's (2004, p.21) assertion that, the interpretative paradigm has a strong "emphasis on experience and interpretation", which was valuable in interpreting novice teachers' experiences. In order to understand the phenomena of novice teachers' experiences, I was guided by Cohen *et al.*'s, assertion that the interpretative paradigm allows the researcher to "get inside the person and understand from within" (p.17).The interpretative paradigm allowed for the interpretation of the experiences of the three novice teachers as stated by Cohen *et al.*, who state that, "interpretative researchers begin with individuals and set out to understand their interpretations of the world around them" (p.18).

A qualitative approach was used for this study, to elicit the participants' views regarding their experiences of teaching literacy in the foundation phase in order to understand the phenomena from their perspective. This study was not about a search for a truth about experience but rather to document the various ways and means of learning to teach literacy in a school context as a qualified teacher. The knowledge produced is

thus, context dependent and is a personal reflection which is not meant to be generalised.

A case study was used as a suitable methodology, which allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of how a selection of novice teachers at one particular school related with each other regarding their experiences of teaching. This concurs with the assertions of Nieuwenhuis (2007, p.76) who states that, "case study research is aimed at gaining greater insight and understanding of the dynamics of a particular situation". Semi-structured interviews were used as a research tool to obtain data from the three participants. Nieuwenhuis (2007) affirms the use of semi-structured interviews for the generation of relevant data.

1.8 Organisation of the dissertation

Chapter one provides an overview to the study of novice teachers' experiences of teaching literacy in the foundation phase. It discusses the background of the study, the focus, the purpose of the study and the research question that guided the study. The context of the study was also outlined. A brief overview of the research design, methodology and paradigm was given.

Chapter two discusses the literature that was reviewed for the study. This chapter comprises three sections. Firstly novice teachers are discussed and their conceptions, expectations, induction and mentoring, challenges and knowledge are acknowledged. The second section focuses on the teaching of literacy. The last section describes the theoretical framework that underpins the study, namely, Kolb's experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984).

Chapter three outlines the research design, the paradigm and approach and the methodology that was used for the study. The selection of participants and the research context are also discussed. A data collection plan is included. Principles of qualitative data gathering and limitations of the study were discussed.

Chapter four discusses the analysis of data based on the three interviews. Data is analysed according to Kolb's experiential learning theory. Four themes emerged from the data: feelings, reflecting, thinking and doing.

Chapter five concludes the research study by discussing the findings, insights and future directions. The limitations of the study and recommendations are also discussed.

1.9 Conclusion

This chapter provided an orientation to the study and a brief overview was given. A background was given of the education progress in the country and the literacy challenges that are experienced. The rationale, purpose, focus and significance of the study were discussed. A brief outline of the context and a description of the methodology that was employed in this study were given. The research question that guided this study was presented, namely: *What are novice teachers' experiences of learning to teach literacy in the foundation phase?*

The next chapter will provide a review of the literature that was used and the theoretical framework that underpinned the study.

CHAPTER TWO

TEACHING LITERACY IN THE FOUNDATION PHASE

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided the overview of the study. This chapter presents a review of the literature and the theoretical framework that informs it. The focus of this study which is, to explore novice teachers' experiences of teaching literacy in the foundation phase will form the basis of this chapter. In order to explore novice teachers' experiences of teaching literacy, the literature reviewed will be based on novice teachers and their experiences of teaching literacy in the foundation phase.

The literature review is divided into three sections. The first section is based on novice teachers and includes the following themes: conceptions, expectations, induction and mentoring, challenges, knowledge of practice and knowledge of teaching context of novice teachers.

The second section focuses on novice teachers' experiences of teaching literacy in the foundation phase and comprises the following themes: novice teachers, literacy in the foundation phase, expectations, the teaching of literacy, reading, challenges, teacher knowledge, teaching literacy in relation to learners' home language, contextual issues, the role of parents and guardians, subject and pedagogical knowledge and context and practice of teaching literacy.

The third section focuses on Kolb's experiential learning theory, and the conceptual framework underpinning this study.

2.2 Novice Teachers

2.2.1 Conceptions of novice teachers

Novice teachers, as a concept, vary in different countries. In some places novice teachers are referred to as newly qualified teachers, meaning those who have recently graduated from higher education. Strong (2009) uses the term beginning teachers and asserts that in some places it refers to only first year teachers and in others to teachers in their first two or three years as professionals. In the South African context novice teachers refer to newly qualified teachers who have been teaching for less than five

years. Arends and Phurutse (2009) state that beginning teachers are defined as newly qualified teachers who have recently joined the profession and have less than four years of teaching experience. In this study novice teachers are those who have recently qualified and have limited experience of teaching in authentic school situations.

2.2.2 Expectations of novice teacher

Novice teachers find themselves in a precarious position when they start their careers. The long awaited moment of being a qualified teacher finally arrives, this excitement and joy is often short lived, thwarted by the expectations of society. These new teachers find themselves thrown into the deep end, swimming with the experienced teachers, and they have to "sink or swim" (Feiman-Nemser, 2001, p.1014). The cliché of sink or swim is widely used to describe novice teachers either adapting to their new environments or leaving the profession because they cannot cope with the realities of teaching. Feiman-Nemser (2003) states that if we leave beginning teachers to sink or swim on their own, they become overwhelmed and leave the profession. In order to prevent attrition of beginning teachers, society has a role to play in assisting them in adapting to the world of teaching. However, the expectations of society and the profession are in conflict with those of novice teachers, because society views novice teachers as competent teachers who should have the capabilities of managing classes on their own.

Novice teachers are expected to be fully fledged teachers who are expected to perform on the same level as their more experienced counterparts. This view is endorsed by Killeavy (2006) who asserts that novice teachers are required to assume the full professional responsibilities of an experienced teacher from the first day they enter the classroom. However, a contrasting view is offered by Feiman-Nemser (2001) who states that, "no matter how good a pre-service program may be there are some things that can only be learned on the job" (p.1026). This view reinforces the fact that though novice teachers, are certified as teachers, they are still inexperienced and in the process of learning and therefore require assistance and support at schools in developing their teaching competencies. The plight of novice teachers is also highlighted by Worthy (2005) and Killeavy (2006), who compare it to other professions such as medicine and law where novices have many opportunities to observe and work with more experienced

professionals, gradually taking responsibility. Killeavy (2006, p.168) refers to the first year of teaching as "daunting and demanding" and therefore expresses the need for novice teachers to develop skills that will enable them to cope with the pressures of society.

Based on the above research on novice teachers it is evident that society and the profession exert high demands on novice teachers. The assumption is that novice teachers, because they have completed their training as teachers, are recognized as qualified teachers and as such they are expected to function efficiently. It is assumed that they should be able to teach efficiently without supervision and, therefore, they are charged with the same responsibilities as their more experienced colleagues, and are expected to perform and be effective teachers. This is affirmed by Feiman-Nemser (2003) who argues that the process of learning to teach is often misrepresented, novice teachers are considered as finished products and the assumption is that that they need to refine existing skills. These expectations of society exert extreme pressure on novice teachers as they are not equipped to meet these demands. In most cases novice teachers have not been exposed to much practical experience of handling a class of learners without the assistance of an experienced teacher.

In South Africa, novice teachers are expected to fulfil the same roles as experienced educators as stipulated in The Norms and Standards for educators (DoE, 2000). The following roles are specified: learning mediator, interpreter and designer of learning programmes and materials, leader, administrator, manager, scholar, researcher and lifelong learner, community, citizenship and pastoral role, assessor and learning area/subject/ discipline/phase specialist.

I argue that this poses a major challenge for novice teachers as they do not have the practical experience expected in order to accomplish these roles effectively. I concur with Morrow (2007, p.99) who states that "the seven roles outlined in the Norms and Standards for educators ignore the realities in which the majority of teachers in South Africa work". Some of the contextual factors that are prevalent in South Africa and impact on teaching are: adult illiteracy, poverty, unemployment, the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, violence and lack of safety and security at schools and in communities and lack of resources (Morrow, 2007 & Fleisch, 2008). This has serious

implications for novice teachers in South Africa, who not only have to adapt to their new teaching environment but are also faced with a myriad of contextual factors. This signifies a need for novice teachers to be supported in their initial years, for assistance and support in gaining competence to deal with the contextual factors that impact on their abilities to perform as professionals.

In the South African context, Arends and Phurutse (2009) maintain that when novice teachers resign, this impacts on the investment by government in subsidising initial teacher training. Therefore, there is a need for novice teachers to be supported and guided in assisting them to become fully fledged teachers.

2.2.3. Induction and mentoring of novice teachers

Induction and mentoring can be seen as important measures implemented by schools to provide support and guidance to assist novice teachers to adapt to the formal environments of teaching. There are many different definitions for teacher induction and mentoring. For the purpose of this study I will refer to the following researchers' definitions:

Killeavy (2006, p.169) refers to the induction phase "as a bridge between initial or pre-service teacher education". Killeavy highlights the advantages of the induction phase by stating that induction provides a supportive space for newly qualified teachers to analyse and evaluate their practice, seek assistance and engage in critical dialogue with colleagues. The analogy of a bridge is also highlighted by Ingersoll & Strong (2011) who state that induction programmes are seen as a bridge from student of teaching to teacher of students. Tickle (2000) challenges this view of the transition of student teacher to teacher, seen as a continuum or bridge linking initial training into full time teaching and argues that the metaphor of the bridge indicates a safe and smooth crossing from student to novice into an experienced teacher is misleading as novice teachers are also faced with challenges.

By contrast, Steyn (2004, p.83) refers to teacher induction "as an ongoing process which includes both formal and informal elements of socialisation and professional development, extending from pre service training into the teaching profession". Howe (2006) defines induction as the process of becoming a professional teacher.

Feiman-Nemser (2001, p.1027) refers to induction, "as a transition from pre-service preparation to practice, from a student of teaching to a teacher of students…"

Based on the above definitions of induction, it is thus evident that schools have a fundamental role to play in developing and assisting novice teachers by providing an environment where they are able to learn the craft and survive and succeed as teachers. This is highlighted by Ingersoll & Strong (2011) who state that, "the goal of these support programs is to improve the performance and retention of beginning teachers …with the ultimate aim of improving the growth and learning of students" (p.4).

Induction and mentoring are often used interchangeably. These words, however, represent different types of assistance given to novice teachers. The difference between induction and mentoring is highlighted by Wong (2004) who states that mentoring and induction are terms that do not have the same meaning and yet are often used incorrectly. Wong refers to induction as a development process that is organised by schools or districts to train, support and retrain and mentoring as an action, a single teacher whose basic function is to help a new teacher. Hudson (2012) emphasizes the need for induction and mentoring for effective teaching, as beginning teachers continue to express the need for ongoing support within their schools and classroom contexts.

Mentoring is regarded as a two way process, which view is held by Bleach (1999) who suggests that participants recognise that they can learn through each other within the context of a relationship that develops through time in a collaborative learning environment, bringing to the fore the role played by mentors in the lives of the novice teachers. Research indicates that a well -structured mentoring program can assist novices in the development of their practice. Hudson (2012) and Howe (2006) advocate the need to provide novice teachers with experienced, qualified and trained mentors. This presents a challenge as most schools do not have trained mentors.

The question arises as to who is responsible to ensure that these programmes are administered in schools. Most research indicates that the principal has a fundamental role to play in ensuring the effectiveness of the induction process (Tickle, 2000 & Killeavy, 2006). Wong (2004) emphasizes the principal's role in the induction process by ensuring a teacher induction program is available for all newly hired teachers. Killeavy (2006) highlights the role of the principal in the induction phase of novice

teachers which includes, scheduling teachers' work and planning time, ensuring that mentors are assigned to novice teachers, monitoring new teachers' lessons, observing classroom teaching and recommends that principals lead by example by engaging in continuous learning.

In South Africa, the Employment of Educators' Act (DoE,1998), stipulates that one of the functions of the principal is to assist educators, particularly new and inexperienced educators, in developing and achieving educational objectives in accordance with the needs of the school. The induction and mentoring of novice teachers has not been mandated in South Africa. In a study conducted on beginning teachers in South Africa Arends & Phurutse (2009) state that there are no programmes to support new teachers. The Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa (ISPFTED) 2011-2025 (DoE, 2011) refers to a plan on teacher development which includes induction and mentoring of new teachers however, there are still no formal structures in schools for mentoring and induction of new teachers.

The benefits of induction and mentoring are highlighted by Ingersoll and Strong (2011, p.1) who state that, "studies reviewed provide empirical support for the claim that induction and mentoring provide positive results which is evident in teacher commitment and reflection, classroom practices and student achievement". These factors, therefore, further reinforce the need for induction and mentoring in schools.

2.2.4 Challenges faced by novice teachers

Novice teachers, in adapting to their new school environment, are faced with many challenges which are highlighted by various researchers, (Feiman- Nemser, 2001; Tickle 2000; Hudson 2012; Steyn, 2004). Novice teachers are expected to perform on the same level as experienced teachers and are given the same responsibilities which is very challenging for them (Feiman – Nemser, 2001).The challenges and difficulties experienced by novice teachers are affirmed by Feiman- Nemser (p.1028) who refers to …"unfamiliar teaching environments, students, curriculum, administrative policies and procedures, testing requirements, professional norms and the larger community". These challenges are also highlighted by Hudson's (2012) study in Australia on how schools can support beginning teachers to become effective teachers in their first years of teaching. This study endorses the need for induction and ongoing mentoring to support

beginning teachers in order to be able to manage the challenges that they encounter in their first years of teaching.

Novice teachers experience difficulty in adapting from student educator to newly qualified educator as discussed by Steyn (2004), who states that the best way of supporting and developing novice teachers is a clear understanding of their problems and by providing constructive induction programmes that address these issues. Steyn (2004, pp.85-87) highlights seven factors related to difficulties that novice teachers face namely: "reality shock, weak knowledge and low skill base, expectations, isolation, classroom management, lack of resources and workload". Each factor is explained hereunder:

Steyn (2004) regards reality shock as a form of distress experienced by novices due to inadequate pre-service preparation. He states that novice teachers lack preparation for the demands of teaching and are confronted with unknown learners, staff, policies and procedures and an unknown curriculum and unfamiliar norms and traditions in the classroom and school. These views of reality shock experienced by novice teachers are also highlighted by Friedman (2000) who refers to reality shock as a transitional period from schooling to work environment which he states is due to the difference between what novice teachers envisioned during their pre service training and their actual teaching. He refers to reality shock as one of the major factors contributing to new teachers leaving the profession after the first year of teaching.

Additionally, Steyn (2004) refers to novice teachers' lack of teaching skills and knowledge required of educators in the classroom as a challenge of weak knowledge and low skill base due to insufficient knowledge and basic skills required for lesson preparation, teaching methods and assessment and pacing of lessons. Furthermore, Steyn regards the expectations of teaching as sometimes daunting for novice teachers, as they are confronted with policies, rules, formal procedures, informal rules and customs, which they are not familiar with which leads to feelings of disillusionment and failure.

Furthermore, Steyn (2004) refers to three types of isolation that may be experienced by novice teachers namely: geographic, social and or professional isolation. Steyn contends that novice teachers spend most of their time alone with their learners in the classrooms,

isolated from the other teachers and, therefore, they may also experience feelings of social isolation and feel excluded from school situations where there are different staff groups. Novice teachers also experience professional isolation, as new teachers they are sometimes a threat to experienced teachers and this results in jealousy amongst teachers. Friedman (2000) regards isolation as one of the factors that lead to disillusionment of novice teachers as they are hesitant to seek advice from more experienced teachers. In order to address the issue of isolation in schools, Feiman-Nemser (2001) recommends the need for interactive opportunities with other colleagues in schools, which she maintains helps teachers overcome their isolation and builds communities of practise. The need for a collaborative learning environment, is endorsed by Wong (2004), who emphasizes that this conducive environment is created by teachers and school leaders working together to improve learning in strong professional learning communities.

Steyn (2004) regards classroom management as one of the major challenges experienced by novice teachers. This view is echoed by Hudson (2012), who states that one of the main challenges expressed by most of the beginning teachers was behaviour management.

Another challenge concerns the lack of resources in schools as one of the major problems that impact on the working conditions of novice teachers in South Africa and this includes the absence of teaching materials and text books (Steyn 2004).

Adding to the challenges are novice teachers' workload (Steyn 2004), which comprises curricular and extra -curricular responsibilities as a challenge for them. Morrow (2007) states that there is a need to develop strategies to reduce the workload of teachers and highlights the fact that teaching does not only entail being a competent teacher as there are caregiving functions as well. Based on the workload challenges experienced by novice teachers in the early years of teaching, it is evident that beginning teachers require support and assistance in order to overcome these challenges.

2.2.5 Knowledge of novice teachers

One of the most important needs of novice teachers is their knowledge of teaching. There are various types of knowledge that are required by novice teachers for effective teaching. In this section I will refer to the following types of knowledge that are

important for novice teachers in assisting them in their practice: knowledge of practice and knowledge of the teaching context.

2.2.5.1 Knowledge of practice for novice teachers

Novice teachers, as qualified teachers, are expected to be well equipped with the necessary knowledge for practice. It is assumed that novice teachers will be able to confidently apply their knowledge of practice. Arends and Phurutse (2009) maintain that researchers have recognised that what teachers know is one of the most important factors that influence school classrooms and learner performance.

There are different viewpoints expressed about the importance of the attainment of teacher knowledge. This view is endorsed by Arends and Phurutse (2009) who also state that teaching skills are fully developed through teaching in a specific context. Some researchers express the view that this knowledge should be attained at training institutions, while some researchers hold the view that teacher knowledge is only fully attainable when novice teachers enter the classrooms. Feiman-Nemser (2001), asserts that the first encounter with real teaching occurs when beginning teachers enter their own classrooms.

Feiman-Nemser (2001) suggests that the knowledge of beginning teachers should encompass knowledge of students, curriculum and school context. There is a consensus that teacher knowledge should encompass the theoretical as well as the practical skills of teaching. This view is echoed by Arends and Phurutse (2009) who state that the preparation of beginning teachers for the realities of the classroom is based on education programmes that focus on content that is mostly theoretical and does not focus on classroom realities. These researchers express the need to balance theoretical orientation with practical teaching skills. Arends and Phurutse maintain that the skills, knowledge and competences of beginner teachers should facilitate access to school knowledge and help improve educational outcomes and achievements.

In order to assist novice teachers to gain the knowledge they require for their professional practices, it is imperative that learning communities are established in schools in order to provide novice teachers with the opportunity to interact with experienced teachers. The ongoing study and improvement in teaching is difficult to

accomplish alone and this therefore emphasizes the need for novice teachers to interact with other teachers (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). Wong (2004) asserts that to produce effective teachers there must be a professional development program that improves professional skills for educators. This brings to the fore the school's role in creating opportunities for enhancing novice teachers knowledge of practise by providing ongoing support and development. This view is reiterated by Hudson (2012) who advocates the need for induction and mentoring in order to provide ongoing support to novice teachers within their schools and unique classroom contexts.

Ingersoll and Strong (2011) highlight the important role of the school in providing an environment where novice teachers are able to learn the craft and survive and succeed as teachers.

2.2.5.2 Knowledge of the teaching context

Novice teachers' knowledge of the teaching context is endorsed by Feiman-Nemser (2001), who asserts that beginning teachers need to learn about their larger community. Feiman-Nemser affirms the need for the establishment of working relationships between teachers and parents based on the students and their education and questions if there are structures in place for teachers to communicate with parents, the availability of community services and resources. This highlights the need for novice teachers to be well prepared to work in a culturally, heterogeneous environment. Hudson (2012) asserts that every school context is different with regard to the socio -economic status, geographical location, population and the school community culture and, therefore, advocates the need for assigned mentors who can assist beginning teachers in adapting to their different school environments that they encounter.

In the South African school context there are many contextual factors that impact on teaching namely; the impact of HIV and AIDS, poverty, unemployment, lack of functioning of schools, violence and safety issues (Morrow, 2007). Morrow asserts that in South Africa the work of a teacher in a well organized and functioning school is different from the work of a teacher in a barely functioning school. Morrow argues that the seven roles described in the Norms and Standards for educators (DoE, 2000) give a description of what it means to be a competent teacher; however these roles ignore the reality of the conditions and the differences between the contexts in which the majority of teachers work. I believe that this would impact negatively on novice teachers if they have not received training in these areas or if they have not been exposed to teaching in

different contexts. Morrow advocates that teacher education programmes need to include formal and material elements of teaching in order to prepare novice teachers to cope with teaching in different school environments. This is affirmed by Arends and Phurutse (2009) who state that beginning teachers feel inadequate as effective teachers as the societal problems that learners are exposed to or victims of demand more than their teacher training has prepared them for.

A review of the selected literature discussed above reveals that there are two dominant conceptions of novice teachers based on years of service and, on when qualifications were attained. In this study, I have considered experience of less than five years as a selection criterion for participation in the study. What also becomes apparent is that there are expectations of novice teachers. For example, in terms of learning to teach two methods are discussed in the literature, namely, mentoring and induction. Mentoring is seen as a bridge (Ingersol & Strong, 2011), whilst Steyn (2004) identified it as an ongoing process and Feiman-Nemser (2001) as a transition for training and real-world practice. The literature also highlights challenges of various kinds faced by novice teachers, like inadequate preparation which can lead to reality shock and isolation. Finally, the literature creates an awareness of the kinds of knowledge that novice teachers require, namely, context, practice knowledge, student knowledge, curriculum knowledge and disciplinary knowledge.

2.3 Novice teachers teaching literacy in the foundation phase

2.3.1 Novice teachers in the foundation phase

The Foundation phase is the first phase of the General Education and Training Band, which includes Grade R, 1, 2 and 3 (South African School's Act, DoE, 1996). The focus in this phase is on primary skills, knowledge and values and therefore lays the foundation for further learning (RNCS, DoE, 2008).

We may question: what is it about novice teachers in the foundation phase that is different to novice teachers in the other parts of the school system? The role of the foundation phase educator is imperative in building the knowledge (especially literacy and mathematics) skills, and values of learners at this stage of development. This study

seeks to explore the experiences of novice teachers in this phase with regard to the teaching of literacy.

2.3.2 Literacy in the foundation phase

There are many definitions of literacy. For example, Wray & Medwell (1991) describe literacy in the foundation phase in terms of the notion of readiness:

According to this view there was a stage in children's lives when they were physically, emotionally and cognitively mature enough to benefit from being taught to read and write. Instead of direct teaching, children who were not ready were given pre-reading and writing activities to help them reach the stage of benefitting from reading and writing readiness teaching. This view has been strongly challenged in recent years by research that suggests that children growing up in literate societies develop literate behaviour early in their lives. This is known as emergent literacy (pp.64-65).

By contrast, Hall (2003, p.232) states that, "research reviewed on effective literacy teaching in the early years is far more complex than a method; it is a complex mix of philosophy, method, teacher development and school culture".

The UNESCO definition of literacy is about a continuum of learning which states that "literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society" (UNESCO, 2004, p.13).

While, Joubert, Bester, Meyer & Evans (2013, p.18) aver the mastery of a language by referring to the traditional form of literacy as, "being literate simply means being able to read and write in at least one language in which one can speak".

The authors state that,

> "in its broader sense, being literate is far more than a cognitive process of learning to read, write and calculate, i.e. decoding texts, it suggests the degree of access one has to one's world, the knowledge required to function in an appropriate and expected level and entails the development of several human

abilities to make sense of the environment in which one must live and interact with all members of one's community". (p.19)

2.3.3 Expectations of foundation phase teachers

Based on the above definitions it is evident that the teaching of literacy requires skilled teachers in order to assist learners in their literacy development. The teachers in the foundation phase, the definitions suggest, require them to be specialists in their subject field. This is affirmed by the National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU) National report (2012, p.11) which states that research was based on the foundation phase in 2012 because "it is here that the base of all future learning is established" and emphasizes the need for the basic skills to be accomplished by the end of Grade 3.This report also suggests that foundation phase teachers are expected to have a sound knowledge of the specified literacy curriculum, which entails the teaching of listening and speaking, reading and phonics, writing and handwriting as stipulated in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), (DoE, 2011).

Foundation phase teachers are also expected to have adequate proficiency in the language of learning, so that learners will understand the content of all subjects and will have access to further education and eventually global participation (Joubert *et al*., 2013; CAPS, DoE, 2011). According to the CAPS document, ten hours is allocated for languages in Grades R, 1and 2. Grade 3 is allocated 11 hours. More time is allocated for the teaching of languages in the foundation phase as stipulated in the CAPS (DoE, 2011) which endorses the importance of literacy teaching in this phase.

South Africa has participated in two international reading literacy studies PIRLS 2006 and PIRLS 2011. Both these studies reflect the low level of South African learners' reading ability compared to children of similar ages and grades in other countries. In PIRLS 2006, South Africa received the lowest scores out of 40 participating countries (Howie *et al.*, 2008). The new curriculum places the responsibility on teachers to differentiate reading levels and to select appropriate reading materials that will effectively support learners (PIRLS, 2011). According to the National reading strategy for teaching reading in South Africa (DoE, 2008), some of the reasons for the low literacy levels include the fact that many teachers have an under developed understanding of teaching literacy, reading and writing.

2.3.4 The teaching of literacy in the foundation phase

The teaching of literacy in the foundation phase is largely practical and is based on the teaching of skills. Teachers, therefore, need to know how to teach reading and writing skills in order to develop learners' literacy competences. In South Africa, the teaching of literacy is based on a balanced approach to literacy development as stated in the Revised National Curriculum Statements: "It is balanced because it begins with children's emergent literacy; it involves children reading 'real' books and writing for genuine purposes, and it gives attention to phonics" (DoE, 2002, p.9).

2.3.5 Reading

"Reading is the key to all literacy," (Joubert *et al*., 2013, p.150). This statement is endorsed by the NEEDU national report (2012, p.24) which reiterates that the key to all literacy is reading development, "a progression of skills that begins with the ability to understand spoken words and decode written words, and is directed toward understanding of text and using it to communicate".

Joubert *et al*. (2013) refers to reading as a skill which enables learners to gather information from reading of pamphlets, books and using computers. This, again, reinforces the need for foundation phase teachers to possess a good knowledge of literacy skills in order to assist the learners in developing their reading skills. Joubert *et al*. (p.150) confirm the important role that the teachers play in the learners' reading development by stating that, "the teacher's love of the language and her empathy with the young child, his world and his abilities are factors that enable him to become a regular and life-long reader". Reading in the foundation phase, from this perspective, should be taught as part of an integrated reading and writing focus time (NEEDU national report, 2012).

In the CAPS (DoE, 2011) for the foundation phase, the reading requirements are divided into shared reading, group guided reading, paired/ independent reading and phonics (including phonemic awareness).

2.4 The challenges of teaching literacy in the foundation phase

The teaching of literacy in South Africa is faced with a myriad of complexities. This is evident by the low literacy levels as indicated in ANA results (2012) and the findings of PIRLS (2006 & 2011).The results indicate that learners who pass grade three are not on the required literacy level. The PIRLS study of 2011 highlights many factors that impact on the teaching of literacy. This study will elicit the following challenges experienced in the teaching of literacy namely: teachers' knowledge, the issue of language and the role of parents and guardians.

2.4.1 Teacher knowledge of teaching literacy

The teachers' knowledge of teaching literacy is one of the factors that contribute to effective teaching of literacy. In South Africa, according to the National Reading Strategy (DoE, 2008) many foundation phase teachers have not been explicitly trained to teach literacy which is why it is difficult to help learners with reading difficulties. This presents a challenge for novice teachers in the foundation phase because they lack support from mentor teachers who are also experiencing difficulty in the teaching of reading.

These challenges are also experienced in other countries as indicated by a study conducted by Cunningham, Perry, Stanovich & Stanovich (2004), who investigated the disciplinary knowledge of kindergarten to third grade teachers (K-3) and also explored how teachers calibrated their knowledge. This study revealed that the knowledge base of K-3 teachers is not aligned with research demonstrating the key role played by phonemic awareness in learning to read. These findings indicated the need for improvement in the level of teacher knowledge in theses areas and also highlighted the need for improvement of teacher preparation and teacher development in these areas.

Similarly, research conducted by Crim *et al*., (2008) investigated early childhood teachers' knowledge related to phonological awareness and indicated that many early childhood teachers do not have sufficient phonological awareness knowledge. This study also highlights the importance of phonological awareness in literacy development and advocates the need for teachers themselves to be knowledgeable in order to positively impact and expand a child's knowledge in this area. These findings highlight

the importance of teacher knowledge for effective literacy teaching and endorse the need for adequate training of teachers and professional development programs to provide teachers with the knowledge and skills required for the teaching of literacy.

2.4.2 Teaching literacy in relation to the learners' home language

In South Africa the issue of language presents a major challenge in the teaching of literacy. The South African Constitution, as articulated in the Language in Education Policy (LiEP) (DoE, 1997), affords all children the right to learn in the language of their choice, typically their home language. The underlying principle of the LiEP is to maintain the use of home language as the language of teaching and learning (LOLT) especially in the foundation phase, while incrementally providing access to an additional language(s). The NEEDU national report (2012) highlights the fact that this right is limited by the ability of schools to provide for its implementation. According to the South African Schools Act (SASA) (1996) the school governing body has the responsibility of determining the language policy of the school. The parents of the school therefore determine the LOLT of the school.

Joubert *et al*. (2013) and Fleisch (2008) emphasize the link between mother tongue instruction and learners' progress. The mismatch between LOLT and home language in some schools is highlighted in the NEEDU national report (2012), which states that in some schools learners are learning in a language which is different to their home language. Joubert *et al*. (2013) posit that teachers especially in foundation phase experience difficulty trying to accommodate learners with different levels of language proficiency.

2.4.3 Contextual issues

In the South African context, teachers are faced with a range of contextual factors that impact on their teaching of literacy as indicated by Morrow (2007). These include: poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, lack of resources, HIV Aids, violence and lack of safety (Fleisch, 2008; Morrow, 2007). It is, therefore, imperative that novice teachers be supported to meet these challenges. I maintain that even though it has been argued that teachers learn in situ (Feiman-Nemser, 2001), training institutions as the first step in the initial development of teachers should focus on these issues to enable novice teachers to

be well prepared when they enter different school contexts. This view is highlighted by Morrow (2007, p.104) who states that the "principal task of training institutions is to teach students how to teach and this involves developing a deeper understanding of both the formal and material elements of teaching". Morrow contends that teacher education programmes that fail to devote sufficient attention to both these elements are, to some extent, deficient. This view is furthered by Arends & Phurutse (2009) who posit that the content of teacher education programmes is largely theoretical and there is a need to balance theoretical orientation with practical skills.

Research in South Africa indicates that there is a link between poverty and performance (Arends & Phurutse, 2009; Fleisch, 2008). Fleisch states that in poor families the literacy development of children is affected by factors such as; the availability of educational resources and books in the home, the frequency and quality of storybook reading, the type of language used and explicit reading and writing instruction.

This is endorsed by the PIRLS study (Howie *et al*., 2012) which indicated that South African households have on average less resources compared to the other countries that participated in the PIRLS study of 2011. Howie *et al*., posit that there is a relationship between achievement and the extent of resources at home. Most literacy skills are developed at home before learners begin their schooling. However, this is not always possible in South Africa as many poor families struggle to play an enabling role in their children's pre- literacy skills development (Fleisch, 2008).

As indicated earlier, most learners in South Africa come from contexts where their home language is different from LOLT of the school and this impacts on literacy development (NEEDU national report, 2012). Fleisch (2008) highlights the fact that children begin their schooling with an adequate knowledge of their home language however the shift to the second language means that they never master the knowledge and skills required by the school.

2.4.4 The role of parents and guardians
Parents and guardians play an important role in their children's' literacy achievement. This is endorsed by Joubert *et al*. (2013), who maintain that the parents or care givers of young children play an important role in guiding them to read. In the PIRLS 2011

summary report, Howie *et al*. (2012) state that, parents who promote reading as a valuable and important activity can motivate children to read. In South Africa there are many factors that impact on the role of parents and guardians in providing for their children's literacy development. South Africa is still faced with problems of adult illiteracy and poverty. Many parents cannot afford to provide literacy resources such as storybooks and computers to promote their children's literacy development. This view is highlighted by Fleisch (2008) who maintains that the learners' home environments impact on their literacy achievement as most learners from poor homes do not have access to literacy resources. The National Reading Strategy (DoE, 2008) states that illiterate parents or parents with little education experience difficulty in assisting their children with literacy tasks.

 Fleisch (2008) affirms the link between socio - economic class and academic performance by stating that most children from poor families tend to perform poorly in tests of reading and mathematics.

2.5 Subject knowledge and pedagogical knowledge for teaching literacy

Novice teachers in the foundation phase are expected to possess a well- grounded knowledge for the teaching of literacy. The foundation phase forms the baseline for other grades and if basic literacy skills are not sufficiently developed, learners will experience great difficulty as they progress to the other grades. NEEDU national report (2012, p.11) emphasizes the importance of the development of literacy skills in the foundation phase by stating that, "if the rudiments of reading, writing and calculating are not firmly entrenched by the end of grade 3, then both learning opportunities and larger life chances of young citizens will be curtailed".

In literacy, the teaching of each skill is different and requires specialist methods of teaching. It thus becomes an imperative for foundation phase teachers to have the required knowledge to use the different teaching methods, skills and questioning techniques to develop the learners' literacy skills. The question arises as to whether the foundation phase novice educators have the required knowledge to teach literacy skills effectively?

Research carried out on effective teachers in the United Kingdom by Wray, Medwell, Poulson and Fox (2002) suggests that children's' literacy performance may be related to three types of effects namely, whole school, teachers and methods and materials and of these the teacher is the most significant. This endorses the value of teacher knowledge as an important mechanism for maintaining high literacy levels in the foundation phase. Wray et al. (2002) identified key factors and strategies of what effective teachers should know, understand and do that enables them to put effective teaching of literacy into practise in the primary schools. According to Fleisch (2008) research indicates that teachers' knowledge influences school classrooms and learner performance.

The concept of knowledge for teaching is explored by Shulman (1986) who questions the transition from expert student to novice teacher. In a study conducted by Meyer (2004) on novice and expert teachers understanding of prior knowledge and how they acted on their understanding in the classroom, novice teachers' prior knowledge tended to be based on prior teaching and is defined by what students formally knew about a concept. Meyer concedes that novice teachers lack the strategies for discovering students' prior knowledge, which negatively impacts on their teaching. This view is also highlighted by Shulman (1986) who in his questioning of how teachers prepare to teach something never previously learned questions how learning for teaching occurs.

Shulman specifies three kinds of subject matter knowledge for teaching viz. content knowledge which includes knowledge of facts, concepts, and procedures within a discipline; substantive knowledge and knowledge of the ways in which new knowledge is brought into the field. The pedagogical content knowledge required of teachers in the foundation phase is the knowledge that, in order to develop the kinds of reading and comprehension skills described under subject knowledge learners must engage with a wide variety of books and other material (NEEDU national report, 2012).

2.6 Context and practice of teaching literacy

In research on novice and expert teachers of literacy by Medwell, Wray, Poulson & Fox (1998) novice teachers described their experiences of learning to teach literacy. Most of these novice teachers indicated that they were able to draw on the knowledge and experience of their past graduate certificate courses for choosing what and how to teach. I maintain that this would pose a problem if novice teachers have not received the

required content knowledge during their training courses. In South African contexts, research indicates that some novice teachers' pedagogical knowledge has been acquired through correspondence programmes; therefore most of their practical knowledge of teaching is gained only when they are at schools (Reeves & Robinson, 2010).

The idea of an apprenticeship of observation is highlighted by Grossman (1990) who states that experiences as students provide prospective teachers with memories of strategies for teaching specific content. Grossman, therefore, maintains that teachers replicate the strategies they experienced as students. This view is affirmed by Hammerness *et al.,* (2005) who posit that the preconceptions of novice teachers regarding educational ideas that are carried from their pre-service years as prospective teachers may be stronger than those of other professionals because of their long apprenticeship of observation in primary and secondary schools.

Medwell *et al*. (1998) state that the novice teachers indicated that they also learned by observation of experienced teachers e.g. observing the use of teaching strategies, forms of classroom organisation, observation of teachers' recording and assessing learners and asking questions from experienced teachers practice and putting the learnt ideas, processes and strategies into practice. Novice teachers, they argue, must be equipped with a range of pedagogic strategies to enable them to operate successfully in developing children's literacy. These statements provide a platform for my study for exploring novice teachers' experiences of how to teach literacy in the foundation phase. Teachers in the foundation phase are expected to be specialists in their subject field in order to teach the basic skills in literacy, namely reading, phonics and writing. However, novice teachers are more likely to be trained as foundation phase generalists than as reading specialists. Studies show lack of phonemic and phonological awareness which are important in the teaching of literacy in the foundation phase. In South Africa debates on language and learning have been addressed by policy recommending that foundation phase learners should be taught in the child's home language. This poses a problem for novice teachers who are not familiar with the child's home language. Literature reveals that there is less likelihood that parents promote reading at home thus leaving the responsibility entirely on teachers. Novice teachers also encounter a range of contextual factors and challenges in their different school contents. Most novice

teachers are not equipped to handle these challenging situations which negatively impact on teaching and learning in the foundation phase.

2.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.7.1 Selecting a theoretical framework

In view of the various complications related to context, knowledge and practices of novice teachers, it is apparent that a framework that factors in how and what novice teachers learn about the teaching of literacy is vital. Hence, David Kolb's experiential learning cycle has been selected.

2.7.2 Introduction

The theoretical framework that will inform this study will be based on David Kolb's experiential learning cycle (Kolb, 1984). The experiential learning cycle will be used to describe the participants' learning experiences with regard to their teaching of literacy. This research study will focus on the four stage adaptive cycle of Kolb's experiential learning theory. The researcher will first discuss the stages of Kolb's model of learning and then demonstrate how this model can be applied to novice teachers' learning in relation to teaching literacy in the Foundation Phase.

2.7.3 Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle

Kolb (1984) defines learning as a process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Kolb indicates that this definition emphasizes several critical aspects of the learning process as viewed from the experiential perspective:

> *First the emphasis on the process of adaption and learning as opposed to content or outcomes. Second is that knowledge is a transformation process, being continuously created and recreated, not an independent entity to be acquired and transmitted. Third, learning transforms experience in both its objective and subjective forms. Finally, to understand learning we must understand the nature of knowledge, and vice versa (p.38).*

Kolb, 1984, p.26 states that, "this model represents learning as a continuous process grounded in experience and ideas that are not fixed and immutable elements of thought but are formed and reformed through experience". Kolb refers to the learning process as

a cyclic process of learning which includes four stages, involving four adaptable modes of learning namely, concrete experience, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation.

Kolb's theory is appropriate for this study as the four stages will be used to explore the novice teachers' learning cycles. In this cycle Kolb shows how experience is translated through reflection into concepts, which are used for active experimentation and the choice of new experiences. The first stage is concrete experience (feeling), which begins with doing something and the learner is actively in the experience. The second stage is observation and reflection (reflecting), where the learner steps back from the experience and observes and reflects on it. In this stage questions are asked and communication channels are open. The third stage is abstract conceptualisation (thinking), which involves the learner conceptualising, making sense of what has happened, interpreting the events and understanding the relationships between them. The fourth stage is active experimentation (doing) which is based on the actual doing or performing of a task based on new experiences (refer to Fig.1).

Bleach (1999) recommends the experiential learning model adapted by Kolb & Fry, as a useful template for novice teachers to use in collaboration with their mentors. Bleach highlights the four stages of the model which represent an integrated process of learning, change and growth.

> *"First, immediate classroom experiences are used as the basis for observation and reflection. They are assimilated into a "theory" from which new applications for action can be deduced. These serve as guides in creating new experiences that could be the focus for a further cycle of action and evaluation (p.75).*

These stages can be interpreted in relation to novice teachers' experiences of learning to teach literacy (refer to Fig.2). Each new experience encountered in their learning will begin with a concrete experience which will relate to how the participants think about their experiences, how they feel and what is the experience. This stage will be used to elicit the participants' initial experiences of teaching where their feelings and emotions will be expressed. This will be followed by the second stage of reflective observation. This stage will involve reflection on their experiences; the participants reflect and

express their views on what they have learnt about the teaching of literacy and how they can improve. The third stage involves conceptualising their teaching of literacy, this involves making comparisons between what they have done and reflecting upon what they already know and how they will improve. The fourth stage refers to their actual teaching and implementing the pedagogical and content knowledge that they have acquired. This involves acquiring new understandings and translating them into predictions of what will happen. These stages will provide a cyclic process of the participants learning through the different experiences that they encounter in their teaching environment. The researcher will use these stages to draw on the participants' responses in the semi-structured interviews, which will be based on their experiences of teaching literacy in the foundation phase.

2.7.4 Experiential Learning   Cycles
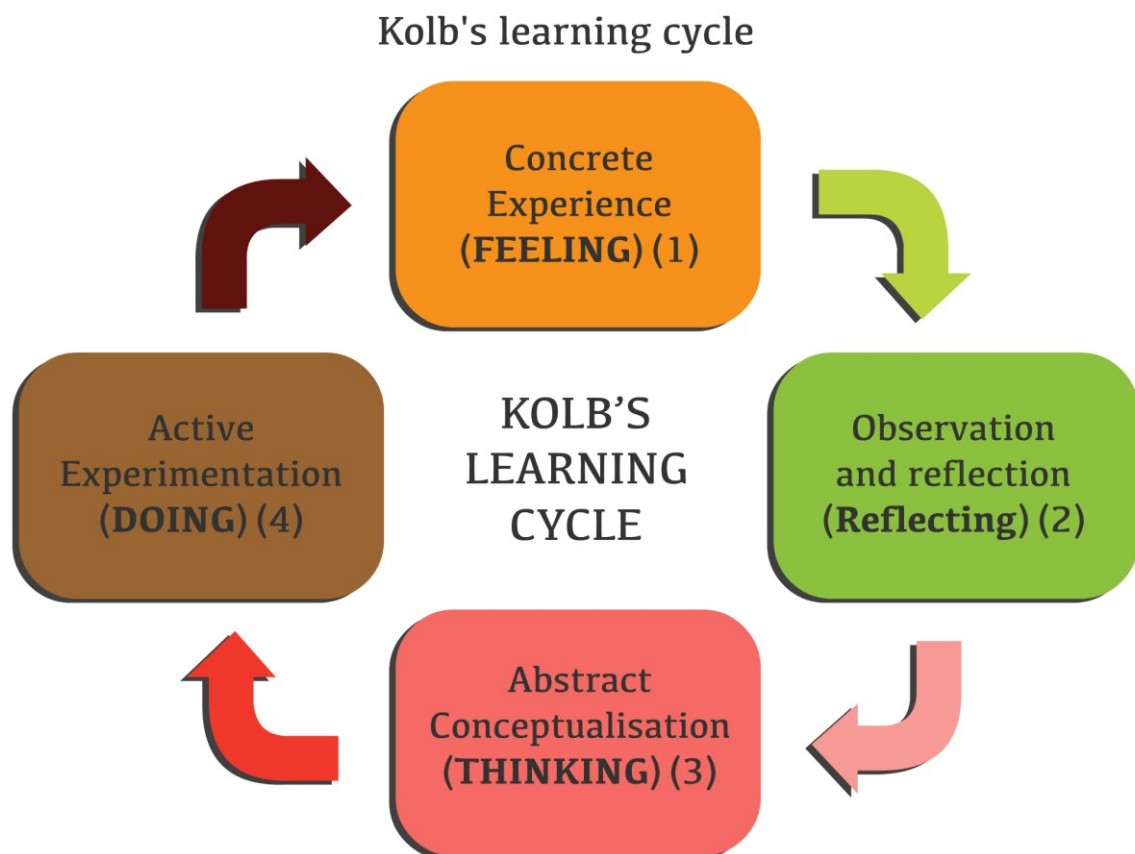
Fig. 1 Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle. (Source Kolb 1984, p.42)

Novice teachers' learning cycle

Experiences of novice teachers learning to teach literacy (FEELING) (1)

NOVICE TEACHERS' LEARNING CYCLE

Expressing their views on what they learnt. (REFLECTING) (2)

Implementing of pedagogical and content knowledge. (DOING) (4)

Conceptualising their teaching of literacy. (THINKING) (3)
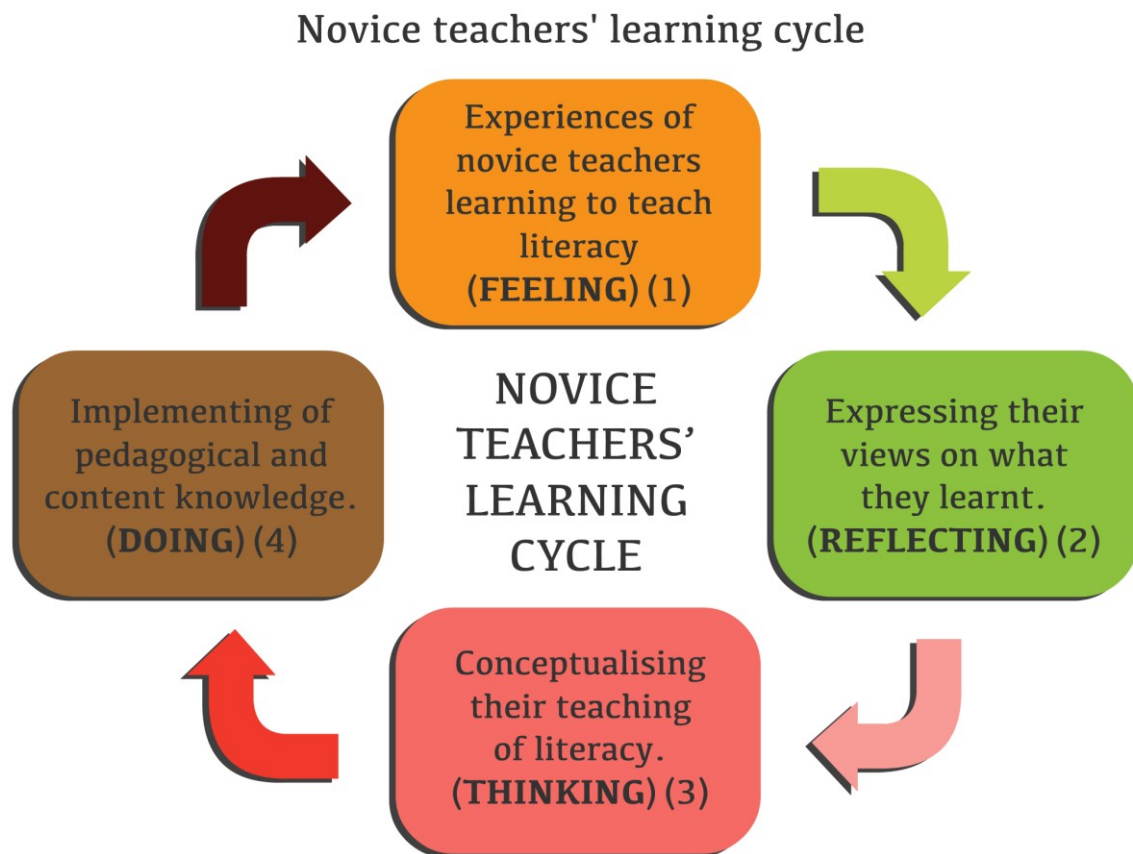
Fig. 2 Novice Teachers' Learning Cycle. Adapted from Kolb (1984, p.42)

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter presented a review of literature based on novice teachers, the teaching of literacy in the foundation phase and the theoretical framework which will be used in the study.

The literature discussed different views on the induction and mentoring of novice teachers and their knowledge and challenges. Morrow (2007) and Feiman- Nemser (2001) argue that there are some things that novice teachers can only learn in situ. An exploration of the teaching of literacy in the foundation phase was given. Joubert *et al*. (2013) outlined the different components of literacy and the teaching thereof.

Emerging from the literature was the issue of contextual factors impacting on literacy achievement. The link between poverty and achievement is highlighted by Fleisch (2008) and Arends & Phurutse (2009). Morrow (2007) highlights contextual factors impacting on teaching. The issue of the discrepancies between the language of learning

and teaching at most schools in South Africa and the learners' home language impact on their literacy achievement.

The conceptual framework, Kolb's experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984) was discussed. This learning cycle will be adapted to track the learning cycles of the participants with regard to their experiences of teaching literacy in the foundation phase.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter a literature review, which identified the literature pertaining to novice teachers' experiences was conducted. The first part of the literature review was based on their experiences with regard to induction and the latter section focussed on their experiences with regard to the teaching of literacy in the foundation phase. The research focus was underpinned by Kolb's experiential learning theory.

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research design and methodology that was used to steer this research study. I embarked on a research process that was guided by the research focus, research question and theoretical framework. The research question that underpinned this study was: What are novice teachers' experiences of learning to teach literacy in the foundation phase?

This chapter also describes the paradigm that influenced the research. It then explores the methodology that was used in the study, the selection and profiles of the participants that participated in this study and the data production instruments that were used for the production of data that emerged from the study. This leads to the unfolding of the data production and analysis process. Finally, ethical issues of validity, reliability, biases and limitations of the study are also brought to the fore.

3.2 The aim and research questions

The aim of this study was to elicit the experiences of novice teachers with regard to their induction, mentoring, challenges, knowledge and their teaching of literacy in the foundation phase. The fundamental aim was to determine novice teachers' experiences of teaching literacy in the foundation phase, their experiences as novice teachers and how this impacts on the teaching of literacy. This study was guided by the research question: "What are novice teachers' experiences of teaching literacy in the foundation phase?"

3.3 The research paradigm

This research study was located in the interpretative paradigm. Cohen *et al*. (2011, p.17) state that the central focus of the interpretative paradigm "is to understand the subjective world of human experience". I, therefore, chose the interpretative paradigm for the research study as it allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of novice teachers' experiences of teaching literacy in the foundation phase. Henning, van Rensburg & Smit (2004, p.21) state that the interpretative paradigm "seeks to produce descriptive analyses that emphasize deep, interpretative understanding of social phenomena." This view resonates with my research study as it aimed at obtaining an understanding of novice teachers' experiences. My research study, focussed on novice teachers' experiences and it allowed me to enter their "world" and to listen to how they interpret it as teachers that are new in the profession. This concurs with Cohen *et al*. (2011) who assert that interpretative researchers begin with individuals and set out to understand their interpretations of the world around them. This study provided a synopsis of novice teachers' experiences of teaching literacy in the foundation phase. Henning *et al*. (2004, p.20) state that in the interpretive approach, "knowledge is not only constructed by observable phenomena but also by descriptions of people's intentions, beliefs, values and reasons, meaning making and self- understanding". This correlates with this study as the fundamental focus was to gain a deeper understanding of novice teachers' experiences of teaching literacy.

3.4 Qualitative Approach

This study was based on qualitative research methods. A qualitative approach was chosen because it provides an interpretative, naturalistic approach to the world. According to Nieuwenhuis (2007, p.51) qualitative research focuses on describing and understanding the meanings imparted by the respondents which he refers to as "seeing through the eyes of the participants." This relates to my study as the main aim of this study was to develop an understanding of novice teachers' experiences of teaching literacy in the foundation phase. The qualitative approach allowed me to question the experiences of novice teachers in order to gain a better understanding of the phenomena of novice teachers' experiences of teaching. This is consistent with Nieuwenhuis (2007) who states that "qualitative researchers believe the world is made up of people with their own assumptions, intentions, attitudes, beliefs, and values and that the way of

knowing reality is by exploring the experiences of others regarding specific phenomenon to see how others have constructed reality by asking about it" (p.55). As a researcher I found it important to "see it through the eyes of the participants" (Nieuwenhuis, 2007, p.51), as I listened to their responses about their experiences and this gave me real life exposure as to how novice teachers experience their initial teaching years.

As stated by Cohen *et al.* (2011, p.213), "qualitative research provides voices to participants and probes issues that lie beneath the surface". The discussion with participants during the interviews provided a platform for exploring the experiences of novice teachers teaching experiences. The participants' voices were acknowledged and they were allowed to freely relate their experiences as novice teachers and this provided rich data for my study. This view is expressed by Nieuwenhuis (2007, p.56) who states that in qualitative research the voice of the "insiders" should be acknowledged. Nieuwenhuis maintains that it is important to see knowledge from the participants' perspective and context in order to reveal how they make meaning of the phenomena under investigation.

I engaged in an interactive relationship with the participants in order to understand their interpretation of their experiences as novice teachers. This is congruent with Nieuwenhuis's (2007) assertion that in qualitative research an interactive relationship develops between the researcher and the participants as well as between the participants and their own experiences and how they have constructed reality based on their experiences. The participants' experiences allowed me to explore and understand reality from their perspective as novice teachers in order to gain insight into their interpretation of their experiences as novice teachers.

3.5 The Research Design

Yin (2009) refers to a research design as the logical sequence that connects the empirical data to a study's initial research questions. Nieuwenhuis (2007,p.70) describes a research design "as a plan or strategy which moves from the underlying philosophical assumptions to specifying the selection of respondents, the data gathering techniques to be used and the data analysis to be done". Cohen *et al.* (2011, p.140) state that research design is governed by the notion of "fitness for purpose'. In this study the research

design was based on the case study method, which allowed for the exploration of novice teachers' experiences of teaching literacy in the foundation phase.

3.6 The Case Study

The case study provided a suitable method for my study as it "provides real people in real situations," (Yin, 2009, p.72). The case study methodology enabled me to explore the experiences of novice teachers in their teaching context. Nieuwenhuis (2007) asserts that the main characteristic of case studies is to gain a holistic understanding of how participants relate with each other in a specific situation and how they make meaning of a phenomenon under study. In my research study this was evident as I was able to gain a deeper understanding of how the novice teachers at one particular school related with each other regarding their experiences of teaching. Nieuwenhuis (2007, p.75) also refers to case studies "as giving a voice to the powerless and voiceless". The assumption is that novice teachers feel that because they are still new in the teaching environment, they do not have a voice and are powerless and therefore are unable to express their feelings. I felt that my study was able to create an environment where novice teachers were "given a voice" and were able to relate their experiences of teaching literacy. Their stories were important for understanding the phenomenon of novice teachers' experiences with regard to learning to teach. Nieuwenhuis (2007), states that the focus of case study research is to gain insight and understanding of the relationships within a particular situation. For the purpose of this study the aim was to gain a deeper understanding of novice teachers in the foundation phase and their experiences in their beginning years of teaching. This was important as it created an awareness of these experiences that novice teachers encountered during their initial teaching years. This is congruent with Nieuwenhuis (2007) who asserts that from an interpretative perspective, the typical characteristic of case studies is to obtain a holistic understanding of how participants connect with each other in a specific situation and how they make meaning of the phenomenon under study. In qualitative research the social context of the research is important in order to understand the social world. This view is articulated by Neuman (2006) who states that the meaning of a social action or statement depends on the context in which it appears.

In this study the case study research was conducted at Rainbow primary school, which is situated in Newlands East in Durban, originally a coloured community. The school is

situated in a sub-economic area and most of the learners' parents are unemployed and indigent. There are many challenges that are experienced due to the language differences of the learners and the poverty experienced by some families. The majority of the learners speak isiZulu and are not fluent in English and, therefore, experience difficulty in developing English literacy skills. Their parents are also faced with many social problems that impact on the learners' behaviour. The school has limited resources due to the fact that most parents cannot pay school fees based on their socio-economic status. The school does not have an established library, thus the learners do not have access to additional reading material to foster their reading development. These factors therefore, impact on teaching and become a challenge for teachers.

This school was purposively selected for this study; the researcher chose this school as it was an ideal representation of a typical South African school that is plagued by many challenges. The main aim of the study was to gain insight into the novice teachers' experiences of teaching literacy in this school.

3.6.1 The Research Participants

3.6.2 The Selection of Participants

Three foundation phase novice teachers were selected and participated in the research. Two of the educators taught in grade two and the other educator taught a grade 3 class. One of the grade two educators had taught grade one the previous year. This sample therefore represented all the grades in the foundation phase and was therefore an adequate sample for reliable data analysis. Purposive sampling was used to select the three novice teachers that taught in the same school as the aim of my study was to elicit the experiences of the novice teachers. This is congruent with Nieuwenhuis (2007) who states that in purposive sampling, the participants are selected because of some defining characteristic that is needed for the study. This view is also highlighted by Cohen *et al.*, (2011, p.156) who assert that in purposive sampling "researchers handpick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgement of their typically or possession of a particular character to be sought".

Foundation phase novice teachers were chosen because I identified foundation phase as crucial for addressing challenges in education. Foundation phase teachers have received training in literacy, therefore, I wanted to observe what happens in terms of their

professional growth. The three participants that were selected provided rich data, which allowed a variety of experiences for this research study. The three teachers attended different training institutions and had different teaching specializations; this helped to provide different perspectives of their preparation for teaching. The participants were in their second year of teaching. This was valuable for the research because they were able to reflect on their first year of teaching and compare these experiences with their current year. This helped to create a comprehensive study on novice teachers' experiences of teaching. The main aim as stated by Nieuwenhuis (2007) is therefore to obtain the richest possible information to answer the research questions.

3.6.3 Description of the participants

The novice teachers in this study were all female teachers in their second year of teaching and they were all teaching at Rainbow primary school. The study was limited to female teachers as there were only female teachers teaching in the foundation phase. The pseudonyms given to the participants are as follows: Sharon, Carol and Nadine.

Sharon

Sharon was a twenty seven year old coloured female. She had attended a co -education catholic coloured primary and an all girls' secondary school. After matriculating she worked for three years at different retail stores. Thereafter, she studied for a bachelor of education degree at a private teacher training institution. She had initially wanted to study nursing. The reason for joining the teaching profession was her desire to help people. She expressed a strong passion for helping learners. At the time of the interview, she had been teaching for two years at the Rainbow primary school. In her first year as a qualified teacher, she taught a grade one class. When interviewed for this study she was teaching a grade two class. She reflected on her first year as being very intimidating and challenging however, she stated that in her second year she had developed more confidence, and was thus able to address the challenges that she had experienced in her first year. She stated that she enjoyed teaching, which is evident by her choice of words, "I love my job, I love it". She identified the following problems which impact on teaching at Rainbow primary school: learners' language barrier, which was the main problem as because of this, it was difficult to communicate and ground learners. Another problem that she cited was lack of parental involvement, she felt that parents did not assist their children with homework due to time constraints caused by

their long working hours, most parents arrived home late and do not have time to supervise their children's homework. She stated that that some parents do not understand their duty as a role- player in their child's education. She felt that the parents' lack of involvement in their child's education impacted negatively on the children's learning.

Carol

Carol was a 24 year old Hindu female who lived in Newlands West. She had attended an Indian primary and secondary school in the area. She started her teacher training immediately after she matriculated and trained through a distance education institution and attended lectures and practical teaching at the same private college as Sharon. She studied intermediate-senior phase and attained a bachelor of education degree. Her desire to become a teacher developed from childhood and considers teaching as her passion. When interviewed for this study, she was in her second year of teaching and it was her second year teaching a grade two class at Rainbow primary school. The challenges that she experienced at Rainbow primary school were: insufficient reading books, learners' language barriers, attention span of learners and no learner support structure at home.

Nadine

Nadine was a 24 year old Muslim female who had attended an Indian primary and high school. She had initially started a diploma in another field at a technical college but did not pursue her studies due to her results and a lack of interest in that field. She then did voluntary teaching at her previous primary school, where she taught a grade four class as an unqualified teacher. She decided to become a teacher because she loved to work with children and consequently studied for a bachelor of education degree at a university, where she was a full time student. She studied foundation intermediate phase and graduated four years later. It was her second year at Rainbow primary and she had been teaching grade three for the second year when interviewed for this study. She was happy with her decision to study teaching as she felt that teaching was her passion. She stated that the following challenges impacted on her effective teaching of literacy: lack of sufficient reading books as a result learners have to share books. Effective time management was also an issue as learners did not complete tasks on time and she also cited learners' short attention span as a challenge.

3.7 The Data Production Plan

Why is the data being produced?	To determine how novice teachers experienced the teaching of literature in the foundation phase.
What is the research strategy?	Semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect the required data.
Who (or what) will be the sources of data?	Novice teachers in the foundation phase.
Where is the data to be collected?	The novice teachers were interviewed at a primary school in Newlands East.
How many of the data sources will be accessed?	Three foundation phase novice teachers.
How often will the data be collected?	Each teacher was interviewed once. The interviews lasted for approximately one hour in length.
How will the data be collected?	The data was collected from the semi- structured interviews, shaped by the theoretical framework, which was recorded using an audio recorder.
Justify this plan for data collection.	**Participants**: I chose foundation phase novice teachers because: 1) they were crucial for addressing the challenges of teaching literacy. 2) Foundation phase teachers have received training in literacy I therefore, wanted to see what happens in terms of their professional growth. **Number of participants**: Three participants were selected in order to provide rich data, so that I had a variety of experiences. The three teachers were selected because they had attended different training institutions. This helped to provide different perspectives of their teaching preparation that they received. The novice teachers were in the second year of teaching. They were able to reflect on their first year of teaching and discuss their experiences. **Method**: The semi structured interviews allowed for the generation of rich data as the novice teachers related their experiences of learning to teach literacy.

Fig. 3 Data collection plan (Source: Vithal & Jansen, 2010)

3.7.1 The Data Production Instruments

The research instrument used in this study to collect data was semi- structured interviews. The main aim of using interviews as data collection instruments was to elicit novice teachers own experiences of how they teach literacy in the foundation phase.

3.7.2 The interview Schedule

3.7.2.1 Interviews

Cohen *et al*. (2011) distinguish between an interview and an ordinary conversation, by asserting that an interview has a specific purpose, it is often question based, with the questions being asked by the interviewer. The research interview has been defined as a

"two-fold person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research relevant information and focussed on him by content specified by research objectives" (Cohen *et al.*, 2011, p.411).

In this study interviews were used as the method of data collection. The use of interviews as the preferred method was based on Cohen *et al.*, (2011) assertion that the three most important functions of an interview include being used to gather information, a flexible tool for data collection to test hypotheses and it may be used with other methods in a research undertaking. I was also guided by Nieuwenhuis (2007), who states that the aim of a qualitative interview is to see the world through the eyes of the participants who can be a valuable source of information to obtain rich descriptive data that will help to understand the participant's construction of knowledge and social reality.

3.7.2.2 Semi structured interview

In this study three novice teachers were interviewed. Semi structured interviews were used to elicit information regarding the novice teachers' experiences and their responses were recorded. Kvale & Brinkmann (2009) assert that the semi- structured interview is close to an everyday conversation, but as a professional interview it has purpose and a specific approach and technique, it is neither an open every day conversation nor a closed questionnaire.

Kvale & Brinkmann (2009) state that the semi structured interview seeks to obtain descriptions of the interviewees lived world with respect to interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena. In this study the use of the semi structured interviews as data collection instruments allowed the interviewees to elicit their experiences as novice teachers and how they teach literacy in the foundation phase. The use of semi structured interviews as a research tool for this study, therefore, allowed for the generation of rich data as stated by Nieuwenhuis (2007). In drawing up the interview schedule (refer to Appendix F,p. 98), I was guided by Kvale & Brinkmann (2009) who stated that the semi structured interview is conducted according to an interview guide that focuses on themes and may include suggested questions. I designed interview questions to obtain information from the novice teachers regarding their experiences of learning to teach literacy in the foundation phase. The questions enabled

the interviewees to relate their experiences of being a novice teacher, their induction and mentoring, challenges they experienced and the teaching of literacy. The flexibility of this type of interview allowed me to probe more deeply and this resulted in gaining a more in-depth and detailed discussion on novice teachers. I used Nieuwenhuis's (2007, p.89) three probing strategies that ensured that I obtained the maximum amount of data and verified that what I heard was what the participants had actually meant, these included; "detailed-oriented probes, elaboration probes and clarification probes." The use of elaboration probes allowed the participants to give a detailed discussion on some questions. Clarification probes were used to check if there was a clear understanding in the interpretation of questions between myself and interviewees.

I interviewed each novice teacher once for duration of approximately one hour. The interviews were conducted according to Kvale & Brinkmann's (2009) assertion, that the interviews are usually transcribed, and the written text and the sound recordings together constitute the materials for the analysis of meaning. In this study data was collected from the semi-structured interviews, shaped by the theoretical framework, which was recorded using a tape recorder.

3.8 Analysis of Data

A qualitative study was conducted in order to establish a coherent interpretation of data. Neuman's (2006) affirmation that qualitative researchers give data meaning, translate and interpret the data by beginning with the participants' point of view and how they interpret and define their situations was used as a guide in this study. I also acknowledged Nieuwenhuis's (2007, p.99) reference to the qualitative data analysis process as ongoing and iterative and "the intertwining of data collection, processing, analysis and reporting."

In order to establish the novice teachers' understanding of the phenomenon of this research study, which was novice teachers' experiences of teaching literacy, I drew on the analysis process described by Nieuwenhuis (2007, p.99) which states that the participants "perceptions, attitudes, understanding, knowledge, values, feelings and experiences" are analysed in order to gain an understanding of their interpretation of the phenomenon. The semi structured interview responses were transcribed and analysed

and constantly read and re-read to see the patterns, categories and the relationships that emerged. This is congruent with the description of the data analysis process described by Nieuwenhuis, which refers to understanding of the data collected through organising, synthesizing, breaking it into manageable chunks and searching for patterns in order to discover what is important and what is to be learned through the collected data in order to tell others. The transcribed data from the interviews was coded and themes and sub - themes were developed using inductive analysis. The analysis of data obtained from the participants was analysed in light of Kolb's experiential learning theory, which underpinned this study. The data was divided into four themes based on Kolb's theory which were then grouped into sub- themes based on the data that emerged from the themes. This provided for the development of categories based on the interpretation of the data.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Research ethics refer to a set of principles that guide and assist the researcher in the choice of goals which are important and in reconciling conflicting values. Throughout this study I ensured that ethical considerations were followed as indicated by Kvale & Brinkmann (2009) who state that ethical issues go through the entire process of an interview investigation, and concerns should be taken into consideration from the start of an investigation to the final report. I ensured that ethical procedures were followed to ensure that the ethical acceptability of the study was maintained. These included informed consent and confidentiality.

3.9.1 Informed consent

Kvale & Brinkmann (2009, p. 63) emphasize the ethical issues of design "which involve obtaining the participants informed consent in the study, securing confidentiality, and considering the possible consequences of the study for the subjects". I ensured that informed consent was obtained from the department of Education, the principal and the participants (refer to Appendix C, D and E). Consent was obtained from the Department of Education through the superintendent of education and management of the Pinetown district, the University of KwaZulu-Natal, the principal of Rainbow primary school and the participants. Kvale & Brinkmann (2009,p.70) state that "informed consent entails informing the research participants about the overall purpose of the investigation and

the main features of the design, possible risks and the benefits from participation in the research project". I adhered to these guidelines by ensuring that the participants were fully aware of their role in the research study. The participants were asked to sign consent forms (refer to Appendix E,p.96) in order to gain their permission to participate in the study. The participants were also informed that their participation in the study was voluntary and they were free to withdraw at anytime. The purpose of the semi structured interviews was explained to the participants, they were informed that the focus of the study was not to elicit specific answers; I therefore requested their candidness in the answering of questions.

3.9.2 Confidentiality

Kvale & Brinkmann (2009), state that confidentiality in research implies that private data identifying the participants will not be disclosed and the issue of confidentiality when reporting private interviews in public and the consequences of the published report for the interviewees will not be compromised.

In order to ensure confidentiality in this study I ensured that the participants were informed that confidentiality would be maintained and guaranteed. To protect the identity of the participants, anonymity was ensured by the use of pseudonyms. I assured the participants that the data would only be used for research purposes with the aim of improving education

3.10 Validity and Reliability

Neuman (2006) refers to validity as suggesting truthfulness and refers to how well an idea fits with actual reality. Kvale & Brinkmann (2009) refer to validity as the truth, the correctness and the strength of a statement. Cohen *et al.* (2011), state that validity is an important key to effective research. Subsequently, I aimed at ensuring validity throughout the research process to ensure the credibility of the study. Neuman (2006,) maintains that validity addresses the question of how well the social reality being measured through research matches with the constructs researchers use to understand it. In this study I ensured that validity was maintained by using participants, an appropriate instrument for gathering data, and relying on authenticity. The appropriate instrument was attained by use of semi structured interviews for eliciting novice teachers'

experiences. An audio- recorder was used to record data and this ensured that accurate data was collected and transcribed as all the interviews were recorded. Authenticity was addressed by ensuring all participants were teaching in the same phase and they were all novice teachers.

Reliability is defined by Neuman (2006); Cohen et al. (2011); Kvale & Brinkmann (2009) as dependability or consistency and suggests that the same thing is repeated or recurs until identical or similar conditions prevail. Kvale & Brinkmann (2009) emphasize the trustworthiness of research findings. Reliability in this research study was maintained by ensuring trustworthiness of the data.

3.11 Trustworthiness of data

The importance of trustworthiness in qualitative research is emphasized by Nieuwenhuis (2007, p.113) who states that "assessing trustworthiness is the acid test of data analysis, findings and conclusions". In this study, when assessing the data, the procedures that are used for assessing the trustworthiness of data were constantly referred to. Precautions were taken to minimize bias throughout the research process. The same questions were addressed to all the participants. The participants were given the transcripts to read in order to verify that the information they gave was correctly and accurately transcribed. Kvale & Brinkmann (2009) emphasize the researcher's ethical responsibility to report knowledge that is secured and verified as possible.

3.12 Limitations of the study

The limitations of this research study are acknowledged. A small sample was used which was limited to a single school and three participants.

The three novice teachers were from the same school, even though their experiences were different, they were still bound by the same context. Therefore, this could, at times have impacted on the research process. The fact that I was the researcher and also the head of department in the foundation phase at this particular school may have had limited the participants' responses; however, I tried to circumvent this by constantly assuring the participants that I was assuming the role of researcher in this context and that the data from the interviews would be used for research purposes only.

3.13 Conclusion

This chapter presented a detailed description of the research design and the research process that was undertaken in this study, which was framed within the interpretative paradigm. The qualitative research process was based on a case study. Three participants were purposively selected and semi- structured interviews were used to elicit the responses of the participants with regard to their experiences as novice teachers. Issues of ethics, validity, reliability and trustworthiness of data were addressed.

The next chapter discusses the results of the data collection process. The data will be presented, analysed and interpreted.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I discussed the methodology that was used in the research study. The participants and the selection of the participants were also discussed. This included the data collection process that was employed in the research study. Issues of ethical considerations, validity and reliability and limitations of the study were considered.

In this chapter I aim to provide a detailed discussion of the presentation of data that emerged from the semi- structured interviews. The data from these interviews with the three participants is presented and discussed according to four themes. The themes emerged from the data and coincide with Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory. The themes are not surprising as the interview schedule was framed by Kolb's experiential learning theory. The first theme is novice teachers' feelings about teaching literacy in the foundation phase. The second theme is novice teachers' reflections of teaching literacy in the foundation phase. The third theme is novice teachers' thinking about teaching literacy. The fourth theme is novice teachers' literacy practices.

4.2 Novice teachers' feelings about teaching literacy

This theme is consistent with Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle which describes the learner's concrete experiences. In this stage the learner is actively involved in the learning process. The focus in this theme is on the feelings of the initial experiences of novice teachers as they embark on their journey and begin their teaching career in schools. This theme depicts the different feelings that are experienced by novice teachers in their school context. Each of the novice teachers expressed different emotions that captured their experiences as novice teachers.

The themes that were drawn from the data were: feelings of insecurity, intimidation, isolation, inadequacy, inability to cope with classroom management, unpreparedness and of lack of support and guidance.

4.2.1 Feelings of insecurity

The participants' responses regarding their experiences during the time that they had been teaching indicated that as new teachers they initially experienced feeling insecure in their new school environment.

Sharon's description of her experiences over the two year period that she has been teaching, expressed feelings that are common to most novice teachers in their initial stages of teaching. She stated that in her first year of teaching, she felt uneasy about teaching. She experienced *"feeling very unsettled, not knowing what to do"*. She used the words which aptly described her feelings at this stage in her career:

I felt a bit uneasy about teaching because it was the first year on my own, in my own classroom, responsible for the children in the class and coming to a new school, getting familiar with the teachers and the learners. I wasn't sure the way around the school… (Sharon)

Carol's response also indicated initial feelings of insecurity during her first year of teaching:

It was very different from college which was just theory based, when we went to schools for practise teaching, we were not on our own in the classroom, we were always under the supervision of a teacher. Even when we taught, the teacher was always in the classroom. (Carol)

She experienced a sense of insecurity and fear of having to cope with the realities of being on her own and faced with the responsibility of her own learners in the classroom. These initial feelings of insecurity experienced by novice teachers are referred to as reality shock by Steyn (2004), who states that the reality shock is due to novice teachers experiencing a gap between their own ideals and the realities of the classroom. The need for novice teachers to be supported is highlighted by Hudson (2012) who contends that beginning teachers require more supportive environments with willing and compatible mentors who can effectively guide their practices.

4.2.2 Feelings of intimidation
The novice teachers' responses indicated that as new teachers at the school, they sometimes felt intimidated by the other more experienced teachers. Sharon expressed

feelings of intimidation and of being afraid to ask for assistance and guidance. As a novice teacher she felt intimidated by the experienced teachers, who seemed more knowledgeable than her and who knew what to do:

... then also what was intimidating was the fact that all the staff had been teaching for years, so for them they just carry on, they just going and going...for me, I was not sure if I was doing this the right way, I didn't know, wasn't sure, who I could go to…but then I thought it's so busy, everyone needs to sort themselves out first,… so to go and ask, I felt like I'm becoming a burden on them. (Sharon)

She feared "becoming a burden" by constantly asking for assistance. She stated that she felt intimidated by the fact that the other teachers had been teaching for years and as a new teacher she did not know what to do. Sharon's response indicated a cry for help, but she realised that teaching kept everyone busy and she had to find a way to cope on her own.

The ordeal of novice teachers having to cope on their own is unlike other professions where novices initially observe and work with more experienced professionals before gradually taking responsibility (Worthy, 2005 & Killeavy, 2006) reflects the sink or swim descriptor that is used by Feiman-Nemser (2001) & Howe (2006). Novice teachers are thrown into the deep end and have to sink or swim on their own, which highlights the plight of novice teachers, who are expected to take full responsibility for their class on their own as opposed to other professions where mentors assist in the transition phase.

4.2. 3 Feelings of inadequacy

Although novice teachers exhibited feelings of inadequacy and of being fearful of the more experienced teachers, they were reluctant to ask for assistance because they felt that this would reveal their vulnerabilities as new teachers, as well as their lack of knowledge and skills.

Nadine expressed feelings of inadequacy when questioned about the training that she received with regard to the teaching of literacy:

They focussed more on higher stuff, so when it comes to the lower grades I don't think we were given sufficient stuff; we weren't shown much practical aspects. We weren't shown what to do. (Nadine)

Based on the above sentiments it is evident that there are numerous factors which resulted in the novice teachers' feelings of inadequacy. Nadine felt that, although she was a qualified teacher, her pre service training did not prepare her for the practical aspects of teaching. This generated feelings of inadequacy, as she was afraid to ask experienced teachers because she feared they would regard her as an incompetent teacher.

Steyn (2004) highlights the different feelings experienced by novice teachers such as: fear, anxiety, stress and feelings of inadequacy and advocates the need for induction and providing ongoing assistance and development to assist novice teachers in developing confidence.

4.2.4 Feelings of isolation

The participants' responses also revealed feelings of isolation, of not knowing who to ask for assistance and guidance. Initially, Sharon indicated that she felt alone, not knowing who to ask for assistance. Sharon's transition from a state of insecurity gradually progressed to feeling more secure until she developed a sense of belonging with her grade teachers:

I don't know how to explain it, but afterwards once you got into the routine, into the hang of things, into the swing of things, now you become more comfortable with the staff, they come to you, ...asking if you need assistance ...if you need advice, I started to go to them because I didn't feel like I'm becoming a burden anymore. (Sharon)

Sharon's trajectory from feeling insecure, intimidated, afraid, uncertain, unsettled and dependent on others gradually transcended to feelings of self- assurance and confidence. After her first year of teaching she felt more confident in her abilities. The experience that she gained in her first year assisted her in overcoming her initial feelings of fear and uncertainty and this developed in the second year to feelings of confidence and security. This was depicted by the strength of the words which she articulated:

I was excited to come back in the new year, you know exactly what to do, you can do things better, more faster, more efficient, you on the ball now, you just go on because you know what needs to be taught in that time frame, and what the children need to know. (Sharon)

These feelings are in contrast with those expressed by Carol, who expressed feelings of excitement and joy at having received her own class and this seemed to overshadow the feelings of insecurity and fear usually experienced by novice teachers:

And when had I my own class, my own children, I was very excited, could practice everything that I learnt with these children. (Carol)

Nadine overcame her initial feelings of isolation, by aligning herself to one of the experienced teachers in her grade and this helped her to gain confidence. She developed feelings of belonging and security in the fact that in her grade the teachers worked closely together. Being part of a team and contributing to the team helped her to cope with some of the challenges that are usually faced by beginning teachers:

Well, the grade 3's work as a team. The four of us are always working together ... what works for Mrs... she comes and tells me and what works for me I go and tell the other teachers ...(Nadine)

Nadine's statement revealed the importance of collaboration with other teachers as this provided a sense of belonging. These initial feelings of isolation expressed by the novice teachers are highlighted by Friedman (2000) who asserts that this is one of the factors that leads to disillusionment of novice teachers as they are hesitant to seek advice from the more experienced teachers.

4.2.5 Feelings of inability in handling learners' behaviour

One of the most challenging experiences that novice teachers in this study were faced with was addressing learners' behaviour. The novice teachers expressed feelings of being unable to handle learner discipline problems. They felt that the learners' behaviour impacted on their teaching and disrupted their lessons:

It was hard in the beginning, my first year, when I first started teaching… learning their background, learning where they come from….It's hard for you as a teacher ...there are some of them with behavioural problems. (Sharon)

In the beginning they were still getting to know me, misbehaving in the classroom, so discipline was a problem at the beginning. (Carol)

Sharon's response indicated the difficulty that she experienced as a novice teacher in the beginning. This was reinforced by her choice of words, "*It's hard in the beginning...it's hard for you as a teacher."*

She also highlighted other factors which impacted on the learners' behaviour, such as the learners' home environment.

Some of them come from abusive homes, they think it is normal behaviour; they bring that type of behaviour to the class. (Sharon)

Nadine also commented on the challenges that she experienced regarding some of the learners behaviour:

There have been very challenging ones. Well, this year there were two kids that really were a challenge, one constantly caused a disturbance; he is very loud, cannot sit still, he whistles, screams and causes the whole class to start laughing. He is very difficult to control. That's a very difficult challenge and unfortunately I haven't been able to control it. I think he needs professional help. (Nadine)

Based on the above discussions on novice teachers experiences of disruptive learner behaviour it was evident that this was an area in which the participants required more support. The need for support and assistance was reinforced by Nadine's statement, "…*he needs professional help.*" The need for a structured mentored program was evident by Nadine's sentiments when asked if she thought that would have assisted her:

Yes, it would have helped. It is very difficult in this school, if a child hits another child, there are no proper disciplinary measures put into place. There's only a certain amount that the teacher can do. (Nadine)

One of the challenges expressed by novice teachers is behaviour management (Hudson, 2012; Steyn, 2004). Classroom discipline, communication with learners and dealing with learner behavioural problems often create critical challenges for beginning educators. This highlights the need for schools to assist beginning teachers by providing

mentoring and assistance to novice teachers in order to assist them in the development of strategies to address learner behaviour.

4.2.6 Feelings of unpreparedness

The novice teachers also indicated that they experienced feelings of not being fully prepared for the actual work of teaching. Different views were expressed regarding their feelings towards their pre service preparation for teaching in the foundation phase. Sharon felt that she was not prepared for administration work as her training only concentrated on the practical aspects of teaching:

I think it has, but administration part, it never prepared me for that, I don't like all the written work that you have to do like registers. During teaching practice you don't do all of that because you just come in and teach the class, you have time to work with the children. (Sharon)

Nadine expressed the view that, although her specialisation was in the foundation intermediate phase, not much emphasis was placed on the foundation phase. The focus of her training was based more on the intermediate phase. This presented a challenge for her as she did not receive sufficient practical preparation for teaching in the foundation phase:

Training institutions need to revisit foundation intermediate phase and separate the phases. I don't think we learnt much when it came to foundation phase. (Nadine)

Carol felt that being exposed to different schools during her practice teaching provided her with knowledge of different school situations and this equipped her for teaching in different school contexts. However, she felt that this did not fully prepare her for the reality of having to cope entirely on her own without assistance in the foundation phase:

Yes, I feel all the practise at schools has helped me, I've been to a private, a public school, all different varieties of schools, I have seen how the children are at the different schools, the different systems of each school, everyone has their own tactic, a different way of how they run their school.... (Carol)

Steyn (2004) asserts that the expectations of beginning teachers are some of the challenges that impact on their teaching as they experience a gap between the reality of

teaching practise and their ideals. Novice teachers are confronted with policies, rules, formal procedures, informal rules and customs which become daunting for them and may lead to feelings of disillusionment and failure during their first years of teaching.

4.2.7 Feelings of lack of support and guidance

The participants all stated that they had received induction at the beginning of their first year from their heads of department. However, it was evident from their responses that there was no follow up provided. They indicated that there was no structured mentoring programme at the school.

Sharon's response indicated the need for the allocation of a specific mentor teacher to novice teachers when they arrived to provide support and guidance:

No, not really, structured like other schools. When I started in my first year, they should have allocated a senior teacher in the grade to pair with. We were just introduced to all the grade one teachers in a meeting and told if you need any assistance, feel free to go and speak to them, their doors will be open. (Sharon)

When they were asked if they were still receiving mentoring from their HODs or someone else, their responses were varied. Sharon stated that she was not currently receiving mentoring but she felt that:

I feel that I don't want to be a burden on somebody but I have received a lot of guidance and help from all the teachers, not just from the HODs or the principal or grade heads. (Sharon)

Nadine felt that even though not much mentoring was received, the HODs were approachable; therefore she could go and ask them for advice if she was in doubt about anything:

We don't really get that much but, their doors are always open, so whenever there is a question or query, their doors are always open for us. But I don't find much mentoring being done. (Nadine)

The participants' responses indicated that they were not allocated a designated mentor at the school. Nadine identified a mentor by aligning herself to one of the teachers in her grade. This helped her as she was able to learn from her peer. This can be seen as a

survival mechanism as it assisted her in gaining support and assistance from other teachers:

"Well, from the time I came to this school, Mrs… has been my mentor". I have learnt a lot from her.

Carol also expressed initial feelings of lack of support, which is depicted by the choice of her words, *"thrown into the deep end."* She had initially taken over teaching in the HODs classroom in her first year of teaching and implied that the HOD had assisted her by mentoring and guiding her to organize the class during the first month of her teaching:

Even though I was thrown into the deep end, Mrs…(HOD) was with me for the first month, she watched how I taught and she showed me how to teach using different methods, she always guided me and if I needed anything, I used to go to her and she showed me how to arrange my files, my registers… (Carol)

The novice teachers' responses reinforced the idea that there were many challenges that they faced in their first years of teaching and therefore they needed to be supported and guided in order to overcome these challenges. Sharon indicated that she needed to know if she was on the right track. The difficulties of classroom management skills which manifested in discipline problems were identified by Nadine and Carol.

All the time, it's not assistance in the way that I don't know how to teach or I don't know how to control my class but it's actually assistance to ensure that I am on the right track. (Sharon)

Yes, I think it would have with the discipline fact. (Nadine)

Well, I do because I'm still learning, especially with discipline in the classroom. (Carol)

These responses endorsed the fact that the novice teachers in this study required continuous mentoring and support during their early years of teaching. These sentiments are echoed by Feiman-Nemser (2001), who reinforces the idea that improvement of teaching is difficult to accomplish by one's self, and that novice teachers need opportunities to talk with other teachers about their teaching, to analyse their students' work, to examine problems and to consider alternative explanations and actions. The

need for induction programmes to assist novice teachers is reinforced by Steyn (2004) who states that novice teachers experience challenges in their transition from student teacher to qualified teacher and the best way of supporting and developing them is to have a clear understanding of their problems and providing constructive induction programmes that will help them to address these challenges and sustain them.

4.3 Novice teachers' reflections about teaching

Novice teachers' reflections about teaching literacy can be interpreted in the light of Kolb's experiential learning cycle which refers to this stage as learners observing and then reflecting on what they have learnt. In this stage the novice teachers reflected and expressed their views on what they had learnt about the teaching of literacy. In this theme, the following types of reflections were drawn from the data: reflections on type of teaching strategies used, reflections on improving teaching and reflections on teaching experiences.

4.3.1 Reflections on type of teaching strategies used.

Participants' responses to their reflections on the type of teaching strategies that they had used in their two years of teaching were based on strategies that they had implemented to address the issues in which they experienced difficulty, namely; classroom management skills and catering for the diverse needs of the learners. Sharon's response indicated that she had focussed on the development of positive reinforcement strategies that helped to improve the discipline of some of the learners in her class:

I try my best to look at the positive side of my class, if I see improvement in their behaviour I award them with stars and dots on the behaviour chart. Those that get the most get a treat and I issue certificates at the end of the term for their tests. It works for some, but others are not interested. (Sharon)

Carol implemented strategies that helped her to gain a better understanding of the learners, provided her with coping skills and aimed at assisting these learners in developing their confidence and self- esteem:

I have learnt that I must practice patience, fairness, compassion, have a sense of humour and understanding of diversity. Many learners come from different cultures,

religions, etc. They need teachers to help them to link different situations with real-life situations. (Carol)

Nadine indicated that she developed strategies that promoted creative ways of teaching by providing stimulating and vibrant lessons in order to gain the learners attention and stimulate their imaginations:

I watch clips of other teachers teaching to pick up creative ways of teaching because if you do things monotonously, kids get very bored. They need activities to stimulate their imagination. (Nadine).

Based on the above responses of the novice teachers it was evident that they had developed their own coping strategies which assisted in addressing the issues of classroom management and catering for diverse needs of their learners. The types of teaching strategies used were based on providing support and encouragement to the learners. Hammerness, *et al*., (2005) express the need for teachers to have a broad set of teaching strategies for working with diverse learners in order to build a culturally responsive practice.

4.3.2 Reflections on improving teaching.

The participants' responses with regard to areas in their teaching that still needed improvement suggested that they were still in the process of learning and still required development in some aspects of literacy. Nadine indicated that she would benefit from phonic workshops:

 Workshops in teaching phonics would help. (Nadine)

I can always improve in anything in literacy, because there is so much, maybe focus more on reading. (Sharon)
I believe that I am still learning, so there is something in each learning area that I still have to gain more insight. (Carol)

It is evident from the responses that reflection formed a vital stage of the novice teachers' development; they were able to reflect on their teaching in order to gain an indication of their progress.

Nadine felt that by observing other teacher's lessons, she could learn from them:*This year I am in a teacher's development support group for IQMS, so I'm looking forward to it because I haven't sat in another teacher's lesson. I think by doing that I could learn a lot.* (Nadine)

Carol felt that she could improve her teaching skills by getting help and reassurance from the other teachers. This indicated that novice teachers needed the support of experienced teachers:

With the help from the other teachers, most definitely I can improve. It's not assistance in the way that I don't know how to teach, it's reassurance like to know I'm on the right track. (Carol)

The participants' reflections on their teaching progress indicated a need for improvement in their teaching and, therefore, they still required guidance and assistance from other teachers. This highlights the need for mentors to provide novice teachers with a high level of support and instil confidence and self esteem in order to develop their professional growth (Bleach, 1999).

The participants' reflections indicated that the different knowledge and experiences that they had acquired in their teaching environment, assisted in developing, influencing and shaping them and helped to address the needs of the different types of learners. They felt that the learners' home environments had profound effects on their teaching and had affected them emotionally. Nadine expressed sadness and compassion when she reflected on how appreciative the learners were for little things:

Well there are some very sad moments, when you feel that you wish you could do more for the kids. Especially at our school, the kids' come from different social backgrounds. You think to yourself, we are so used to a luxurious life, for these learners little things are so important. You wish you could do more for them. (Nadine)

Carol's reflections indicated that her experiences had moulded and equipped her to be able to handle different classroom situations:

Well it's moulded me into the teacher that I am today, it's helped me and prepared me for what happens in the classroom situations, the different things that we are faced with the children. (Carol)

The novice teachers' reflections indicated that they had learnt that teaching required more than the basic standards of classroom delivery, as there was the need to address issues of wider significance such as learners' home environments. This view is expressed by Bleach (1999) who states that the mentoring process should not only focus on novice teachers' self- evaluation of their teaching performance but also on pedagogical issues and social and ethical contexts of educational practise

4.3.3 Reflections on teaching experiences.

The participants' responses regarding their reflections on their teaching experiences during their two years of teaching indicated that they had gained confidence in their abilities.

Nadine commented on the fact that she had become confident in her teaching:

You find you learn much more, in my first year I was not really confident as I am now, literacy is my strong point. Also, the children in my class last year were much different than this year. (Nadine)

Sharon's response endorsed these sentiments:

I have learned a lot since I was teaching grade one, I am more confident. I am enjoying it, I was excited to come back in the new year, I know what to do, I can do things better. (Sharon)

Nadine indicated that the previous year was an adjustment for her:

Last year I was still adjusting to the system of the school and the way things are run. This year I am able to focus on helping the learners develop their English language skills. (Nadine)

The novice teacher's reflections on what they would change since they first started teaching, varied and they indicated areas where they felt they still required development and support.

Carol indicated that she still needed to improve on being more firm with regard to learner discipline:

It would definitely be discipline, I would be more firm, I have tried this year, I am more firm. I have boundaries with the learners and I don't allow them to take advantage of me. With regards to my learning areas, I should speak more to the HOD's and get more advice. (Carol)

Nadine felt that she always addressed her mistakes as each year was faced with different experiences, different learners and different challenges. She also indicated that she still required improvement in helping learners to address their emotional issues:

I don't think that I would change anything, I have learnt a lot from my mistakes. Every year is a new year, every kid is a new kid and you will never get two kids that are the same. There are always ways of improving, when it comes to feelings, some children get so emotional. (Nadine)

The reflections of the novice teachers' teaching experiences are consistent with Kolb's (1984) second stage of the learning cycle which he refers to as 'observation and reflection'. Their responses indicated that through self reflection they were able improve and develop their teaching skills. Bleach (1999) states that the first year offers opportunities for reflection in and on action because new teachers bring into schools their emerging ideas about teaching and learning based on their pre service training and experiences at schools.

4.4 Novice Teachers' thinking about teaching literacy

This theme was drawn from the participants thinking about their teaching of literacy. Based on the data elicited from the interviews, the following sub- themes emerged. They are: thinking about their knowledge of teaching literacy, thinking about the skills of teaching literacy, thinking about the different types of learners and thinking about their pre- service training.

4.4.1 Thinking about their knowledge of teaching literacy

Participants' responses to the knowledge and skills that they thought were needed to teach literacy, required them to think about their own teaching of literacy. Their responses indicated that they had acquired a good theoretical knowledge of the teaching of literacy.

Sharon's response indicated that teachers should have knowledge of how to teach the basic literacy skills in phonics, reading and writing. She emphasized the need for teachers to display good literacy skills and the importance of good phonetic knowledge:

Especially, with phonics you must know phonetic awareness, you need to know how to pronounce the word, must pronounce every letter of the alphabet properly. (Sharon)

She also reinforced the importance of the teacher having the ability to structure lessons and activities to cater for the different abilities of learners. She reiterated the importance of teachers being good role models and possessing good subject matter knowledge:

Teachers must be good role models, you must write neatly, you can't write untidy and have untidy writing on the board and expect the children to write neatly. In reading you must model a love for reading and the steps for reading. (Sharon)

Sharon also described the qualities that the teacher should possess. This was reinforced by her choice of words:

You need to be a mentor, model a love for reading, have patience and do not scream and shout if the child does not understand. (Sharon)

The novice teachers' responses indicated that the teaching of literacy required a teacher that had good knowledge of literacy teaching. This is consistent with Wray and Medwell's (2001) assertion that novice teachers must be equipped with a range of pedagogic strategies to enable them to operate successfully in developing children's literacy.

4.4.2 Thinking about the skills of teaching literacy

The participants' responses indicated that the foundation phase requires literacy teachers who should be skilled to teach learners at this stage of their development, which includes the ability to adjust teaching to suit the level of the learners, being able to employ different methods of teaching and finally, catering for the different learner needs. Carol furthers this description of the ideal foundation phase teacher by stating:

You should be able to integrate, interlink, be open- minded and know how to extend the questions, e.g. in phonics you must know how to pronounce, break down

words, give the learners opportunities to interact with the words, show them pictures, link and interlink with everything. (Carol)

The participants' responses indicated that not only must a teacher have knowledge of the teaching of literacy but should also be skilled in addressing the needs of the learners. They stated that foundation phase teachers needed to stimulate the learners' imagination and provide a rich learning environment that will enhance the learners' literacy development:

Now a day's kids don't think out of the box, they need to have that imagination, they are very narrow- minded, and you need to have things that are opened a lot. (Nadine)

For literacy you must have phonic games, nice charts to grab their attention, songs, say jingles, play games, make it seem like it's a fun thing. (Sharon)

You can't just teach in a boring manner, it needs to be exciting and fun and add different types of media, use different games, puzzles etc., engage the learners. (Carol)

Their responses reinforced the importance of using visual aids and different types of media to stimulate the learners' literacy development by providing a rich learning environment. They referred to the teacher's approach and the manner of teaching as important to stimulate learning. Joubert *et al*. (2013) recommend that teachers create an atmosphere that is conducive to learning which will foster incidental learning.

4.4.3 Thinking about the teaching of the different types of learners

Based on the participants' responses with regard to the teaching of the different types of learners at their school, all the participants indicated that the issue of language barrier was a major challenge as the majority of the learners' home language was isiZulu and the language of learning and teaching at this school was English. isiZulu was taught as a first additional language, and therefore, from the participants' perspective, it was imperative that a teacher in this school context should be able to cater for these learners' challenges with respect to the learning of English. The novice teachers responses also highlighted many other contextual factors that they experienced such as; poverty, lack of parental support, some learners were orphans and therefore, lived in child-headed households or with grandparents.

Sharon reflected on the issue of language barriers at the school by stating that:

Most of the learners have a language barrier, the problem at home is that they only speak in their home language which is isiZulu and at school they have to switch to English. It is very difficult for them, especially in the foundation phase as they have not yet developed good English vocabulary. Therefore, the teacher needs to have patience and must also try and learn another language in order help the learners. (Sharon)

Carol also furthered this discussion by stating that:

Some of the learners experience great difficulty in understanding and speaking English and therefore have great difficulty understanding the teacher. Their English skills also affect their reading progress. (Carol)

Nadine commented on the impact of the learners' home environment on their reading progress:

It impacts a lot, because most of the learners come from poor homes, their parents cannot afford to buy books for the children to read at home to help them improve their reading. Reading is not on the level it should be. (Nadine)

Sharon commented on the learners' home environments and how this impacted on the learners' progress:

Some of the children are orphans and they live in child-headed households so there is no assistance with homework. Some of them live with their grandparents and some of the grandparents cannot speak or read English and therefore cannot assist them. Some of them have behavioural problems because they come from abusive homes, they think that is normal behaviour, they display that type of behaviour in the class. (Sharon)

Carol's response indicated that how the learners' home environment affected the learners' learning:

They also have problems with their support structures, some parents do not have much money and therefore the children do not bring lunch to school. This affects the learners' concentration skills. Some learners live with their grannies, which are old and the learners really don't have the support they need. (Carol)

The novice teachers' responses indicated the impact of the various contextual factors that were prevalent in this school context and how this affected teaching and learning. The impact of learners' home environment on their learning is highlighted by Morrow (2007) who states that teaching does not only entail being a competent teacher as there are contextual factors which impact on the workload of teaching. Fleisch (2008) highlights the effects of poverty on learner achievement. Language barriers resulting from a discrepancy between the LOLT of the school and learners' home language impact on learners' literacy development (NEEDU national report, 2012).

4.4. 4 Thinking about pre service literacy training

Based on the participants' responses to the difference between what they had learnt with regards to the teaching of literacy at university and teaching at school, the data indicated that their pre service training focussed on different specializations.

Nadine's qualification was foundation intermediate and her pre- service training was based more on the intermediate phase rather than the foundation phase. She indicated that she did not receive much practical experience in the foundation phase:

We would do much more intermediate stuff when it came to creative writing, we did have one or two lectures that work shopped us on creative writing. They focussed more on higher stuff so when it comes to the lower grades, I don't think we were given sufficient stuff, we weren't shown many practical aspects, and we weren't sure what to do. (Nadine)

Sharon's training was based on the foundation phase only and focussed on practical teaching in the foundation phase. Her response indicated that her training institution was well resourced and focussed on teaching learners in small groups as opposed to her current teaching context:

It was a private institution they focussed on small groups and when we did our practice teaching with small groups of learners, each child had resources, games, puzzles, books, they bought books for the children but now where I am it's not the same, you can't have a puzzle for each child, the children cannot afford to buy them, so there's a difference. The teacher has to make provisions for those things. (Sharon)

Carol stated that her pre service training was more theory based; she studied through a distant education university and attended lectures at an affiliated college:

At college it was more in depth with different theories and how you put them into practice, not really a true reflection like when you come to the classroom, where you have to apply it practically. (Carol)

Nadine also stated that she did not receive training in addressing learning problems and therefore experienced difficulty in identifying the symptoms of these problems:

There are a lot of learning problems that the learners experience and it's a huge challenge for the teacher. We weren't given sufficient training in identifying learning problems such as Attention Deficit Disorder (ADHD) etc. I have a learner who cannot spell, I cannot decipher his written work, his just writes e and a's in all his words. (Nadine)

The responses indicated that although the novice teachers' were all foundation phase teachers their training differed; some had received less practical experience. Their pre service training did not equip them for the contextual realities that teachers encountered such as; the identification of learning problems, handling learner behaviour and addressing societal problems that impacted on learners. These challenges are also highlighted by Morrow (2007) who states that pre service programme content is mainly theoretical and emphasizes the need for a balance with practical skills to equip beginner teachers with knowledge, skills and competences that will help improve educational outcomes and achievements.

4.5 Novice teachers' literacy teaching practices

This theme according to Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle refers to the actual experimentation or doing stage which focuses on the actual teaching practices of novice teachers in the first years of teaching and it is based on the key aspects of literacy namely; phonics, reading and writing. The data that emerged from this theme drew on the following literacy teaching practices; teaching of phonics, teaching of reading**,** teaching of writing, the use of teaching strategies and teaching the literacy curriculum.

4.5.1 Teaching of phonics

With regard to the teaching of phonics all the participants referred to a structured method for the teaching of phonics which was used at the school. Sharon reflected on how she taught phonics in her two years of teaching, in a grade one class in her first year and in grade two in her second year:

In grade one, when teaching phonics, we used the letter land approach: start with a rhyme, read a story based on the new sound, introduce the new sound, and learners identify objects in the classroom that start with the particular sound. (Sharon)

Nadine and Carol advocated the use of pictures in teaching phonics:

I write the words on the board and draw pictures to explain the word. Children learn better from pictures. (Nadine)

We use the letter land approach, e.g. if I am teaching the 'sh' sound, I will draw a picture of Sammy snake and the hat man and then I will make up a little story about the new sound and write the phonic words based on the new sound. (Carol)

The participants' responses indicated that the use of pictures was a strong focus in the foundation phase for the teaching of phonics. Sharon stressed the importance of using resources when teaching:

You have to use resources, like apparatus, teaching aids, so when I introduce a sound e.g. 'a'- I have pictures of animals, ants etc. Some learners are visual learners they have to see the picture in order to recognize the sound, not just look at the letter of the alphabet and know the sound. (Sharon)

The participants' responses indicated that they were all familiar with the letter land approach that was used in their school to teach phonics. This was consistent with the Department of Education's recommendation that schools select a phonics programme that will ensure systematic teaching of phonics in the school as stated in CAPS English home language document (DoE, 2011).

4.5.2 Teaching of reading

Regarding the teaching of reading, all the participants' responses focussed on guided reading and referred to teaching reading in ability groups using graded readers based on the learners' reading level.

Carol explained the method that she used to teach group guided reading:

I have four groups in my class in different levels, A, B, C and D. The A's are the strong group, they read confidentially on their own and they require very little assistance. Group B is the average group and group and C and D are the weak groups. I discuss the topic and the new words in the stories and then we read together, thereafter each child reads a page on their own. (Carol)

Reading is taught in different groups, so while the one group is sitting on the carpet the rest of the class is doing an independent activity. (Nadine)

Sharon referred to group reading, individual reading and paired reading and focused on assisting the weaker readers by pairing them with a fluent reader to assist them:

Learners are taught in their groups, I first read while they follow and then they read as a group, then individually or in pairs. I usually put one fluent reader with a child that is a weaker reader. Assessment will be based on discussion of the story, comprehension and also the level of the reader that the child is reading. (Sharon)

Nadine and Sharon considered reading as the main focus in the teaching of literacy and emphasized the importance of teaching reading skills and the need for teacher to instil a love for reading in order for learners to develop their reading skills.

Nadine stressed the importance of reading in the foundation phase. Carol emphasized the importance of reading in order to progress in other areas of literacy:

The main thing that we are lacking here is the inability to read and we really need to focus on reading because that is a big issue, if the child can't read and is going up from grade 3, then I think that the child is heading for failure. (Nadine)

Reading is the most important aspect of literacy. The child must know how to read, they will not progress in other areas of literacy like phonics or writing, and therefore, reading is the core. (Carol)

Sharon's response differed in that she felt that learners needed to have a good phonetic knowledge to provide learners with strategies for reading. She felt that a good phonetic knowledge was the basis for reading:

A good sound- letter relationship in phonics is very important. If learners know and can identify their sounds, they will be able to learn sight words and gradually will be able to read, with reading you will be able to write. (Sharon)

Nadine's response highlighted the learners' low reading levels and expressed great concern regarding learners that progressed to the next phase and still could not read. This statement brings to the fore the low reading levels in most schools, which was evident in the findings of PIRLS (2006 & 2011) and revealed the low literacy levels of South African learners in comparison to other countries. Joubert *et al.* (2013) affirm the importance of reading and the foundation teachers' role in developing learners' reading skills.

4.5.3 Teaching of writing

The question focused on the teaching of creative writing. Based on the participants' responses on their teaching of creative writing, they all demonstrated that they possessed a sound knowledge of teaching creative writing:

Sharon referred to the fact that the focus of writing was different in each grade and showed development and progression:

I use a theme or topic e.g. super hero, I will read a story or text about super hero, I will discuss the story and get feedback from the learners. They will imagine that they are the main character, super hero, discuss the type of hero they would like to be, the costume that they would wear etc. I will provide a guide, summarize the story and then they must write their own story on Superhero. (Sharon)

Nadine's response demonstrated the use of the process approach in the teaching of creative writing. She had initially indicated that the teaching of creative writing in the

foundation phase was not given much focus in her pre service training; however, her response reflected that she had developed competence in this area:

I always like to be very imaginative, very graphic in creative writing because children enjoy more of that. This week I chose a birthday party because most of them can relate to a birthday parties. We sang happy birthday, and then we discussed their own birthdays, presents they received and how they felt. I brought some examples of birthday cards, and then I got them to draw a card and write their message inside the card. (Nadine)

Carol's response indicated a similar method of teaching creative writing:

I discuss the topic; relate it to their experiences, maybe they were on holiday or maybe it was Nelson Mandela's birthday. Then we will talk about the topic and they will draw a picture and write their own sentences about it. (Carol)

These responses reflected the novice teachers' development with regard to their teaching of writing using the process approach as stipulated in CAPS (DoE, 2011). Their use of resources such as: pictures, stories, birthday cards and songs affirmed the importance of the writing environment and the stimulation it provided in motivating and assisting learners to write creatively as highlighted by Joubert *et al.* (2013).

4.5.4 The use of teaching strategies

The participants demonstrated a wide range of strategies that are used for the teaching of literacy:

I use puzzles, games, songs, encourage learners to bring storybooks from the library and home to read to the class and take books from class library home. (Sharon)

I show them pictures, cuttings, show them actual things, show them concrete objects. (Nadine)

I have worksheets prepared for them, or write lessons on the board, or write questions based on their reading books, or have discussions on books during shared reading. (Carol)

The responses demonstrated that great care and dedication was channelled at addressing learners' weaknesses in order to assist them in their development. The responses varied from assisting learners with reading to giving extra work and setting extra homework:

I take my weak reading group out every day for reading, or if I can't do that every day, I get a brighter child that has completed her work to read with the weak child. (Nadine)

I focus on one of the weaker learners every day because the other groups can work on their own. I sit with them in their groups and assist them. I also give them less sentences to write compared to the other learners as they take longer to complete their written work. (Sharon)

The use of teaching and learning strategies to achieve the desired outcomes and objectives in the practical teaching of literacy is endorsed by Joubert *et al*. (2013). These authors advocate the use of different grouping strategies to enhance teaching and learning not only in literacy but also for other subjects.

4.5.5 Teaching the literacy curriculum

The novice teachers' responses indicated that they had background knowledge of how to teach literacy in the foundation phase. Their initial teacher training was based on the National Curriculum Statement (NCS), which was used in their first year of teaching. They all indicated that they were not experiencing much difficulty with the transition to the new curriculum, (CAPS) as they had attended departmental training workshops on CAPS, even though these were mainly theoretical in nature. They felt that planning with the other more experienced teachers in their grades, this year, had helped to guide and assist them:

We weren't trained in CAPS at college, we did the NCS. Last year we taught the NCS. I prefer CAPS but I need to master it first. We plan together in our grades, we sit together and prep together and plan for two weeks. (Sharon)

We always work as a team because we find that most of us have different ideas, so it's easier to plan altogether. (Nadine)

Last year we attended departmental workshops and they trained us on how to teach the curriculum and how to implement it. I am coping with the adjustment; I am progressing and reading through the documents, it helps. (Carol)

The responses highlighted the fact that the participants still needed clarity regarding the new curriculum (CAPS) and, therefore, there was a need for assistance as they were still in a process of learning. Sharon says, *"I need to master it first"* and Carol states, *"I am progressing and reading through the documents."* Nadine confirms, *"We always work as a team, because it is easier for planning."*

These responses reinforced the need for ongoing mentoring in the school to provide support and assistance to novice teachers. The school can play an important role in novice teachers' development by allocating mentors to provide structured support (Bleach, 1999).

4. 6 Conclusion

In this chapter the analysis was based on three case studies of the three participants. Each case study tracked the feelings, reflections, thinking and doing (actual teaching) of the novice teachers. This was in line with Kolb's experiential learning theory. Through the analysis the researcher was able to reflect on the novice teachers' experiences of teaching literacy in the foundation phase.

In the next chapter, I will be sharing the findings of my research on novice teachers' experiences of teaching literacy in the foundation phase. This will include the findings, insights and future directions of the study.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS, INSIGHTS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter the analysis of data was discussed. In this chapter I will discuss the findings, insights and future directions.

This research study was intended to understand novice teachers' experiences of teaching literacy in the foundation phase. The study comprised three novice teachers' experiences of teaching literacy in the foundation phase. The novice teachers were named Sharon, Carol and Nadine. They were all in their second year of teaching in the foundation phase at the same school. Each participant's pre -service specialisation was different; Sharon's specialization was in the foundation phase; Carol in the intermediate senior phase; and Nadine in the intermediate foundation phase. Sharon taught grade one in the first year and grade two in her second year of teaching. Carol had been teaching grade two for two years and Nadine was teaching grade three for two years. Data was obtained through case study methods. After analysing the data, three experiential learning cycles emerged. Their experiential learning cycles were interpreted in the light of Kolb's experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984) which will be shared in this chapter.

5.2 Findings

5.2.1 Novice teachers' experiential learning cycles

 The findings will be presented as three experiential learning cycles. Each participant's experiential learning cycle will be discussed according to Kolb's experiential learning cycle, which describes a four stage cycle involving four different modes of adaptive learning modes (Kolb, 1984). These include: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation. The participants' learning cycles will be presented as feelings (concrete experience), reflecting (reflective observation), thinking (abstract conceptualisation) and doing (active experimentation).

5.2.2 Sharon's experiential learning cycle

Sharon's feelings (Concrete experience)

Sharon's experiential learning cycle began with the concrete experience stage. This

stage of her learning cycle captured the different feelings that she experienced as a novice teacher. In her first year she felt inadequate, intimidated by experienced teachers, insecure, not sure if she was on the right track and was afraid to ask for assistance as she was not sure who she should ask. This instilled feelings of loneliness, disquiet, of not knowing what to do and being uneasy about teaching. She felt unprepared for the administration workload and there was no designated mentor teacher to assist her. She felt that discipline was a problem and was intimidated by the learners' behaviour. She felt strongly that she should have been allocated a mentor teacher. Although she had received some support from the HOD, she felt that she still required more support and guidance. However, with time she developed confidence and was able to seek advice from the other teachers.

Sharon's reflecting (Reflective observation)

During this stage Sharon reflected on her initial feelings and developed ways in which to address them. Initially, she experienced discipline as a challenge, however, later she was able to address this behaviour by the use of positive reinforcement and providing support and encouragement to the learners. On reflecting on ways to improve literacy, she realized that she needed to focus more on the teaching of reading. She felt that she still required reassurance, to see if she was on the right track. Addressing learners' contextual issues was still a challenge and she felt that she still needed support. Her reflections indicated that in her first year she was still adjusting and in her second year she had gained more confidence. Her initial feelings of fear were overcome by feelings of enjoyment and excitement in teaching.

Sharon's thinking (Abstract conceptualisation)

During this stage Sharon engaged in thinking of ways in which she could improve her teaching of literacy; she realized that she must have knowledge of phonetic awareness and phonics, write neatly, model good reading skills, have a love for reading and have patience. She considered how she could stimulate the learners' imagination, using games, charts and songs. She also thought that by learning isiZulu she would assist learners who experienced language barriers, in order to be able to communicate with them. Her pre -service training was foundation phase, she trained at a private institution, which focussed on teaching small groups of learners and had sufficient resources.

Sharon's doing (Active experimentation)

Sharon's responses to her actual teaching of literacy indicated a strong literacy focus. She explained that she used the letter land approach to teach phonics and she discussed her lesson on how she introduced a new sound. She started with a rhyme, then discussed a story based on the sound, then introduced the new sound and learners identified things that started with the sound. In reading, she focused on group guided reading and taught in ability groups. She developed learners' literacy skills by using puzzles, games, songs, library books and storybooks. She felt that she still needed to master CAPS because her pre-service training was based on NCS. She worked as a team, with the other teachers in her grade for preparation and planning of lessons.

5.2.3 Carol's experiential learning cycle

Carol's feelings (Concrete experience)

Carol initially experienced mixed feelings, excited at having her own class and also feelings of insecurity, fear and anxiety about her inability in coping with learners' behaviour. She felt insecure and alone and used the term, "thrown into the deep", expressing her need for support. She experienced difficulty adjusting from college to school as she felt that her pre- service training was mostly theoretical and had insufficient practical experience. She felt that discipline was a problem as she experienced challenging learners and was intimidated by their behaviour.

Carol's reflecting (Reflective observation)

During this stage Carol reflected on her initial challenges and developed strategies that addressed them. She had improved in the handling of learner ill-discipline by implementing strategies that developed the learners' confidence and self- esteem. She practised patience, fairness and compassion and showed a sense of humour and understanding of diversity. She was able to link different situations with real life. However, she felt that she still required help and assistance from the HODs in the handling of discipline and improvement of the different subjects. She realized that she also needed to be more firm in her dealings with learners.

Carol's thinking   (Abstract conceptualization)

Carol's conceptualization of her experiences indicated that she regarded reading as the

most important aspect of literacy. She developed the learners' literacy skills by integrating, interlinking and extending questions. She made teaching exciting and fun by using different media, games and puzzles. She felt that the learners' language barriers affected their reading progress as they had no support structures, and most of them lived with grandparents. The majority of the learners were poor and had no lunch which affected their concentration skills. Her pre -service training was intermediate senior and it was mostly theoretical and did not prepare her to work with the complexities in the classroom.

Carol's doing – (Active experimentation)

This stage reflected her development of literacy skills. She used the letter land approach to teach phonics. When teaching a new sound, she drew a picture that related to the sound, she discussed a story about the sound and wrote words based on the sound. In reading she focused on ability group guided reading. The reading lesson included discussion of the story, introduction of new words, learners reading together and individually. In her teaching of writing, she discussed the topic, related it to the learners' experiences and the learners drew and wrote sentences on the topic. She used pictures, worksheets, puzzles and games to stimulate the learners' thinking skills. Although, she had received training in the NCS, she had attended departmental workshops on CAPS and was coping with the adjustment from the NCS.

5.2.4 Nadine's experiential learning cycle

Nadine's feelings (Concrete experience)

She experienced initial feelings of inadequacy, unpreparedness and anxiety about being unable to handle learner discipline. She felt that she was not fully prepared for teaching in the foundation phase and in different school contexts. She felt that her pre- service training focussed more on intermediate phase and was mostly theoretical and, therefore, she received insufficient practical experience which did not prepare her for teaching in the foundation phase and in different school contexts. However, she was able to improve her teaching skills by seeking help and working with other teachers. This made her feel that she was part of a team and therefore, she felt a sense of belonging and security.

Nadine's reflecting (Reflective observation)

Nadine reflected on her initial feelings of inadequacy which were a result of her inability to handle learner discipline. She had developed strategies that had assisted her in overcoming these feelings such as; the use of creativity to gain learners' attention and stimulating their imagination. Her reflections indicated that she had become more confident; she had learnt from her mistakes and was improving. She felt that her pre-service training was mostly theoretical; she had received insufficient practical experience which did not prepare her for teaching in the foundation phase and in different school contexts.

Nadine's thinking (Abstract conceptualization)

Nadine's conceptualization of her experiences revealed that she had learnt to stimulate the learners' imagination by developing their thinking skills using different media. She considered the learners' poor home contexts and how these impacted on their reading. Most of the learners' parents could not afford books, therefore most learners did not have books at home to read and this affected their reading progress. Her pre -service training was foundation –intermediate and she indicated that she had received more intermediate phase training and insufficient practical foundation phase training. She had not received training in addressing learning problems.

Nadine's doing   (Active experimentation)

This stage revealed Nadine's teaching of literacy. She indicated that her pre -service training was focussed on the intermediate phase however, she demonstrated that she had knowledge of how to teach literacy. She used the letter land approach to teach phonics which entailed drawing pictures, writing words on the board and explaining the words. In reading, she used guided reading in groups. She considered reading as important and focused on group reading. Her pre -service training was based on the intermediate phase. She made her handwriting lessons imaginative and graphic by choosing and discussing topics with which the learners could identify and on which they were able to write sentences. She used teaching strategies, which included the use of pictures and cuttings.

5.3 Cross -case analysis: Characteristics common to all participants

5.3.1 Initial feelings about teaching.

All the participants' initial experiences generally expressed negative emotions. They all experienced similar initial feelings of fear, inadequacy, unpreparedness, insecurity and loneliness. Being unable to handle learner discipline was challenging for them all. These feelings expressed by the novice teachers are congruent with the literature on novice teachers (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Steyn, 2004). The learning cycles demonstrated the growth of the novice teachers, from initial negative feelings to positive feelings of excitement, confidence, sense of belonging and feeling secure.

5.3.2 Learning about teaching from reflection.

The data indicated that all participants demonstrated that they had reflected on their initial feelings and learnt from their experiences. Each participant reflected on their inability to handle learner discipline. Sharon's reflections indicated that, although, she felt that she still required help from the HODs, she had developed strategies , such as the use of positive reinforcement to address learner's behaviour and to provide support and encouragement to the learners. Carol also stated that she required help from the HOD in handling discipline, however, she also referred to strategies that she had implemented to develop the learners' self- confidence and self esteem. She referred to practicing patience, fairness and compassion and being more firm.
Nadine introduced creativity to gain learners' attention and to stimulate their imagination. Through self reflection the participants demonstrated that they improved and developed their teaching skills. All three participants also indicated that they had overcome their initial feelings of inadequacy. Nadine, even though she constantly asserted that she had received insufficient practical training, established a collaborative working relationship with the teachers in her grade. Sharon felt that she still needed improvement in literacy teaching however, she also stated that she was enjoying teaching and demonstrated excitement. These responses resonated with the reflection cycle of Kolb's theory (Kolb, 1984). The value of reflective practice for newly qualified teachers is also advocated by (Bleach, 1999).

5.3.3 Gap between pre-service education and teaching in context.

The data that emerged from the study revealed a gap between the participants' pre service education and teaching in context. Steyn (2004) highlights this as one of the challenges experienced by novice teachers, due to being confronted with policies, rules, formal procedures, informal rules and customs. One of the contributing factors for the gap experienced by novice teachers was due to the contextual factors that they had encountered in their teaching context, such as the issue of a language barrier, poor socio economic conditions and poverty. All the novice teacher participants indicated that they experienced difficulty in handling learner discipline. Morrow (2007) asserts that teacher education programmes need to include both formal and material elements of teaching in order to equip students with practical skills to teach in different contexts.

5.3.4 Drawing on theoretical models to teach.

The data on the teaching of literacy indicated that the participants were able to draw on theoretical models in their teaching and they had all had received training in the NCS curriculum. They indicated that they had attended the Departmental of Education's workshops on the new policy, CAPS and were able to implement it. They all made reference to the teaching of phonics using the letter land approach, using group guided reading and teaching of creative writing.

5.3.5 Adapting pre-service learning, and application of theory.

The data indicated that all the participants did not know how to adapt pre service learning and application of theory into practise. Some participants indicated that they received insufficient practical training for the foundation phase. Nadine stated that her training did not fully prepare her for teaching in the foundation phase as she had received insufficient practical training. Carol stated that, "at college it is more in depth with different theories and how you put it into practise, not really a true reflection like when you come to the classroom, where you see it for yourself." Arends & Phurutse (2009) assert that the content of teacher education programmes is largely theoretical, therefore, there is a need to balance theoretical orientation with practical skills.

5.4 Insights about novice teaching.

All three case studies showed a connection with literature. This was evident by the initial feelings and challenges that were expressed by novice teachers generally,

according to (Killeavy, 2006; Feiman –Nemser, 2001; Tickle, 2000; Hudson, 2012). In this study participants indicated that they received insufficient mentoring, however, the data revealed that they did adapt to teaching in context using self- help rather than depending entirely on support from other teachers. One teacher aligned herself to one of the experienced teachers, rather than having a prescriptive mentor. The learning cycles indicated that the novice teachers were coping.

This study reveals that in South Africa there are many contextual factors that impact on education. This is highlighted by Morrow (2007, p.56) who states that, "South Africa suffers from deeply debilitating social problems which affect basic education". In South Africa, given the past history of apartheid, education is based on a different premise than that of other countries; teachers trained in the apartheid era received different types of education based on their race. Thus the question of a suitable mentor becomes debatable. Morrow (2007, p.86) affirms this by referring to "school-based teacher education as a kind of apprenticeship, needs to be handled with care and scepticism, especially in our educational context." However, this study advocates the need for some guidance and support in terms of areas such as administration work. As stated by Sharon, that pre service training did not prepare her for administration work, "not all that admin business, it never prepared me for that". Feiman -Nemser (2001) confirms this type of support that is needed by stating that some aspects of teaching can only be learnt through experience.

5.5 Conclusion: Theoretical, methodological and contextual reflections

5.5.1 Kolb's theory

Kolb's theory was suitable for this study as it provided a framework for capturing the participants' experiences of teaching literacy in the foundation phase. The experiential learning theory suggests that knowledge is created through the transformation of experience (Kolb, 1984). In the data captured, the experiential learning cycles of the three participants were tracked according to the stages used in this learning theory namely; concrete experiences, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation (Kolb, p.40). The study depicted the participants' experiences as they entered their first year of teaching, each new experience encountered in their learning began with a concrete experience, expressed their feelings about their initial

journey as novice teachers, which was characterised by negative emotions. This was followed by the second stage, reflective observation; they reflected on their experiences and indicated the strategies that they had developed to improve their initial experiences. The next stage was abstract conceptualization which involved conceptualising their teaching of literacy, thinking about their experiences, comparing and reflecting. Lastly, the active experimentation stage, involved their actual teaching of literacy based on their knowledge that has been transformed by the different experiences. The participants' learning cycle represented their development and how this impacted on their experiences of teaching literacy.

5.5.2 Usefulness of case studies.

Even though the three cases are similar, they were not identical. Case studies enable one to understand how individuals learn and adjust to a situation in different contexts. The three case studies showed connection with literature on novice teachers. This study portrayed the experiences of three novice teachers' teaching of literacy in the foundation phase. The novice teachers in this study entered the teaching profession with different teaching specializations bound by the same context. The case study of three novice teachers provided an analysis of the data that emerged from the study and provided valuable insight into novice teachers' experiences of teaching. Nieuwenhuis (2007) asserts that a case study is aimed at gaining greater insight and understanding of the dynamics of a specific situation.

5.5.3 Participants chosen for the study

The three selected participants were suitable as they represented an appropriate spectrum of novice teachers. They were all in their second year of teaching and, therefore, were able to reflect on their first year of teaching and provided rich data on their experiences. They had all started their teaching at the present school and the data reflected on how their knowledge developed based on the different experiences that they encountered. Strategies were developed in order to overcome difficulties that they had experienced in their first year. The fact that the participants were all teaching in the foundation phase and yet had different specialisations represents the reality of a South African teaching context and provided a platform to explore the reality of novice teachers in a different school context.

5.5.4 Limitations

This study was a small scale study of three participants in a particular context; however, the data that emerged from the study provided valuable insights. The three novice teachers were from the same school and, therefore, reflected a particular school context. As a researcher and being an HOD at the same school, could have been limiting. I am uncertain to what extent it constrained the participants even though I constantly assured them that I was interviewing them as a researcher and I encouraged them to speak freely about their experiences.

5.5.5 Summary of findings

In summation, the findings of this study, which were driven by the research question, "What are novice teachers' experiences of learning to teach literacy in the foundation phase" brought to the fore two emerging issues. Firstly, the data revealed that novice teachers' experiences of teaching literacy in the foundation phase were impacted by a myriad of contextual factors. The data refers to the issue of language as a major challenge in this context. The responses indicated that the learners' language barriers impacted significantly on the teaching of literacy. In this school context the majority of the learners were isiZulu speaking, however, the LOLT of the school was English. Sharon indicated that … *"it is difficult for them especially in the foundation phase as they have not developed good English vocabulary."* Carol intimated that … *"they have difficulty understanding the teacher. Their English skills also affect their reading skills."* Morrow (2007, 58) asserts, *"as expected in a multilingual society, there are many problems in respect to language. The majority of parents and schools opt for English as the language of teaching and learning. English is perceived as a means of gaining access to mainstream national and global society."* In South Africa, while the LiEP (DoE, 1997) advocates the right of learners' to be taught in the language of their choice in reality this is impossible and leads to challenges in the teaching of literacy.

The data also revealed other contextual factors such as; the large class numbers, the lack of resources, societal problems which included; poverty, ill- disciplined learners and single headed families. Nadine stated that … *"most of the children come from poor homes, parents cannot afford to buy books to read at home to help them improve their reading. Reading is not on the level it should be."* Carol further stated … "some

parents do not have money, therefore, the children do not bring lunch to school and this affects their concentration skills." Fleisch (2008) highlights the impact of poverty, on literacy related practices which results in poor reading and writing skills. These findings are consistent with South African history, which is plagued by a legacy of apartheid and has impacted negatively on the education system.

This study revealed that novice teachers' experiences of teaching literacy were marred by a deluge of contextual challenges which impacted on their teaching. In South Africa these newly qualified teachers enter the realm of teaching against the backdrop of a country teaming with problems. They are confronted with low literacy levels, language barriers (PIRLS, 2006 & 2011; NEEDU national report, 2012), and a host of contextual challenges (Morrow, 2007). They are expected to perform their duties as competent teachers according to the Norms and Standards for educators as stipulated in (DoE, 2000), which ignore the reality of conditions in which the majority of work (Morrow (2007). This, therefore, would definitely impact on novice teachers' experiences of teaching literacy.

Secondly, the findings also revealed a positive response demonstrated by the participants in adapting to this context. The participants in this study have shown that as intellectuals they played an active role in their own professional development, they were actively engaged with policy and tried to transcend their circumstances by developing strategies to address the challenges that they encountered in their teaching context. The data revealed how the novice teachers employed different strategies to adapt to their challenging teaching context. Kolb's experiential learning cycle provided a lens through which their experiences could be tracked according to the four adaptive modes of learning. Nieto (2003) affirms the view of teachers as intellectuals by stating that, "teachers are always in the process of becoming, they need to continually rediscover who they are and what they stand for through dialogue and collaboration with peers, through ongoing study and through deep reflection of their craft (p.125).

5.5.6 Recommendations

Based on the above findings, the recommendations would be two fold. Firstly, to address the contextual challenges that impact on the teaching of literacy would require the contribution of all role players, such as the national government, DoE and pre

service training institutions. Pre service training institutions as the initial developers of novice teachers are required to equip them with knowledge and skills to be able to adapt and apply in any school context. There is also a need for a stronger focus on practical skills for the different specializations, especially in the foundation phase where basic skills are instilled using practical methods.

The DoE needs to address the contextual factors that impinge on teaching, such as the language barriers, large class sizes, and insufficient resources and to play a major role in providing effective and well structured developmental workshops. The national government also has a responsibility of addressing the societal problems impacting on teaching such as poverty.

Secondly, the challenge to all role players in education is to develop teachers intellectually, who are able to be actively involved in their own development and ultimately in the education of the country. This is echoed by Morrow (2007, p.30) who states that "the reconstruction of our country depends on the reconstruction of the education system and professional teachers are the main agents." This therefore advocates the need for the development of novice teachers who can be agents of change and assist in improving the country's literacy levels by engaging in a process of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984), through reflection, conceptualization of their experiences and developing strategies, that will improve their practise and address the challenges that they encounter in their teaching.

Nieto (2003) provides a platform for developing teachers as intellectuals by stating; "*training institutions need to develop in teachers a new way of thinking about learning. Schools need to promote professional development and intellectual engagement among teachers. Teachers need to know more about the students they teach and to engage in collaboration with other teachers to share ideas*" (p.124-127).

REFERENCES

Arends, F., & Phurutse, M. (2009). *Beginning teachers in South Africa: School readiness, knowledge and skills* .Pretoria, South Africa: HSRC Press.

Joubert, I. (Ed.), Bester, M., Meyer, E. & Evans, R. (2013). *Literacy in the foundation phase.* (2nd ed.). Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Bleach, K. (1999). *The induction and mentoring of newly qualified teachers. A new deal for teachers.* London: David Fulton Publishers.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research methods in teacher education.* (7th ed.). London: Routledge.

Crim, C., Hawkins, J., Thorton, J., Rosof, H. L., Copley & Thomas, E. (2008). Early childhood educators' knowledge of early literacy development. *Issues in Teacher education, 17* (1), 17.

Cunningham, A. E., Perry, K .E., Stanovich, K. E., & Stanovich, P.J. (2004). Disciplinary knowledge of K-3 teachers and their knowledge calibration in the domain of early literacy. *Annals of Dyslexia*, *54*(1), 139-166.

Department of Education. (1996). *South African Schools' Act.* Pretoria: Department of Education.

Department of Education. (1997a). *Curriculum C2005. Learning for the 21st century.* Pretoria: Department Of Education.

Department of Education. (1997). *Language in Education Policy.* Pretoria: Department of Education.

Department of Education. (1998). *The Employment of Educators Act No. 76 of 1998.* Pretoria: Department of Education.

Department of Education. (2000a). *Norms and Standards for educators.* Pretoria: Department of Education.

Department of Education. (2002). *C2005, Revised national curriculum statement. Grades R -9. (School Policy) Languages.* Pretoria: Department of Education.

Department of Education. (2003). *Revised national curriculum statement. Grades R-9. (Schools). Teacher guide for the development of learning programs.* Pretoria: Department of Education.

Department of Education. (2008). *National reading strategy*. Pretoria: Department of Education.

Department of Education. (2008). *National Curriculum Statements.* Pretoria: Department of Education.

Department of Basic Education. (2011). *Curriculum & assessment policy statement. Grade R-3. English Home Language.* Pretoria: Department of Education.

Department of Basic Education and Higher Education and Training. (2011). *Integrated strategic planning framework for teacher education and development in South Africa 2011-2015*. Pretoria: Department of Education.

Department of Education. (2011). *Statement on the release of the annual national assessments for 2011 (June 28 2011).* Pretoria: Department of Education.

Department of Education. (2012). *Report on the Annual National Assessments 2012: Grades 1 to 6 and 9*. Pretoria: Department of Education.

Feiman-Nemser, S. (2001a). From preparation to practice: designing a continuum to strengthen and sustain teaching. *Teachers' College Record*, *103* (6), 1013-1055. Columbia University: Teachers College.

Feiman-Nemser, S. (2001b). Helping novices to learn to teach. Lessons from an exemplary support teacher. *Journal of Teacher Education, 52*(1), 17-30.

Feiman-Nemser, S. (2003). What new teachers need to learn. *Educational Leadership*, *60*(8), 25-29. Retrieved 18.02.2012 from: http://publications/educational_leadership.

Fleisch, B. (2008). *Primary education in crisis. Why South African schoolchildren underachieve in reading and mathematics* .Cape Town: Juta and Company.

Friedman, I. A. (2000). Burnout in teachers: Shattered dreams of impeccable professional performance. *JCLP/In Session: Psychotherapy in Practice*, *56*(5), 595-606.

Grossman, P. L. (1990). A tale of two hamlets. The making of a teacher. Teachers' knowledge and teacher education. In A. Liebermann (Ed.), *Professional development series.* Columbia University: Teacher College Press.

Hall, K. (2003). Effective literacy teaching in the early years of school: A review of evidence. In N. Hall., J. Larson & J. Marsh (Eds.), *Handbook of early childhood literacy* (pp.315-326). London: Sage Publications

Hammerness, K., Darling-Hammond, L., Bransford, J., Berliner, D., Cochran-Smith, M., Mc Donald, M., & Kenneth, Z (2005). How teachers learn and develop. In L. Darling- Hammond & J. Bransford (Eds.), *Preparing teachers for a challenging world: what teachers should learn and be able to do* (pp. 258-289). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Henning, E, van Rensburg, W., & Smit, B. (2004). *Finding your way in qualitative research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Howe, E. R. (2006). Exemplary teacher induction: An international review. *Educational Philosophy and Theory, 38*(3) 287-297.

Howe, S., van Staden, S., Tshele, M., Dowse, C., & Zimmerman, L. (2012*). PIRLS 2011 Summary Report. South African children's reading achievement.* Pretoria: Centre for Evaluation and Assessment, University of Pretoria.

Howe, S., Venter, E., van Staden, S., Zimmerman, L., Long & Du Toit, C., *et al*. (2008). *Progress in international reading literacy study (PIRLS) 2006 summary report. South African children's reading literacy achievement*. Pretoria: Centre for Evaluation and Assessment, University of Pretoria.

Hudson, P. (2012). "How can schools support beginning teachers? A call for timely induction and mentoring for effective teaching." *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, *37* (7), 6. Retrieved 18 August 2012, from http://ro.ecu.edu.au/ajite/vol37/issue7/6

Ingersoll, R. M., & Strong, M. (2011). The impact of induction and mentoring programs for beginning teachers: A critical review of the research. *Review of education research, 81*(2), 201-233.

Killeavy, M. (2006). Induction: A collective endeavour of learning, teaching and leading. Leaning, teaching & leading: a global perspective, 45(2), 168-176. Retrieved 16 October 2012, rom http:// www.tandonfonline.com/loi/htip.

Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: experience as the source of learning development.* Engelwood Cliffs, N.J: prentice-Hall, Inc.

Kvale, S. & Brinkman, S. (2009). *Interviews. Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing.* (2nd ed.). United States of America: Sage Publications

Medwell, J., Wray, D., Poulson, L., & Fox, R. (1998). Effective teachers of literacy. Final report to the teacher training agency. University of Exceter. Retrieved 10 August 2011, from http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/000000829.htm#refs.

Meyer, H. (2004). *Novice and expert teachers' conceptions of learners' prior knowledge*. Teacher Education. USA. www.interscience.wiley.com.

Morrow, W. (2007). *Learning to teach in South Africa.* Pretoria: HRSC Press.

National Education Evaluation Development Unit (NEEDU). (2012). *National Report 2012. The state of literacy teaching and learning in the foundation phase*. Retrieved 13 September 2013, from http: www.education.gov.za.

Neuman, W. L. (2006). *Social research methods*. *Qualitative and quantitative approach*. (6th ed.). United States of America: Pearson International Edition

Nieto, S. (2003). *What keeps teachers going?* New York: Teachers College Press.

Niewenhuis, J. (2007). Introducing qualitative research. In K. Maree (Ed.). *First steps in research.* Pretoria: Van Shaik Publishers.

Progress in International Literacy Studies. (2006). PIRLS 2006 International report. Retrieved 12July 2013, from http://pirls.bc.edu/pirls2006/intl rpt.html.

Progress in International Literacy Studies. (2011). PIRLS 2011 International report. Retrieved 12July 2013, from http://pirls.bc.edu/pirls2011/intl rpt.html.

Reeves, C., & Robertson, M. (2010). Am I "qualified" to teach? The implications of a changing school system for criteria for teacher qualifications. *Journal of Education*, 50, 7-33.

Republic of South Africa. (1996). *The constitution of the Republic of South Africa*. *Act 108 of 1996.*Pretoria: Government Printers.

Sayed, Y. (2004). The case of teacher education in post-apartheid South Africa: politics and priorities. In L. Chrisholm, (ed.).*Changing class: Education and social change in post-apartheid South Africa*. New York: HSRC Press.

Shulman, L.S. (1986). Those who understand knowledge growth in teaching. *American Educational Researcher, 15*(2), 4-14.

Spear-Swerling, L., & Brucker, P.O. (2004). Preparing novice teachers to develop basic reading and spelling skills in children. *Annals of Dyslexia*, 5(2), 332-364.

Steyn, G. M. (2004). Problems of and support for beginning educators. *Africa Education Review,* 1(1) 81-94. Retrieved 2 July 2012, 11.41pm, from http://uir.unisa.ac.za

Strong, M. (1999). *Effective teacher induction and mentoring. Assessing the evidence.* New York: Teachers College.

Tickle, L. (2000). *Teacher induction: The way ahead*. United Kingdom: Open Press University.

UNESCO. (2004). The plurality of literacy and it's implication for policy and program. *UNESCO Education sector position paper 13*.Paris: UNESCO.

Vithal, R., & Jansen, J. (2010). *Designing your first research proposal*: *A manual for researchers in education and the social sciences.* Cape Town, South Africa: Juta & Company Limited.

Wong, H. K. (2004). Induction programs that keep new teachers teaching and improving. *NASS Bulletin,* 88(638). Retrieved 2 July 2012, 12.38 pm, from https:// effective teaching .com/new teacher.com/pdf.

Worthy,   J. (2005). "It didn't have to be so hard": the first years of teaching in an urban school. *International journal of qualitative studies in Education,*18 (3), 379-398.

Wray, D., & Medwell, J. (1991). Literacy *and language in primary years.* Routeledge Falmer: London.

Wray, D. & Medwell, J. (2001). Teaching literacy effectively: Contexts & Connections. London: Routeledge Farmer. Retrieved 26 September 2011, from http:www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/000000829.htm.

Wray, D., Medwell, J., Poulson, L., & Fox, R. (2002). *Teaching literacy effectively in the primary school. Language and literacy in action series.* Routledge Falmer: London Retrieved August 26, 2011, from http://books google.co.za.

Yin, R. K. (2009). Case study research: Design and methods. (4th ed.) California: Sage Publications.

Appendix A: Ethical Clearance UKZN

UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

27 July 2012

Ms Merle A Baker (200502235)
School of Education

Dear Ms Baker

Protocol Reference Number: HSS/0558/012M
Project Title: Novice teachers experiences of teaching literacy in the Foundation Phase

In response to your application dated 26 June 2012, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL.**

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

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

Yours faithfully

....
Professor Steven Collings (Chair)
/ms

cc Supervisor: Dr Nyna Amin
cc Academic Leader: Dr MN Davids
cc Admin: Ms S Naicker / Mr N Memela

Professor S Collings (Chair)
Humanities & Social Sc Research Ethics Committee
Westville Campus, Govan Mbheki Building
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa
Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 3587/8350 **Facsimile:** +27 (0)31 260 4609 **Email:** ximbap@ukzn.ac.za / snymanm@ukzn.ac.za

Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

Appendix B: Ethical Clearance- Department of Education

kzn education

Department:
Education
KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Sibusiso Alwar   Tel: 033 341 8610   Ref.:2/4/8/265

Ms Merle Andrea Baker
44 Greenwich Village
45th Avenue
Sherwood
4091

Dear Ms Baker

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **Novice Teachers' Experiences of Teaching Literacy in the Foundation Phase,** in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where   the intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 01 July 2012 to 31 December 2013.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Mr. Alwar at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report / dissertation / thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Director-Resources Planning, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to the following Schools and Institutions:

    10.1   Barracuda Primary School

Nkosinathi S.P. Sishi, PhD
Head of Department: Education

24-08-2012
Date

…dedicated to service and performance
beyond the call of duty.

Appendix C

Permission letter to Department of Education (KZN)

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT FOR DISTRICT MANAGERS (Department of Education and Culture Services)

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Study Title: Novice teachers' experiences of teaching literacy in the foundation phase.

My name is Merle Baker and I am currently engaged in a Master of Education degree at the University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN). The purpose of this study is to explore novice teachers' experiences of teaching literacy in the foundation phase. The findings of this study will be used in my M. Ed dissertation and any related publications and presentations.

I would like to interview novice teachers about their experiences of teaching literacy in the foundation phase. I request your permission to conduct my research at Barracuda Primary School in Newlands East in the Pinetown District. I would greatly appreciate if I could engage foundation phase novice teachers in my study. Teachers' participation is voluntary and I will assure them of confidentiality and anonymity. They will be informed that they have no binding commitment to the study and they may withdraw their consent at any time if they need to.

All interviews will not be conducted during teaching time. I will ensure that privacy, confidentiality and anonymity will always be maintained.

All data recordings and transcripts will be kept in a safe, locked cupboard while being used and destroyed thereafter.

I hope that this study would make a significant contribution to the research on teacher development with particular reference to novice teachers' and their teaching of literacy in the foundation phase.

Should you require any further clarification or details about the ethics of this study you may contact the ethics administrator in the School of Education, Dr Noor Davids at 031 2603439 or via email at davidsmn@ukzn.ac.za.

Thank you for your co-operation

_____

M. Baker

Appendix D

Permission letter to the principal

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT FOR PRINCIPAL

Dear Principal

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Study Title: Novice teachers' experiences of teaching literacy in the foundation phase.

My name is Merle Baker and I am currently engaged in a Master of Education degree at the University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN). The purpose of this study is to explore novice teachers' experiences of teaching literacy in the foundation phase. The findings of this study will be used in my M. Ed dissertation and any related publications and presentations.

I would like to interview novice teachers about their experiences of teaching literacy in the foundation phase. I request your permission to conduct my research at your school and would greatly appreciate if I could engage three of your foundation phase novice teachers in my study. Teachers' participation is voluntary and I will assure them of confidentiality and anonymity. They will be informed that they have no binding commitment to the study and they may withdraw their consent at any time if they need to.

I would like to assure you that the interviews will not be conducted during teaching time. I will ensure that privacy, confidentiality and anonymity will always be maintained.

All data recordings and transcripts will be kept in a safe, locked cupboard while being used and destroyed thereafter.

I hope that this study would make a significant contribution to the research on teacher development with particular reference to novice teachers' and their teaching of literacy in the foundation phase.

Should you require any further clarification or details about the ethics of this study you may contact the ethics administrator in the School of Education, Dr Noor Davids at 031 2603439 or via email at davidsmn@ukzn.ac.za.

Thank you for your co-operation

_____

M. Baker

Appendix E

Participants Consent Letter

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

44Greenwich Village
45th Avenue
Sherwood
4091
26 June 2012

Dear Participant

REQUEST FOR CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

Novice teachers' experiences of teaching literacy in the foundation phase.

My name is Merle Baker and I am currently engaged in a Master of Education degree at the University of Kwa Zulu Natal (UKZN). The purpose of this study is to explore novice teachers' experiences of teaching literacy in the foundation phase. The findings of this study will be used in my M. Ed. dissertation and any related publications and presentations.

I would like to interview novice teachers about their experiences of teaching literacy in the foundation phase. In this study I will use narrative interviews to gather information from the teacher participants.

I would like to seek your permission to participate in my study. The participation is voluntary and you are at liberty to decline if you do not want to or are unable to participate. You will be required to be involved in two interviews. Each interview will be about one hour long. No personal questions will be asked, except the number of years that you are teaching and your gender. The interviews will be audio taped.

Participation also means that you have the right to withdraw your participation at any time. You have the right to have your identity protected. You will have access to all drafts of paper before and after it is submitted for review. All data recordings and transcripts will be kept in a safe, locked cupboard while being used and destroyed thereafter.

I hope that this study would make a significant contribution to the research on teacher development with particular reference to novice teachers' and their teaching of literacy in the foundation phase.

Should you require any further clarification or details about the ethics of this study you may contact the ethics administrator in the School of Education, Dr Noor Davids at 031 2603439 or via email at davidsmn@ukzn.ac.za.

Thank you for your co-operation
M. Baker

INFORMED CONSENT DECLARATION FOR PARTICIPANTS

TITLE OF STUDY: Novice teachers' experiences of teaching literacy in the foundation phase

I _____ (full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project and I consent to participating in the interviews.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw at any time, should I so desire.

_____   _____

(SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT)   (DATE)

Appendix F

Interview Schedule

1. What grade are you currently teaching?

2. How long have you been teaching for?

3. Tell me about your teaching experiences during the time that you've been teaching, from your first year & now your second year.

4. How do you address these learners' problems or challenges that you experience?

5. How are you coping teaching the new curriculum CAPS as this is your first year, last year you were teaching NCS?

6. Do you feel that you have received sufficient support and mentoring assistance from the school?

7. Did you receive induction?

8. Do you still receiving mentoring from your HOD's or someone else?

9. Is there a structured mentoring program at your school?

10. Do you think that this would have assisted you?

11. Which areas do you still need assistance?

12. Do you feel that you studies have prepared you for teaching in foundation phase?

13. What knowledges do you think are needed to teach literacy effectively in foundation phase?

14. What skills do you think are needed?

15. How do you think or recommend is the best for learners to acquire literacy?

16. What do you think literacy should focus on?

17. What do you think is the difference between what you have learnt with regard to teaching at university and at school- with regard to teaching literacy?

18. What training did you receive to develop you in the areas with regard to literacy?

   1. Knowledge of curriculum with regard to literacy.

   2. The teaching of literacy, what training did you receive.

   3. Knowledge of curriculum with regard to literacy curriculum.

19. How do you teach literacy to your learners with regard to the following aspects of literacy?

  1. Phonics

  2. Reading

  3. Writing- Creative writing

20. Is there a difference in the way you taught literacy in your first year and the way you teaching it now?

21. How do you structure your literacy lessons for the day?

22. What teaching strategies do you use to teach literacy, I know you have mentioned some of them?

23. What assessment strategies do you use to assess learners competence?

24. How do you assist learners in developing their literacy skills?

25. How do you cater for the different abilities and needs of the learners in your class?

26. How do you adjust your teaching in order to assist learners?

28. How does the learner's home environment impact on your teaching in the class?

27. How do you plan lessons for teaching literacy?

28.1 Do you work on your own?

29. You have been teaching for two years teaching. On reflection, what are some of the challenges that you have experienced as a novice (new) teacher?

30. How have you overcome these challenges? How are you improving or coping with them?

31. What teaching strategies have you learnt that have improved your teaching?

32. What aspects or areas do you still need to improve in your teaching?

33. How do you think you can improve your teaching?

34. How have the different knowledges/ experiences that you have acquired, assisted in developing, influencing and shaping your experiences as a teacher?

35. On reflection- what would you change/ alter in the way that you have done things regarding teaching experiences since you first started?