



# **EXPLORING BEGINNER TEACHERS' KNOWLEDGE IN THE TEACHING OF LITERATURE IN ENGLISH**

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English**

**by**

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*FOR*

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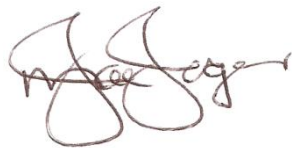
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MJ DE JAGER

11 August 2015

## ABSTRACT

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Teacher knowledge research in English as a second language (ESL) has tended to overlook the existence of Literature in English as a stand-alone subject. This study does not dispute the place of literature in language learning, but contends that the knowledge base for teachers of the subject English Language differs from that of teachers for the subject Literature in English. In Zimbabwe, during the beginner teachers' training, literature is introduced as part of language learning, whereas the current school curriculum requires the teaching of Literature as a stand-alone subject.

Notwithstanding the mismatch between the beginner teachers' training and the school curriculum requirements, I assumed that Ordinary level (O Level) Literature in English beginner teachers had come to hold teaching knowledge constructed from integrating their theoretical and classroom based experiences. Thus, the purpose of this study was to explore the knowledge beginner teachers come to possess from teaching Literature in English. Following a qualitative approach, a single case study design was employed to explore the beginner teachers' knowledge. Four purposively selected O Level Literature in English beginner teachers from high schools in Bulawayo Province of Zimbabwe participated in the study. Data were collected using non-participant classroom observations, document analysis, semi-structured interviews, and field notes.

Using inductive thematic analysis of the data, four themes of beginner teachers' knowledge in Literature in English emerged. The findings indicated that Literature in English beginner teachers have four types of knowledges, three of which are identifiable in ESL teacher knowledge literature. Similar to other findings in existing literature on teacher knowledge research, the beginner teachers held knowledge of the curriculum, knowledge of teaching and knowledge of learners. Interestingly, though, the beginner teachers in this study also revealed that they held dispositional knowledge. Dispositional knowledge has not been included as a category in any ESL knowledge base and thus is the new insight into ESL teacher knowledge that the study provided. The findings also showed that the beginner teachers had knowledge gaps in the teaching of different literary genres. They used peer and virtual-based strategies to minimise the knowledge gaps when they occurred.

The conclusion of this thesis is that despite challenges in the teaching of Literature in English, beginner teachers' managed to construct teaching knowledge from an amalgamation of their past educational experiences, present classroom experiences and anticipated classroom experiences. Thus, I posit that beginner teacher knowledge is a multiple sourced construct that is fluid, idiosyncratic, attitudinal, pragmatic, and contextual.

**KEYWORDS:** Beginner teachers; English as a second language; Literature in English; Ordinary level; reflective practices; theoretical teacher knowledge; practical teacher knowledge; beginner teachers' knowledge gaps; second language teacher education





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## TERMINOLOGY

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**Beginner teacher:** Researchers such as Trent (2015) Kim & Roth (2011) Arends & Phurutse (2009) Carrigan (2008) Bartell (2005) and Ncube (2001) use the term "beginner teacher" differently. For the purpose of this study, I chose the definition presented by Kim and Roth (2011), Arends, and Phurutse (2009), which refers to beginner teachers as individuals that are in-service teachers in their fourth year of teaching. Specifically, for this study I added another characteristic of beginner teachers as individuals who are teaching O Level Literature in English for the first time in their professional lives. The term beginner teacher is used in the context of this study to refer to the four individuals who were participants.

**GCE:** The General Certificate in Education (GCE) is an examination administered by EDEXCEL and the University of Cambridge International Examination for Ordinary and Advanced Level learners in the United Kingdom and some of her colonies (Cambridge International Examinations 2014).

**Literature in English:** Literature in English is the name of a subject presented in the Zimbabwean high school curriculum, which covers literary works by authors such as William Shakespeare, Charles Dickens, John Milton, Andrew Marvel, George Elliot, Elizabeth Gaskell and Charlotte Brontë (ZOLLS 2013; DiYanni 2000). The subject also covers works of other authors who write or whose works have been translated to English but are not from native English backgrounds such as Nikolai Gogol, Ibsen Henrick, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Chinua Achebe, Doris Lessing, Bessie Emery Head, Eski'a Mpahlele, Mariama Ba, Mongo Beti, Tsitsi Dangarembga and Yvonne Vera (cf. addendum P; ZOLLS 2013:2.0). It is important to note the difference between the subject "Literature in English" and the general term "English literature." The focus of Literature in English is "on the artistic and aesthetic qualities of imaginative prose, poetry and drama, the social context, the writer's overall worldview and the pupils' response to this. An interest in Literature will develop an important learning component outside the requirements of examinations in promoting awareness of values, morals, and attitudes" (ZOLLS 2013:2.0).

**Ordinary Level ('O' Level):** is a two-year course presented in Zimbabwean secondary schools. The schooling period in which the course is presented is commonly referred to as Forms 3 and 4. Candidates write national examinations at the end of Form 4. The course was adopted from the British GCE Ordinary Level (Kanyongo 2005). In my study, the term refers to the academic course for learners between 15 and 17 years of age.

**Advanced Level ('A' Level):** is a two-year course presented in Zimbabwean secondary schools. The schooling period in which the course is presented is commonly referred to as Forms 5 and 6. Candidates write national examinations at the end of Form 6. The course was adopted from the British GCE Advanced Level (Kanyongo 2005).

**Vignette:** A vignette is a description of an incident or a section of interesting data in a qualitative study. It serves as a word illustration in qualitative research (Henning, Gravett & Van Rensburg 2005). In my study, I use vignettes to describe the sections of data that were important in understanding the context and the beginner teachers' knowledge construction.

**Secondary/high school:** Secondary or high school is the second level of formal schooling in Zimbabwe. It is specifically meant for Forms 1 to 4 (Kanyongo 2005). The learners in secondary school are in the age group between 13 (14) and 18 years of age.

**Head teacher:** The head teacher is the head of the school /principal who is the school leader.

## Chapter 1

### Background to the study

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#### 1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore beginner teachers' knowledge in the teaching of Literature in English. In international literature the term "beginner teacher"<sup>1</sup> refers to new teachers who have completed their teacher training programmes (Trent 2015; Farrell 2012; Carrigan 2008). However, education researchers do not seem to have consensus on the years one remains regarded as a beginner teacher. Most studies refer to an individual who is in the first five years of teaching as a beginner teacher (Trent 2015; Kim & Roth 2011; Arends & Phurutse 2009; Carrigan 2008; Bartell 2005; Stansbury & Zimmerman 2000; Reynolds 1995; Ballantyne, Hansford & Packer (1995). In line with Kim and Roth (2011) and Arends and Phurutse (2009), this study uses the term "beginner teacher" to define an individual who has completed the Zimbabwean English secondary teacher training programme<sup>2</sup> and has no more than four years' full-time teaching experience. Although the beginner teacher participants in this study have been teaching for four years, they had only now started teaching Ordinary Level (O Level) Literature in English for the first time in their professional lives, which makes them beginner teachers in the subject.

What is uncontested in the studies cited above is that beginner teachers face a "reality shock [...] this shock is believed to reflect a mismatch between early career teachers' expectations and the realities of the classroom, an outcome which could account for the frustration, anxiety and self-doubt many early career teachers are thought to experience" (Trent 2015:1). Notwithstanding the contextual differences in which beginner teachers operate, studies suggest that their focus is on ensuring instructional effectiveness against a background of limited instructional knowledge (Trent 2015; Kim & Roth 2011; Hackett 2010; Arends & Phurutse 2009; Ulvik, Smith & Helleve 2009).

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<sup>1</sup> The terms "novice" and "early career teachers" are also used in international research to refer to beginner teachers (Trent 2015; Farrell 2012; Huntly 2011). The term "beginner teachers" is used in this study (cf.1.9.1).

<sup>2</sup> cf. section 1.3.

Studies in English as a second language (ESL) indicate that beginner teachers go through similar challenges as those described above (Senon, Zakaria & Shah 2013; Ulvik *et al.* 2009; Flores & Day 2006). Richard and Schmidt (2002) state that ESL is the study of a language that one acquires after one has learnt a mother tongue. In their study of five ESL beginner teachers in Norway, Ulvik *et al.* (2009) found that the group had the following challenges: (i) work load that allowed limited time for reflection, (ii) class room management, (iii) English language assessment and evaluation and (iv) establishing relationships with administration, colleagues and parents. Senon *et al.* (2013) also confirm the findings by Ulvik *et al.* (2009) in the context of Malaysian ESL beginner teachers, but they further highlight social and academic isolation as a challenge that new teachers experience. In his study of five Zimbabwean English teachers, Ncube (2001) found that they lacked subject knowledge necessary for effective teaching resulting from a discrepancy between what they had learnt as pre-service teachers and the curricula realities of the secondary school English classroom. From the studies above, it is clear that ESL beginner teachers are "battling with the conflict between their beliefs, their training, the realities of the classroom, the demands of parents and learners, the requirements to demonstrate immediate attainment" (Paran 2012:457).

From this background it appears that ESL beginner teachers are not always ready to assume teaching responsibilities, as they find that their teacher training has not adequately prepared them for the actual instructional act (Senon *et al.* 2013; Paran 2012; Ulvik *et al.* 2009; Flores & Day 2006; Smith & Ingersoll 2004; Ncube (2001). In Zimbabwe, as is the case with most ESL countries, the challenges described above emanate from the nature of the teaching profession which Smith and Ingersoll (2004:682) describe as an occupation that "cannibalizes its 'young' and in which the initiation of new teachers is akin to a 'sink or swim,' 'trial by fire,' or 'boot camp' experience". From Smith and Ingersoll's (2004) quote, I note that beginner teachers are not inducted and mentored into the profession, but are expected to be both effective and competent classroom practitioners.

ESL beginner teachers' challenges originate from a situation where they themselves are second language speakers trained in educational institutions that use a curriculum designed from international research that fails to account for their instructional contextual nuances (De Jager & Evans 2013; Kadodo & Kadodo 2011;

Ncube 2001). Borg (2003:98) notes that "there is a need for more research in contexts which, globally speaking, are more representative of language classrooms .... Hardly any of the settings studied in research I have reviewed here reflect these characteristics". The Zimbabwean ESL beginner teachers face contextual challenges that are unique to the nature of their teacher training and curricula requirements at secondary schools where they eventually teach (Ncube 2001). In Zimbabwe beginner English teachers are trained to teach two subjects, namely English Language and Literature in English (Department of Teacher Education 2012). The pre-service English curriculum that beginner teachers study covers knowledge about English, English language skills, English grammar and African and world literature, as well as the methodologies of the teaching of each of these knowledges at secondary school (Viriri & Viriri 2013; Nyawaranda 1999). While African and world literature knowledge is combined under knowledge about English during teacher training, the school curricula requires a more detailed meta-comprehension of Literature in English as a stand-alone subject (Gordon 2012; Ncube 2001).

Literature in English as a stand-alone subject is the study of classical literary works written in English by prominent poets, novelists and dramatists from the European, American and African continents (ZOLLS 2013; DiYanni 2000). The study of Literature in English focuses on "... the artistic and aesthetic qualities of imaginative prose, poetry and drama, the social context, the writer's overall worldview and the pupils'<sup>3</sup> response to this." (ZOLLS 2013:2.0). Works by European authors such as William Shakespeare, Thomas Hardy, Jane Austin, George Orwell, Henrik Ibsen, Nikolai Gogol, American authors such as, Alice Walker, Richard Wright and Toni Morrison, and African novelists and dramatists such as Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Chinua Achebe, Mariama Ba, Wole Soyinka and Yvonne Vera are studied in O Level classes (ZOLLS 2013). The scant literary knowledge that Zimbabwean beginner teachers acquire from their teacher training is inadequate to match the O Level Literature in English syllabus requirements (cf. section 1.3; Ncube 2001). A review of international research in order to understand this discrepancy shows that while the history of the role of literature as a source of input for English language acquisition is well documented in ESL, we do not know enough about the knowledge of the teaching

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<sup>3</sup> In this study the terms "pupils" and "learners" both refer to children attending secondary school.

Literature in English as a stand-alone subject (cf. section 2.2; Fleming & Strevens 2015; Gordon 2012; Van 2009; Savvidou 2004; Rosenblatt 1995; Lazar 1993; Maposa 1992; Collie & Slater 1987).

The Zimbabwean English secondary school curriculum requires of beginner teachers to be able to teach English Language and Literature in English as separate subjects (Department of Teacher Education 2012; Ncube 2001; Maposa 1992). However, the Zimbabwean English teacher training programme equips beginner teachers with an integrative form of teaching knowledge which does not distinguish between English Language and Literature in English as stand-alone subjects as required in the secondary school curriculum (cf. section 1.1.2; table 1.2). To further compound the picture presented above, upon graduation, the beginner teacher is denied the opportunity to immediately teach Literature in English – especially at O Level. Although this practice does not adhere to a specific policy, it is an accepted norm in most Zimbabwean secondary schools (Ncube 2001). This norm allows English beginner teachers to teach Zimbabwe Junior Certificate level (ZJC) literature before being assigned O Level classes. As the ZJC course work is a two year programme, English beginner teachers are in general only assigned O Level Literature in English classes after two years. However, at ZJC, literary competence expected at O Level is acquired by chance as the ZJC course aims at improving learners' reading ability and habit (Maposa 1992). While beginner teachers improve teaching practice in English Language, which they are immediately allowed to teach up to O Level, the same progress is limited in the teaching of Literature in English (Ncube 2001).

Despite the Literature in English beginner teachers' challenges noted above, when finally having offered O Level Literature in English classes, the teachers have managed to teach the subject adequately and some learners have acquired literary competence from their classes (Gordon 2012; Ncube 2001). I understand that although the beginner teachers could experience instructional and social challenges, they were

"for the most part, ... developing competence in at least three skills: classroom management, human relations, as well as the pedagogical skills associated with good curriculum and effective instruction. Throughout the course of their first five years on the job, neophyte teachers spend much of their time and energy focusing upon and developing competence in these important skills as they struggle through their successes and failures to become good teachers" (Jacobs 1996:5).

Although I am aware of beginner teachers' challenges with international, African and Zimbabwean literature, in this study I chose to focus on the knowledge that beginner Literature in English teachers had constructed from their theory of education and experiences from their teaching practice (Giovanelli 2015; Olivero 2015; Shulman & Shulman 2004; Hegarty 2000; Johnson 1999). Ulvik *et al.* (2009) state that:

"teacher education cannot possibly prepare teachers for every situation they meet in the profession .... Teachers constantly face unexpected situations and it is not possible to provide recipes of response to each and every one. A teacher has to ... make decisions every second minute, and it seems that a beginning teacher needs time for reflection on decisions made. They need to find answers to concrete and uncertain situations to accomplish complex and conflicting goals (836).

By exploring beginner teachers' knowledge within the Literature in English classroom, I illuminated their role as knowledge constructors which is important in supporting their efforts during their formative years into the profession (Senon *et al.* 2013; Paran 2012; Ulvik *et al.* 2009; Flores & Day 2006; Smith & Ingersoll 2004; Ncube 2001).

## **1.2 Locating myself within the study**

This study was inspired by my interest in English teacher training. As a lecturer at a university in Zimbabwe, I taught a course on methods of teaching Literature in English to in-service English teachers who were improving their qualifications from a Diploma in Education to a Bachelor of Education. Over the seven years I taught the course, the English in-service teachers had continually mentioned the challenges they experienced while navigating their way as beginner Literature in English teachers. These individuals had been teachers for two years or more as the Zimbabwean Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) only allow academic upgrading after a two-year in-service probation. These in-service teachers are trained to teach two subjects, namely English Language (Syllabus code-1122) and Literature in English (Syllabus code-2013), when they qualify as English teachers from secondary school teacher training colleges. In agreement with Ncube's (2001) findings, these in-service English teachers in my class explained the challenges of teaching Literature in English as originating from a mismatch between the O Level syllabus aims and the teacher training curriculum. However, the majority

of these in-service teachers were not assigned Literature in English classes in their first two years of service.

My students explained that in their teacher training programmes they were equipped with knowledges for the teaching of the subject English Language, while the teaching of literature was presented as a sub-section of language teaching (cf. section 1.1.2; table 1.2). According to these teachers, the knowledge they needed for effectively teaching Literature in English as a stand-alone subject was limited. I was able to confirm my students' observations from analysing the teacher training colleges' prospectuses for secondary school teachers, which revealed more courses in English Language than in Literature in English (Department of Teacher Education 2012; cf. section 1.3.2; table 1.2). The English teachers in my class explained that in spite of the challenges they experienced as new subject teachers, these experiences were shaping their practice and informing a broad, personal and contextual knowledge base for their teaching. What I understood from these discussions was that they were involved in the construction of their knowledge for teaching Literature in English.

A review of the literature, aimed at understanding my students' challenges in the teaching of Literature in English, revealed that ESL teacher knowledge studies focused only on English Language knowledges (Watzke 2007; Johnston & Goettsch 2000; Turner-Bisset 1999; Cochran-Smith & Lytle 1999; Golombek 1998; Freeman & Johnson 1998). In addition, most of the studies were conducted by international researchers and few, if any, were conducted from a Zimbabwean or an African perspective could not locate a single study that dealt with teacher knowledge for Literature in English as a stand-alone subject in ESL.

The literature review revealed two strands of research on teacher knowledge. These strands indicate how researchers assume teachers come to know about generic and subject knowledges for teaching (Fenstermacher 1994). The first strand of ESL teacher knowledge research focuses on beginner teachers' knowing originating from theoretical orientations that pre-service teachers need to be effective professionals (cf. section 2.4; Grossman, Hammerness & McDonald 2009; Turner-Bisset 1999; Fenstermacher 1994). Studies conducted in the early 1980s and later 1990s, such as Turner-Bisset (1999), Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) and Shulman (1986; 1987) are



cited in discussions on teacher knowledge bases that inform teacher education curricula.

The second strand of ESL teacher knowledge studies focuses on how teachers come to know about teaching from practice and experiential orientations (cf. section 2.5; Lampert 2010; Fenstermacher 1994). Studies in the second strand define teacher knowledge as personal and practical classroom experiences (John 2002; Golombek 1998; Clandinin & He 1997; Connelly & Clandinin 1985; Elbaz 1983). In the two strands mentioned above, Shulman (1987) is the only researcher who investigated English literature teacher knowledge bases, but he focused on the teaching of English as a first language. Turner-Bisset (1999), Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) and Golombek (1998), who investigated teacher knowledge bases for ESL teachers, concentrated on the language aspect of English with Literature as a part of language teaching. The researchers mentioned above discuss teacher knowledge in British (Turner-Bisset 1999; Cochran-Smith & Lytle 1999), American (Golombek 1998; Connelly *et al.* 1997; Shulman 1986; 1987; Schön 1983), and Canadian contexts (Elbaz 1983), which do not adequately address the uniqueness of non-native<sup>4</sup> ESL teaching contexts such as Zimbabwe.

Furthermore, the research strands informing teacher knowledge research mentioned above are usually discussed separately. This means that the cited researchers demarcate teacher knowledge models originating from formal teacher training and classroom practices separately, without attempting to integrate the strands (DeGraff, Schmidt & Waddell 2015; Cheng, Tang & Cheng 2012; Grossman *et al.* 2009; Lampert 2010; Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, Bransford, Berliner, Cochran-Smith, McDonald & Zeichner 2005 ). Dewey (1965:151) argues that

... practical work should be pursued primarily with reference to its reaction upon the professional pupil making him a thoughtful and alert student of education, rather than to help him get immediate proficiency. For immediate skill may be gotten at a cost of power to go on growing. Unless a teacher is ... a student of education he may continue to improve in the mechanics of school management, but he cannot grow as a teacher, an inspirer and director of soul-life.

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<sup>4</sup> Second language speakers.

From the above, I deduce that beginner teachers are moulded by the theoretical knowledge gained during their training as well as the practical experiences they encounter in the classrooms (cf. section 2.6; figure 2.3; Olivero 2015; Grossman *et al.* 2009; Hammerness *et al.* 2005). Fundamentally, I concur that beginner teachers are unique individuals who utilise their own constructed knowledge to make sense of their teaching in the classroom (Olivero 2015; Leeferink, Koopman, Beijaard & Ketelaar 2015; Hackett 2010; Buitink 2009). The mark of a professional is one who possesses knowledge, which is particular to his/her trade (Olivero 2015; Farrell 2012; Hackett 2010; Schön 1983). One is referred to as a professional because one brings knowledge that is inaccessible to the non-professional (Aspland 2015; Lampert 2010; Stanley 1998).

However, studies that explore teacher knowledge for Literature in English of beginner teachers as professionals, and emanating from the ESL tradition, are lacking. Therefore, this study contributes to the existing research on teacher knowledge by providing a knowledge base specific to Literature in English as a stand-alone subject for English Second Language (ESL) beginner teachers. I chose to study beginner teachers' practice in the classroom as I propose that they are constantly constructing and re-constructing their teaching knowledge through reflective practice that accounts for their theoretical and experiential knowing (cf. section 2.6; DeGraff *et al.* 2015; Aspland 2015; Leeferink *et al.* 2015; Lampert 2010; Hackett 2010; Grossman *et al.* 2009; Golombek 1998; Connelly *et al.* 1997; Cochran-Smith & Lytle 1999; Chaiklin & Lave 1996; Lave 1991; Connelly & Clandinin 1990; Elbaz 1983). To this end, my study explores the teaching knowledge held by Literature in English beginner teachers as they create, reflect, interpret, construct and re-construct their teaching practice within the Zimbabwean classroom context.

## **1.3 Background to the Zimbabwean teacher training context**

### **1.3.1 History of education in Zimbabwe**

Like all Bantu people of Southern Africa, pre-colonial Zimbabwe had indigenous forms of education that essentially equipped the young generation with social and cultural expectations of that particular people (Shizha & Kariwo 2012). However, the arrival of the British colonisers in pre-colonial Zimbabwe not only disrupted the

indigenous learning forms, but also introduced a British education system which Shizha and Kariwo (2012:13) describe as segregatory since "[r]acial discrimination in colonial Zimbabwe was so ubiquitous that no African was allowed to enrol in Whites-only schools. A handful of private schools owned by the Church would enrol one or two token Blacks each year, if they showed 'outstanding' academic performance, had influential and wealthy parents, or if they belonged to the same religious denomination". This means that the British education system imposed a hegemonic worldview which allowed a limited number of black Zimbabweans to gain access to it (Kanyongo 2005; Nherera 2000; Zvobgo 1999). The great number of Blacks in colonial Zimbabwe was channelled to vocational education where they acquired practical skills in agriculture, carpentry and building, which prepared them as labourers in the British colonisers' industries (Kanyongo 2005; Zvobgo 1999).

In colonial Zimbabwe, most African students were educated in missionary schools (Zvobgo 1999). Missionary schools were run by different Christian groups and were seen as places where Africans' characters were formed to suit the economic needs of the British colonisers (Shizha & Kariwo 2012). Within the missionary schools, one of the instruments used to maintain the British colonial hegemony in Zimbabwe was the use of the English language. English was used as the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) for the few Blacks who enrolled in missionary schools (Shizha & Kariwo 2012; Ngugi 1994). According to Kadodo, Kadodo, Bhala and Bhebe (2012:32) English was used as

"an instrument of ... socializing the colonized into acceptance of inferior status, power and wealth. In Zimbabwe, the 1903 Education Ordinance laid the foundation for the subsequent dominance of English language in the Zimbabwean school curriculum. English language became associated with social status, political and economic power leading to most people developing favourable attitudes towards it."

From this quotation, I understand that English during this time was taught as a subject to assist black students to gain access to the British culture (Kadodo *et al.* 2012; Ngugi 1994).

However, with independence in 1980, the Zimbabwean government abolished segregated education systems (Kanyongo 2005; Zvogbo 1999). For this task, teacher education was expanded to promote education for all (Nherera 2000; Zvogbo

1999; Maposa 1992). Still, the colonial legacy remained steadfast in the Zimbabwean education system and subjects like English were held in high esteem, as they allowed students to interact with the British culture, which many still desired (Viriri & Rubaya 2013; Ngara 1982). The literary works of William Shakespeare, Charles Dickens, John Milton, Andrew Marvel, George Elliot, Elizabeth Gaskell and Charlotte Brontë were commonly prescribed texts (DiYanni 2000; Morrison 1988). However, the majority of black Zimbabwean learners did not possess adequate understanding of the English language and its culture, and found it difficult to comprehend the literary works that were prescribed for their reading (Morrison 1988). The problem was further compounded by the lack of qualified black teachers with adequate exposure to teaching Literature in English (Morrison 1988).

At the same time, the Communicative Approach (CA), which emphasises the learning of English for practical usage, was gaining momentum in ESL communities (Carter 2007). English literature was seen as daunting and unnecessary in the English language classroom as texts that differed from everyday spoken English were used (Howatt & Widdowson 2004). However, Zimbabwean schools that were formerly reserved for white learners (pre-independence), continued to present English literature as part of their school curriculum (Howatt & Widdowson 2004; Delanoy 1997; Morrison 1988). Furthermore, Morrison (1988) reports that English teachers' preparation was aligned more to the teaching of literature than to that of the language component of English. Based on Morrison's (1988) report, the Department of Teacher Education at the University of Zimbabwe<sup>5</sup> realigned the English teacher education curriculum to reflect language preparation more than that of literature (Maposa 1992). Teacher training colleges removed most of the courses that were meant to equip teachers with adequate knowledge to teach literature (Maposa 1992; Morrison 1988).

Later in the 1990s there was a renewed revival of and emphasis on the teaching of literature in the high school curriculum (Carter 2007; Howatt & Widdowson 2004; Brumfit 2000; Long 2000). At that time the importance of literature for both the

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<sup>5</sup> University of Zimbabwe's Department of Teacher Education oversees the academic and professional standards of all government teacher education programmes in Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe Junior Certificate (ZJC)<sup>6</sup> and O Level curricula was emphasised. Literature in English is an optional subject for O Level, but it is compulsory for the ZJC (Moyana 2000; Maposa 1992). However, little was done to equip teachers with the appropriate knowledge to teach Literature in English. The teacher education curriculum presented at teachers' colleges continued to cover courses aligned to language preparation rather than to literature (Ncube 2001; Maposa 1992). The teachers' college prospectus that I analysed indicates that Literature in English is presented as part of English pre-service teacher knowledge alongside linguistic elements such as phonetics and phonology, morphology and syntax, grammar, discourse analysis, semantics and language skills (cf. table 2.2). In spite of the limited preparation, English teachers are required to teach the literary aspects of English at O Level in secondary schools (Ncube 2001; Zimbabwe Government 1999). Thus, my study explores the knowledges that Literature in English beginner teachers have come to hold as new subject teachers. To better understand the knowledge that beginner teachers had gained from their training, the next section focuses on English teacher training in Zimbabwe.

### 1.3.2 Exploring English teacher training in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwean pre-service secondary school teachers are trained at college and university levels. All teacher training colleges resort under the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) (Zezekwa, Mudau & Nkopodi 2013; Kanyongo 2005). In Zimbabwe, college-based teacher training for both primary and secondary schools is coordinated by the University of Zimbabwe's Department of Teacher Education (DTE) (Zezekwa *et al.* 2013). Under the Scheme of Association, the university, through its Department of Teacher Education (DTE), is the accrediting authority with a mandate of monitoring the quality of teacher education programmes throughout the country (Gondo & Gondo 2012). The University of Zimbabwe, as the responsible authority, approves the syllabi for all colleges, examines the students and finally awards the diploma qualification. Each of the colleges is autonomous in terms of curriculum and examinations (Department of Teacher Education 2012; Mamvuto, Kangai, Chivore & Zindi 2012). Individual colleges are responsible for the administration, assessment and quality of their programmes.

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<sup>6</sup> ZJC refers to the first two years of secondary education and is aimed at learners of 13 to 14 years old.

Before being awarded a Diploma in Education, pre-service teachers are prepared in content and methodology for the teaching of English for five terms<sup>7</sup> (15 months) and one term teaching practice. Using the online prospectuses<sup>8</sup> of three Zimbabwean secondary teacher training colleges and nine universities, table 1.1 provides a summary of the three types of teacher training courses presented at universities in Zimbabwe.

**Table 1.1: Zimbabwean teacher training programmes**

<b>Course</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Admission requirements</b>
Diploma in Education 2 years (full time)	The course provides Advanced Level graduates with a diploma in Education in any subject in the secondary school curriculum. The candidate specialises in two subjects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Advanced Level passes in at least two subjects.</li> <li>- C or better grade in the subject of specialisation.</li> </ul>
Bachelor of Education (BEd) (2 years – full time ) (4 years – part time)	The course provides secondary school teachers who hold diplomas with a university degree in the area of specialisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Diploma in Education in the area of specialisation.</li> <li>- Advanced Level pass in the area of specialisation.</li> <li>- At least 2 years post-teacher training experience.</li> </ul>
BA/BSc with Education (5 years and 1 term teaching practice)	This course provides teacher training alongside subject specialisation classes for enrolled university students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The prospective student should be enrolled at university and should be specialising in a subject that is presented as part of the secondary school curriculum.</li> </ul>
Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) (12 months class work and 1 term teaching practice – full time )  (18 months class work and 1 term teaching practice – part time)	The course provides teacher training to postgraduates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A degree in a subject presented as part of the secondary school curriculum.</li> </ul>

<sup>7</sup> Each term is three months long.

<sup>8</sup> Prospectus contains the college or university syllabus and course structures.

From the online prospectuses of three Zimbabwean secondary school teacher training colleges, I summarised the English curriculum in table 1.2. The English teacher training curriculum in Zimbabwe is made up of knowledge about language and methodologies of the teaching of English. As is shown in table 1.2, literature is part of the content of the pre-service teachers' overall knowledge of English Language.

**Table 1.2: Zimbabwean English pre-service teachers' curriculum**

Content	Description
Knowledge about language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Knowledge about English</li> <li>b. Phonetics and phonology</li> <li>c. English grammar – morphology; syntax; discourse analysis; semantics</li> <li>d. Language skills: listening; speaking; reading; writing and registers</li> <li>e. <b>Literature: general theories/ideologies of literature; African literature in English; world literature in English and poetry</b></li> </ul>
Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>f. Child language acquisition</li> <li>g. Teaching English as a second language</li> <li>h. Analysis of ZJC and O Level English syllabuses to identify objectives and content and their implications on the choice of strategies and materials in teaching English</li> <li>i. Scheming</li> <li>j. Lesson planning</li> <li>k. Evaluation</li> <li>l. Testing</li> <li>m. Marking</li> <li>n. Teaching listening</li> <li>o. Teaching speaking</li> <li>p. Teaching reading</li> <li>q. Teaching writing</li> <li>r. Teaching vocabulary methods</li> <li>s. Teaching register</li> <li>t. Teaching of spelling</li> <li>u. <b>Literature in English teaching methods (methods for teaching poetry, drama and novels)</b></li> </ul>

According to Nyawaranda (1999:9), teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe assume "... that student teachers come to the department already equipped with a knowledge of theoretical linguistics, such as grammar and other language skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing." From this I gather that teachers' colleges equip

teachers with methodological knowledge rather than subject knowledge. As Nyawaranda (1999) mentions, there is an assumption that the Advanced Level (A Level) course equips student teachers with the content they need to be subject specialists. English teacher training in Zimbabwe thus regards pre-service teachers merely as reflectors of the preparatory theoretical and subject knowledge of previous educational institutions (Gondo & Gondo 2012). Thus, the future for Literature in English is very bleak as the teacher training curriculum focuses on linguistics rather than on literature (Ncube 2001). Furthermore, the assumption that teachers convey their subject knowledge from O and A Levels to teacher training does not hold true for Literature in English. Literature in English is an optional subject in both O and A Levels, which means that learners may choose not to study the subject (Nyawaranda 1999). It is true then that some pre-service teachers enter preparation programmes without having taken Literature in English classes. The next section captures the rationale for my exploration of beginner teachers' theoretical and experiential knowledge in teaching Literature in English.

#### **1.4 Rationale for studying Literature in English beginner teachers' knowledge**

In Zimbabwe an English teacher is regarded as being capable of teaching the linguistic and literary aspects of English (Department of Teacher Education 2012; Ncube 2001; Maposa 1992). The preparation programme that pre-service English teachers undergo equips them with the teaching knowledge for both language and literature domains (Department of Teacher Education 2012; Ncube 2001). Ncube (2001) mentions that the English teacher training programme in Zimbabwe adequately prepares a teacher in English Language, with some appreciation of the methodological and ideological knowledge of Literature in English (cf. table 2.2). However, in the secondary school curricula, English Language and Literature in English are taught as separate subjects (cf. figure 2.2). The secondary school curriculum requires English teachers who possess a meta-cognitive understanding of Literature in English as a stand-alone subject, which is in contrast with what their teacher training provides (cf. section 2.2.1; figure 2.2). According to ZOLLS (2013) the focus on Literature in English is on the plot, literary function of characters,



thematic issues and an appreciation of literary techniques in all the literary genres<sup>9</sup> and fosters learners' social awareness. The Literature in English classroom is used as the starting point for learners to analyse the socio-cultural dimensions of their own communities to improve their future participation in them (Paran 2008; Jackson & Vavra 2007; Rosenblatt 1995; Lazar 1993). Although most college graduates have theoretical knowledge of the ideological and methodological aspects of Literature in English from their teacher training, they lack the holistic knowledge of the subject focus (Ncube 2001). Researchers such as Fleming and Strevens (2015), Gordon (2012), Carter (2007) and Ncube (2001) confirm this inadequacy as emanating from a general fallacy that English Language knowledge preparation is the same as for Literature in English. The perpetuation of this fallacy not only lies in teacher preparation programmes but is evident in teacher knowledge models suggested for ESL teaching that fail to include teacher knowledge for Literature in English as a stand-alone subject (Turner-Bisset 1999; Cochran-Smith & Lytle 1999; Golombek 1998).

Studies in ESL teacher knowledge "formulate a list of should know and should do" for teachers (Gordon 2012:378). The teacher knowledge base suggested by such researchers makes it difficult to see the dynamic relationship between theoretical teacher knowledge and classroom practices (Gordon 2012; Grossman *et al.* 2009). Teacher knowledge in Literature in English has been characterised by what Gordon (2012:378) calls "fuzzy, nebulous and difficult nature" due to a lack of research in the area. Olivero (2015) and Grossman *et al.* (2009) suggest that it is important to unlock beginner teachers' knowledge in the classroom as a way of understanding how their self-reflection influences their teaching practice.

Research on how beginner teachers come to possess the knowledge they have is important in the teaching profession. Carter (2007:1) claims that it is only recently that "researchers began to systematically frame and study this knowledge". The focus is now on how beginner teachers experience the classroom and how such knowledge can contribute to their understanding of the teaching profession (Hackett 2010; Buitink 2009; Tang 2003). Noteworthy is that Freeman and Johnson (1998) indicate that a revolution is raging in the knowledge domain of the Teaching of

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<sup>9</sup> O Level Literature in English focuses on the study of four genres namely, poetry, drama, novel and short stories.

English to Speakers of Other Language (TESOL), as the emphasis has shifted from what teachers should know to what they actually know about teaching. Freeman and Johnson (1998:397) contend that "the core of the new knowledge base must focus on the activity of teaching itself; it should centre on the teacher who does it, the contexts in which it is done, and the pedagogy by which it is done. Moreover, this knowledge base should include forms of knowledge representation that document teacher learning within the social, cultural, and instructional knowledge". This indicates a growing discontentment in the behavioural tradition of teaching and an embrace of teachers as contributors to the construction of their own knowledge, in addition to being instrumental in the construction of knowledge of their learners (Grossman *et al.* 2009; Hammerness *et al.* 2005). In line with Freeman and Johnson's (1998) call to understand teacher knowledge from a constructivist worldview, I explored teacher knowledge from an understanding that the beginner teachers' classrooms are empowering sites that assist them to reflect and be critical of their teaching practice (Lampert 2010; Grossman & McDonald 2008; Rosaen & Florio-Ruane 2008; Chaiklin & Lave 1996).

Interestingly, teacher knowledge research is silent on how beginner teachers learn to teach Literature in English. I believe that whatever takes place in the Literature in English lesson is dependent on the extent to which the teacher is knowledgeable. The general assumption is that English Language teachers are able to teach the literary aspects of English in a similar way as they do the language aspect. This implies that teachers must be constructing knowledge in Literature in English for themselves (Buitink 2009; Lampert 2010; Grossman & McDonald 2008; Rosaen & Florio-Ruane 2008). Thus, I was cognisant that by reviewing beginner teachers' knowledge from theoretical and experiential sources I better understood it as an integrative phenomenon (cf. section 2.6; figure 2.2; Grossman *et al.* 2009). In light of the above, the aim of this study was to build upon international teacher knowledge research by exploring the knowledge that four ESL beginner teachers had come to hold from teaching Literature in English.

### **1.5 Purpose of studying Literature in English beginner teachers' knowledge**

The purpose of this study was to explore the teaching knowledge held by O Level Literature in English beginner teachers. Specifically, this study sought to understand the knowledge constructed by beginner teachers from an amalgamation of their theoretical knowledge from educational institutions and experiential knowledge from their daily practices in the classroom. I focused on four beginner teachers who were teaching Literature in English for the first time and on the knowledge they had constructed from the classroom. From Schön's (1983) professional reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action, I was cognisant that as reflective individuals, the beginner teachers could have teaching knowledge gaps which, as practitioners, they minimised when they occurred. This was informed by my understanding that beginner teachers had gained knowledge of teaching from their pre-service programmes which they used to teach Literature in English. To this end the objectives of this research were to:

- explore the beginner teachers' theoretical and experiential knowledge for teaching of Literature in English
- identify the knowledge gaps beginner teachers have in their Literature in English teaching knowledge
- understand the strategies that beginner teachers use to address the knowledge gaps in their teaching

### **1.6 Research questions**

The primary research question that guided this inquiry is:

What teaching knowledge do beginner teachers come to possess for teaching Literature in English from their theory of education and experiential practices?

The secondary research questions are:

- a) What knowledge gaps, if any, exist in beginner teachers' knowledge of Literature in English?
- b) How do Literature in English beginner teachers address the knowledge gaps, if any, in their teaching?

The questions above guided my exploration into the knowledge held by O Level Literature in English beginner teachers, informed by their theoretical and experiential knowledge. Although I assumed that teachers held idiosyncratic knowledge for teaching that is context-dependent, I was aware that as new practitioners they could have knowledge gaps. As such, I was also interested in identifying the knowledge gaps that beginner teachers had in teaching Literature in English. To this end, my goal was to understand the knowledge that Literature in English beginner teachers constructed in the contexts of their classroom.

### **1.7 Conceptual framework**

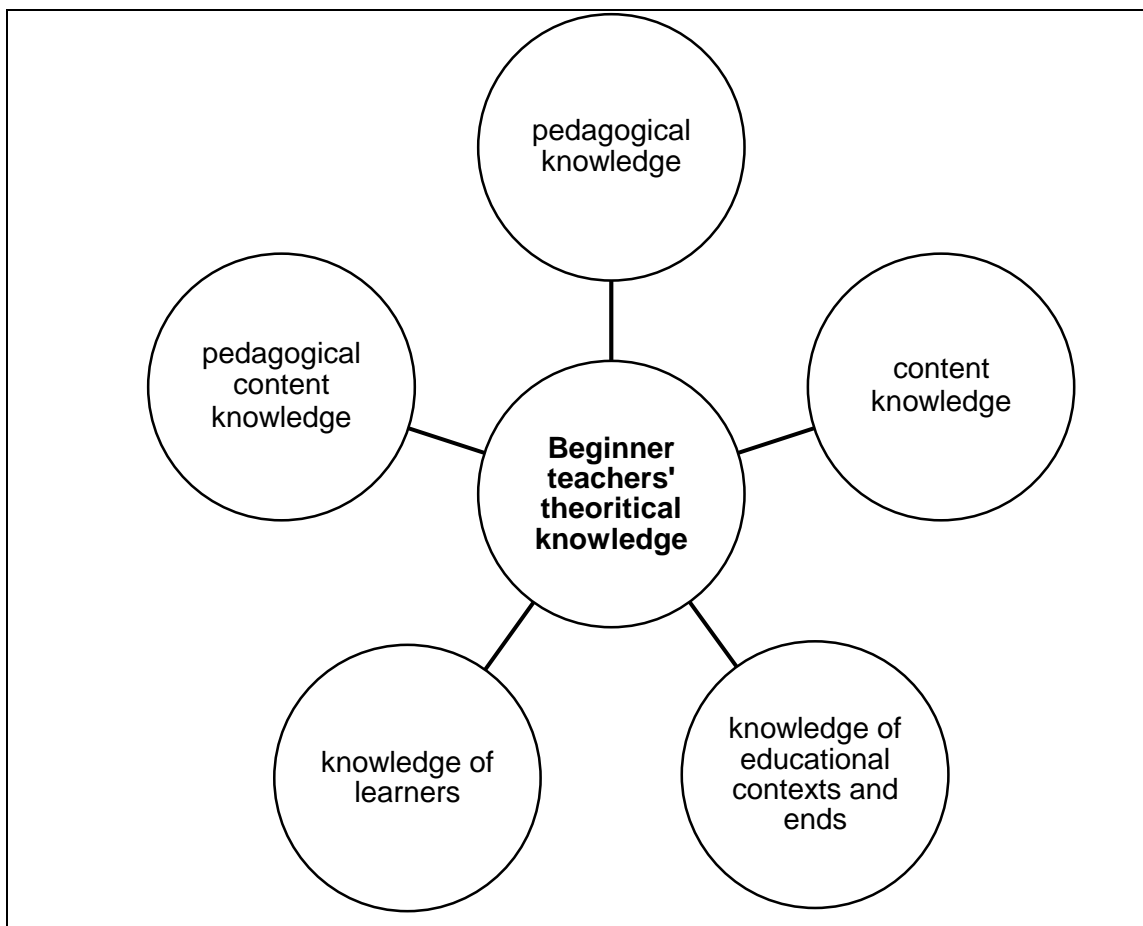
I chose to use a conceptual framework to guide my understanding of beginner teachers' knowledge construction in Literature in English. A conceptual framework was developed to understand "the system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and theories..." that guided my exploration into the knowledge held by beginner Literature in English teachers (Maxwell 2005:39). I selected to use a conceptual framework as an interpretive tool in understanding what beginner teachers know as Literature in English teachers, underpinned by a belief that knowledge is a social construct (Jabareen 2009; Maxwell 2005). The concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs and theories that guided this study were drawn from teacher knowledge research and underpinned by social constructivism. Specifically, the theoretical constructs that guided this exploration are:

- theoretical teacher knowledge
- experiential teacher knowledge
- social constructivism

A synthesis of the three constructs above provided an exploratory framework within which this study was approached (Maxwell 2005; Miles & Huberman 1994). For the purpose of this study, I used both a narrative and graphic description of the presumed relationship among the constructs, which are discussed briefly below and in detail in chapter 2 (cf. section 2.6; figure 2.3; Miles & Huberman 1994).

### 1.7.1 Theoretical teacher knowledge

Theoretical teacher knowledge defines the formal body of knowledge that teachers need for their professional practices (Grossman *et al.* 2009; Shulman & Shulman 2004; Turner-Bisset 1999; Cochran-Smith & Lytle 1999; Shulman 1983). Informed by Schwab's (1973) five curriculum common places<sup>10</sup>, theoretical teacher knowledge researchers identify knowledges that pre-service and in-service teachers should learn and teach by providing a framework for structuring these essential knowledges for teaching (DeGraff *et al.* 2015; Shulman & Shulman 2004; Fenstermacher 1994). Figure 1.1 provides a summary of theoretical knowledges an ESL teacher must know from teacher training programmes from the literature review.



**Figure 1.1: Theoretical teacher knowledges (from Turner-Bisset 1999; Cochran-Smith & Lytle 1999)**

<sup>10</sup> Detailed in chapter 2 (cf. section 2.4).

Shulman & Shulman (2004) note that theoretical teacher knowledge models provide for knowledges that are shared by the teaching community and are explicit in competent, qualified teachers. Thus, theoretical teacher knowledge encompasses all academic disciplines such as philosophy, psychology, sociology, statistics and human and child development theories (Cochran-Smith & Lytle 1999; Turner-Bisset 1999). From the background above, I was cognisant that the Literature in English beginner teachers, as qualified professionals, know about pedagogy, learners, content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of educational ends and curriculum from their teacher preparation programmes.

The choice of theoretical teacher knowledge models was informed by how they highlight both the essential knowledges and why they are important for teaching (Shulman & Shulman 2004). I understand that the beginner teachers' theoretical knowledge provides them with justifications and reasoning for the inclusion of each knowledge that they require for Literature in English teaching (Hackett 2010; Freeman & Johnson 1998; Fenstermacher 1994). I support the theoretical teacher knowledge researchers' view as it allowed me to explore teacher knowledge from the perspective that beginner teachers are not merely applying learnt theories in their Literature in English classroom, but that they reason before using certain actions (Olivero 2015; Lampert 2010; Grossman *et al.* 2009; Verloop, Van Driel & Meijer 2001; Hegarty 2000). Although theoretical teacher knowledge is prescribed by university researchers for the training of pre-services teachers, it still allows the practitioners an opportunity to use theory of education in ways that account for the context and personal and experiential nuances during the act of teaching (Freeman & Johnson 1998; Johnson 1999).

### **1.7.2 Experiential teacher knowledge**

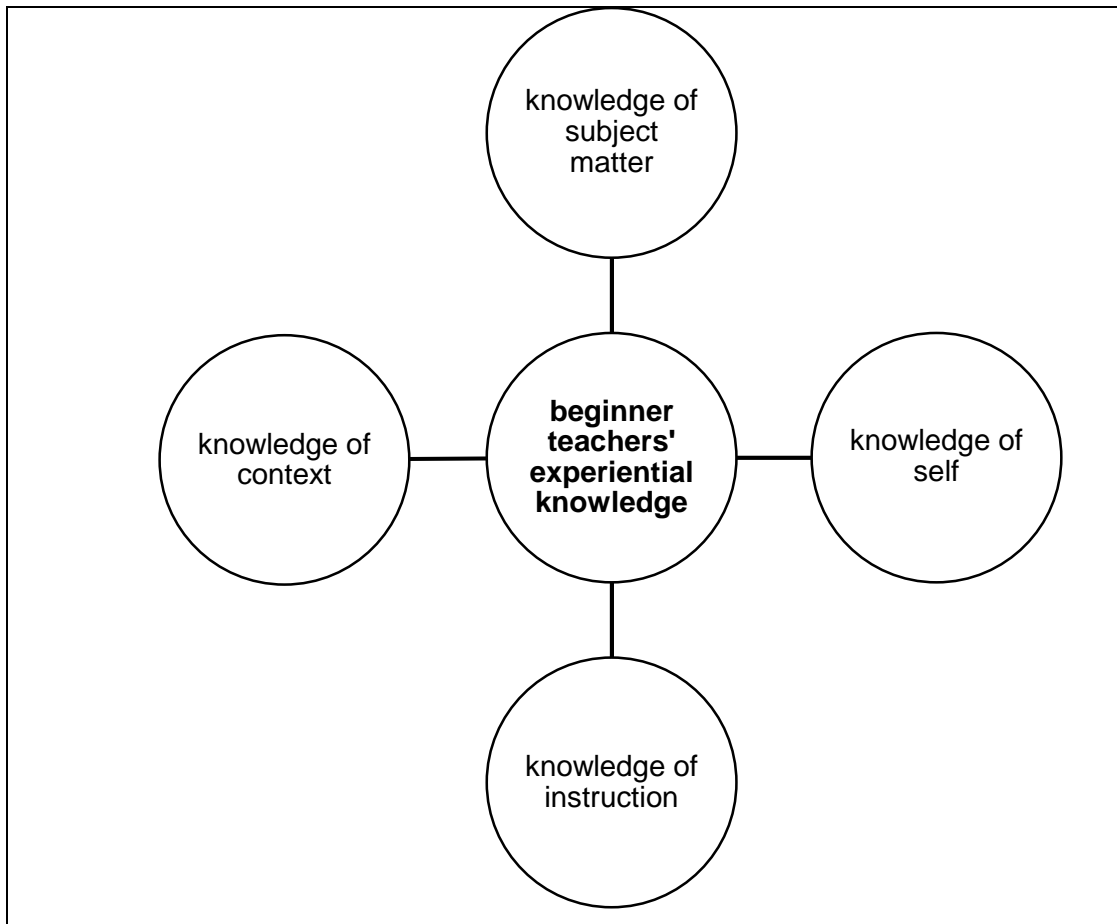
Experiential knowledge is the knowledge that beginner teachers construct from the practice of teaching (cf. section 2.5; Hackett 2010; Connelly *et al.* 1997; Fenstermacher 1994). According to Fenstermacher (1994:11) experiential knowledge is

... the type of knowledge which is bounded by the situation or context in which it arises, and it may or may not be capable of immediate expression in

speech or writing. The teachers' experiential knowledge is generally related to how to do things, or the right place and time to do them, or about how to see and interpret events related to one's action.

I deduce from this that experiential teacher knowledge is idiosyncratic, practical, tacit and contextual and results from a unique blend of the individual's classroom experiences and formal training (McGlynn-Stewart 2015; Olivero 2015; Lampert 2010; Johnson 1999; Connelly *et al.* 1997; Fenstermacher 1994). Experiential teacher knowledge in this study refers to beginner Literature in English teachers' practical knowledge (Golombek 1998; Elbaz 1983), personal practical knowledge (Clandinin & Connelly 1987), and reflective practices (Farrell 2012; Cochran-Smith 2003; Schön 1983; Dewey 1933).

Experiential teacher knowledge is personal and practical (John 2002; Golombek 1998; Connelly *et al.* 1997; Elbaz 1983). Thus, teacher knowledge is embodied in the narratives of the beginner teachers' lives, which means the knowledge they construct originates from the beliefs, values and philosophies that they hold true for their teaching practices (McGlynn-Stewart 2015; Golombek 1998; Connelly *et al.* 1997; Clandinin & Connelly 1995). Experientialists identify knowledges constructed from the beginner teachers' formal training, personal background and reflective practices as important in our understanding of teaching knowledge (Giovanelli 2015; Borg 2003; Verloop *et al.* 2001; Hegarty 2000). From the experiential teacher knowledge perspective, I looked closely at beginner teachers' actions and activities in the Literature in English classroom as an indication of experiential knowing that is idiosyncratic, practical and contextual (Buitink 2009; Golombek 1998; Connelly *et al.* 1997). Similar to theoretical teacher knowledge models, Golombek (1998) and Elbaz (1983) also codify teacher knowledge that results from experiential practices. They indicate that a teacher should know about subject matter, curriculum, instruction, contexts and self. Figure 1.2 presents a summary of what an ESL teacher should know from experiential researchers.



**Figure 1.2: Experiential teacher knowledges (from Golombek 1998; Elbaz 1983)**

Although in the literature, theoretical and experiential teacher knowledge models are presented as separate research strands, I motivate for an understanding of beginner teachers' knowledge as an amalgamation of both the theoretical and experiential comprehension of the teaching practices (DeGraff *et al.* 2015; Trent 2015; Gan 2013; Cheng *et al.* 2012; Hackett 2010; Grossman *et al.* 2009; Johnson 1999). I chose to utilise social constructivism to understand the integrative knowledges that beginner teachers construct in the Literature in English classroom.

### **1.7.3 Social constructivism**

Social constructivism is based on an assumption that knowledge is socially constructed from experiential practices (Schwandt 2007; Ellis 2006). From this premise, I understand beginner teachers' knowledge to develop from theoretical and experiential insights from the practice of teaching Literature in English (Gan 2013;



Cheng *et al.* 2012; Nagamine 2007; Johnson 1999). By applying social constructivism to my understanding of beginner teachers' knowledge, I illuminate its construction as originating from the interaction with theoretical knowing and with others (learners, parents, colleagues, school and community) (Schwandt 2007; Nagamine 2007). Thus, I approached the study with an understanding that the participants' knowledge was communally constructed – the individual beginner teachers cognitively brought into the classroom knowledge accrued over years in educational institutions (McGlynn-Stewart 2015; Ellis 2006). From this background, I approached this inquiry with the purpose of understanding the knowledges that participants had come to hold from unique contexts such as their classrooms, schools and communities (Leeferink *et al.* 2015; Lampert 2010; Buitink 2009).

I chose to utilise social constructivism to guide my conceptual understanding of teacher knowledge as it allows for the exploration of knowing located within the individual's cognition and context (Schwandt 2007; Nagamine 2007). This perspective allowed me to view beginner teachers as intellectual generative individuals who are able to identify challenges in their teaching practice and solve them (Olivero 2015; Hackett 2010; Lampert 2010; Buitink 2009). It is in the process of reflecting and interpreting their teaching and learning environments that beginner Literature in English teachers construct knowledge that is both idiosyncratic and context-dependent (Farrell 2012; Cheng *et al.* 2012; Shulman & Shulman 2004; Connelly *et al.* 1997; Elbaz 1983).

Social constructivism identifies the context as important in our understanding of knowledge construction (Schwandt 2007; Nagamine 2007). Thus, in this study, using the Literature in English classroom as the research site allowed for a holistic comprehension of the beginner teachers' knowledge construction resulting from the context (Williamson 2006; Ellis 2006; Chaiklin & Lave 1996; Lave 1991). In this study, I was aware that beginner teachers did not hold similar knowledge owing to both contextual and personal nuances present during the construction of the teaching knowledge in each Literature in English classroom (Leeferink *et al.* 2015; Schwandt 2007; Nagamine 2007; Williamson 2006).

## 1.8 Assumptions of the study

I approached the study with the following assumptions:

- Literature in English beginner teachers' knowledge is constructed from both their theoretical and experiential knowing.
- Literature in English beginner teachers' knowledge is fluid as it takes shape in the needs of the learners in the classroom.
- I assumed that in the two years as O Level Literature in English beginner teachers, they had applied and refined their formal knowledge through their classroom experiences.
- Based on theoretical teacher knowledge research, beginner Literature in English teachers know about pedagogy, learners, content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of educational ends and curriculum from their teacher training.
- Based on experiential teacher knowledge research, beginner Literature in English teachers' knowledge is personal, practical, experiential and contextual and results from reflective practices.
- Based on social constructivism, beginner teachers hold knowledges shaped by classroom based interactions.

## 1.9 Definition of key terms

Under this section, I discuss key concepts I used to aid the reader's understanding of the terms as they are used in the study.

### 1.9.1 Literature in English beginner teachers

In international teacher knowledge research, the terms "beginner teachers", "early career teachers" and "novice teachers" are used interchangeably to refer to individuals that are at the starting point of their careers (Carrigan 2008; Bartell 2005; Stansbury & Zimmerman 2000; Reynolds 1995; Ballantyne *et al.* 1995). My understanding of the term is slightly different from that in previous research. From my understanding a novice is someone who is new at a task, an individual who may be entering a certain context for the first time (Farrell 2012). The term "beginner teacher"

on the other hand, denotes an individual beginning a professional career but who is not new to it (Huntly 2011). In my opinion beginner teachers are being initiated into teaching but they are not new to it, as they have been part of education institutions throughout their academic lives (Buitink 2009; Johnson 1999). Thus, in this study, I chose to use the term "beginner teacher" as it accounts for the individuals' accrued knowledge as an important aspect of their present classroom practices (Olivero 2015; Buitink 2009; Verloop *et al.* 2001; Hegarty 2000).

In some research studies the term "beginner" is usually used to refer to individuals who have successfully completed their teacher training and are in their first year of teaching (Carrigan 2008; Bartell 2005; Stansbury & Zimmerman 2000; Reynolds 1995; Ballantyne *et al.* 1995). In Zimbabwe, such teachers are not usually assigned O Level Literature in English classes. During the pre-data collection stage it became apparent that the trend in most Zimbabwean schools was to allow beginner teachers to teach O Level Literature in English after having taught Zimbabwe Junior Certificate (ZJC) literature and after having enrolled for a Bachelor of Education degree. From the above background and for the purpose of this study, the term "beginner teacher" is used similar to Arends and Phurutse's (2009) and Kim and Roth's (2011) definition of a teacher who has four years' full time teaching experience.

The beginner teachers in this study had four years of full time teaching experience. During these four years, the beginner teachers taught subjects such as English language, IsiNdebele and History but were teaching O Level Literature in English for the first time in their professional lives (cf. table 3.2). This means that the beginner teachers who participated in this study had started their teaching careers in the year 2011 but had only started teaching Literature in English in 2013 – their third year as qualified teachers. These beginner teachers had been teaching the same Literature in English learners in 2013 and 2014 as the O Level course is a two-year course. The beginner teachers participating in this study were college-trained teachers holding Diplomas in Education (English) and were all enrolled for Bachelor of Education (English) degree programmes at universities in Zimbabwe.

### **1.9.2 Literature in English beginner teachers' knowledge**

For the purpose of this study the term "knowledge" refers to the knowledge constructed by beginner teachers from theoretical and experiential knowing while teaching Literature in English (Leeferink *et al.* 2015; Buitink 2009; Verloop *et al.* 2001; Hegary 2000; Connelly *et al.* 1997; Calderhead 1996). As a theoretical phenomenon, teacher knowledge in this study refers to a codifiable and prescriptive body of professional mastery that pre-service teachers obtain from their teacher training that makes up their theory of education (cf. section 2.4; Shulman & Shulman 2004; Cochran-Smith 2003; Grossman *et al.* 2009). In this study, from an experiential orientation, teacher knowledge comes from personal and practical experiences which beginner teachers reflect on from specific and unique contexts (cf. section 2.5; Cheng *et al.* 2012; Hackett 2010; Buitink 2009). The beginner teachers' knowledge is seen in their actions and activities in the Literature in English classroom (Lowery 2002; Edwards & Ogden 1998)

### **1.9.3 Literature in English**

I used the same definition for Literature in English as the one used in ZOLLS (2013) which states that it is the study of works written in English from African and world poets, dramatists and novelists. African literature defines literary works that originate from Africa written in English (ZOLLS 2013). Following DiYanni's (2000) definition, world literature refers to works written in English or translated in English by prominent authors from Europe and America, such as William Shakespeare, Henrik Ibsen, Nikolai Gogol, Alice Walker and Richard Wright.

### **1.9.4 Teaching Literature in English**

In this study, teaching Literature in English refers to the beginner teachers' ability to scheme/plan and deliver lessons for O Level learners using both theoretical knowledge from their training and experiential knowledge from their classroom practices.

## 1.10 Summary of research design

This section presents a synopsis of the research design adopted for the study. Table 1.3 summarises the research design used, while the research design is discussed in detail in chapter 3.

**Table 1.3: Summary of the research design**

<p>Paradigmatic approach (cf. section 3.3)</p>	<p>I employed an interpretivist approach to explore beginner teachers' teaching knowledge in Literature in English (Hennick, Hutter &amp; Bailey 2011).</p> <p>The conceptual framework for this study was taken from literature on theoretical and experiential teacher knowledge research and underpinned by social constructivism (cf. section 2.6; Olivero 2015; Ellis 2006).</p> <p>I chose a qualitative approach to explore and understand the knowledge that beginner teachers constructed from teaching Literature in English (Cresswell 2013).</p>
<p>Research design (cf. section 3.3.1)</p>	<p>I used a single case study design to gain a better understanding of the Literature in English beginner teachers' knowledge construction contextualised to the Literature in English classroom (Yin 2014).</p>
<p>Selection of participants (cf. section 3.3.3)</p>	<p>Data were collected from four purposively selected Literature in English beginner teachers.</p> <p>The term "beginner teacher" refers to teachers who teach O Level Literature in English for the first time but have been in service for fewer than four years.</p>
<p>Data collection methods (cf. section 3.3.5)</p>	<p>I used non-participant class observation, document analysis and semi-structured interviews to collect data. Non-participant observations and document analysis were the secondary research method (Bowen 2009).</p> <p>The semi-structured interviews were the primary research method.</p>
<p>Data documentation (cf. section 3.3.6)</p>	<p>The data were documented in the form of video recordings of observations, audio recordings of interviews, descriptive notes of document analysis and the researcher's own field notes.</p> <p>The data were stored in audio and visual formats with password protection.</p>
<p>Data analysis and interpretation (cf. section 3.4)</p>	<p>Data were analysed through inductive thematic analysis, enhanced by reflections to unearth hidden meanings of the participants' own words (Babbie &amp;</p>

	<p>Mouton 2001).</p> <p>I translated, transcribed and coded data collected from each participant and themes and patterns were identified and categorized from the data (Creswell 2009; De Vos, Strydom &amp; Fouche 2005).</p>
Ethical considerations (cf. section 3.5)	<p>I adhered to the following ethical considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before data collection, I ensured that I obtained the participants' informed consent.</li> <li>• During and after data collection I protected the participants from harm and maintained their confidentiality and anonymity.</li> </ul>
Quality criteria (cf. section 3.7)	<p>To ensure rigour in my study I applied Lincoln and Guba's (1985) measures of trustworthiness, which include credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability.</p>

### 1.11 Outline of the study

#### Chapter 1: Background of the study

Chapter 1 provides the orientation and background to the study of beginner teachers' knowledge of Literature in English. The chapter includes the context of the study, problem statement, the rationale for the study and the purpose of the study. A summary of the research design and methodology and ethical considerations is also presented in this chapter.

#### Chapter 2: Literature review

In chapter 2, I discuss the conceptual framework of the study. The conceptual framework is drawn from theoretical and experiential teacher knowledge research and social constructivism. The aim of this chapter is to highlight the gaps that exist in ESL research knowledge, which justifies the need for this study.

#### Chapter 3: Research design and methodology

Chapter 3 outlines the research design, methodology and paradigmatic position used in the study. I also discuss the sample and sampling techniques, data methods and analysis, measures for quality and ethical considerations and I also provide the justification for their selection in the study.

#### **Chapter 4: Data analysis and interpretation**

In chapter 4, I present the empirical findings of the study. The data results are presented as themes, which indicate the types of knowledge that the four participants had as beginner teachers of Literature in English. The themes are analysed and each theme is presented with its own interpretation for a deeper appreciation of the findings.

#### **Chapter 5: Conclusion and recommendations**

In chapter 5, I conclude the study and make recommendations based on the findings. Certain suggestions are made to different stakeholders who have an interest in teacher knowledge. The chapter also highlights recommendations for future studies.



## Chapter 2

### Literature review

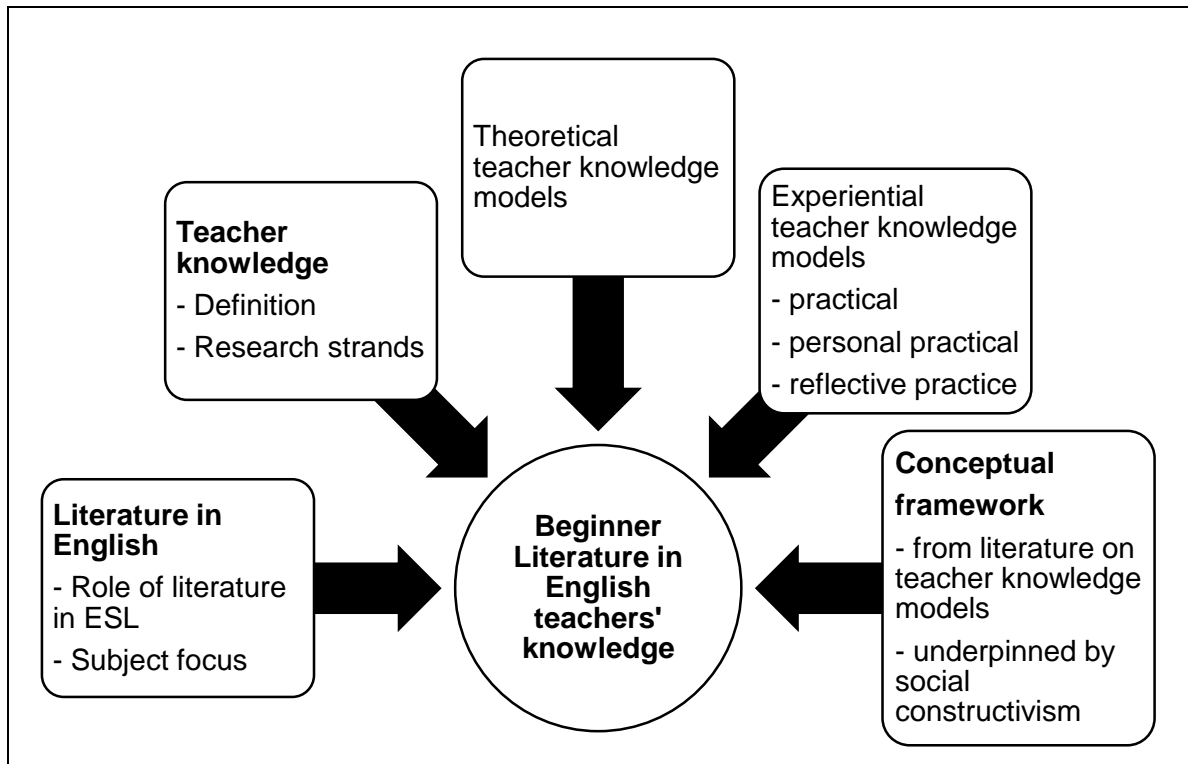
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#### 2.1 Introduction

As indicated in the previous chapter, the purpose of this study was to explore the knowledge held by O Level Literature in English beginner teachers. I start this chapter by investigating the role of literature in ESL classrooms as a tool for second language acquisition, in order to help the reader understand the context of the study. This study focuses on Literature in English as a stand-alone subject, which differs from literature as an enhancer to language acquisition. This is then followed by a discussion on the subject focus for Literature in English as a stand-alone subject in the Zimbabwean secondary school curriculum. I also present comparative definitions of teacher knowledge from prominent researchers in the field of teacher knowledge, which lead to this study's operational definition of the term "teacher knowledge".

To guide my understanding of the knowledge held by beginner Literature in English teachers, I developed a conceptual framework that explains the system of concepts, assumptions and beliefs that underpin my inquiry (Jabareen 2009; Maxwell 2005). The conceptual framework for this study is drawn from the literature review on theoretical and experiential teacher knowledge studies and anchored in social constructivism. Specifically, I focus on theoretical and experiential teacher knowledge models from prominent practical, personal practical teacher knowledge research and reflective practice. Figure 2.1 provides a summary of the reviewed literature.





**Figure 2.1: Summary of reviewed literature**

## 2.2 History of literature in ESL classrooms

The use of literature in the ESL classroom has been that of an enhancer to language acquisition (Van 2009). As an enhancer, literature is used to assist learners in acquiring a second language (Maley 2001). According to Ncube (2001) and Maposa (1992), in the Zimbabwean secondary schools context, short stories, novels, poetry, newspapers and magazines are considered important literary sources in enhancing learners' language acquisition. Methods such as grammar translation, direct translation, audio lingual, the silent way and suggestopedia incorporate literature to develop learners' phonology, grammar and vocabulary abilities (Van 2009). However, the use of the ESL teaching methods that use literature as a linguistic strategy as described above, have later declined in popularity due to their failure to offer a natural and communicative way of acquiring a language (Savvidou 2004). The phasing out of literature aligned methods in teaching English as a second language significantly decreased its role in the school curriculum (Fleming & Strevens 2015; Collie & Slater 1987).

Furthermore, the introduction of the Communicative Language Teaching method (CLT), which advocates the use of conversations and dialogues similar to those that learners may use in daily interactions, resulted in the complete neglect of literature in ESL classrooms (Maley 1989; 2001). In response to this trend, Zimbabwean secondary teachers' colleges removed a sizeable number of literature courses from their course content, as is clear from their prospectuses from the early 1980s to the present (cf. 1.2; Maposa 1992; Morrison 1988). However, in the late 1980s to the earlier 1990s a renewal and revival of literature in teaching English as a second language gained momentum in ESL instructional contexts, including in Zimbabwe (Maposa 1992).

This renewal of the use of literature for English language acquisition comes from an understanding that it has an inherent ability to help learners acquire sociolinguistic, pragmatic and interactive competencies to enable them to communicate beyond the classroom (Brumfit & Benton 1993). Learners who are exposed to literature in language classes are equipped with the necessary interpretation skills to explain different cultural and language perspectives (Jackson & Vavra 2007). Literature is also a rich source of authentic language material, as it comprises two important features, namely language in use and aesthetic presentation of the spoken word, which is the cultural context of language (Paran 2008). The use of literature as a strategy for language learning is important as it helps break down artificial grammar instruction (Jackson & Vavra 2007). It seems then, that even with the renewal of the use of literature in ESL classrooms, the focus is still on using it to learn a language. However, the study of literature as a stand-alone subject in ESL appears to be overshadowed by its use as a strategy for teaching English Language (Gordon 2012). The next section provides the definition of Literature in English and its subject focus as a stand-alone subject for O Level learners in Zimbabwean secondary schools.

### **2.2.1 Focus on the subject: Literature in English**

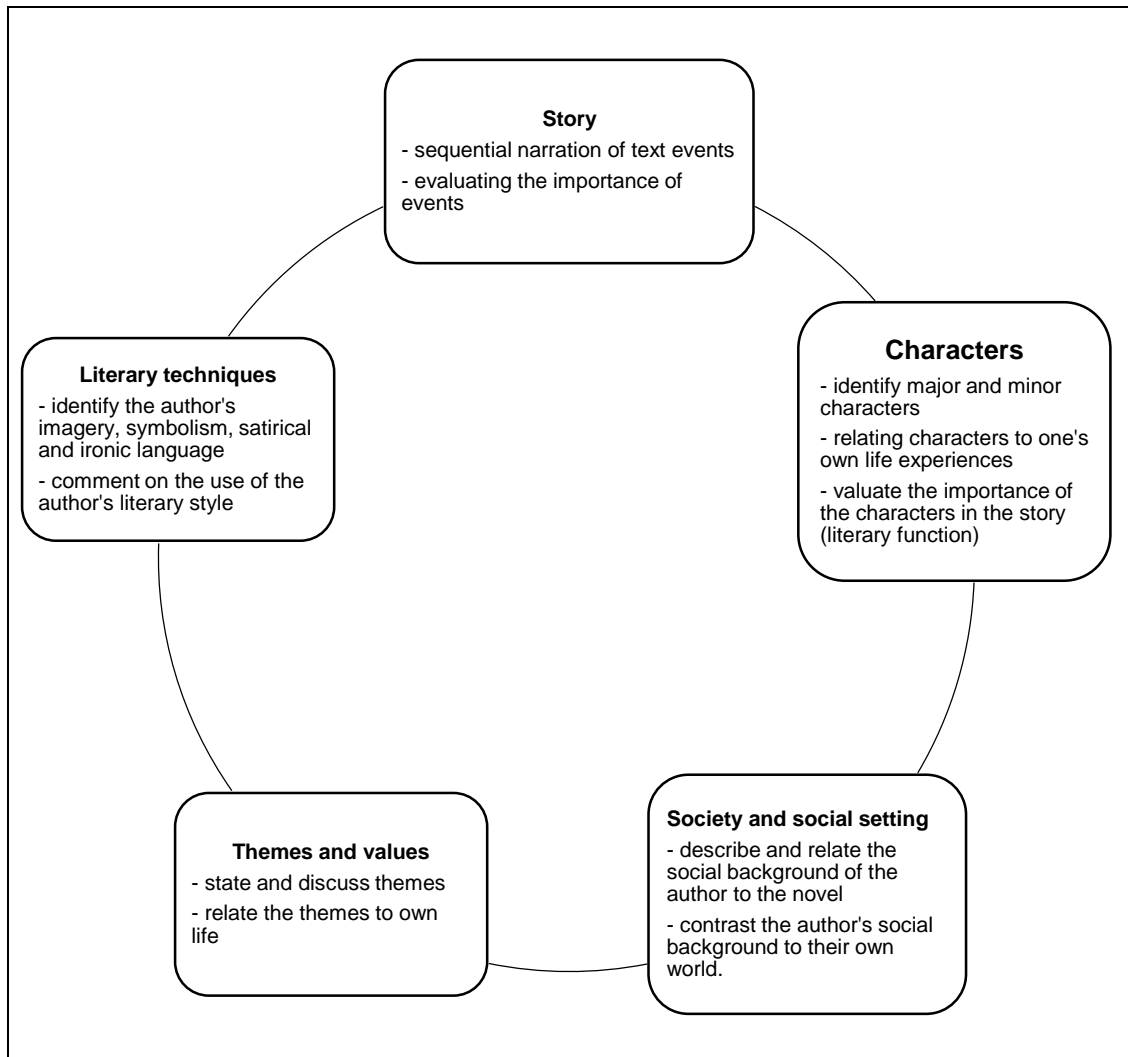
Literature in English in the Zimbabwean secondary school context focuses on the study of works by English authors from the Western tradition such as Christopher Marlowe, Walter Raleigh, William Shakespeare, John Milton, Geoffrey Chaucer, Francis Bacon, John Donne, Alexander Pope, Jane Austen, Thomas Hardy, Charles

Dickens, Oscar Wilde, T.S. Elliot and Maya Angelou (DiYanni 2000). Literature in English also focuses on the works of non-native English authors such as Chinua Achebe, Mariama Ba, Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Ibsen Henrick (ZOLLS 2013). Literature in English emphasises the study of four literary genres namely poetry, drama, short stories and novels. The Zimbabwean Literature in English O Level Syllabus (2013–2018:3.0) states that the aim of teaching Literature in English is to

- stimulate an appreciation of artistic and aesthetic qualities of Literature;
- develop learners' reading competence;
- stimulate analysis, comment and informed judgment on literary texts;
- develop the ability to learn and develop from the experiences depicted in Literature.

A competent learner of Literature in English is one who is able to read the novels, discuss the plot, comment on literary function of characters and engage with the thematic issues in any genre (ZOLLS 2013). On a higher analytic level, Literature in English learners are expected to relate and contrast the literary world with their own societies. The learners' comprehension of the use of literary techniques and how they influence the novelist's, poet's and dramatist's vision also communicates a higher order competence (ZOLLS 2013). Literature in English in Zimbabwe emphasises that learners study the story, characters, social background, themes and values (ZOLLS 2013; cf. figure 2.2). The five focal points are meant to foster learner literary competence.

The study of Literature in English as a stand-alone subject is important as it helps improve learners' reading ability (Lazar 1993). Also as one of its curriculum aims, ZOLLS (2013) states that it aims to develop learners' reading abilities and skills. The reading abilities nurtured in the Literature in English classroom are easily extended to improve learners' performance in other subjects in the school curriculum (Fleming & Strevens 2015). In addition, Literature in English develops learners' reading of newspapers, reports and instructions. Such skills are important for learners' lives beyond the classroom and the school as they help them to integrate into mainstream society (Paran 2008).



**Figure 2.2: Focus on the subject: Literature in English**

Moreover, Literature in English creates in learners an appreciation of the aesthetic and thematic qualities of social life (ZOLLS 2013). At this level, learners are able to analyse, comment, make informed judgements on literary texts, and relate these judgements to their lives and community experiences (Gordon 2012; Jackson & Vavra 2007). The learners are inspired by the knowledge from the literary texts to analyse their community experiences. The idea is that the learners are able to comment on their society and contribute meaningfully to it (Gordon 2012; Paran 2008; Rosenblatt 1995).

Furthermore, Literature in English is a reservoir of a country's civilization and cultural history (Rosenblatt 1995; Ngugi 1994). Literature provides a panorama of a society by describing its social life and noting the contradictions and problems in that society

(Paran 2008). Through the study of a variety of literatures learners have an opportunity to analyse their community and its contribution to the world. This implies that Literature in English classrooms are more than just a perusal of novels but are modern-day tools that learners use to assess the values, morals and attitudes of the past, present and future world (Rosenblatt 1995; Lazar, 1993; Carter & Long 1991; Collie & Slater 1987). The continual subject apathy currently experienced in the Zimbabwean Literature in English classrooms can limit the learners' access to the innumerable merits of its study (Gordon 2012; Ncube 2001). My study is an effort at reviving the excitement that should pervade the study of Literature in English in the school curriculum.

In spite of the well laid out Literature in English subject focus and the merits of its study, Ncube (2001) reveals that in many Literature in English lessons the growth of learners' imagination and their acquisition of literary competencies are stifled by the dictation of notes and memorization. Ncube's (2001) interviews with Ordinary Level markers revealed that the main reason for students not doing well in Literature in English is that they produce uniform and pre-learned answers from teachers' notes and study guides. Some teachers claim that they resort to rote teaching because they do not have the adequate knowledge to teach Literature in English (Ncube 2001). During my years as a Literature in English O Level marker I observed that fewer and fewer schools in Zimbabwe were offering Literature in English as a subject. The reason for this is probably that the results obtained by those who do, are poor. Moreover, Carnory, Chisholm and Bagele (2012) mention that teachers shun teaching important elements of a subject because they do not possess adequate knowledge to effectively teach it. This is confirmed by Ncube (2001) who found that Zimbabwean secondary school teachers shun teaching Literature in English because they do not have adequate knowledge needed to be effective subject teachers.

Notwithstanding Ncube's (2001) findings and those of researchers such as Senon *et al.* (2013); Carnory *et al.* (2012), Ulvik *et al.* (2009) and Flores & Day (2006) who found that beginner teachers lack adequate knowledge needed for effective teaching, I am of the opinion that even with this minimal knowledge of teaching, beginner teachers are involved in an elaborate process of constructing knowledges for use in their classrooms (Leeferink *et al.* 2015; Trent 2015; Buitink 2009). I assume that within the Zimbabwean context Literature in English beginner teachers use an

amalgamation of their theory of education and classroom experiences to construct the knowledges they need to teach the subject (DeGraff *et al.* 2015; Lampert 2010; Zeichner 2010; Johnson 1999; Calderhead 1996). Thus, exploring the classroom context as a research site and by involving Literature in English beginner teachers in the collection of data, I believe that I better understood what they believed their teaching knowledge to be (Clarke & Hollingsworth 2002; Connelly *et al.* 1997).

### **2.3 Defining teacher knowledge**

Teacher knowledge is the combination of knowledges that teachers need to be competent in their work (Sadler, Sonnert, Coyle, Cook-Smith & Miller 2013). Although there is general agreement in research that teachers require knowledge for teaching, there is little agreement on the sources of the knowledges necessary for teaching (Sadler *et al.* 2013; Cheng *et al.* 2012; Fenstermacher 1994).

The sources for teacher knowledge are understood in teacher knowledge as existing in two strands – theoretical and experiential (Sadler *et al.* 2013; Cheng *et al.* 2012; Fenstermacher 1994). The research strands define how researchers and philosophers believe teachers come to hold knowledges necessary for their teaching practice (Fenstermacher 1994). Theoretically inclined ESL researchers such as Turner-Smith (1999) and Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) define teacher knowledge as originating from the curriculum that beginner teachers acquire from teacher training. Theoretical teacher knowledge is produced by university researchers and academics; this means that this knowledge is known by the researchers and prescribed for beginner teachers' use in the classroom (DeGraff *et al.* 2015; Grossman *et al.* 2009; Verloop *et al.* 2001). Theoretical researchers develop empirically and normative grounded teacher knowledge bases that are prescribed for beginner teachers' training and classroom usage (Hegarty 2000; Golombek 1998; Fenstermacher 1994). In the context of my study, this understanding means that the sampled O Level Literature in English beginner teachers in Zimbabwe hold a common knowledge from their teacher training. I support the theoretical researchers' view that beginner teachers should possess knowledges that are "required to achieve a state of competence" (Fenstermacher 1994:14). Although theoretical teacher knowledge is important in my understanding of the formal knowledge beginner teachers require as professionals, I was cognisant that "imposing a codified

body of knowledge on teachers and separating them from their experiential knowledge may lead to closed worlds of meaning rather than opening windows on possibilities" (Golombek 1998:447). I concur with Golombek (1998) that teachers' experiential practice together with their theoretical knowledge form part of how they come to know about teaching as it allows us to see them as knowers and not merely consumers of knowledge (Olivero 2015; Trent 2015; Verloop *et al.* 2001).

To account for beginner teachers' knowledge growth and their role as knowledge constructors, experientially aligned researchers such as Golombek (1999), Connelly *et al.* (1997), Schön (1983) and Elbaz (1983) define teacher knowledge as a practical and contextual process of knowing. Thus, experiential researchers hold beginner teachers' knowledge constructed from the classroom as important in enhancing the practice of teaching (Leeferink *et al.* 2015; Trent 2015; Lampert 2010; Grossman *et al.* 2009). In line with experiential teacher knowledge researchers, I believe that beginner teachers, through their individual experiences, using learners' personalities, personal history and subject knowledge, construct experiential knowledge which they use to teach (Buitink 2009; John 2002; Edwards & Ogden 1998; Golombek 1998; Connelly *et al.* 1997). From the experiential researchers, I approached my study from an understanding that beginner teachers' knowledge is constructed and reconstructed in the classroom context from the quality of experiences that beginner teachers go through (Golombek 1998; Schön 1983; Dewey 1938). Thus, I embrace Schön's (1983:42) knowing-in-action as I believe that beginner teachers' come to know about teaching from practising as teachers, and through classroom-based experiences in Literature in English.

A *tour d'horizon* of the literature above guided my understanding of knowing as reflective of both the beginner teachers' theoretical and experiential qualities (DeGraff *et al.* 2015; Buitink 2009; Grossman *et al.* 2009; Hegarty 2000). From this understanding, I assume that in the minds of the beginner teachers, knowledge from both the theoretical and experiential forms, is intertwined as what they believe and know as true for their teaching practice (cf. figure 2.2; Hammerness *et al.* 2005; John 2002; Hegarty 2000; Alexander, Schallert & Hare 1991). I realise that exploring teacher knowledge from the classroom is a way of recognising beginner teachers' metacognitive interaction of their theoretical and experiential practices (Lampert 2010; Brouwer & Korthagen 2005; Golombek 1998). Although teacher knowledge

researchers align their inquiry following the strands discussed above, I chose in this study to define teacher knowledge as the totality of knowledges and insights held by the beginner teachers, which inform their classroom actions and activities constructed from an amalgamation of their theoretical and experiential knowledge (Olivero 2015; McGlynn-Stewart 2015; Lampert 2010; Grossman *et al.* 2009; Lowery 2002; Edwards & Ogden 1998).

An appreciation of teacher knowledge from both theoretical and experiential aspects provides for a conceptual understanding of beginner teachers' knowledge construction as existing from multiple sources, which gives it a robust and holistic quality required for an in-depth understanding of the participants' teaching knowledge (Grossman *et al.* 2009; Cochran-Smith 2003; Fenstermacher 1994). Although I studied beginner teacher knowledge within the Zimbabwean context, I relied on American, Canadian and British researchers' models in guiding my inquiry as models from the Zimbabwean and African contexts are scarce. I believe, however, that this broadens the applicability of my study to a wider and not merely the Zimbabwean context. The next section is limited to the studies of prominent teacher knowledge researchers that I reviewed.

## **2.4 Exploring theoretical teacher knowledge**

Most studies in the theoretical knowledge domain are aligned to Schwab's (1973) five curriculum common places (Turner-Bisset 1999; Cochran-Smith & Lytle 1999; Shulman 1987). Schwab (1973) explains that curriculum decisions should be based on learners, teachers, contexts, subject matter and curriculum making. Schwab's (1973) five common places indicate the knowledges a teacher needs to be effective practitioners. Theoretically-oriented studies provide justifications for categories that are considered essential for beginner teachers' professional use (Grossman *et al.* 2009; Turner-Bisset 1999; Fenstermacher 1994). According to Cheng *et al.* (2012:781) theoretical teacher knowledge is the knowledge of the "discipline-based theories and concepts derived from systematic knowledge". I understand theoretical teacher knowledge to be explicit and intentional knowledge that beginner teachers acquire from training (Buitink 2009). This is a significant aspect in teacher knowledge, as I approached my study from an understanding that beginner teachers



already hold an array of knowledges from their teacher training, which they use for teaching Literature in English.

According to Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999:256) theoretical teacher knowledge "... bespeaks the educational community's quest to join the other major professions by establishing an official and formal body of knowledge that distinguishes professional educators from laypersons". The greatest misconception associated with teaching has always been that it is difficult to know what teachers do in the classroom and hence it is difficult to consider it as a profession (Lampert 2010). However, through studies such as those by Turner-Bisset (1999), Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) and Shulman (1987) it is easy to identify forms of teacher knowledges necessary for teacher training. I understand that one of the most important approaches when investigating teachers' knowledge is to begin by exploring their theoretical knowledge, which is a function of the preparation programmes (Hammerness *et al.* 2005; Fenstermacher 1994). Table 2.1 highlights the teacher knowledge models that form part of my discussion under this section.

**Table 2.1: Summary of theoretical teacher knowledge models**

<b>Shulman (1987)</b>	<b>Cochran-Smith &amp; Lytle (1999)</b>	<b>Turner-Bisset (1997)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• American context</li> <li>• Focused on English literature</li> <li>• Source of teacher knowledge is from empirical and wisdom of practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• American context</li> <li>• Focused on general ESL pre-service teacher knowledge</li> <li>• Classroom teachers are an important source of their teaching knowledge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• British context</li> <li>• Focused on general ESL pre-service teacher knowledge</li> <li>• Teachers' knowledge of self is important in understanding their knowledge construction</li> </ul>

#### **2.4.1 Shulman's (1987) model of teacher theoretical knowledge**

Due to the scarcity of studies that focus on ESL teacher knowledge emanating from non-native contexts, most ESL teacher knowledge researchers have often aligned their works to Shulman (1987) (Freeman & Johnson 1998). Shulman's (1987)

teacher knowledge framework is based on his observation of an experienced native English literature teacher. Although the focus of this study is slightly different from that of Shulman (1987), his work is important as it acknowledges the need for professional knowledge that encompasses pedagogy and subject matter for beginner teachers. The teacher knowledge model he proposes is prescriptive as it is meant to guide policy for teacher training in America. Shulman (1987) states that teaching is a learned profession and through interaction with the content scholarship, educational materials and structures, formal educational scholarship and wisdom of practice, teachers have the potential to develop the knowledge categories he advances. From observing his participant, Shulman (1987:8) came up with seven categories that he proposes make up teacher knowledge as highlighted in table 2.2.

**Table 2.2: Theoretical teacher knowledge model (Shulman 1987)**

Category	Definition
General pedagogical knowledge	Knowledge of skills of teaching that are applicable across all subjects in the curriculum.
Knowledge of educational ends	Knowledge of the general aims and goals of education.
Knowledge of learners and their characteristics	Knowledge of learners' characteristics based on understanding their cognition, motivation and learning development.
Knowledge of educational contexts	Knowledge of the governance and financing of the school ranging from the classroom, school, communities and cultures.
Content knowledge	Knowledge of the facts, concepts and relationships that govern the subject focus.
Curriculum knowledge	Knowledge of the materials and programmes designed for teaching at a particular school level.
Pedagogical content knowledge	Knowledge of the integration of subject's content and its pedagogy to assist learners in acquiring subject competence.

Shulman's (1987) understanding of teacher knowledge as emanating from a theory of education underpinned my inquiry into the knowledge beginner teachers hold from their training that guides their actions and decisions in the classroom. From this understanding, I paid attention to how the sampled beginner teachers explained the theoretical influence on their Literature in English teaching practice. However, for Shulman (1987), the most important knowledge a teacher holds is pedagogical content knowledge (PCK). PCK is a special amalgam of content and pedagogy that beginner teachers as subject specialists need. Interestingly, Shulman (1987) does not explain how the seven categories are integrated or implemented when the beginner teacher enters the classroom. In addition, hierarchal linear presentation of teacher knowledge in Shulman's (1987) model creates an artificial separation that is difficult to comprehend in the actual practice of teaching (Hegarty 2000).

Shulman's (1987) ability to categorise teacher knowledge from "richly developed portrayals of expertise in teaching" confirms teachers as important in the construction of their teaching knowledge from observing what they do in the context of the classroom (Shulman 1987:1). However, Shulman (1987) fails to account for teaching knowledge constructed from the classroom experiences and practice. Although Shulman (1987) includes wisdom of practice as a source of teacher knowledge, he does not regard teachers as a prominent part of their knowledge construction. Nevertheless, Shulman's (1987) work is important in informing this study as there is a lack of theoretical frameworks of understanding teacher knowledge in English as a second language (Johnston & Goettsch 2000; Freeman & Johnson 1998). Furthermore, Shulman (1987) is perhaps the only researcher whose knowledge base is constructed from observing an English literature teacher, notwithstanding that he only focused on a native speaker teachers' knowledge base.

#### **2.4.2 Turner-Bisset's (1999) model of teacher theoretical knowledge**

Turner-Bisset (1999) expanded on Shulman's (1987) teacher knowledge model. Turner-Bisset's (1999) study focuses on ESL teacher knowledge classification for the practice of teaching as she prescribes a list of knowledge domains that are needed for effective teaching in the British context. Her reconceptualisation of Shulman's (1987) work is interesting, as she attempts with some notable achievement, to produce a teacher knowledge base that contains both theoretical and practical

aspects of teacher knowledge. She did this by reconsidering Shulman's (1987) knowledge of learners and pedagogical knowledge and added knowledge of self to her model. Turner-Bisset (1999) explains that knowledge of learners includes teachers' knowledge of their social and cognitive domains. The implication is that a beginner teacher requires knowledge of the learners' developmental stages (cognitive) and their context (social) in order to provide appropriate instruction that accounts for diversity in the classroom. Moreover, she contests Shulman's (1987) notion of pedagogical content knowledge supremacy in teacher knowledge. Turner-Bisset (1999) comments that all the categories in her teacher knowledge model are interrelated and critical for effective teaching, and none is superior. Table 2.3 provides a summary of Turner-Bisset's (1999) teacher knowledge model.

**Table 2. 3: Theoretical teacher knowledge model (Turner-Bisset 1999)**

Category	Definition
Curriculum knowledge	Teachers' knowledge of the school's programmes and materials for each subject.
General pedagogical knowledge	Knowledge of teaching that is usually enhanced through classroom practice.
Subject knowledge	Teachers' knowledge of the concepts of the subject and the relationship among them. It also refers to the beliefs that the teachers hold about the subject.
Knowledge of models of teaching	Knowledge of beliefs that teachers hold about teaching.
Knowledge of learners	Knowledge that teachers have about the cognitive and social aspects that inform their learners in the classroom.
Knowledge of self	Teachers' knowledge of the image they have of themselves as professionals.
Knowledge of educational contexts	Teachers' knowledge of the contexts in which learning takes place.
Knowledge of educational ends	Teachers' knowledge of the short and long term educational goals.

Turner-Bisset's (1999) inclusion of Elbaz's (1983) knowledge of self in her model is, I believe, an understanding of the social nature of teaching. Turner-Bisset (1999) mentions that knowledge of self is intricately related to teachers' practice in class, as it influences how they instruct. Elbaz (1983) and Golombek (1998), like Turner-Bisset (1999), explain that knowledge of self is the teachers' self-affirmation of what they know about themselves in relation to how they chose to teach (Cheng *et al.* 2012; John 2002). Turner-Bisset (1999) comments that the inclusion of knowledge of self as part of teacher knowledge is critical in understanding how teachers define themselves as professionals and human beings. In my study, I accepted that beginner teachers' self-knowledge accounted for the knowledge they accrue outside the classroom and which they bring into their teaching and which influences the quality of activities and actions during the instructional act (Zeichner 2010; Buitink 2009). I believe beginner teachers' knowledge should be viewed as including knowledges they have accessed over the years in the educational institutions and that influence their knowledge construction ( McGlynn-Stewart 2015; Hackett 2010; Freeman & Johnson 1998; Chaiklin & Lave 1996; Calderhead 1996; Lave 1991). Turner-Bisset's (1999) inclusion of teachers' knowledge of self in the theoretical teacher knowledge base confirms teaching as being complex, contextual and personal (Trent 2015; Cheng *et al.* 2012; John 2002; McLean 1999; Golombek 1998; Connelly *et al.* 1997). I understand this to mean that there is a need to investigate beginner teachers' experiences in class as contributing to the formation of their knowledge base. Turner-Bisset (1999) mentions that poor performance in one category in her teacher knowledge model renders the teaching environment ineffective. Consequently, in this study, I constantly sought to understand the integrative nature of the beginner teachers' knowledge in order to obtain an in-depth portrait of what they hold as their overall teaching knowledge (Buitink 2009; Johnson 1999).

Turner-Bisset (1999) explains that it is not possible to observe all knowledge categories that a teacher possesses during the instructional act, but it does not mean that the teacher does not possess those categories. I deduce from Turner-Bisset (1999) that evidence of the beginner teachers' knowing exists in multiple sources rather than just the instructional act. The use of multiple data methods and conceptualising teaching knowledge as amalgamated from both theoretical and experiential insights was intended to present a holistic description of beginner

Literature in English teachers' knowledges. Turner-Bisset's (1999) teacher knowledge model is interesting as it integrates aspects of theoretical with some form of experiential bias as she, like Shulman (1987) and Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1998), prescribes the knowledge categories that are needed for effective teaching to take place. On the other hand, she aligns with Elbaz (1983), Schön (1983), Clandinin and Connelly (1996) and Golombek (1998) in affirming teacher knowledge as experiential. I am in support of Turner-Bisset's (1999) view of teacher knowledge as integrated, as I also view beginner teachers' knowledge as originating from both their preparation programmes and classroom experiences.

### **2.4.3 Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (1999) model of teacher theoretical knowledge**

Like Shulman's model (1987), Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) also categorised teacher knowledges for competent teachers. While Shulman's (1987) focuses on pedagogy and subject matter in his teacher knowledge model, Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (1999) model emphasises the categorisation of teacher knowledge according to variety of disciplines needed for competent prospective second language (L2) teachers. Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (1999) focus is similar to Shulman's (1987) as they also delineate teacher knowledge for teacher education. Teacher knowledge models, such as the one presented by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999), are important as a theoretical foundation for designing the syllabus for teacher training institutions. Their teacher knowledge model highlights that teachers should know disciplines such as psychology, sociology, history of education, philosophy of education, linguistics, neuroscience and subject knowledge to be competent teachers. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) propose that beginner teachers' knowledge contains eight domains as shown in table 2.4.

**Table 2.4: Theoretical teacher knowledge model (Cochran-Smith & Lytle 1999)**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Knowledge of disciplinary foundations of education	Teacher's knowledge of the philosophies that inform teaching as a profession.
Knowledge of the subject	Teacher's knowledge of the teacher's area of specialisation.
Knowledge of human development and learners	Teacher's knowledge of other subjects that enhances the teacher's understanding of how learners acquire knowledge in different developmental stages.
Pedagogical knowledge	Teacher's knowledge of the general strategies for teaching.
Classroom organisation knowledge	Teacher's knowledge of the strategies that a teacher uses to manage the learning environment.
Knowledge of assessment	Teacher's knowledge of the strategies of assessment in the subject of specialisation.
Knowledge of teaching as a profession	Teacher's knowledge of the philosophies and methods that inform teaching.
Social and cultural contexts of teaching and schooling knowledge	Teacher's knowledge of the socio-cultural contexts that inform teaching and learning.

The model that Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) suggest regards knowledge for teaching as inter-disciplinary. Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (1999) study focuses on identifying teacher knowledge needed for L2 pre-service preparation programmes. However, such codification of knowledge poses certain challenges. Hegarty (2000:453) comments as follows: "a more serious limitation for present purposes is that these disciplines are separate from each other. Each provides valuable insights that inform the practice of teaching but they tend to do so in an atomistic way with no

systematic means of combining different understandings with a common framework". In line with Hegarty (2000), I believe that the separation of teacher knowledge domains according to the divisions and disciplines in the course syllabus of teacher training institutions does not provide a picture of its integrative quality in the practice of teaching. I concur with Hegarty's (2000:451) assertion that "teaching is a diverse and complex activity". This means teaching is multi-dimensional, its unique aspects are limited by prescriptive teacher knowledge models that fail to account for classroom experiences as part of knowing about teaching. This understanding helped me to be conscious of the efforts by the beginner teachers to construct a well-developed practical theory of knowing during the act of teaching as it revealed their efforts of "practicalising" theoretical knowledge to suit their contexts (Cheng *et al.* 2012:781; Buitink 2009).

In addressing the challenges I raised above, Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) acknowledge that the model they suggest for training pre-service teachers will not effectively address teacher knowledge if it does not account for classroom practice. They note that the knowledge-for-practice suggested by university-based researchers does not show how theoretical knowledge translates into classroom practice. Teacher knowledge-for-practice should account for ways in which teachers

organize lessons and units of study, the activities and materials teachers use for various groups of students, the sequence of content matter teachers present, the ways teachers structure lessons and classroom interactions, and the methods teachers use to assess individual and group progress. Teaching, then, is understood primarily as a process of applying received knowledge to a practical situation" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle 1999:257).

Beginner teachers are those who construct knowledge through reflecting, adapting and translating theoretical knowledge to suit the classroom practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle 1999; Connelly *et al.* 1997; Golombek 1998; Elbaz 1983). Thus, ignoring teachers as knowledge constructors is an "exclusionary and disenfranchising" omission (Lytle & Cochran-Smith 1992:4). From the background above, I propose that teacher knowledge is constructed by beginner teachers from theory of education and experiential practices from the classroom (Olivero 2015; Cheng *et al.* 2015; DeGraff *et al.* 2015; Giovanelli 2015; Verloop *et al.* 2001; Hegarty 2000; Johnson 1999). I also concur that the beginner teacher is a constructor of own teaching knowledge, but I hold that they need structural knowledge from formal training to



guide their initial journey into the teaching profession (Cochran-Smith & Lytle 1999; Lytle & Cochran-Smith 1992; Shulman 1987).

Although I have placed Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) under the theoretical knowledge models, their study differs slightly from Shulman (1987) as they confirm that teachers as classroom practitioners are producers of the knowledge they need for teaching. They emphasise that research carried out by university researchers fails to acknowledge teachers as sources of their teaching knowledge. This is not to suggest that Shulman (1987) ignores the practical aspect of knowledge, as he highlights the importance of wisdom of practice as a source of teacher knowledge. The difference between his study and that of Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) is the source(s) of teacher knowledge. The latter acknowledges teachers as the source of teaching knowledge, while Shulman (1987) locates the sources of teacher knowledge in educational materials and structures, formal education structures and wisdom of practice.

#### **2.4.4 Significance of theoretical teacher knowledge models to my study**

A summary of the theoretical teacher knowledge models above guided my understanding of teacher knowledge as emanating from a prescribed, organised and interdisciplinary knowledge, which the beginner teachers acquire through formal training. Theoretical teacher knowledge studies mentioned above illuminate teacher knowledge as linear, which means the models present lists that can be used as analytical tools of finding knowledges needed for teaching as a profession (Grossman *et al.* 2009; Fenstermacher 1994). Theoretical teacher knowledge studies are empirically aligned as they are based on research on areas of teaching such as "philosophy, psychology and growing bodies of case studies" (Shulman 1987:1). I concur with Gitomer and Zisk (2015:4) that beginner teachers as "educated professionals have a general set of intellectual competencies". From the review of theoretical teacher knowledge models above and from the assumption that beginner teachers have gone through formal training, they have knowledge of the following five aspects:

**Subject specific knowledge** of the course that the beginner teacher is formally prepared to instruct (Cochran-Smith & Lytle 1999; Turner-Bisset 1999; Shulman

1987). Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999:258) mention that "the assumption is that it is impossible for teachers at any level to teach students effectively and/or to meet the standards of the various subject matter professions without fundamental knowledge of the disciplines they teach". For this study, this means that the sampled O Level Literature in English beginner teachers held a specific subject matter knowledge that indicated their status as content knowledge professionals (Cheng *et al.* 2012; Buitink 2009; Hegarty 2000). From this understanding, I approached the study with an assumption that the beginner teachers possess knowledge of how Literature in English subject matter and concepts are organised, related and connected to real-world settings.

**Pedagogical subject knowledge** for teaching O Level Literature in English (Cochran-Smith & Lytle 1999; Turner-Bisset 1999; Shulman 1987). Shulman (1987:9) highlights that pedagogical subject knowledge is "ways of representing and formulating the subject that makes it comprehensible to others". In the context of my study, this means that I was cognisant that the beginner teachers have knowledge from their training that enables them to use specific strategies in teaching Literature in English. Such an understanding means that I paid attention to how the beginner teachers use their knowledge of learners' preconceived ideas about Literature in English to enrich the instructional environment.

**Knowledge of how learners develop cognitively and socially** in Literature in English classrooms (Cochran-Smith & Lytle 1999; Turner-Bisset 1999; Shulman 1987). Beginner teachers know how learners develop subject competence from their comprehension of interdisciplinary knowledge of psychology, sociology and philosophy (Cochran-Smith & Lytle 1999). Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) explain that the interdisciplinary knowledge that beginner teachers receive during training is used to create a learning environment that develops learners cognitively and socially. Turner-Bisset (1999) states that beginner teachers' knowledge of their learners comes from their theoretical knowledge of child development theories and general psychology and sociology. This means that beginner teachers know the developmental stages, social nature, behaviour and interests of their learners and use these to contextualise their teaching in order to meet the needs of each learner. Following the above background, I was attentive to how beginner teachers constructed enriched Literature in English instructional settings to assist learners in

reaching cognitive and social development expected at O Level. Furthermore, I was interested in observing the beginner teachers' intentionality in the selection of instructional techniques from their theoretical knowledge to alter the classroom settings to suit the cognitive and social needs of their learners (Turner-Bisset 1999).

**Knowledge of general teaching/instruction.** From their training, beginner teachers hold generic knowledge about teaching. My understanding of beginner teachers' knowledge of teaching is that, as educators, they know the general principles and skills of their profession (Cochran-Smith & Lytle 1999; Turner-Bisset 1999; Shulman 1987). Unlike Shulman (1987) and Turner-Bisset (1999), like Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) and Verloop *et al.* (2001), I place beginner teachers at the centre of their knowledge construction. In other words, I am aware that the sampled beginner teachers are professionals who can discuss their teaching practice using generic terms that are easily understood by other educators.

**Knowledge of self** as related to the practice of teaching. Teaching is a profession that demands that beginner teachers invest themselves in their jobs (Giovannelli 2015; Lampert 2010). This means that what teachers know about themselves as individuals, emanating from their experiences at educational institutions, greatly influences the type of practitioners they become (Olivero 2015; Buitink 2009; John 2002; Golombek 1998). I am of the opinion that beginner teachers' knowledge of self contributes to their ideas, beliefs and concepts about what it means to be a Literature in English teacher (Turner-Bisset 1999; Golombek 1998). Turner-Bisset (1999) confirms that beginner teachers use autobiographical knowledge to form schemata of images of what they expect of themselves as teachers. Consequently, in this study, I was interested in understanding the knowledge that Literature in English beginner teachers constructed from interpreting their knowledge of self to inform their teaching practices (Cheng *et al.* 2015; Buitink 2009; John 2002; Golombek 1998). I was attentive to beginner teachers' self-referential tendencies and how these influenced the image they hold about their roles as Literature in English teachers (Cheng *et al.* 2015; Hackett 2010; Elbaz 1983).

Although theoretical knowledge models allowed me to view beginner teachers' knowledge as a codifiable, systematic, explicit and prescriptive phenomenon, it failed to account for the practitioners' experiential knowledge from the practice of teaching

as source of their teaching knowledge (Olivero 2015; Trent 2015; Lampert 2010; Grossman *et al.* 2009; Hegarty 2000). Hegarty (2000:451) states that "...teaching draws on a multiplicity of cognitive, affective and interpersonal elements. To appreciate fully the challenge of teaching excellence, we have to bear in mind not only the extraordinary diversity of these elements but also the many different ways that teachers can draw on them to construct teaching behaviour". From the quote above, I deduce that beginner teachers cannot be well established as professionals unless they are allowed to interpret their teaching practice from multiple sources of knowing. My understanding that teacher knowledge is holistic and robust allowed me to explore multiple sources of beginner teachers' knowledge. One such knowledge source is experiential teacher knowledge, which identifies teachers as originators of the teaching knowledge they use (Giovanelli 2015; Grossman *et al.* 2009; Buitink 2009; Golombek 1998; Elbaz 1983). In the next section I investigate beginner teachers' experiential knowledge construction from practical and reflective ways of knowing.

## **2.5 Exploring experiential teacher knowledge**

Experiential teacher knowledge is the beginner teachers' effort to "practicalise" their theoretical knowledge from interpreting their teaching practices and reflection on classroom-based experiences (Cheng *et al.* 2012:781). Experiential teacher knowledge helps beginner teachers to "... learn how to do instruction, not just hear and talk about it" (Ball, Sleep, Boerst & Bass 2009:459). This means that the Literature in English classroom is the context where beginner teachers practice their profession and acquire experiences that inform their overall teaching acts (Lampert 2010). My understanding of experiential teacher knowledge is drawn from Dewey (1938:25) who notes that a "complete rejection of traditional education only presents new problems for those who seek a new type of education. In order to solve problems in a new education, educators must recognize and understand the connection between education and personal experience." Dewey (1938) makes a case for teacher knowledge as a fusion of both theory of education and classroom experiences.

Dewey's (1938) work is exciting as it views knowledge as not governed by rules and certain behaviours, but as influenced by the actual classroom interactions, which

develop the beginner teachers into professionals. I understand that practical experiences in the classroom are not inferior to theoretical knowledge, but are actually teachers' contributions to their profession (Olivero 2015; Grossman *et al.* 2009; Golombek 1998). In the same vein, Freeman and Johnson (1998:412) state that they "... believe teachers must understand their own beliefs and knowledge about learning and teaching ... must be fully aware of and develop a questioning stance toward the complex social, cultural and institutional structures ... must be able to articulate, to themselves and to others, the highly situated and interpretative processes involved in learning and teaching". From Freeman and Johnson (1998) I understand that teaching is a learned process, which is perfected through experiential activities in the classroom. From this background, I considered that since beginner teachers operate from different instructional contexts, their knowledge tends to be situational and personal (Lampert 2010; Buitink 2009; Clandinin & Connelly 1996). This means that I was attentive to the beginner teachers' knowledge, which revealed accounts of their contextual and idiosyncratic nuances as informing their teaching practices.

Fenstermacher (1994) and Feiman-Nemser and Floden (1986) also mention that traditionally there was a clear demarcation between knowledge held by academics (theoretical knowledge) and by practitioners (experiential knowledge). This implied that teachers possessed experience gained from teaching and as such their knowledge was not considered as important. The view that teachers' experiential knowledge lacked credence slowly decreased in the early 1980s (Feiman-Nemser 2001). Academics came to the realisation that experiential knowledge was important in understanding the teaching knowledge held by teachers. Clandinin (1986) maintains that teachers were credited for having some experience from their classrooms, but that their experience was not acknowledged as important. Fenstermacher (1994:7) notes that "... the omission is due in part to the fact that we have not had ways of thinking about this experiential knowledge and in part because we fail to recognise more practically oriented knowledge". Experiential knowledge is one of the strands that has allowed teacher knowledge researchers to imagine teachers constructing their own knowledge. Studies in experiential knowledge confirm that teacher knowledge is constructed from a synthesis of theoretical and experiential practices (Buitink 2009; Grossman & McDonald 2008; Hegarty 2000; Golombek 1998; Elbaz 1983). In the next sections I expand on the concept of

experiential knowledge using practical teacher knowledge, personal practical knowledge and reflective practices.

### 2.5.1 Practical teacher knowledge

In her study entitled *The teacher's practical knowledge: report of a case study*, Elbaz (1981) initiated a change of focus in teacher knowledge studies from teacher cognition to teacher practical knowledge. Elbaz's (1981) study was born from her discontentment with the approach to Canadian teacher-based studies that discounted the knowledge that classroom teachers possessed (Calderhead 1996). Elbaz (1983:5) propounds that practical knowledge "encompasses first hand experiences of students' learning styles, interests, needs, strengths and difficulties, and a repertoire of instructional techniques and classroom management skills". From the above it is clear that practical knowledge is derived from the beginner teachers' experiences and is observable from the actions that practitioners do in class. Verloop *et al.* (2001) further state that the concept of practice is embedded in the professional situation experienced by beginner teachers as they carry out their tasks as teachers. This means that when beginner teachers interact with teaching and learning materials, tools and learners in the classroom, they are practising their profession and constructing knowledge (Lampert 2010; Hegarty 2000). It is my understanding, therefore, that beginner teachers develop experiential knowledge within classroom situations by placing their theoretical knowledge into practice (Gitomer & Zisk 2015; McGlynn-Stewart 2015; Grossman *et al.* 2009; Buitink 2009; Dewey 1938).

Carter (1990:299) mentions that practical knowledge "refers broadly to the knowledge teachers have of classroom situations and purposeful actions in these settings". I can deduce from the above quotation from Carter (1990) that beginner teachers are more than consumers of theoretical knowledge – they are experts who have requisite theoretical knowledge to teach and are also practitioners who construct situated knowledge for their teaching (Chaiklin & Lave 1996; Calderhead 1996). I understand this to mean that teachers' theoretical knowledge integrates with their class experiences without the teachers being conscious of it, "as practice is the process of actively carrying out an idea as distinct from the process of having an idea" (Lampert 2010:3). From the definitions above, I view teaching actions and activities that are coherent and respond to practical needs within the classroom, as

the beginner teachers' practical knowledge. For this study, practical knowledge is the sum of the comprehension generated by a teacher in response to the classroom needs, which influences the actions and activities therein (Olivero 2015; McGlynn-Stewart 2015; Lowery 2002; Edwards & Ogden 1998).

In this study an appreciation of what practical knowledge is provides a general framework of understanding what teaching practice is. Prior studies, which are similar to my study, are even more important as they provide effective insights into what is already known. As a dearth of studies on Literature in English knowledge from an English Second Language context exists, some of these studies are analysed in the next section.

### **2.5.2 Elbaz's (1983) model of teacher practical knowledge**

The idea of illuminating knowledge constructed from the practice of teaching as important to our understanding of teacher knowledge, is commonly attributed to the work of Elbaz (1983; 1981). Although Elbaz's (1983) study provides important insights for this study it has some differences that need to be highlighted. Elbaz (1983) focused on an experienced Canadian English teacher as a participant, while my study investigates the knowledge of beginner teachers in the ESL community. I included Elbaz's (1983) study as part of the models I discussed, as she investigated English as a subject and she also acknowledges the practical aspects of the teachers' knowledge which I also incorporated into this study.

Elbaz (1983), like Cochran Smith and Lytle (1999), believes that beginner teachers are more than instruments for accomplishing curriculum goals. Elbaz (1983) comments that teachers should be allowed to articulate the knowledge they hold from their teaching practice. Her argument is that the knowledge that underpins beginner teachers' work should not be focused on what they need to know, but on what works for the teacher in a particular context. Elbaz (1983) recognises the importance of understanding the cognitive process that influences beginner teachers to take certain actions in the classroom as critical to the teachers' knowledge construction. She explains that teachers' knowledge about teaching is embedded in their actions and activities that they perform in the classroom. In line with Elbaz's (1983) comprehension of teacher practical knowledge I approached my study with an

understanding that the Literature in English beginner teachers' knowledge is idiosyncratic, experiential, situated in context and explicit in classroom actions and activities (Buitink 2009; Chaiklin & Lave 1996).

Elbaz's (1983) practical teacher knowledge model is made up of five categories, namely knowledge of subject matter, knowledge of curriculum, knowledge of instruction, knowledge of self and milieu of schooling. Elbaz (1983) states that knowledge of subject matter is shaped by the practical situation in which teaching takes place. She notes that there are different facets of the presentation of subject content, depending on the situation that the teacher is in. In the context of this study, I understand this to mean that beginner teachers select the type of content that they present and how they present it, influenced by the practical needs of the learners and materials that are available for teaching. On the other hand, teachers' knowledge of self is their understanding of their role as professional teachers (Elbaz 1983). This implies that beginner teachers know that they contribute to the field of teaching as professionals based on the image they have about themselves as Literature in English teachers (Turner-Bisset 1999). From this background I was attentive to beginner teachers' knowledge that resulted from knowing their personality traits, talents and limitations, all of which mould the type of teaching that takes place in the classroom (Trent 2015; Elbaz 1983).

Elbaz (1983) elaborates that knowledge of the curriculum is knowledge of activities that teachers are involved in, which have to do with the curriculum. Such curriculum activities involve how beginner teachers draft and interpret the school and national curriculum. Elbaz's (1983) participant was involved in the development of the curriculum learning materials; development of the curriculum for her school's English department and the curriculum of a reading centre. My understanding of knowledge of the curriculum is that beginner teachers who are able to practically break down the curriculum to meet the needs of the learners are in the process of constructing personalised teaching knowledge. From this view, I consider the beginner teachers' attempts at interpreting the Literature in English curriculum to suit their context as part of their practical knowledge. Table 2.5 provides a summary of Elbaz's (1983) teacher knowledge categories.



**Table 2.5 : Practical teacher knowledge model (Elbaz 1983)**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Knowledge of subject matter	The teacher's knowledge of the concepts that make up the subject focus in an area of specialisation.
Knowledge of curriculum	The teacher's knowledge of the documents and materials that inform teaching and learning in a subject.
Knowledge of instruction	The teacher's knowledge of the general methods of teaching and learning.
Knowledge of self	The teacher's knowledge of their personal attributes that they bring into teaching and how these influence teaching practice.
Knowledge of milieu	The teacher's knowledge of the context of teaching and learning.

Elbaz (1983) also added knowledge of milieu as part of practical teacher knowledge. Teachers' practical knowledge of milieu focuses on knowledge of the social environments where teaching and learning takes place. I believe that beginner teachers' knowledge about the Literature in English classroom organisation and the relationship they have with learners, other teachers and the school administrators is important in my understanding of their context-dependent knowledge (Chaiklin & Lave 1996: Lave 1991). For the purpose of this study, I kept in mind that the beginner teachers' knowledge could not be understood if separated from their social contexts. This means that in my study I considered the beginner teachers' political views about teaching and the settings that teachers creates for their selves during the activity of teaching as critical in comprehending their social constructed knowledge.

Knowledge of instruction, on the other hand, refers to the teachers' teaching styles and the knowledge of learning and teaching. I was cognisant that beginner teachers know how Literature in English is organised, how learners acquire literary competencies and how it is measured and evaluated. After working through Elbaz's (1983) practical teacher knowledge model, I realised that I did not agree with her as she failed to include knowledge of learners as an independent category in her

model. I gather from Turner-Bisset (1999) and Shulman (1987) that beginner teachers' knowledge of learners is a significant domain of the teaching practice. In this study, I constantly reflected on how the beginner teachers' actions and activities in the Literature in English classroom are performed with the knowledge of the learners' cognitive and social background in mind (McGlynn-Stewart 2015; Turner-Bisset 1999).

Elbaz (1983) explains that Sarah, her participant, held practical knowledge, which does not mean that she did not have theoretical knowledge as well, but that she re-defined theory to suit her practical needs. I support Elbaz's (1983) view that beginner teachers' knowledge construction does not end with the acquisition of theoretical knowledge, but is rather a continuous process that evolves throughout their professional lives (Trent 2015; Buitink 2009; John 2002; Johnson 1999). From the background above, I was attentive to the beginner teachers' reorganisation and reconstruction of theoretical knowledge to suit their instructional contexts (Verloop *et al.* 2001; Hegarty 2000; Chaiklin & Lave 1996). Elbaz (1983) provides important insights for this study as she explicates that beginner teachers' experiential knowledge is constructed in the process of dealing with classroom challenges. From this view, I gathered that beginner teachers hold a specialised knowledge that "function [s], in part, of her response to the situation" (Elbaz 1983:5). For me, including Elbaz's model in the review means that I embrace the notion that beginner teachers' knowledge is constantly being shaped and re-shaped according to the teacher's contextual needs, and is observable from the beginner teachers' classroom actions (DeGraff *et al.* 2015; Trent 2015; Olivero 2015; Chaiklin & Lave 1996).

Elbaz (1983), in agreement with Cochran Smith (1999), regards beginner teachers as constructors of their teaching knowledge. I understand that beginner teachers are continuously reflecting on their teaching and making teaching decisions and judgements, which confirm them as professionals (Farrell 2012; Schön 1983). Arguing that beginner teachers are knowledge constructors goes against an understanding of teachers as mere consumers of theoretical knowledge (Verloop *et al.* 2001). My understanding of beginner teachers as constructors of knowledge aligns with Schön (1983:42) who states that professionals work in a "swampy lowland where situations are confusing messes incapable of technical solutions". Schön's (1983) view is echoed by Hegarty (2000:456) who notes that failing to

acknowledge teachers as knowledge constructors "leads to an impoverished notion of teaching which reduces it to the unreflective application of rules devoid of insight and creativity". Thus, in this study I considered Literature in English beginner teachers' actions and activities originating from their classroom practices as evidence of teaching knowledge (DeGraff *et al.* 2015; Cheng *et al.* 2015; Buitink 2009; Verloop *et al.* 2001; Hegarty 2000; Johnson 1999).

### 2.5.3 Golombek's (1983) model of teacher practical knowledge

Golombek (1998) expands on Elbaz's (1983) notion of practical knowledge through the study of ESL teachers in America. She studied the practical knowledge of two experienced ESL secondary international school teachers using classroom observation, interviews and stimulated recall reports. Golombek (1998) outlines that teacher practical knowledge includes four aspects, namely knowledge of self, knowledge of instruction, knowledge of subject matter and knowledge of context. Knowledge of self refers to the identities that teachers assign to themselves as a result of the professional activities they are involved in such as that of teacher, mentor and subject specialist. Table 2.6 provides a summary of Golombek's (1998) teacher knowledge categories.

**Table 2.6 : Practical teacher knowledge model (Golombek 1998)**

Category	Definition
Knowledge of self	The knowledge of teachers' self-assigned roles as professionals.
Knowledge of instruction	Teachers' knowledge of teaching and learning.
Knowledge of subject matter	Teachers' knowledge of the content.
Knowledge of context	Teachers' knowledge of the settings where teaching and learning takes place.

Golombek's (1998) notion of knowledge of self is similar to that of Turner-Bisset (1999) and Elbaz (1983) as she states that teachers' beliefs of self influence the knowledge they construct for teaching in their classrooms. Furthermore, Golombek (1998) defines knowledge of subject matter as constructed from the input that teachers have received because of their lectures, their own reading and other such experiences that Golombek's participants had filtered through interpretative frameworks. Schön (1983) calls these interpretative frameworks the teacher's reflective practice ( cf. 2.5.6). I am of the opinion that beginner teachers' knowledge of self within the context of the Literature in English classroom accounts for their accrued knowledge in the educational institutions, their personal traits and abilities that inform their constructed teaching practices. I approached this study with an understanding that beginner teachers' self-knowledge is connected to their personal circumstances which indicate their knowledge construction as idiosyncratic and situated, qualities that promote a complete and holistic picture of teaching Literature in English (Trent 2015; Buitink 2009; Chaiklin & Lave 1996 ). Importantly, I noted how the Literature in English beginner teachers' sense of self "naturally grows and adapts to the specific contexts" (Giovanelli 2015:2). From this background, I was attentive to the beginner teachers' descriptions of how their self-knowledge informed their teaching actions and activities in the Literature in English classroom (Giovanelli 2015; Trent 2015; Golombek 1998).

Golombek (1998) includes knowledge of context, which is the actual situation where teaching takes place, as part of her model. She elaborates that the institutional and socio-political settings of a given education situation determine how teaching happens in the classroom. In line with Golombek (1998), I also view beginner teachers' knowledge as influenced by the socio-cultural dimensions of the school. For the purpose of this study, I accepted that the beginner teachers' Literature in English knowledge construction from a broader perspective that allowed me to see their specific socio-cultural nuances as influencing their knowledge construction. Thus, I paid attention to how the sampled beginner teachers explained the teaching knowledge they constructed from knowing the school ethos and culture (Lampert 2010; Feldman 1997).

Based on the constructs it deals with, my study is similar to Golombek's (1998). Golombek (1998) understands teacher knowledge as characterised by personal and

practical knowledge, a notion also discussed by Connelly *et al.* (1997). This is an important point in my study, as I investigated beginner teachers' knowledge influenced by the belief that they develop teaching knowledge from personal and practical situations. From her study, Golombek (1998) acknowledges that teachers are able to construct knowledge they use in their daily activities. This implies that I view Literature in English beginner teachers as part of their knowledge construction, which results from their teaching practices informed by the decisions they take as knowers in their workplace (Farrell 2012; Schön 1983). Although similar in some respects, my study also differs from Golombek's (1998). My research was aimed at exploring knowledge that beginner teachers hold in Literature in English, while Golombek's study concentrated on the teaching of language by experienced ESL teachers. In the Zimbabwean context, however, English Language and Literature in English are taught as separate subjects. My study offers a new perspective on ESL teacher knowledge research where there is separation of teacher knowledge domains for English Language and Literature in English.

#### **2.5.4 Clandinin and Connelly's (1987) personal practical teacher knowledge**

Clandinin and Connelly (1987) extended Elbaz's work and called teacher knowledge personal practical knowledge. Clandinin (1986:8) elaborates that he experienced a "dissatisfaction with the way teachers were viewed. The prevailing view and organization of the educational enterprise gives little credit to their knowledge". Hence personal practical knowledge, as part of teacher knowledge, is a reaction against research that advocates for identification of certain behaviours as proof that the beginner teachers know (Golombek 1998; Fenstermacher 1994). Personal practice knowledge embraces beginner teachers' beliefs about teaching and how it is moulded by classroom experiences and practices to a personalised and practical teaching knowledge that is context-dependent (Connelly *et al.* 1999; Clandinin & Connelly 1987). Clandinin (1992:125) comments that

we see personal practical knowledge in the person's past experience, in the person's present mind and body and in the person's future and actions. It is knowledge that reflects the individual's prior knowledge and acknowledges the contextual nature of that teacher's knowledge. It is a kind of knowledge carved out of, and shaped by situations; knowledge that is constructed and reconstructed as we live out our stories and retell and relive them through a process of reflection.

From the quotation above, I note that beginner teachers' personal practical knowledge is derived from their classroom experiences and the practical dilemmas they face during teaching, and how they personally solve these from integrating and reflecting on accrued knowledge from past interactions within education institutions. I understand that personal practical knowledge research champions an understanding of beginner teachers' knowledge from experiential and practical orientations of their theoretical knowledge – beginner teachers are seen as experimenting with theoretical knowledge in the situated context of the classroom (Grossman *et al.* 2009; Buitink 2009). I regard the beginner teachers' personal practical knowledge as constructed from how they think and act in the classroom as critical in understanding how they experiment with their theoretical knowledge (Olivero 2015; Grossman *et al.* 2009).

Against this background I acknowledge the integrative perspective to beginner teachers' knowledge – I posit that beginner teachers need theoretical knowledge as a formal base for teaching but I also highlight the experiential quality of teaching (DeGraff *et al.* 2015; Grossman *et al.* 2009; Johnson 199; Calderhead 1996). This integrative perspective allowed me a holistic and complete comprehension of beginner teachers' knowledge as personal, situated, theoretical and spatial (Grossman *et al.* 2009; Feldman 1997). I support the work of Clandinin and Connelly (1986) within the context of this study as it allowed me to view Literature in English beginner teachers' knowledge as constructed from experiential practices. Identifying teachers as a source of their knowledge is important in understanding their crucial role as constructors of contextualised teaching knowledge (Buitink 2009; Cochran-Smith & Lytle 1999; Johnson 1999). From this view, beginner teachers are given credence as decision-makers and knowers rather than just mere consumers of their teaching knowledge (Giovanelli 2015; Hegarty 2000; Schön 1983). From this background, I considered beginner teachers as increasingly active and influential members of the teaching community from comprehending how their theory of education and classroom experiences inform their teaching practices (Giovanelli 2015; Buitink 2009; Lampert 2010; Connelly *et al.* 1987).

Clandinin and Connelly (1996) advocate a narrative method in acquiring teacher knowledge within the classroom. Clandinin and Connelly (1995:12) claim that

(o)ur best understanding of teacher knowledge is a narrative one [...] In this view of teacher's knowledge, teachers know their lives in terms of stories. They live stories, tell stories, retell stories with changed possibilities, and relive the changed stories. In this narrative view of teacher's knowledge, we mean that their way of being in the classroom is storied: As teachers they are characters in their own stories of teaching, which they author.

I understand that the use of the narrative design in teacher knowledge research limits the use of only prescriptive academic theories as the only source of teaching knowledge (Calderhead 1996). It is from this understanding that I used the teachers' stories about their classroom practices and experiences to explore the knowledge they hold as Literature in English beginner teachers. I reasoned that beginner teachers' descriptions and stories of experiences in the classroom were evidence of an on-going process of learning as they became members of the teaching community (Olivero 2015; Buitink 2009; Schön 1987). I also concur that beginner teacher knowledge should account for their experiences and practice within specific contexts and how these lead to knowledge construction.

Connelly *et al.* (1997) emphasise that the personal practical knowledge model of teaching locates the individual beginner teachers' self-concept in the image they place on the activity of teaching. Giovanneli (2015:3) notes that "this emerging practitioner self-conception as a literature teacher is an example of ... embryonic manifesto that emerges during a beginning teacher's formative experiences, both as student at a school and university, and during their initial teacher education". From the quotation above, I understand that the beginner teachers' knowledge develops from a broad comprehension of the image they place on themselves as beginning Literature in English teachers constructed from their years in the educational institutions. To explain the image the teachers place on their teaching practice, Clandinin (1986) used narrative accounts of three primary school teachers and discovered that they used images to express thoughts about teaching. For example, an image of the school as a second home for the learners may lead the beginner teachers to think of themselves as custodial parent to learners, which will result in such a class exuding home-like qualities (Fenstermacher 1994). Clandinin and Connelly's (1987) research into personal practical knowledge is based on stories, images and narratives told by teachers from an experiential and practical perspective. Although I did not use the narrative design, I embraced the descriptive and storied approach to understanding the beginner teachers' constructed

knowledge (Olivero 2015; Lowery 2002). This approach allowed me to view beginner teachers as interpreting and reflecting on their teaching practice to suit their context (Farrell 2012; Buitink 2009).

From the background above, I realised that beginner teachers' personal practical knowledge is constructed when they reflect on their classroom practices and experiences (Olivero 2015; Mustafa 2005). I understand this to mean that the beginner teachers are in a continuous process of reflecting on what they know and on what they do – the tension in this process leads them to a knowledge construction that integrates their theoretical, personal, practical and situated knowledge (Olivero 2015; Farrell 2012; Cochran-Smith 2003). In the next section, I explore the beginner teachers' reflective practices as an important source of their experiential knowledge.

### **2.5.5 Exploring teachers' reflective practices**

Teachers' knowledge is a function of their reflection on the practice of teaching (Mustafa 2005; Meijer *et al.* 1999; Connelly *et al.* 1997; Munby & Russell 1993; Grimmitt & Mackinnon 1992; Schön 1987). The renewed interest in teachers' reflective practices comes from the constructivist trends currently experienced in education (Farrell 2012; Freeman 2002; Feldman 1997). According to Freeman and Johnson (1998), teaching in ESL/English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is undergoing such a revolution. One such revolution in ESL is asserting the contribution of teachers' practical, experiential and reflective knowledge to the larger body of teacher knowledge. The use of the term "reflection practice in education" can be traced back to Dewey (1933) and Schön (1983). Dewey (1933:9) cited in Akbari (2007:198) states that reflective practice is an "active, persistent, careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further consequences to which it leads". In the context of this study, reflective practice emphasises the beginner teachers' professional growth and development through a process of reflecting on their theoretical and experiential teaching practices in the Literature in English classroom (Farrell 2012; Zeichner 2010; Mustafa 2005; Cochran-Smith 2003).

Dewey (1933) notes that reflective practice in teaching distinguishes routine and impulse actions. According to Dewey (1933), routine action is largely based on



authority and tradition – it denies the classroom teacher the role of knower. Impulse action is based on teachers' experimenting with the solutions to the immediate needs in the classroom (Olivero 2015; Mustafa 2005). By following Dewey's (1933) reflective impulse actions reasoning I allowed myself to see the Literature in English beginner teachers as active in defining their teaching space. I rejected an imposition of teaching knowledge as universally applicable and embraced a dynamic and situated understanding of teaching (Farrell 2012; Lampert 2010; Hammerness *et al.* 2005; Brouwer & Korthagen 2005). I support Dewey's (1933) view as I reasoned that beginner teachers who act routinely by following the curriculum without analysing the needs of the classroom fail to provide and meet learners' needs, but they construct context-dependent knowledge when they continuously reflect and revise their teaching practices (Farrell 2012; Hegarty 2000; Calderhead 1996). Thus, in my study, beginner teacher's actions and activities in Literature in English are important in determining what they know, as I posit that after reflecting on their teaching experiences, beginner teachers select to incorporate specific actions and activities to make the learning and teaching environment effective (Olivero 2015; Lampert 2010; Lowery 2002; Edwards & Ogden 1998).

Although not specifically written with teaching in mind, Schön's (1983) work further expands my understanding of reflective practice. Schön (1983) highlights his "dissatisfaction with technical rationality" (Fenstermacher 1994:11). Technical rationality is a term that refers to the reasoning that each profession requires a prescribed body of knowledge that practitioners need to be competent (Schön 1983). Schön (1983:42) does not dismiss the place of theoretical knowledge in a profession, but his contention holding to technical rationality seems to suggest a "fundamental misconception of what professional do." Schön (1983) suggests that the work of professions must be understood from the challenges and actions in their professional practices. In explaining how professionals know, Schön (1983) refers to, knowing-in-action, reflecting-in-action and reflecting-on-action. In the context of this study, knowing-in-action draws attention to how beginner teachers' reflective practices lead to the construction of teaching knowledge in Literature in English. From an understanding of Schön's (1983) knowing-in-action I approached this study from an orientation that beginner teachers' knowing is located in the contexts of the classroom and is observable in what they do as exhibited by the teaching actions and activities. (Farrell 2012; Chaiklin & Lave 1996). Thus, I held the beginner teachers'

actions and activities in class and in their planning as *prima facie* of their knowing (Lowery 2002; Edwards & Ogden 1998; Grimmatt & MacKinnon 1992).

Schön (1983) mentions that professionals reflect on the work they do so using reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. In the context of this study, reflection-in-action takes place during the teaching practice. It is beginner teachers' awareness of the decisions they make as they teach and how these affect their learners (Mustafa 2005; Schön 1983). Schön's (1983) reflection-in-action is similar to Dewey's impulse (1933) and Zeichner and Liston's (1996) rapid reflection as the three terms address beginner teachers' minute actions of addressing learners' needs during the instructional act. According to Schön (1983), reflection-on-action happens after the teaching has taken place. Mustafa and Nurdan (2009) explain that the teachers' reflection-on-action happens when the teacher reviews, analyses and evaluates the lesson with the intention of improving practice and enhancing professional knowledge. For this study, this means that beginner teachers immediately reflect on their teaching actions in the process of teaching (Farrell 2004; Stanley 1998; Zeichner & Liston 1996). Furthermore, within the Zimbabwean context, the Literature in English beginner teachers are required, as part of their daily tasks, to reflect-on-action using a scheme/plan book where they reflect on the planned Literature in English lesson (cf. section 3.3.5.2; figure 3.6). From Schön's (1983) professional reflective practices reasoning discussed above, I reaffirm my conviction that beginner teachers' knowledge is embedded in the rapid and prolonged reflective actions which are altered according to the contextual needs.

Stanley (1998) designed a teacher reflection model made up of five levels. The first level is when the beginner teacher engages in the act of teaching. Engagement is initiated by the stability in personal, professional and contextual factors. The next level is perpetual allegiance where the beginner teacher commits to the use of reflection as a way of teaching. The next level is using reflection where the beginner teachers understand their practical knowledge and uses reflection as a tool for concretising it. In this phase beginner teachers explore actions that work in their own classrooms. Sustaining reflection is the level when teachers appreciate how their affective and critical factors influence their use of reflection as a knowledge construction tool (Stanley 1998). The last level, practising reflection, is when a beginner teacher uses the practical knowledge generated from reflection practice into

solving localised problems. At each level the teacher constructs knowledge from personal and contextual reflection. From Stanley's model (1998) I came to acknowledge that beginner teachers are able to articulate the process by which they reflect on their own teaching and what allegiance they hold true within their Literature in English classroom (Farrell 2012; Cochran-Smith 2003).

### 2.5.6 Significance of experiential teacher knowledge to my study

In summary, the experiential teacher knowledge models discussed above, through a review of studies in practical teacher knowledge, personal practical knowledge and reflective practices, provide that beginner teachers' knowledge is personal, contextual, reflective, tacit, content related and guiding. These aspects are provided in table 2.7.

**Table 2.7: Six aspects of experiential teacher knowledge**

Aspect	Explanation
Personal	It is personal as each teacher possesses unique self-knowledge of teaching.
Contextual	It is contextual as it takes shape in different classrooms.
Reflective	It is based on the teacher's reflection on classroom experiences.
Tacit	It is tacit, which means that teachers are usually unaware of using it.
Content related	It is content related, which means that it is subject specific.
Guiding	It guides the type of teaching that takes place in the classroom.

Teacher experiential knowledge gives prominence to beginner teachers' knowledge constructed from the context of the Literature in English classroom (Grossman *et al.* 2009; Golombek 1998; Connelly *et al.* 1997). John (2002) claims that empirical evidence that is used to support the codification of teacher knowledge is based on a wrong premise, as teaching is a social activity. The argument that teacher knowledge can be informed by research-based theories is difficult to explain, as teachers are

able to define their own knowledge through reflecting on their actions and activities in the classroom (Akbari 2007; Mustafa 2005; Connelly *et al.* 1997; Fenstermacher 1994). Lampert and Golombek (1998) maintain that by imposing a body of knowledge on beginner teachers and by rejecting their experiences in the classroom is a separation that creates tensions and aloofness that fails to improve teaching practice. Against this background, I chose to understand that beginner teachers come to know, informed by both theory of education, practice and experiences in the classroom. I chose to illuminate the beginner teachers' knowledge even though they were teaching Literature in English for the first time. I was aware that they had accrued experiential knowledge from teaching English Language and from their experiences as former Literature in English learners, which they use to inform their teaching practice in the Literature in English classroom (DeGraff *et al.* 2015; Gordon 2012; Ncube 2001). From this reasoning, I approached my study from an understanding that no one aspect of theoretical and experiential knowledge should be regarded more important than the other, but that a symbiotic relationship should be emphasised (cf. section 2.6; figure 2.3; DeGraff *et al.* 2015; John 2002; Golombek 1998).

Experiential teacher knowledge "is a way of organising and re-organising past experiences, it embodies a person's experience, finds expression in practice; and is the perspective from which new experience is taken" (Clandinin 1986:5). Thus, experiential teacher knowledge is both personal and practical. Experiential teacher knowledge is, therefore, dialectical and situated in the personal and practical experiences of the teacher (Sahan & Terzi 2015; Buitink 2009). In the context of this study, I assumed that each beginner teacher possesses individualised knowledge that influences their teaching decisions and judgements (Olivero 2015; Lampert 2010; Schön 1983).

Experiential teacher knowledge is also tacit, which means that it is innate in the practitioner's mind, but is difficult to articulate (Lowery 2002; Meijer *et al.* 1999; Edwards & Ogden 1998). This suggests that teacher knowledge is instinctive and unconscious as it is embedded in the minds of the users. Teachers demonstrate it during the act of teaching (Farrell 2012; McLean 1999). Thiessen (2000:528) notes that the orientation by which we understand teacher knowledge to be "the image of teaching as knowledge work. Such work ... involves the interrelated use of routines,

procedures and process with discipline-based theories, concepts, pedagogical principles and situation-specific propositions". Within the context of my study I observed the actions and activities that Literature in English beginner teachers embrace to exhibit what they know from both theoretical and experiential knowledge domains.

Experiential teacher knowledge is also contextual (Golombek, 1998; Edwards & Ogden 1998; Connelly *et al.* 1997; Elbaz 1983; Schön 1983). Beginner teachers' experiential knowledge is constructed when teachers act in response to the needs of their learners in the classroom. This means that teacher knowledge is "embedded in the artefacts of context" (Leinhardt 1998:148). Teachers' experiential knowledge is also constructed when teachers deal with dilemmas in class that present them with knowledge gaps (Akbari 2007; Stanley 1998; Day 1993).

In summary of both the theoretical and experiential teacher knowledge studies I reviewed, table 2.8 below provides the significance of the studies to my understanding of beginner teachers' knowledge of Literature in English.

**Table 2.8 Summary of studies in teacher knowledge and their significance to my study**

<b>Studies</b>	<b>Significance to my study</b>
Shulman (1986; 1987); Grossman (1990); Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999); Turner-Bisset (1999)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teacher knowledge can be categorised</li> <li>- Teachers possess theoretical knowledge.</li> </ul>
Elbaz (1981); Clandinin (1986); Carter (1990); Golombek (1998); Clandinin and Connelly (1992); Fenstermacher (1994)	Teacher knowledge is shaped by practical situations where teaching takes place.
Elbaz (1981); Clandinin (1986); Carter (1990); Golombek (1998); Clandinin and Connelly (1992); Fenstermacher (1994)	Teacher knowledge is informed by teachers' theoretical and experiential practices.
Elbaz (1981); Clandinin and Connelly (1992)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teacher knowledge is constructed by the teacher and is influenced by practical needs.</li> <li>- Teacher knowledge is tacit.</li> </ul>
Dewey (1933); Elbaz (1981); Clandinin (1986); Carter (1990); Golombek (1998); Clandinin and Connelly (1992); Fenstermacher (1994); Schön (1983); Zeichner and Liston (1996)	Teacher knowledge is constructed by the teachers in the classroom.
Elbaz (1981); Clandinin (1986); Carter (1990); Golombek (1998); Clandinin and Connelly (1992); Fenstermacher (1994)	Teacher knowledge is understood through the actions of the teacher in the classroom.
Elbaz (1981); Clandinin (1986); Carter (1990); Golombek (1998); Clandinin and Connelly (1992); Fenstermacher (1994)	Teacher knowledge acknowledges the classroom teacher as a knower.
Dewey (1933); Schön (1983); Zeichner and Liston (1996); Mayer and Marland (1997); Akbari (2007); Crookes and Arakaki (1999)	Teacher knowledge takes place when teachers engage in reflection of their practical knowledge.
Dewey (1933); Schön (1983); Zeichner and Liston (1996); Mayer and Marland (1997); Akbari (2007); Crookes and Arakaki (1999)	Teacher knowledge is created when a teacher reflects on practical situations in the classroom.

## 2.6 Conceptual Framework

Teacher knowledge and its acquisition are complex and fiercely contested by researchers (Grossman *et al.* 2009; Verloop *et al.* 2001). Furthermore, the philosophical foundations that teacher knowledge is based on are also very difficult to pin down. I, as most of the researchers in the field, am aligned to Dewey's (1966:344) assumption that "only that which has been organized into our disposition so as to enable us to adapt the environment to our needs and to adapt our aims and desires to the situation in which we live is really knowledge". After reviewing teacher knowledge bases in both the theoretical and experiential domains, I propose that beginner teacher knowledge includes an integrative understanding of both domains (Cheng *et al.* 2012; Grossman *et al.* 2009; Lampert 2010). Teaching is governed by specific procedures that influence its practice, hence beginner teachers require formal knowledge in both pedagogy and subject knowledge to inform their professional activities (Grossman *et al.* 2009; Lampert 2010; Cochran-Smith & Lytle 1999). Additionally, the knowledge that teachers construct for themselves in their classroom is important in confirming them as practitioners and knowers (Grossman *et al.* 2009; Lampert 2010; Golombek 1998; Connelly *et al.* 1997).

From an understanding of the literature review in the preceding sections (cf. 2.4; 2.5) teacher knowledge sources exist in two forms, namely theoretically and experientially. The theoretically inclined teacher knowledge researchers emphasise teacher training as the source of beginner teachers' knowledge (Turner-Bisset 1999; Cochran-Smith & Lytle 1999; Shulman 1987) while experiential teacher knowledge researchers motivate for classroom practice, experiences and reflective practices as the sources of beginner teacher knowledge. However, my understanding of teacher knowledge favours an integrative trajectory that illuminates an exchange between theoretical principles and teacher expertise in a way that these two types of input interact and refine each other (Grossman *et al.* 2009; Lampert 2010; Verloop *et al.* 2001). In addition, Shulman (1986:6) notes that "teachers must not only be capable of defining for students the accepted truths in a domain. They must also be able to explain why a particular proposition is deemed unwarranted, why it is worth knowing, and how it relates to other propositions both within the discipline and without, both from theory and practice". This suggests an interplay of teachers' theoretical and experiential practices as critical to the construction of teaching

knowledge (Grossman *et al.* 2009; Buitink 2009; Tang 2003; Hegarty 2000). I concur with Connelly *et al.* (1997:665) that "personal practical knowledge is a term designed to capture the idea of experience in a way that allows us to talk about teachers as knowledgeable and knowing persons. Personal practical knowledge is in the teacher's past experience, in the teacher's present mind and body, and in the future plans and actions. Personal practical knowledge is found in the teacher's practice. It is, for any one teacher, a particular way of reconstructing the past and the intentions of the future to deal with the exigencies of a present situation." From the previous quote, I note that beginner teachers' knowledge has a historical quality which influences their classroom practices (McGlynn-Stewart 2015; Buitink 2009).

Connelly *et al.* (1997) and Feldman (1997) mention that the integrative nature of teacher knowledge gives it the personal and social qualities. As a socially influenced phenomenon, teacher knowledge is personal, practical, contextual and unique (Hammerness *et al.* 2005; Beijaard *et al.* 2004; John 2002; Golombek 1998; Connelly *et al.* 1997). Due to its social nature, teacher knowledge is also conflict and dilemma oriented (Farrell 2012; Lowery 2002; Edwards & Ogden 1998). Beginner teachers enter the classroom with knowledge from their teacher preparation programmes which they re-shape and re-fine in the face of the conflict and dilemmas inherent to the social environment of the classroom (Grossman *et al.* 2009; Hammerness *et al.* 2009). It follows then that teacher knowledge is a construct of teachers' theoretical and contextual classroom practices (Grossman & McDonald 2008; Rosaen & Florio-Ruane 2008; Connelly *et al.* 1997; Chaiklin & Lave 1996; Auseon 1995). This proposition means that teachers are involved in a process of re-constructing theoretical knowledge as they reflect on the practical realities of the classroom and in the process re-construct new knowledge (Buitink 2009; Grossman & McDonald 2008). The re-constructed knowledge contains theory of education, which is informed by the theoretical preparation programmes, but also by knowledge from the contextual and non-generalizable practical aspects that teachers discover through experience (DeGraff *et al.* 2015; Cheng *et al.* 2012; Grossman *et al.* 2009). Thus, teacher knowledge is a link of the metacognitive processes that inform teaching emanating from both theoretical and experiential knowledge domains (Grossman *et al.* 2009; Hammerness *et al.* 2005).

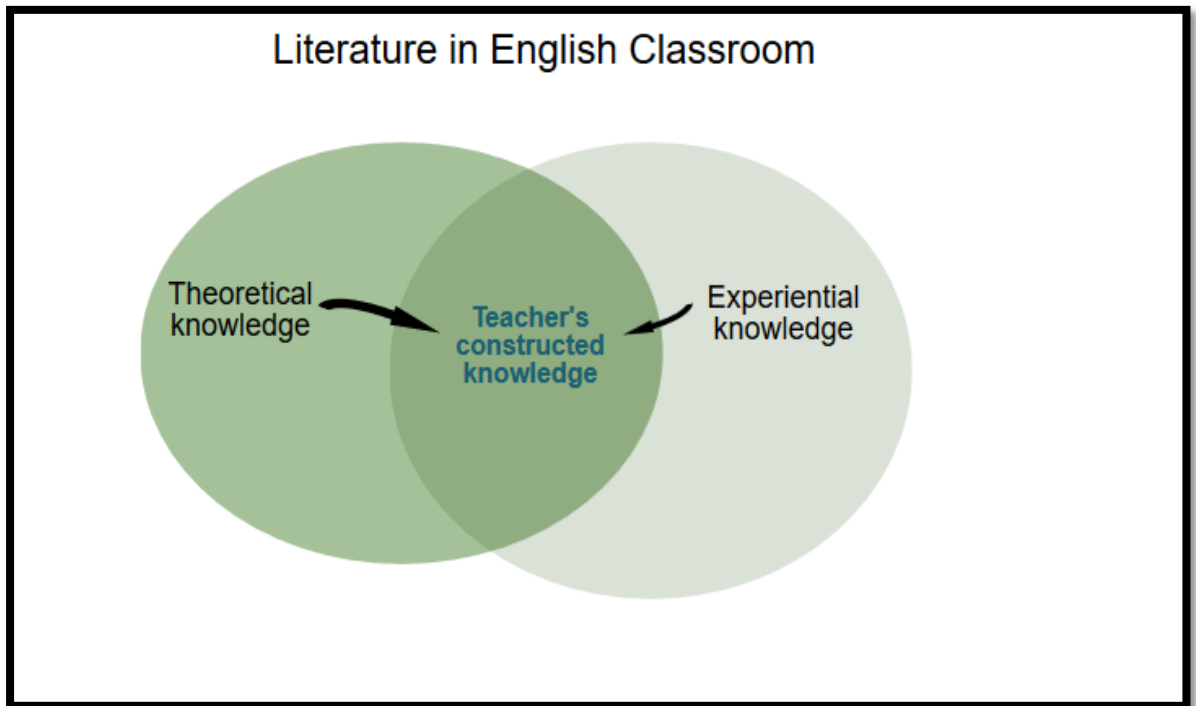


According to McLean (1999:67) "teachers are not seen as narrowly scientific in their work; they are seen as thinking and acting in complex, contextual and emotional ways". McLean's (1999) assertion is related to Aristotelian practical reasoning. Practical reasoning is reasoning that guides human beings into an action from a situational analysis rather than a theoretical position (Fenstermacher 1994). In teacher knowledge, practical reasoning implies that beginner teachers address context-dependent challenges in the classroom using actions which differ from their theory of education. Their actions, according to Akbari (2007) and Mustafa (2005) result from a continuous process of monitoring, revising and reframing their teaching experiences and situations. I understand this to mean that teachers use particular actions as professionals, which are informed by both theory and practice (DeGraff *et al.* 2015; Grossman *et al.* 2009; Schön 1983). Teachers are in a continuous learning process as they interpret the activities of their profession by modifying and integrating new ideas through what they know and believe (Grossman *et al.* 2009; John 2002; Golombek 1998). The sum total of those acts, I believe, is what constitutes teacher knowledge in Literature in English (Lowery 2002; Edwards & Ogden 1998).

Connelly and Clandinin (1990:12) emphasise that "what is at stake is less a matter of working theories and ideologies and more a question of the place of research in improvements of practice and of how researchers and practitioners may productively relate to one another". From Connelly and Clandinin's (1990) assertion I deduct that teacher knowledge is constructed from a link between theoretical and experiential knowledge. This means that teaching is a contextualised process where teachers' theoretical and experiential practices influence the type of knowledge that they construct in the classroom (Grossmann *et al.* 2009; Hegarty 2000).

My understanding is supported by Calderhead (1996) who comments that teacher knowledge is constructed as a metacognitive function of the teacher's own training and the practical realities that are inherent in any classroom. From this understanding I approached teacher knowledge from a holistic orientation by acknowledging the beginner teachers' theoretical and experiential knowledges as part of their constructed classroom knowledge. Hence I acknowledged the individual beginner teacher's unique context in terms of their self-image, educational background, classroom practices and the school ethos in their teaching knowledge construction. Figure 2.3 visually presents the study's conceptual framework drawn from the

literature review on theoretical and experiential teacher knowledges and aligned to social constructivism.



**Figure 2.3: Conceptual framework**

### 2.6.1 Social constructivism

My understanding of teacher knowledge construction is in line with the social constructivist orientation. Social constructivists believe that teaching is a complex interplay between the teacher and learners, which is based on their classroom experiences (Nagamine 2007; Schwandt 2007; Ellis 2006). Social phenomena, of which teaching is a part, must be understood from the social context in which it is produced through observing participants in the environment and how they relate to events in that environment (Williamson 2006; Maxwell 2005; Chaiklin & Lave 1996; Lave 1991). I bore in mind that beginner teachers' knowledge is shaped by the realities of their classroom. Thus, an appreciation of their classroom practices, which reveal their idiosyncrasies and the multiple realities which they embrace as unique individuals, was an important insight for this study (Grossman & McDonald 2008; Rosaen & Florio-Ruane 2008; Chaiklin & Lave 1996).

Social constructivism acknowledges individuals as constructors of their knowledge (Schwandt 2007; Nagamine 2007; Williamson 2006). Social constructivists recognise that individuals construct knowledge from personal and social nuances during a social activity (Nagamine 2007; Schwandt 2007; Williamson 2006; Crotty 1998). This epistemic understanding embraces the notion that beginner teachers are able to construct their own context-dependent teaching knowledge. The knowledge creations exist as constructs in the minds of beginner teachers (Williamson 2006; Crotty 1998). Heron and Reason (1997:277) also discuss this idea as they note that "knowers can only be knowers when known by other knowers: knowledge presupposes mutual participative awareness". I believe teachers' roles in the construction of their knowledge is incongruous with the traditional role of knowledge transmitters; I believe that teachers are active in constructing their teaching knowledge (Schwandt 2007; Ellis 2006; John 2002; Connelly *et al.* 1997; Elbaz 1983). My study elaborates on knowledge generation in a social context. By its very nature teacher knowledge is situational, experiential and contextual (Buitink 2009; John 2002; Golombek 1998; Connelly *et al.* 1997; Chaklin & Lave 1997).

I understand that studies informed by social constructivism are not restricted to what is already known in the field. Crotty (1998:51) highlights that "instead, such research invites us to approach the object in a radical spirit of openness to its potential for new or richer meaning. It is an invitation for reinterpretation." Social constructivists acknowledge that each participant constructs meaning in different ways. Thus, this study sought to understand the Literature in English beginner teachers as constructors of the knowledge they use in their teaching. It is evident from the literature review that an integrative-constructivist approach to beginner teachers' knowledge alerts one to a deeper understanding of the practice of teaching from an idiosyncratic, practical, contextual and experiential knowing which is a shift from a prescriptive form currently experienced in ESL teacher knowledge research.

## **2.7 Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to explore the teaching knowledge held by beginner teachers in Literature in English. To reach this goal, in chapter 2 I reviewed the studies on the linguistic role of literature as an enhancer in English language acquisition. This discussion was aimed at illuminating the differences between

literature as a strategy for teaching English Language and Literature in English as a stand-alone subject. As an area which exhibits a dearth of studies, I also in this chapter discussed the aims for Literature in English to orient the reader to its focus as a stand-alone subject. My literature review indicated that teacher knowledge results from the practitioners' theory of education and classroom practices. The classroom context is an important source of the teacher's curiosity and experimentation of what it means to work and function in that specific environment. From the literature review, I understand that beginner teachers apply their formal knowledge to the classroom experiences that leads to construction of teaching knowledge that is tacit, idiosyncratic, practical and contextual.

By drawing from multiple sources of teacher knowledge construction, I laid the theoretical foundations that underpinned the study's epistemological and methodological choices. From this background, I focused on exploring beginner teachers' knowledge constructed from an amalgamation of their theoretical and experiential practices within the context of the Literature in English classroom.



## Chapter 3

### Research Design

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#### 3.1 Introduction

In chapter 2, I addressed the significance of this study by discussing teacher knowledge studies in ESL. In addition, I looked at the importance of including Literature in English in the school curriculum. I also identified the knowledge gaps in existing teacher knowledge research and discussed the conceptual framework that influenced my understanding of teacher knowledge. In chapter 3, I discuss the research methodology followed in exploring teacher knowledge in Literature in English. The chapter provides details of the paradigmatic orientation, methodological design, and methods for data collection, data analysis, quality criteria, and the ethical measures followed in the study. A summary of the research design that I followed is presented in table 3.1.

**Table 3.1 Summary of research design**

Research questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What teaching knowledge do beginner teachers come to possess for teaching Literature in English from their theory of education and experiential practice?             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. What gaps exist in beginner teachers' knowledge of Literature in English?</li> <li>b. How do beginner teachers of Literature in English address the gaps, if any, in their knowledge?</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
Epistemological paradigm	Interpretivism
Methodological paradigm	Qualitative
Research design	Single case study
Selection of participants	Purposive sampling <b>Criteria</b> ➤ Literature in English beginner teachers in

	<p>the Bulawayo Province in Zimbabwe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Beginner teachers teaching O Level Literature in English for the first time but who had taught other subjects in the school curriculum for fewer than four years</li> <li>➤ Literature in English beginner teachers who had taught the same O Level learners from 2013 to 2014</li> </ul>
Data collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Non-participant classroom observation</li> <li>➤ Document analysis</li> <li>➤ Semi-structured interviews</li> <li>➤ Field notes</li> </ul>
Ethical considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Ethical considerations</li> <li>➤ Informed consent</li> <li>➤ Protecting participants from harm</li> <li>➤ Confidentiality and anonymity</li> </ul>
Strategies of enhancing trustworthiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Credibility: triangulation, crystallization, peer debriefing, member checking</li> <li>➤ Transferability: thick descriptions and purposive sampling</li> <li>➤ Dependability: audit trail, video recordings, audio recordings, field notes and transcriptions</li> <li>➤ Conformability: reflexivity and audit trail</li> </ul>

### 3.2 Epistemological paradigm

#### 3.2.1 Interpretivism

An interpretivist framework was used as the theoretical lens that frames the argument of my study (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009; Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln 2005). The interpretivist paradigm emphasizes meaning and understanding of participants' activities within their contexts (Creswell, 2013;

Nieuwenhuis 2007). The interpretivist paradigm is concerned with descriptive analysis of participants' understanding of their lived experiences within a historical context (Creswell, 2013; Henning, Rensburg & Smit 2011; Mertens 2014; Chaiklin & Lave 1996). I favoured the interpretivist paradigm for this research as I aimed at understanding Literature in English beginner teachers' knowledge. In addition, the study focuses on interpretive understanding of participants' experiences in the context of their classroom, which aligns well with the chosen paradigm (Mertens 2014; Denzin & Lincoln 2005).

Consequently, the research questions I posed in chapter 1 are important in determining the choice of the research paradigm (cf. section 1.6). Moreover, since the purpose of this study was not to prescribe the knowledge that beginner teachers ought to have, but to explore what knowledge they had constructed for themselves as they dealt with the demands of the classroom, the philosophical foundation of this study was properly located in the interpretive domain (Mack 2010; Mertens 2014). This means that I embrace the subjective ontological understanding that beginner teachers' knowledge is socially constructed (cf. section 2.6; Creswell 2013; Mack 2010; Nieuwenhuis 2007). Thus, my task as researcher was to observe and listen to the beginner teachers' stories about the knowledge that they had constructed in their Literature in English classrooms (Golombek 1998; Fenstermacher 1994).

The selection of the interpretivist paradigm was based on my belief that beginner teachers, as social actors, are able to interpret their experiences and assign meaning to them (Mertens 2014; Nieuwenhuis 2007). I understood this to mean that interpretivists ascribe to participants' multiple socially constructed realities (Nieuwenhuis 2007; Mack 2010). As four beginner teachers were participants in the study, I knew that the interpretivist paradigm would be critical in revealing the multiple experiences of each beginner teacher in her context (Mertens 2014; Denzin & Lincoln 2005). Additionally, Mack (2010) confirms that interpretivists maintain that social actors are involved in knowledge construction, which precludes a continuous process, which accrues theoretical and experiential knowing. Interpretivists assume that individuals are involved in deliberate and meaningful actions as they interact with the phenomena (Scotland 2012; Henning *et al.* 2011). Furthermore, Nieuwenhuis (2007) mentions that participants' realities lie within their spoken words, connotations and meaning. I purposed, therefore, to allow participants' views to be heard in this

study. I did not approach the study armed with a list of knowledges that Literature in English beginner teachers ought to have, but I entered their classrooms hoping to see how they practiced teaching and constructed contextual knowledge adequate for teaching (Mack 2010; Buitink 2009).

The interpretivist world is governed by the belief that human knowledge is inherent in the mind and is observable in the activities that individuals do as part of their world (Nieuwenhuis 2007; Lowery 2002). This knowledge is brought to their consciousness through a dialogue between the researcher and participants (Mack 2010; Grix 2004). The aim of this interpretivist study, therefore, is to explore the depth of beginner teacher knowledge by understanding their experiences in the Literature in English classroom (Mertens 2014). From this understanding, I was also cognisant of the fact that, as beginner teachers reflected on their teaching practice, they constructed and reconstructed aspects that enhanced teaching and learning (Lampert 2010; Akbari 2007). From the teachers' actions and activities in class, I believe that I was able to assess what the Literature in English beginner teachers knew about teaching (Schwandt 2007; Edwards & Ogden 1998). Moreover, in accordance with DeGraff *et al.* (2015), Leeferink *et al.* (2015), Cheng *et al.* (2012) and Calderhead (1996), I was convinced that a discussion on teacher knowledge should identify practitioners as the source of that knowledge. Interpretivism provided me with a theoretical base through which I viewed beginner teacher knowledge constructed from the context within which it was practiced (Grossman *et al.* 2009; Buitink 2009; Hammerness *et al.* 2005). I understood that participants are able to make value judgements about the phenomena as they interact with them (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007). From this understanding I undertook this study from a view that knowledge is constructed and exists in multiple realities of the four Literature in English classrooms I observed (Kalof, Dan & Dietz 2008).

The strength of adopting interpretivism as the paradigmatic approach came from my understanding that beginner teachers' reality is a result of their individual consciousness and is located in specific classrooms (Nieuwenhuis 2007; Crookes & Arakaki 1999). I hold that beginner teacher knowledge is a product of teachers' reflections on the needs and challenges of their classrooms (Stanley 1998; Crookes & Arakaki 1999). I believe that teacher knowledge is relative as it is justified by the mind that has created it (Nieuwenhuis 2007; Scotland 2012), and I believe that



teacher knowledge has no single reality as it is made up of multiple realities. These realities are subjective and defined by the beginner teachers' lived experiences within their contexts (Wahyuni, 2012; Denzin & Lincoln 2005).

### **3.2.2 Application of interpretivism to the study**

The interpretivist paradigm is applied in this study through a discussion of its ontological, epistemological, methodological and axiological aspects (Creswell 2013; Mertens 2014; Kalof *et al.* 2008; Nieuwenhuis 2007).

*Ontology:* Interpretivists believe that reality does not exist in singular form but in multiple realities (Mertens 2014; Henning *et al.* 2011). I acknowledged that each participant's teaching knowledge was subjective and true to her context (Leeferink *et al.* 2015; Mertens 2014). From this ontological position, I took cognisance of the fact that teacher knowledge exists in multiple realities, as individual beginner teachers deal with various situations in their Literature in English classrooms differently (Creswell 2013; Nieuwenhuis 2007; Hegarty 2000). Such a premise highlights that a beginner teacher's reality in the classroom is subjectively understood, as no two individuals can have the same lived experiences (Mertens 2014; Denzin & Lincoln 2005). I believe that beginner teachers may have similar views about some aspect of knowledge, but that these cannot be explained from one reality. In rare situations, where beginner teachers have similar experiences, their constructs differ (John 2002; Golombek 1998; Fenstermacher 1994). Clandinin and Connelly (1996) and Elbaz (1983) note that individuals' interpretive frameworks filter their experiences and in the process they construct a special kind of knowledge which is personal and contextual (John 2002; Golombek 1998; Elbaz 1983).

I focused on understanding the knowledge that beginner teachers had constructed from their social environment (Schwandt 2007; Nagamine 2007). I was cognisant of the social environments that influenced the teachers to assign meaning to their practice of teaching (cf. section 2.6; Lincoln Lynham & Guba 2011). I recognised that Literature in English beginner teacher knowledge could not be explained divorced from social elements such as the curriculum, philosophical underpinnings, religious inclination, and philosophical stances on teaching, school expectations, culture, and political milieus (Buitink 2009; Verloop *et al.* 2001; Hegarty 2000). Thus, in this study

the adoption of a case study design was a pragmatic decision aimed at enhancing the contextual description of each beginner teacher's social realities as a way of accurately capturing how they influence their knowledge construction (Yin 2014; cf. section 3.3.2).

In addition, I assumed that the reality of teacher knowledge does not exist outside of the practising beginner teacher. Lichtman (2010) underscores that that reality is a product of the individual consciousness, moulded by practice and experiences (cf. section 2.6). This means that teacher knowledge is experiential and is founded within the needs of the learners in the Literature in English classroom (McGlynn-Stewart 2015; Buitink 2009). I then reasoned that teacher knowledge is found in each beginner teacher's stories about their professional experiences, which I came to understand through observations, document analysis, and interviews (Mertens 2014; Golombek 1998)

*Epistemology:* The epistemological notion of interpretivism is that researchers and participants are co-constructors of knowledge (Mertens 2014; Nieuwenhuis 2007). I created a "personal and interactive" relationship with the participants in order to understand their world (Mertens 2014:19). I assumed that knowledge is a communal element and that it is enhanced by the fiduciary and depositary relationship between the participants and the inquirer (Henning *et al.* 2011; Ellis 2006). As an interpretivist researcher, I held that Literature in English beginner teachers' knowledge is informed by their values and beliefs about teaching that they have accrued from their experiences in educational institutions (Nieuwenhuis 2007; cf. section 2.6). I understood that the participants and I, as a researcher, were partners in the creation of knowledge, but as we were unfamiliar to one another, there was a need to create such a relationship (Mertens 2014; Nieuwenhuis 2007). The prolonged fieldwork and self-disclosure helped me gain the participants' trust in order for me to enhance my understanding of the beginner teachers' experiences in their Literature in English classrooms (Dwyer & Buckle 2009; Watt 2007).

*Methodology:* Interpretivists believe that "human life can be assumed from within" (Nieuwenhuis 2007:59). This means that human life is observed from its subjective experiences (Mertens 2014). From this understanding I embraced a qualitative and case study design as methodology. The interpretivist methodological assumption is

that research should capture everyday constructs of how participants interpret social life (Creswell 2013). I used qualitative methods of data collection that included non-participant observations, document analysis and semi-structured interviews to allow participants to understand the world holistically (Creswell 2013; Mertens 2014). The use of these research methods came from an awareness that they had the potential to allow the participants to discuss in-depth experiences about their teaching (Creswell 2013; Mertens 2014; Nieuwenhuis 2007). The use of the research methods I selected allowed for a rich understanding of teacher knowledge from theoretical and experiential perspectives (Olivero 2015; Grossman *et al.* 2009).

*Axiology:* I was aware that, as a qualitative researcher, I held certain values and beliefs about the teaching of Literature in English, emanating from my dual role as a researcher-teacher (Lincoln, Lynham & Guba 2011; Wahyuni, 2012). I wrote issues of reflexivity in my researcher's journal, as I was aware that I could not conceal my values and lived experiences from the research process (Neuman 2011). I used the research journal to detail my thoughts and feelings about what I had observed and heard during the fieldwork and data analysis. This continuous process of sieving through and reflecting on my thoughts and feelings assisted me in engaging with the data in ways that gave the participants' voices prominence (Wahyuni 2012).

### **3.3 Research design and methodology**

#### **3.3.1 Qualitative approach**

In order to explore the knowledge that Literature in English beginner teachers hold, I used a qualitative approach. Qualitative research allows for attitudes associated with a phenomenon to be understood in the context of occurrence (Suter 2006). This means that qualitative research answers the what, why and how of a process (Charmaz 2006). Qualitative researchers explore social phenomena and meaning derived from those who interact with such phenomena (Creswell 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Cohen *et al.* 2007). A qualitative researcher seeks to gain understanding of human experiences through the meaning that social actors ascribe to the activities they participate in (Creswell 2013; Theron & Malindi 2012; Leedy & Ormrod 2005). Qualitative studies are, thus, context-bound (Denzin & Lincoln 2011). I believe that the Literature in English classrooms provide the context in which

beginner teacher knowledge is constructed. I understand that human actions are best understood from the context they originate from (Henning *et al.* 2011). I viewed my participants' actions and activities in the classroom as a historical story which contained their practices and experiences of being Literature in English teachers (Lowery 2002; John 2002; Golombek 1998).

The purpose of my study was to provide rich and thick descriptions of the knowledge possessed by Literature in English beginner teachers (Mertens 2014; Theron & Malindi 2012). I was interested in enhancing my understanding of how beginner teachers define their own knowledge from their lived experiences (Lichtman 2010). In line with the qualitative tradition, I focused on discovering meaning assigned by the beginner teachers to their classroom actions and activities (Creswell 2013). The qualitative position I assumed highlighted my commitment to capturing the participant's world through observing, analysing and listening to the meaning they assigned to themselves as teachers (Creswell 2013). Furthermore, I was aware that by selecting qualitative research as my method, I had to approach the study of teacher knowledge holistically (Creswell 2013). I sought to present a complex picture of teacher knowledge in its theoretical and experiential forms (Creswell 2013; Golombek 1998; cf. section 2.6). I was cognisant that teacher knowledge accumulated with the beginner teacher's history and by reporting on multiple sources, I managed to capture such a picture from my participants' contexts (Yin 2014; Creswell 2013; Mertens 2014; Denzin & Lincoln 2005; Stake 2005).

The knowledge generated in qualitative research is derived from participants in their natural surroundings (Creswell 2013; Johnson & Christensen 2012; McMillan & Schumacher 2010). My study fits well into the qualitative approach as I studied participants in their natural surroundings (Literature in English classroom). In addition, the use of the emic approach to my study assisted me as the primary data instrument to immerse myself in the data and interpret them from the participants' perspectives. As the primary research instrument, I was able to experience for myself the subjective meaning that participants had assigned to teaching Literature in English (Creswell 2013; Lichtman 2010; Nieuwenhuis 2007). Moreover, the inductive approach provided the theoretical lens through which I analysed participants' socially constructed realities from the meanings they assigned to teaching Literature in

English (Creswell 2013; Denzin & Lincoln 2005). From this position, I was able to illuminate the participants' experiences as Literature in English beginner teachers.

### **3.3.1.1 Strengths and limitations of qualitative approach**

As an interpretivist researcher, I embraced the qualitative approach as it provided the participants with a voice to share their experiences as Literature in English beginner teachers (Mertens 2014; Creswell 2013; Theron & Malindi 2012). I was aware that employing a qualitative viewpoint to my study provided in-depth details of the experiences that moulded the type of teaching knowledge that the participants held (Creswell 2013; Johnson & Christensen 2012; Henning *et al.* 2011; McMillan & Schumacher 2010). Moreover, I was aware that qualitative studies stimulate participants into providing a complex and detailed picture of their world (Mertens 2014; Creswell 2013). As I did not intend to prescribe the teaching knowledge that Literature in English teachers ought to have, a qualitative inquiry was, thus, important in highlighting the participants' descriptions of their world as beginner teachers (Mertens 2014; Creswell 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Cohen *et al.* 2007).

Qualitative research has inherent limitations, notwithstanding the strengths I mentioned previously. The qualitative inquiry is latently designed for smaller samples due to its emphasis on understanding context-rich data (Creswell 2013; Johnson & Christensen 2012; Henning *et al.* 2011; McMillan & Schumacher 2010). For this, qualitative research is criticised for its inability to extend to wider populations (Tashakkori & Teddlie 1998). I believe that my study, as a qualitative case study, is important in informing other methodological orientations as part of future studies in Literature in English teacher knowledge bases (Yin 2014; Stake 2005).

As the researcher is the main research instrument in qualitative research, it is often said that personal bias is intrinsic to its nature (Denzin & Lincoln 2011; Miles & Huberman 1994). I addressed this limitation in my study by the use of field notes, which my supervisors continuously reviewed in an attempt to identify areas of bias. Moreover, multiple data collection methods were used to create a holistic picture of sources of teacher knowledge (Creswell 2013).

### 3.3.2 Case study

The use of the case study in qualitative inquiries usually falls into two approaches (Creswell 2013). In the first approach, researchers choose what is to be studied and focus on the unit of analysis (Stake 2005). From this approach, Merriam (2009) defines a case study as an intensive and holistic analysis of a single social unit. In this regard, beginner teachers' knowledge in this study was understood as a single social unit that was viewed holistically from their Literature in English classroom (cf. figure 2.2)

In the second approach, a case study is mentioned as "an empirical enquiry to investigate a contemporary phenomenon in real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin 2014:13). From Yin's definition, a case study is a research strategy of inquiry. The focus of a case study as an inquiry is on contemporary issues, real-life contexts, and relationships between the phenomenon and contexts (Creswell 2013; Denzin & Lincoln 2005). My study fits the second approach perfectly as I regarded beginner teachers' knowledge as a contemporary phenomenon that educational researchers have only recently considered as researchable (Johnson 1999; Freeman & Johnson 1998; Fenstermacher 1994). Studies in teacher knowledge in ESL/EFL have concentrated on the language aspect of English, while Literature in English as a stand-alone subject in ESL/EFL has to date not been explored (Gordon 2012).

Each of the approaches to case studies mentioned above revealed a strength that I wanted to include for the general understanding of beginner teachers' knowledge. I chose to embrace both approaches. This means that I regarded a case study as both a choice of what is to be studied and a strategy of research. Both approaches allowed me to explore beginner teachers' knowledge as a bounded unit contextualised to the Literature in English classroom (Yin 2014; Creswell 2013; Denzin & Lincoln 2005; Stake 2005).

Apart from the two approaches mentioned above, Yin (2014) notes that two types of case studies exist, namely single case and multiple case studies. A multiple case study enables an investigator to explore differences among cases with the intention of replicating the findings across the cases (Yin 2014). A single case study, on the

other hand, is used for critical cases where a researcher intends to "confirm, challenge or extend a theory" (Yin 2014:38). Single case studies are also employed when a researcher specifically includes cases that are extreme and rare in understanding a phenomenon (Yin 2014). In addition, single case studies are used for revelatory purposes. A study is considered as revelatory when a researcher explores a "phenomenon previously inaccessible to scientific inquiry" (Yin 2014:40). To extend my understanding of ESL beginner teachers' knowledge in Literature in English classrooms, I selected a single case study. This means that O Level Literature in English beginner teachers who taught the subject for the first time were the unique case included in my study (cf. section 3.3.3; table 3.1).

My selection of a single case study was further influenced by the need to explore beginner teachers' knowledge in Literature in English as a stand-alone subject – an area that has been poorly researched. I was cognisant that as a bounded unit, participants shared common experiences as new subject teachers (Cresswell 2013; Merriam 2009). This, particularity with beginner teachers as a bounded unit, was important in my understanding of their construction of knowledge from a continuous process of dealing with challenges inherent in the classroom (Yin 2014; Creswell 2013). As a single case design, I paid attention to the unique contexts that helped explain individual teacher's knowledge construction in order to produce a holistic picture of the phenomenon (Yin 2014; Creswell 2013). The contexts of my study were the four Literature in English teachers' classrooms. I understand that it is in the context of the classroom that individual teachers formulate their teaching knowledge, which embodies a personal, situational, and practical orientation (Buitink 2009). Closely related to the above assertion is the notion that a phenomenon binds itself with the context, which means for this study it was important to understand beginner teachers' knowledge from the context of that particular Literature in English classroom (Yin 2014; Nieuwenhuis 2007).

Merriam (2009) describes case studies as particularistic, descriptive and heuristic. Case studies are particularistic as they focus on a particular phenomenon, situation, event or programme, which in my study is teacher knowledge (Merriam 2009). Case studies are also descriptive as they contain in-depth data from participants who are involved in the activity (Creswell 2013; Merriam 2009). The case study design is heuristic as it provides a better and holistic picture of a phenomenon studied, which

is provided by the use of multiple sources of information (Creswell 2013; Merriam 2009; Nieuwenhuis 2007). The triple definition of a case study provided by Merriam (2009), was important for my purpose to present a complex and holistic picture of Literature in English teachers' knowledge. My study was particularistic as I focused on the phenomenon of beginner teacher knowledge constructed practically in multiple classrooms (Yin 2014; Merriam 2009; Nieuwenhuis 2007). The study is descriptive as it provides a detailed account of each participant's voice as they explain their lived experiences (Creswell 2013; Mertens 2014; Merriam 2009; Nieuwenhuis 2007).

Stake (2005) also distinguishes three types of case studies, namely intrinsic, instrumental and multiple/collective case studies. He defines an intrinsic case study as one that is conducted based on a researcher's innate interest about a specific curriculum, classroom, or book. As a former Literature in English teacher and a current teacher educator, I was interested in exploring Literature in English beginner teacher knowledge emanating from teachers' lived experiences. Instrumental case studies are usually secondary interests of the researcher. Its aim is to provide a base for the inquirer to explore other issues. My study combined the intrinsic and instrumental characteristics of a case study, as I understood that there is "no line distinguishing intrinsic case study from instrumental; rather, a zone of combined purpose" (Stake 2005:237). I found that I simultaneously had an intrinsic interest in Literature in English beginner teachers' knowledge emanating from my dual role as a former teacher and a university lecturer in the subject, but also a desire to understand teaching knowledge in Literature from the perspective of ESL beginner teachers. My study is instrumental as it provides valuable insight into understanding beginner teachers' knowledge from the context of the ESL classroom as a phenomenon (Stake 2005).

### **3.3.2.1 Strengths and limitations of case studies**

I specifically selected the case study design based on its inherent ability to assist me to explore multiple, complex perspectives of a phenomenon (Yin 2014; Creswell 2013; Nieuwenhuis 2007; Stake 2005). This ability to explore a phenomenon from participants' natural settings, which provides a holistic portrait, was what I needed for



a deeper comprehension of beginner teacher knowledge (Yin 2014; Creswell 2013; Seabi 2012; Merriam 2009; Nieuwenhuis 2007; Stake 2005).

In spite of their advantages, case studies are criticised for their use of single units of analysis, which makes the findings difficult to generalise (Yin 2014; Creswell 2013). In line with Yin (2014), I believe that this limitation is actually the strength of the case study. In my study, I provided thick and rich descriptions of participants' contexts as they formulated their teaching knowledge (Mertens 2014; Theron & Malindi 2012). Using classroom observations, document analysis and interviews, I illuminated beginner teacher knowledge as observable, recordable and discussable. The data methods enhanced a vigorous inquiry into teacher knowledge. This means that I provided a holistic picture of beginner teacher knowledge, which could be transferred to similar contexts (Creswell 2013; Stake 2005). I used rigorous quality values such as credibility, transferability, and dependability and conformability strategies to provide my study with scientific procedures to overcome this limitation (Marshall & Rossman 2010; Shenton 2004; Miles & Huberman 1994; Lincoln & Guba 1985). Furthermore, I obtained in-depth and rich data from prolonged visits to the sites that assisted me in presenting a detailed account of participants' worlds (Theron & Malindi 2012; Shenton 2004; Krefting 1991).

### **3.3.3 Research site**

The purpose of the study was to explore the knowledge that Literature in English beginner teachers held. Such a focus led to a selection of beginner teachers from the Bulawayo Province in Zimbabwe, as I knew that Literature in English was presented as subject at high schools in that province. Most of the schools are former group A<sup>11</sup> schools that included the study of Literature in English in their curricula. This implies that the sites were chosen deliberately, as I knew that the possibility of finding the participants I required to answer the research questions was great (Patton 2014; Creswell 2013). The site for the study was, therefore, Literature in English classrooms in Bulawayo schools. The Literature in English classroom was chosen as site for the study as I know that beginner teacher knowledge was situated in the

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<sup>11</sup> Refers to Zimbabwean schools that were reserved for white students prior to 1980.

context of such classrooms (John 2002; Hegarty 2000; Chaiklin & Lave 1996; Lave 1991).

### **3.3.4 Purposive sampling**

Since the aim of this qualitative study was to explore beginner teachers' knowledge and not to generalise, I used a non-probability sampling technique, which allowed me to select participants who would be able to answer the research questions (Patton 2014; Morgan & Sklar 2012; Merriam 2009). I regarded purposive sampling as appropriate for this case study as I intended to enhance my understanding of beginner teachers' knowledge in Literature in English from their positions as social actors interacting with the phenomena (Patton 2014; Merriam 2009). As the study was qualitative in nature, with the purpose of gathering rich narratives, the sample size was limited (Theron & Malindi 2012; Cohen *et al.*, 2011). The use of such a sample is very typical of qualitative research (Creswell 2013; Nieuwenhuis 2007). My study was well suited to a smaller sample as I required a rigorous account of beginner teacher knowledge, which a large sample could not have yielded (Patton 2014; Yin 2014; Creswell 2013).

I used purposive sampling to select participants who were able to answer the research question (Patton 2014; Merriam 2009; Nieuwenhuis 2007). Four Literature in English beginner teachers were selected as participants in the study. The selection of beginner teachers was based on my understanding of their particularity as a group. The beginner teachers were selected using Stake's (2005:238) uniqueness criteria of the "nature of the case, its historical background, and other contexts" as indicated in Table 3.2.

**Table: 3. 2 Selection of participants**

<b>Uniqueness</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>
Nature of the case	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Beginner teachers</li> <li>➤ Holder of secondary school teacher's Diploma in Education (English)</li> <li>➤ Four years' experience as a qualified teacher</li> <li>➤ Two years as an O Level Literature in English beginner teacher</li> <li>➤ Literature in English beginner teachers that had taught the same learners from 2013 to 2014</li> <li>➤ Beginner teacher qualified to teach Forms 1 to 4</li> </ul>
Historical background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Trained at any one the three Zimbabwean secondary school teachers' colleges</li> <li>➤ Post advanced level graduates trained as secondary school English teachers</li> </ul>
Contexts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Literature in English beginner teachers teaching in high schools in the Bulawayo Province</li> </ul>

Table 3.3 provides a summary of the participants who, for ethical reasons, are referred to as Participants A, B, C, and D. As is clear from table 3.3 all the participants are females who have had 4 years' teaching experience. From the demographic information, all the participants held the minimum teaching qualification of a Diploma in Education in English and they had begun to further their education at different universities.

**Table 3.3: Description of participants**

Participant	Years as a teacher	Academic qualifications	Subject qualified to teach	Gender	Form qualified to teach
<b>A</b>	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diploma in Education in English</li> <li>• BEd English (Candidate)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English Language</li> <li>• Literature in English</li> <li>• Music</li> </ul>	F	Forms 1 to 4
<b>B</b>	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diploma in Education in English</li> <li>• BA English/ isiNdebele (Candidate)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English Language</li> <li>• Literature in English</li> <li>• isiNdebele</li> </ul>	F	Forms 1 to 4
<b>C</b>	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diploma in Education in English</li> <li>• BA isiNdebele/ English (Candidate)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English Language</li> <li>• Literature in English</li> <li>• IsiNdebele</li> </ul>	F	Forms 1 to 4
<b>D</b>	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diploma in Education in English</li> <li>• BEd English (Candidate)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English Language</li> <li>• Literature in English</li> <li>• History</li> </ul>	F	Forms 1 to 4

Purposive sampling is usually criticised for its small samples (Patton 2014). Thus, it is difficult to make generalisations from studies that employ purposive sampling (Creswell 2013; Nieuwenhuis 2007). In addition, the criteria for the selection of the sample are subjective and biased as the researcher is the primary data collecting instrument (Creswell 2013; Bogdan & Biklen 2007). As a qualitative researcher, I believe that the composition of the sample for this study was rich as it included the beginner teachers who were involved in the actual teaching of Literature in English (Patton 2014; Denzin & Lincoln 2011; Merriam 2009). Furthermore, to counter the limitations mentioned above, I collected data until I reached the point of saturation (Denzin & Lincoln 2005). In qualitative research, saturation is reached when participants can no longer provide new insights about the phenomena (Crouch & McKenzie 2006; Charmaz 2006). Additionally, the participants in this study indicated their knowledge construction using multiple research methods that enhanced my study's credibility and transferability (Marshall & Rossman 2010; Lincoln & Guba 1985).

### 3.3.5 Data collection

I planned for, and used research methods that allowed for prolonged field engagement as a way of understanding beginner teacher knowledge nuances when they occurred (Locke, Spirduso & Silverman 2007). I believe that the research methods used were suitable to answer the research questions (Creswell 2013; Henning *et al.* 2011). Therefore, I employed three research methods, namely observations, document analysis, and interviews. I used three research methods as I sought for "convergence and collaboration" (Bowen 2009:28), and I reasoned that multiple methods provided "a confluence of evidence that breeds credibility" (Eisner 1991: 58). The interviews were employed as the main method of data collection, while observations and document analysis were secondary methods (Wahyuni 2012; Bowen 2009).

I began collecting data by simultaneously observing and analysing the beginner Literature in English teachers' scheme/plan books. I reasoned that the classroom observations and document analysis would illuminate the beginner teachers' actions and activities that would then inform my questions for the interviews with them (Lowery 2002; Edwards & Ogden 1998). In the second phase, I collected data through semi-structured interviews. During the semi-structured interviews I listened as the four participants narrated what they knew about teaching Literature in English (Patton 2014; Marshall & Rossman 2010). From the interviews one could also identify gaps in the beginner teachers' knowledge as well as the strategies they used to close such gaps when they occurred in their Literature in English classrooms. During each phase of data collection, I was mindful of my intrusiveness into the participants' classrooms, so I took great care to be sensitive and thoughtful towards the participants (Kvale & Brinkman 2009). A summary of the research methods employed is presented in table 3.4

**Table 3.4 Summary of research methods**

Method of data collection	Type	Documentation	Research question answered
Classroom observation	Non-participant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Video recordings</li> <li>- Field notes</li> </ul>	What teaching knowledge do beginner teachers come to possess for teaching Literature in English?
Document analysis	Collected from individual participants' scheme books	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Field notes</li> </ul>	What teaching knowledge do beginner teachers come to possess from teaching Literature in English?
Semi-structured interviews	Individual interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Audio recordings</li> <li>- Field notes</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What teaching knowledge do beginner teachers come to possess for teaching Literature in English?               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) What knowledge gaps exist in beginner teachers' knowledge of Literature in English?</li> <li>(b) How do beginner teachers of Literature in English address the gaps, if any, in their knowledge?</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

### 3.3.5.1 Non-participant classroom observation

Classroom observation as a research instrument measures behaviour from direct observation in the classroom (Wragg 2012; Galton 1998). Observations highlight events and behaviour from social contexts (Marshall & Rossman 2010). Creswell (2013) clarifies that observation is important in qualitative studies as the researcher is the key instrument. As sensor of the most essential elements of the study, I was simultaneously looking at what beginner teachers did and reflected on why they did this (Wragg 2012; Marshall & Rossman 2010). John (2002) acknowledges that researchers, when using classroom observation to investigate teacher knowledge, should seek to understand what teachers do while reflecting on what they saw. To document what I observed in each beginner teachers' Literature in English classroom, I used an observation schedule (cf. addendum L). The schedule

included description and reflection columns. By using this schedule, I was able to describe what I saw and heard in the classroom for each participant. I was also able to use the schedule to reflect on what I thought while observing the teacher in the classroom (Nieuwenhuis 2007).

During observation, my role was that of a non-participant observer (Patton 2014). I purposely selected this type of observation as I wanted to see the beginner teachers' individual practices without my input (Henning *et al.* 2011). I was aware that the use of direct observation could offer me an opportunity to observe things that participants would selectively not talk about during their interview (Patton 2014). I understood that teacher knowledge is self-transformational and through observing the beginner teacher in the act of teaching in a specific context, augmented by their autobiographical characteristics, I would be able to capture what they know through their classroom actions and activities (Lowery 2002; Edwards & Ogden 1998).

I conducted two classroom observations as I needed to see the context in which each beginner teacher worked (Mertens 2014). Both classroom observations were conducted during a double period session assigned for Literature in English in each school. A double period session is 80 minutes (1 hour and 20 minutes) long, which means that I observed each participant for 160 minutes (2 hours and 40 minutes) in total. In each class, I sat in a position where I did not overtly disturb the teaching and learning environment, but which gave me a full view of the class (Marshall & Rossman 2011). I was seated with the video recorder mounted and ready when the learners entered the class.

From the classroom observations, I inductively developed a list of actions and activities that the beginner teachers were involved in, and these actions and activities informed my interview with each participant. An example of such a list of actions and activities is captured in table 3.5 for observation 1 of participant C. John (2002), Golombek (1998), Fenstermacher (1994), Clandinin and Connelly (1996) and Elbaz (1983) comment that teacher knowledge comes from allowing the practitioners to explain why they are involved in the actions and activities in their classroom. All the observations were documented using a recording sheet (*cf.* addendum L) and video recorder.

**Table 3.5: Actions and activities: observation 1 of participant C**

Participant C	Actions / Activities observed
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Praying before and after the lesson</li> <li>- Introducing the researcher</li> <li>- Introduction to the lesson</li> <li>- Encouraging learners to study Literature in English</li> <li>- Encouraging learners to participate in class</li> <li>- Calling learners by their names</li> <li>- Summarising the novel</li> <li>- Encouraging learners to listen attentively</li> <li>- Calling for learners' contributions</li> <li>- Guiding learners to reach an accurate answer</li> <li>- Leading class discussion</li> <li>- Moving around</li> <li>- Summarising the history of Zambia</li> <li>- Emphasising that learners provide textual evidence</li> <li>- Involving non-participating learners</li> <li>- Assigning group work for learners</li> </ul>

Although I employed non-participant classroom observations as one of the research methods, I was aware of its limitations. One such limitation was that participants' behaviour might be distorted as participants often act differently when they are aware of being observed (Patton 2014). Participants may act differently in the presence of the researcher and a camera or they may choose to behave in a way that portrays them in a positive light (Wragg 2012; Bodgan & Biklen 2007). In spite of the above, it seemed as though the participants were unperturbed by my presence in the classroom. The beginner teachers explained to me that as new teachers in the subject, they were used to being observed by the HoDs and Education Officer for English.

### 3.3.5.2 Document analysis

The procedure of analysing and evaluating the documents related to the phenomena under study is called document analysis (Bowen 2009). In document analysis, all types of written communication that could explain the phenomenon under scrutiny are analysed (Bowen 2009; Gall, Gall & Borg 2006; Corbetta 2003). I used document analysis as I aimed at producing rich descriptions of teacher knowledge from multiple sources and at different times (Corbin & Strauss 2014; Bowen 2009). Document analysis focuses on types of written material that enhance the historical context of the phenomena (Bowen 2009; Henning *et al.* 2011). Bowen (2009:28) notes, "documents contain texts (words) and images that have been recorded without the



researcher's intervention". This implies that document analysis in my study served to highlight beginner teachers' planned actions and activities determined by the needs of the curriculum and learners, without them being influenced by the researcher.

I used document analysis as one of the secondary research methods (Bowen 2009). For this study, I analysed the beginner teachers' scheme/plan books to see their planned actions and activities for the present and intended Literature in English lessons. A scheme/plan book is an official document that secondary school beginner teachers are required to have to plan for their teaching in Literature in English. For confidentiality purposes, I could not use copies of the participants' original scheme/plan books, as each page contained the departmental school stamps for the school head teacher and head of the English department. A constructed visual representation of the scheme book is presented in table 3.6.



Table 3.6 Visual representation of Participant B's scheme/plan book

Week ending	Work planned	Objectives	Sources	Activities	Homework	Evaluation
20 October 2014	<i>Animal Farm</i> Book summary Themes Essay	By the end of these lessons, the pupils should be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Summarise <i>Animal Farm</i> using the plot sequence.</li><li>- Discuss the main characters and themes of the novel.</li><li>- Write an essay based on one of the themes.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <i>Turn Up commentary</i></li><li>- <i>Animal Farm</i></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Discussion</li><li>- Group work</li><li>- Report back</li><li>- Individual work</li></ul>	Essay writing	

The analysis of the scheme/plan book was important in tracing the beginner teachers' knowledge in the historical context (Bowen 2009). I was able to trace how the beginner teachers planned for lessons from the evaluation of previous lessons. For example, when learners failed to identify the major or minor characters in *The Lion and Jewel*, Participant B retaught the lesson and changed the activities that she had used in the previous lesson. Such data from the scheme book provided me with a depth of information that I needed to develop a holistic portrait of teacher knowledge (Creswell 2013; Denzin & Lincoln 2005). At this level, documents provide access to information that participants have forgotten or are unwilling to share, and for this reason I agree with Bowen (2009) that document analysis also serves a collaborative role and, as such, adds to the credibility and verification of the study.

I collected the scheme books from the participants and photocopied them. The scheme/plan books contained the beginner teachers' planning for two years, as O Level Literature in English is a two-year course. The beginner teachers' planned in-class activities were important in understanding their practical practices. I agree with Schön (1983:68) that "(t)he practitioner allows himself to experience surprise, puzzlement, or confusion in a situation which he finds uncertain or unique. He reflects on the phenomenon before him, and on the prior understandings which have been implicit in his behaviour. He carries out an experiment that serves to generate both a new understanding of the phenomenon and a change in the situation." From the quote above, I note then that beginner teachers are field practitioners who are able to reflect on their teaching practices and suggest actions, which could be used to curtail future occurrences of challenges.

For my analysis, I concentrated on the work planned for the last term of the course, which was the period between September and December 2014. From the beginner teachers' scheme/plan books, I analysed their objectives, activities and evaluation for each week. I reasoned that the beginner teachers' objectives revealed their knowledge about the syllabus, pedagogy and the learners' developmental stages (Turner-Bisset 1999; Golombek 1998).

The evaluation sections of the scheme/plan books showed the beginner teachers' ability to reflect and solve contextual challenges inherent in their teaching. I documented the analysis of the scheme/plan book using a self-constructed protocol

(cf. addendum M), which consists of two sections, namely a descriptive and reflective sections. What teaching knowledge do beginner teachers come to possess from teaching Literature in English a reflective section. I described the scheme/plan book on a structural level. I described the sections each beginner teacher used to draw up the scheme/plan book. The reflective account was my own analysis of the scheme/plan book. I used field notes to capture my thoughts about what and how the teachers had planned. An example of such field notes is provided below.

This is interesting; Participant B is using the wrong spelling for novel title in her scheme/plan. Instead of writing *A Cowrie of Hope*, she has written *Cowry of Hope*. Further, while she has planned for learners answering context-based question as one of the objectives, she has not included individual work as part of the learners' activities or homework. (Field notes: 20 September 2014).

I was aware that document analysis has limitations. The scheme/plan book, which I analysed, was not designed with my study in mind. At times, I found the information in the scheme book incomplete and idiosyncratic (Bowen 2009). Since document analysis was a secondary data instrument, I asked the participants during the interviews to explain the missing parts in their scheme books (Bowen 2009; Corbetta 2003).

### 3.3.5.3 Semi-structured Interviews

Interviews are used in qualitative studies to obtain data through face-to-face interaction. Yin (2014) comments that interviews are conducted to probe deeper into what participants think about the subject under discussion. I used interviewing as I sought to listen to participants explain in their own words what they consider as their teaching knowledge in Literature in English (Henning *et al.* 2011). My interest in capturing beginner teachers' experiences in their own words motivated me to conduct interviews (Creswell 2013). Nieuwenhuis (2007) suggests that there are three types of interviews, namely open-ended, structured and semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews aim at exploring participant knowledge of a phenomenon through collaborating with other methods (Nieuwenhuis 2007). Wahyuni (2012:73) mentions that the purpose of semi-structured interviews is to "facilitate the interviewees to share their perspectives, stories and experience

regarding a particular social phenomena being observed by the interviewer". This means that the aim of using semi-structured interviews is to obtain participants' knowledge from interacting and dialoguing with them (Cohen *et al.* 2007; Kvale & Brinkman 2009; Nieuwenhuis 2007).

I used semi-structured interviews since my study was paradigmatically anchored in interpretivism, which gives prominence to the participants' meaning of their lived experiences (Mertens 2014). Furthermore, Cohen *et al.* (2007) comment that a semi-structured interview is used when we want to know what participants are thinking about a phenomenon under study. I favoured the use of semi-structured interviews since I explored the knowledge beginner teachers held in teaching Literature in English and I was interested in what the teachers thought.

I personally conducted all the interviews. I did not expect to be emotionally drawn into the interviews. After the first interview with Participant B, I wrote the following in my field notes:

It took a lot for me today not to cry with Participant B as she was sharing with me her journey as a Literature in English teacher. I was not aware that Literature in English teaching produced such an emotional reaction. It felt good to be in the company of those who loved teaching literature as I do. (Field notes: 24 September 2014).

I interviewed four O Level beginner Literature in English teachers, as I believe that they had knowledge and experiences of teaching Literature in English (Golombek 1998; Fenstermacher 1994). I conducted four interviews of 30 to 35 minutes with each of the participants, equalling 16 interviews in total. Participant A's interview was carried out in the school cafeteria, but the interviews with Participants B, C and D were conducted in their offices. The interview venue was chosen by each participant as a place where they were comfortable to sit and have a conversation with me. I used what Mason (2002:88) calls an "*aide memoire*" where I wrote down the questions that guided me for each interview (cf. addenda H to K).

The first interview with each participant was exploratory in nature as I established what the participants knew about teacher knowledge (Rubin & Rubin 2005). During these interviews, the participants also described the knowledge that they held as beginner teachers of English (cf. addendum H). The second interview was a follow-up on the participants' actions and activities I had observed during the class observation (cf. addendum I). During this interview the participants explained why they were engaged in the actions/activities I had witnessed. The third interview was similar to the second interview but I concentrated on participants' scheme/plan books (cf. addendum J). I approached both the second and third interviews from an understanding that "our knowing is ordinarily tacit, implicit in our patterns of action and in our feel for the stuff with which we are dealing. It seems right to say that our knowledge is in our action" (Schön 1983:49). I was aware that unless the participants were questioned about their teaching practices, they would consider them as ordinary and irrelevant. In the fourth interview, I gave the participants the opportunity to reflect on their teaching practices (cf. addendum K). I asked the participants to discuss the teaching knowledge gaps that they encountered in teaching Literature in English and the strategies they used to minimise the gaps when they occurred (Akbari 2007; Mustafa 2005; Crookes & Arakaki 1999; Stanley 1998).

Although I chose to use semi-structured interviews as one of my research methods, I was cognisant of its limitation emanating from the interviewer's effect (Denscombe 2007). Interviewer effect is a situation where participants answer the interview questions in a way that they feel pleases the researcher (Merriam 2009; Denscombe 2007). As a way of dealing with this limitation, I informed the participants during the initial interview that I was more interested in what they had to say than what my research aimed to do. Furthermore, I employed reflexivity where I constantly reflected on how my values and beliefs influenced my study (Watt 2007). My field notes also assisted me in separating my thoughts about beginner teacher knowledge from what the participants highlighted. I was mindful of my own bias and values as I interviewed the participants. I used open-ended questions, which allowed the participants to discuss their own perspectives. I also avoided leading questions, which could have elicited the responses I wanted. After each interview session, I had a debriefing with the participants during which I read my interview notes back to them to confirm whether I had heard them correctly (Denscombe 2007).

### 3.3.6 Documentation

For documentation purposes, I used field notes, video recordings and audio recordings as detailed below.

#### 3.3.6.1 Field notes

Field notes in qualitative research are captured descriptively and reflectively (Bogdan & Biklen 2007; Cohen *et al.* 2007). I used field notes to record the proceedings during observations and interviews (Gall *et al.* 2006; Given 2008). Field notes are used to record what the researcher hears and sees during data collection (Schwandt 2007). During observations and interviews, I detailed my thoughts, confusion, and understandings as I interacted with the participants (Bogdan & Biklen 2007). The field notes were important in my study as they were a tool of self-reflection as I sought to understand beginner teacher knowledge (Schwandt 2007). Additionally, the use of field notes allowed for the initial look at emerging themes during the process of data collection (Given 2008). The field notes were compiled during and immediately after the observations and interviews (Given 2008; Bogdan & Biklen 2007).

As this research was a case study, I captured the physical and social environment of the school and the classroom as I observed it (Given 2008). I captured the general feeling I had as I drove onto the school premises and as I entered the classroom (Cohen *et al.* 2007). I also recorded the social interactions between the beginner teachers and their learners. I paid attention to the verbal and non-verbal communication in the classroom as I observed the learning and teaching environment (Patton 2014). In my field notes, I also explained how what I saw and heard contributed to my understanding of the teacher's knowledge (Cohen *et al.* 2007; Schwandt 2007). Moreover, as an interpretivist researcher, I recorded my thoughts, impressions and criticisms about what I heard and observed as part of the reflective field notes (Schwandt 2007; Patton 2014). Furthermore, I posed questions about aspects that I felt remained unanswered as I interviewed the participants (Patton 2014). In some instances, I noted suggested follow-up questions for the participants (Bogdan & Biklen 2007; Cohen *et al.* 2007). The reflective field notes were important in tracking the iterative processes that I went through as I collected data (Given 2008). I also used the reflective field notes to stimulate a deeper and

richer understanding of the methodological elements of the study throughout the data collection process (Cohen *et al.* 2007).

The use of field notes in data collection is not without limitations. As I compiled the field notes both descriptively and reflectively, the field notes contained my biases and impressionistic understanding of my observations (Cohen *et al.* 2007; Gall *et al.* 2006). As a secondary data collection method, the themes from the field notes were triangulated with other methods to enhance the credibility and conformability of the study (Bowen 2009; Wahyuni 2012). As researchers often lack exactness when recording field notes (Babbie & Mouton 2001), I specifically chose to compile the field notes immediately after observations and interviews to maintain accuracy of the events. I also improved the accuracy of the field notes by making video recordings of observations and audio recordings of interviews.

### **3.3.6.2 Video recording**

In order to preserve the actions and activities I observed in the Literature in English classrooms (Flick 2009), I recorded all classroom observations on video. The video recordings allowed for the documentation of minute, concurrent, verbal and non-verbal activities that provided for a deeper and richer understanding of beginner teachers' knowledge in Literature in English (Cohen *et al.* 2007; Flick 2009). It was important to use the video recorder in my study as I sought to minimise biases inherent in using only field notes to record observations (Bodgan & Biklen 2007). As the primary research instrument, using video recordings was critical in my endeavour to immerse myself in the participants' world (Marshall & Rossman 2010). In line with ethical standards, I sought and obtained permission from the participants, learners' parents/guardians and learners to video record them (Cohen *et al.* 2007; cf. addenda F, E & G).

I was mindful of the intrusive and awkwardness of video recording in the classroom (Flick 2009). As a way of preparing participants for what was to happen (Bodgan & Biklen 2007), I informed them of the aim of the observations and the time that was involved. Furthermore, I knew that the presence of a stranger with a camera in the classroom had the potential to cause anxiety among the Literature in English learners (Kvale & Brinkman 2009). Although the learners were not part of the study, they were



present during the class observations. I took care to ask for permission from the learners' parents/guardians before I conducted the classroom observation, as the learners were minors (Gall *et al.* 2006) (cf. addendum E).

### **3.3.6.3 Audio recording**

I documented the interviews by making audio recordings thereof. All the participants gave their permission to be audio recorded (cf. addendum F). I believe that by recording the interviews I captured the participants' own words as they discussed their experiences as beginning Literature in English teachers (Silverman 2011). I personally transcribed all the interviews from audio to text as I was interested in familiarising myself with the data and maintaining accuracy (Kvale & Brinkman 2009). Although the task of transcribing the audio data was cumbersome, it was very rewarding as I had gained intimate knowledge of the data (Wahyuni 2012). Although I transcribed the audio recordings verbatim, I cleaned the data to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants (Oliver, Serovich & Mason 2005).

### **3.3.6.4 Vignettes**

Vignettes are "simulations of real events, a small illustration" from collected data (Wilson & While 1998:9). Vignettes are used to document textual data of participants' experiences in relation to the phenomena (Braun & Clarke 2013). Accordingly, in this study vignettes were used to document and illustrate important events in the participants' teaching knowledge construction. I understood that the vignettes were also a critical source of thick description which was useful in capturing the significant moments in the participants' journey to knowledge construction (Henning *et al.* 2011).

## **3.4 Data analysis: inductive thematic analysis**

Data analysis in qualitative research includes data management, organisation and making sense of raw data (Creswell 2009). In following the qualitative tradition, I analysed raw data from my researcher's notes and interview transcripts (Patton 2014; Merriam 2009). Through the data analysis, I intended to understand the participants' construct of their teaching knowledge interpreted from their contexts. For this reason I used inductive analysis as a method of data analysis (Denzin &

Lincoln 2005; Given 2008). I employed inductive thematic analysis for its strength as a method that seeks to identify recurring themes from raw data and interpret them to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomena without a predetermined theory (Braun & Clarke 2006; Spencer, Ritchie & O'Connor 2003). As this study was "in search of regularities of the social world, induction was central" (Punch 2009:172). Deductive coding was inappropriate for this data analysis, as the study allowed the beginner teachers' voice in the construction of own teaching knowledge without the use of an already known theory (Creswell 2009; Miles & Huberman 1994).

I followed Creswell's (2009) steps for data analysis. The first step was to organise and prepare the data by transcribing the audio interviews verbatim (Creswell 2009). The second step was to read the data and obtain a general sense of the participants' meaning (Spencer *et al.* 2003). Thirdly, I coded the data into segments and colour-coded segments that revealed similar ideas (Creswell 2009; Nieuwenhuis 2007). This process eventually leads to the grouping of codes with similar meanings into categories (Creswell 2009; Nieuwenhuis 2007). I further grouped categories into subthemes (Creswell 2009; Nieuwenhuis 2007), which I grouped into major themes (Creswell 2009; Nieuwenhuis 2007). The last step of the data analysis was to interpret the meaning of the data from my role as the primary data instrument and from literature (Creswell 2009). The data analysis steps are discussed in detail below.

I closely read and re-read the transcribed interviews and field notes until I was satisfied that data saturation point had been reached (Creswell 2009; Spencer *et al.* 2003; Silverman 2011). The coding process of labelling data began after I had read the transcripts (Creswell 2009; Silverman 2011). In the first level of coding I used open codes (Yin 2014; Punch 2009), which emanated from the data itself as they required no inferences beyond the data itself (Punch 2009). At the first level of coding, I labelled the segments of data using words and phrases from the raw data. This level of coding was done inductively, which implies that the codes were based on the data itself (Creswell 2009; Silverman 2011).

On the second level, the data were coded using axial coding (Yin 2009). At this level I identified related codes and colour-coded them to signal similarity (Creswell 2009; Saldaña 2008). I used axial coding to group and indicate connections and

relationships among categories (Creswell 2009; Saldaña 2008). I then labelled the segments of data that I had grouped as belonging to the same category. This process led me to collapse the categories into subthemes and eventually main themes (Creswell 2009; Saldana 2008).

After structuring and presenting the data at the thematic stage, I then interpreted the meaning of the themes (Creswell 2009; Saldaña 2008; Corbin & Strauss 2014). The interpretation of themes was done influenced by what Creswell (2009:189) calls "information gleaned from literature or theories". In this stage, I placed the study within the large body of studies on teacher knowledge (Saldaña 2008). The interpretation of themes was done to highlight the significance of the study and set the stage for recommendations to be made (Corbin & Strauss 2014; Creswell 2009; Saldaña 2008). To enhance the quality of my findings when the themes emerged, I went back to the participants to check whether the themes I had created reflected their knowledge (Barbour 2001). All four confirmed that the themes indeed reflected their teacher knowledge in Literature in English. As I interpreted and explained the themes, I constantly went back to check the raw data and field notes to confirm whether the explanation, conclusion and proposition reflected the participants' words and meanings (Denzin & Lincoln 2005; Lincoln & Guba 1985). Furthermore, I also had debriefing sessions with my supervisors who also assisted in tracking the process of data analysis (Given 2008; Lincoln & Guba 1985).

### **3.5 Ethical considerations**

As a qualitative researcher, I consciously reflected on ethical issues that had to do with the participants' rights of confidentiality, consent and general sensitivity (Kvale 1996). In line with the ethical guidelines of the University of Pretoria, I applied for ethical clearance from the Research Ethics Committee before commencing with data collection (cf. addendum A). After receiving ethical clearance, I then applied to the Bulawayo Provincial Education Director (PED) to carry out my study (cf. addendum C). I used the letter of permission (cf. addendum B) from the Bulawayo PED to ask for permission to conduct my study from the head teachers in the four schools that were part of my research (cf. addendum D). I sought the participants' direct consent before beginning the data collection (Drew, Hardman & Hosp 2007; De Vos *et al.* 2005). I invited Literature in English beginner teachers to participate in

the study through a letter of invitation (Drew *et al.* 2007; cf. addendum F). The letter of invitation highlighted that the participants had the right to withdraw from participating in the study at any time (Drew *et al.* 2007; Eide & Khan 2008). I explained to the participants how I was to collect the data and how much time would be involved (Berman & Field 2004; Eide & Khan 2008). I also informed the participants that participation in the study entailed them being observed and interviewed, and that their scheme books would be analysed. I also indicated that some portions of their interviews would be used for publication (Lankshear & Knobel 2004). After having explained this, the participants were asked to indicate their consent to participate in the study by signing a consent form (Drew *et al.* 2007; cf. addendum F).

Since the learners were minors, I sought their parents'/guardians' permission for them to be video recorded in class (Berman & Field 2004; cf. addendum C). The letter of information included a consent portion where the parents/guardians signed to give permission for their child/ward to be video recorded (Best & Khan 2006; cf. addendum E). O Level (Form 4) Literature in English learners were present during classroom observations, but were non-participants in the study. However, I sought their permission for video recording (cf. addendum G) as I was cognisant that my presence in the classroom could cause the teacher and learners undue emotional discomfort (Jones & Kottler 2006) and for this reason, I informed the learners of my presence in the classroom through a letter of information. The letter of information included an assent portion where the learners signed to give permission to be video recorded in the Literature in English classroom (Berman & Field 2004; Drew *et al.* 2007; cf. addendum G). During the data collection stage I endeavoured to limit my intrusion in the classroom by being a non-participatory observer (Berman & Field 2004).

### **3.5.1 Protecting participants from harm**

I was aware that the beginner teachers needed to be protected from both the psychological and physical harm resulting from participating in my study (De Vos *et al.* 2005; Israel & Hay 2006; Babbie & Mouton 2001). Although I was of the opinion that beginner teachers were best equipped to share their stories about their knowledge in the Literature in English classroom, I was cognisant that the beginner

teacher may still be unsure and self-conscious of the knowledge they possess in the classroom (Babbie & Mouton 2001; De Vos *et al.* 2005). I ensured and maintained a fiduciary relationship with the participants, in order to set them at ease, so that I could elicit the best possible data (Drew *et al.* 2007; Cohen *et al.* 2007).

This research did not pose any physical threat to either beginner teachers or their learners. It did, however, have the potential to create emotional discomfort associated with being observed and interviewed (Drew *et al.* 2007; Cohen *et al.* 2007; Neuman 2011). The study investigated what the teachers knew about their jobs and this could create feelings of anxiety and incompetence, which could cause some participants to be reluctant to be involved in the study. I set the participants at ease through continuously explaining the aim of and their role in the study (Cohen *et al.* 2007). By building a trust relationship with the participants through prolonged field engagement, I minimised such risks (Babbie & Mouton 2001). The participants were also informed that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any point of the data collection stage (Babbie & Mouton 2001). Furthermore, the participants were informed that they could decline to answer any of the interview questions if they felt uncomfortable or regarded the questions as being intrusive.

### **3.5.2 Participants' confidentiality and anonymity**

I made all possible efforts to maintain the confidentiality of the participants during and after the data collection stage (Henning *et al.* 2011; Lankshear & Knobel 2004) and during the publication of the study (Lankshear & Knobel 2004). The participants in my study were referred to by their pseudonyms, namely Participants A, B, C and D. Due to the administrative roles they fulfilled in schools, the relevant head teachers were aware of which teachers participated in the study. The participants were also informed that the head teachers were aware of their participation in the study. Although I used a case study as my design, I made a conscious effort to refrain from overtly describing the research sites, in order to protect the participants' confidentiality and anonymity (Kaiser 2009; Lankshear & Knobel 2004). In conclusion, Table 3.7 provides a summary of the ethical standards I adhered to during the study.

**Table 3.7: Actions to ensure ethical research process (Adapted from Creswell 2013:58–59)**

Steps in the research process	Ethical considerations
1. Prior to conducting the research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I applied and obtained ethical approval from the Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee of the University of Pretoria (cf. addendum A).</li> <li>- I read and implemented the ethical standards expected from an educational researcher as prescribed in the University of Pretoria Student Handbook and by the Research Council of Zimbabwe.</li> </ul>
2. Beginning to conduct the study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I solicited and obtained permission to collect data in Bulawayo high schools from the Bulawayo Provincial Education Director (PED) (cf. addenda B &amp; C).</li> <li>- I obtained permission to collect data from four head teachers in Bulawayo high schools (cf. addendum B).</li> <li>- I made initial contact with the participants where I explained the aims of the study and their role in the study (cf. addendum D).</li> <li>- I informed the participants of their rights to voluntary participation, confidentiality and anonymity (cf. addendum D).</li> <li>- In order not to pressurise the participants, I allowed them to read the letter of invitation and to consider their participation overnight.</li> <li>- After they had agreed to be part of the study, I informed the participants that they could still withdraw their participation at any point during the study (cf. addendum D).</li> <li>- I obtained permission to video record their charges from the parents/guardians of all the learners who would be present during class observations (cf. addendum C).</li> <li>- I obtained permission from all the learners to record them on video during the observations. I indicated in the letters that the learners could decline to be video recorded (cf. addendum E).</li> </ul>
3. Collecting data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I personally conducted all the classroom observations, analysed the documents and conducted the interviews.</li> <li>- I informed the participants of the anticipated disruptions.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I presented each participant with a copy of the observation video disc for further self-reflection.</li> </ul>
4. Analysing data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I presented multiple perspectives of beginner teacher knowledge to avoid siding with the participants.</li> <li>- I assigned each participant an alphabetic pseudonym to maintain anonymity and confidentiality.</li> <li>- After the study had been concluded I presented each participant with a letter of appreciation (cf. addendum N).</li> </ul>
5. Reporting data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I did not plagiarise my work as I acknowledged authorship and provided evidence for my findings.</li> <li>- I did not disclose information that could harm the participants.</li> <li>- I wrote the final report using clear, straightforward and appropriate language.</li> </ul>
6. Publishing study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I included participants' views and presented thick descriptions to support the findings.</li> <li>- I presented copies of the final report to the Provincial Education Director who, in the letter of permission, indicated that he required a copy (cf. addendum B).</li> </ul>

### 3.6 Role of the researcher

My role in this study was that of the key instrument of data collection. As a qualitative researcher, I collected, analysed, and interpreted the data (Creswell, 2013; Henning *et al.* 2011). The epistemological underpinning of qualitative studies is based on the values shared by the researcher and the participants as co-creators of knowledge (Henning *et al.* 2011). This means that, as the researcher, I was actively involved in the meaning-making process with the participants (Nieuwenhuis 2007). I understand the above statement to refer to the perpetual knowledge creation that is foundational in qualitative studies (Henning *et al.* 2011). Knowledge creation is a continuous process, which means that the meeting between the participants and the researcher created other facets of knowledge, which were previously inaccessible to either party (Henning *et al.* 2011).

My role as a qualitative researcher described above was susceptible to reflexivity. According to Creswell (2013), reflexivity is the researchers' awareness of how their

subjectivity can influence the process of their work. On the other hand, Ellingson (2009) states that reflexivity refers to the continuous process by which qualitative researchers reflect on how their own values, perceptions and actions influence their study. I was aware that by carrying out qualitative research, it was impossible to remain indifferent to the subject matter (Denzin & Lincoln 2005). This implies that I was not an outsider as both the participants and myself shared a common "identity, language and experiential base" about the teaching of Literature in English (Dwyer & Buckle 2009:58). As a former Literature in English teacher and a current teacher educator in the subject, I believe that I contributed certain values and beliefs about the teaching of the subject, which participants as "natives" of that world shared with this study (Kanuha 2000:439). As a qualitative researcher, I had some familiarity with the Literature in English classroom from my years as a subject teacher. Moreover, I had a form of intimacy with the participants as a former Literature in English teacher that allowed the participants to identify with me as part of their group, although we were not previously acquainted (Unluer 2012; Dwyer & Buckle 2009). My role as a qualitative researcher allowed me access to the participants' world that an outsider researcher could not have comprehended. From this intimate relationship, I was able to discuss the participants' classroom experiences using thick and rich descriptions of their world (Unluer 2012; Henning *et al.* 2011; Asselin 2003).

Although I was the main research instrument, I was a non-participant observer. As a non-participant observer, I observed the participants' world without participating in it (Cresswell, 2013; Nieuwenhuis 2007). This strategy made it possible for me to look at the teachers' knowledge in the classroom from their perspective (Theron & Malindi 2012; Asselin 2003). The field notes that I compiled during the study helped me to focus on the participants' experiences and not my own (Watt 2007). Peer debriefing sessions with my supervisors helped to keep my bias in check (Theron & Malindi 2012; Maxwell, 2005). This continuous reflection on the research process helped me understand my own reflexivity, which led to a deeper understanding of the participants' world (Watts 2007).



### **3.7 Strategies for enhancing trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness in qualitative research refers to the truth-value of the studies (Krefting 1991; Lincoln & Guba 1985). I understand trustworthiness in qualitative studies to mean the measure of quality, the extent to which the data analysis is believable and trustworthy (Marshall & Rossman 2010; Shenton 2004). I established trustworthiness by using Lincoln and Guba's (1985) measures of trustworthiness, namely credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability.

#### **3.7.1 Credibility**

Credibility is the degree to which the study's findings are seen as emanating from the participants' raw data (Silverman 2011; Shenton 2004; Lincoln & Guba 1985). Credibility can be achieved through triangulation, crystallization, prolonged field engagement, peer debriefing and member checks (Shenton 2004). Triangulation in this study was achieved using multiple participants and research methods (Yin 2014). Four beginner Literature in English teachers were selected for the study to provide a multi-layered understanding of teacher knowledge (Patton 2014; Creswell 2013; Nieuwenhuis 2007). I employed the use of multiple research instruments to improve the internal consistency of the data (Yin 2014; Shenton 2004). In addition, as data were collected for a prolonged period (from July to October 2014), the prolonged engagement in the field was a way of familiarising myself with the participants' contexts, and was aimed at improving the emic experience I needed to understand the participants' teaching knowledge (Creswell 2013; Shenton 2004; Lincoln & Guba 1985).

I also used crystallization as a strategy to enhance credibility. Crystallization is a process of obtaining multiple views and meanings about a phenomenon through a process of data immersion (Lewis & Ritchie 2003; Richardson 2000). To enhance my study's crystallization, I immersed myself in the data and produced thick and rich descriptions of the participants' world from a deeper and extensive understanding of the data (Creswell 2013; Theron & Malindi 2012; Ellingson 2009). Additionally, I used member checking to control my bias from influencing the data analysis and interpretation. I asked the participants to check the accuracy of my findings and interpretations (Creswell 2013; Barbour 2001). Through member checking I thus

confirmed that I had captured the participants' voice and given prominence to their teaching knowledge (Creswell 2013; Glesne 2006; Cohen & Crabtree 2006). I also engaged at length with my supervisors and peers about my findings and interpretations to provide an external check on the research process (Glesne 2006). In these frequent peer-debriefing sessions, I allowed myself to view my findings from multiple angles, which extended the richness of my understanding of teacher knowledge (Glesne 2006; Shenton 2004).

### **3.7.2 Transferability**

I also took note of transferability as a measure of trustworthiness for my study. Transferability is the extent to which my study could be transferred to other situations with similar findings obtained (Marshall & Rossman 2010; Merriam 2009; Shenton 2004; Lincoln & Guba 1985). To attend to the transferability aspect of my study, I provided thick and extensive descriptions of the methodology and context of my study. Using thick descriptions, I captured the cultural context in which the beginner teachers had constructed their teaching knowledge (Mertens 2014; Bogdan & Biklen 2007). The use of the case study design allowed for the presentation of the participants' experience as multi layered (Yin 2014; Merriam 2009; Stake 2005). I used the case study design as a strategy for providing the readers with a robust understanding of beginner teacher knowledge nuances (Marshall & Rossman 2010; Stake 2005; John 2002). Moreover, the use of purposive sampling, which allows for the selection of key informants, focused my study on a knowledgeable group (Cohen *et al.* 2001). I, thus, provided the readers with an in-depth description of the selection criteria I used for purposively sampling the participants (Patton 2014; Yin 2014; Stake 2005).

### **3.7.3 Dependability**

Dependability is the extent to which my findings are stable over time (Marshall & Rossman 2011; Shenton 2004; Lincoln & Guba 1985). As an interpretivist researcher, I was aware that knowledge is constructed subjectively, experientially and socially (Scotland 2012; Neuman 2011; Henning *et al.* 2011; Nieuwenhuis 2007). I used an audit trail as a strategy of enhancing dependability (Cohen *et al.* 2007; Lincoln & Guba 1985). To provide for an audit trail of my study, I documented the

observation notes and videos, scheme book excerpts, document analysis notes, interview audios, transcripts and field notes (Cohen *et al.* 2007; Bowen 2009; Lincoln & Guba 1985). Furthermore, my supervisors continually audited the trail of the observation video tapes, document analysis schedules, interview transcripts, and field notes as a way of validating the findings that I eventually reached. Preserving the above-mentioned documents provided for a review of the trail of the data collection process, which enhanced the dependability of the study (Schwandt 2007; Krefting 1991).

#### **3.7.4 Conformability**

Conformability is the degree to which the findings of the study reveal the experiences and ideas of the participants (Shenton 2004; Lincoln & Guba 1985). Miles and Huberman (1994:65) mention "conformability is the extent to which the researcher admits his or her own predispositions". From the quotation above, acknowledgement of the researcher's reflexivity is a strategy of enhancing conformability. Creswell (2013) posits that reflexivity is a declaration by the researcher on how their background influences their interpretation of the data.

In my attempt to adhere to the principle of conformability in this study, I acknowledged that my beliefs and values as a teacher trainer in Literature in English could have an impact on my data analysis. This means that, at the beginning of the study, I made such biases known and my supervisors constantly monitored that I did not overtly influence my data analysis process (Creswell 2013:). Moreover, I maintained field notes in which I recorded ideas, thoughts, and methodological decisions that I made during the data collection and analysis stage (Gall *et al.* 2006). The field notes assisted me in verifying the findings and in keeping my personal biases in check (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The field notes allowed me to record my thoughts – a strategy that helped me separate personal assumptions from the participants' views (Bodgan & Biklen 2007; Schwandt 2007). In conclusion, Table 3.8 below gives a summary of the strategies of enhancing trustworthiness in this study.

**Table 3.8 Summary of the strategies for enhancing trustworthiness**

<b>Trustworthiness</b>	<b>Measure used</b>
Credibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Triangulation</li> <li>❖ Crystallization</li> <li>❖ Prolonged engagement</li> <li>❖ Peer debriefing</li> <li>❖ Member checking</li> </ul>
Transferability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Thick descriptions</li> <li>❖ Case study</li> <li>❖ Purposive sampling</li> </ul>
Dependability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Audit trail</li> <li>❖ Video recordings</li> <li>❖ Audio recordings</li> <li>❖ Field notes</li> <li>❖ Transcriptions</li> </ul>
Conformability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Reflexivity</li> <li>❖ Field notes</li> </ul>

### 3.8 Conclusion

In chapter 3, I presented the plan that I used to explore the knowledge that O Level beginner teachers held in teaching Literature in English. This chapter contains the paradigmatic foundations of the study and justifies the selection of interpretivism for this purpose. The justification for the selection of research design, sampling and sampling techniques, data collection tools, and strategies for data analysis are provided. In addition, the chapter contains the measures followed to maintain the trustworthiness of the study as well as the ethical procedures that I adhered to during the course of the study. In chapter 4, the data analysis and the interpretation of the data are discussed and the research findings are integrated.



## Chapter 4

### Data analysis and interpretation

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#### 4.1 Introduction

In chapter 3, I explained the methodology used in the study and I justified the sample selection, data collection and analysis. I also outlined the paradigmatic orientation that influenced my research exploring beginner teacher knowledge of Literature in English. Chapter 4 presents an account of the data analysis outcome. The findings are presented in the form of themes, which delineate the beginner teachers' knowledge of Literature in English, their teaching knowledge gaps, and the strategies they use to minimise the knowledge gaps when they occur. From the data analysis process described in chapter 3, the O Level Literature in English beginner teachers in this study held the following knowledge:

- beginner teachers' knowledge of the curriculum
- beginner teachers' knowledge of teaching
- beginner teachers' knowledge of learners
- beginner teachers' dispositional knowledge

In spite of the above knowledges held, the participants indicated that the main knowledge gaps included teaching world literature settings, Shakespearian language, African literature, dealing with inadequate resources, integrating the internet in teaching Literature in English and teaching learners who fail to comprehend literary concepts. The participants explained that they used inter-subject teaching, team teaching, self-motivation, E-learning platforms, research and study guides as strategies to minimise knowledge gaps when they occurred. The section below provides a detailed discussion of the key findings of the study.

#### 4.2 Participants in the study

The participants in this study comprised four O Level Literature in English beginner teachers. I believe that for me to understand the theoretical and experiential preferences of each beginner teacher participant, there was a need to understand

their autobiographical journey into teaching. As I reflected on the participants, I found that I associated their personalities with colours. I used O'Connor's (2011) colour coding to describe the participants' personalities as shown in table 4.1.

**Table 4.1 Colours and personalities (O'Connor 2011:231)**

Colour	Personalities
White	Quiet, peaceful, sincere, genuine and tolerant
Yellow	Very optimistic, easily excited, trusting, enjoys life and is endearing
Grey	Mature, responsible, dependable and depressed
Red	Dynamic, resourceful, courageous and creative
Blue	Sincere, high achiever, sense of purpose, strong and a sense of beauty
Green	Cheerful, gentle, loyal and loving

I used the following colours to describe the participants. I used blue for Participant A, grey for Participant B, green for Participant C and yellow for Participant D. Participant A's story into teaching is one of determination to make a difference through the classroom. Through empowering the girls in her class with the ability to think and act, Participant A believed that she was contributing to their mentorship as independent thinkers.

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### **Participant A – Empowerer**

Participant A is a 27-year-old woman. She has been a teacher for four years. She loves to act and participate in public speaking. Her greatest love is teaching and empowering learners, especially the girl child. Her dream has always been to be a teacher.

I used the colour blue to describe Participant A as I saw in her the strength as well as the calmness of a blue sea. In her presence, I imagined a calm blue sea. She is soft-spoken, but easily excited by a discussion about her teaching. When she talked about teaching, I saw her strength and excitement. I found Participant A independent and fiercely opinionated in her outlook about teaching Literature in English. I liked that she was sincere and genuine in her approach to teaching as I observed her sensitivity to learners' needs in the classroom.

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Participant B, on the other hand, found teaching Literature in English exhilarating but challenging. Interestingly, teaching was not her first love, as she dreamt of being a lawyer. She found the challenges inherent in the school system difficult to navigate. I

observed that she approached teaching with a lot of frustration that she could only express in tears.

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### **Participant B – Melancholic**

Participant B is a 26-year-old woman who has been a teacher for four years. Her dream was to be a lawyer but she failed to obtain the university entry requirements to study to become one. Teaching, she said, came as her third choice, but she has grown to love teaching Literature in English.

Participant B reminded me of grey clouds. She saw the white clouds from the fulfilment she felt teaching Literature in English. However, many black clouds were present because of the challenges she faced as she navigated her role as a Literature in English teacher. I loved being in her presence as she was self-assured about whom she was and how she imagined her Literature in English class.

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Participant C's journey into teaching was pre-determined by a religious calling. She considered teaching as a pastoral vocation. She believed that she was called into the ministry of teaching. Coming from a religious background, Participant C assigned teaching an exclusiveness that is usually associated with religious ministry – she believed she was shepherding rather than teaching the learners.

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### **Participant C – Nurturer**

Participant C is a 28-year-old woman who has been a teacher for four years. She lost her mother when she was 20 years old. Since then she has been the mother figure for her siblings. She considers teaching her calling; she says God chose her to be a teacher.

I used the green colour to describe Participant C as her class made me visualise a green field of tall, beautiful grass where children play, laugh and run. Participant C's class is warm and welcoming. She is motherly, caring and full of energy. I appreciated the secure and safe environment she had created for learners' literary growth.

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Participant D regarded teaching as a mentorship journey. She saw herself as mentoring her learners for academic and life excellence. Participant D is a product of a similar mentoring philosophy. Teaching for Participant D was practical to the needs of the learners.

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### Participant D – Pragmatist

Participant D is a 25-year-old female teacher who has been in the service for 4 years. She knew she wanted to be a teacher in high school already, because of her English teacher who went out of her way to create an enabling environment in their impoverished rural school. For Participant D teaching is about mentoring learners for life.

I described Participant D using a yellow colour as I imagined a yellow sunflower about to be harvested when I first met her. She radiates a charisma and individuality, which makes it easy to relax in her company. I found her self-motivated, self-reliant and non-conformist. I enjoyed the time I spent at her school as I saw a lot of myself through her excitement about the teaching of Literature in English.

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### 4.3 Theme 1: Beginner teachers' knowledge of the curriculum

The participants explained that they held knowledge of the curriculum. Knowledge of the curriculum referred to the participants' knowledge of the intended skills and experiences that their school aspired to for the learners' academic development. The participants agreed that they held such knowledge from interpreting the national, school and departmental curriculum documents. The beginner teachers' knowledge of the curriculum included the following subthemes: (i) beginner teachers' knowledge of the philosophical orientations that inform the school curriculum and (ii) the teachers' knowledge of the syllabus. The beginner teachers' knowledge of the philosophical orientations that inform the school curriculum contained two categories, namely the teachers' knowledge of the philosophical foundations of the curriculum and teachers' knowledge of the schools' expectations. The beginner teachers' knowledge of the syllabus included two categories namely, beginner teachers' knowledge of (i) Literature in English syllabus content and (ii) its examination requirements.



#### 4.3.1 Subtheme 1: Beginner teacher's knowledge of the philosophical orientations of the school curriculum

The beginner teachers in this study had knowledge of the philosophies that inform their school curriculum. Moreover, the teachers had constructed the schools' expectations of them as professionals from knowing the philosophies underpinning the curriculum that influenced teaching and learning in their schools. I discuss the categories in this subtheme in detail below.

##### ***Category A: Beginner teachers' knowledge of the philosophical foundations of the curriculum***

According to Participants A and C, their knowledge of the curriculum encompassed the skills and attitudes that a learner should possess after having gone through the school system. It included all the school subjects, and how they could be used to achieve such a goal:

- *The curriculum includes all the subjects in the school. All the subjects work together to produce a learner we desire for our community (A:3)<sup>12</sup>.*
- *The curriculum covers the entire subjects in the school, which is why I was emphasising on using other subjects to help in studying Literature in English. We must not study Literature as an isolated subject (C:38).*

Participants A and C noted that knowledge of the curriculum included all the subjects at a particular school and how they were integrated for the learners' benefit. In addition, Participants B and D highlighted that their knowledge of the curriculum was based on an understanding of what it means to teach at a particular school inferred from the school's curriculum documents:

- *I think the curriculum is the basic information about the expected teaching outcomes at my school (B:18).*
- *Our curriculum emphasises on building the learner by nurturing them both academically and spiritually. It is the school's expectation that I help the*

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<sup>12</sup> These quotes are from the transcripts of the interviews with the participants and are referenced by the pseudonym allocated to the participant (the letters A, B, C or D) as well as the page number in the transcript from which it was taken. The quotes are presented here are true transcripts of the participants comments.

*learners acquire both the spiritual and academic acumen before they graduate to the next level of the academic life (D:63).*

In addition, participants mentioned that specific philosophical viewpoints influence the curriculum chosen at their schools. Participant A said that her school curriculum was philosophically based on the concept of *unhu/Ubuntu*<sup>13</sup>:

- *I know the curriculum of the school. I know that it is influenced by the Ministry's need to foster Ubuntu as per the Ministry's vision statement (A:1).*

Participant A, a beginner teacher from a government-run school, articulated that the vision statement of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education aims at, "well educated Zimbabweans who are patriotic, balanced, competitive, and self-reliant with *unhu/Ubuntu*" (ZMPSE 2013:1). I noticed that the philosophy that Participant A referred to was easily observable in her school, from their emphasis on girl empowerment, practical-oriented teaching, use of E-learning platforms and indigenous knowledge systems as enhancers to teaching and learning. Participants C and D come from different religiously inclined schools but both their philosophical curriculum ideologies are based on the integration of faith and learning:

- *It is in the school curriculum that we have devotion at the beginning of each class, as this is a Christian school. We groom our students spiritually. I know that some of the students find relief and sense of belonging through this spiritual interaction (C:35).*
- *Our school uses a Christian approach to learning. Our curriculum is holistic, which means we cater for the pupils' spiritual, mental and physical growth. We emphasize on the similarities and differences in the subject content and our belief system (D:63).*

In contrast, Participant B did not clearly articulate the philosophical underpinning of her school's curriculum. She mentioned that her school groomed the learners for integration into the world community:

- *The students are groomed for the global village. Our curriculum is geared towards producing an individual to fit in the world community (B:18).*

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<sup>13</sup> This philosophy promotes a mutual respect and cooperation among people (ZMPSE 2013).

From Participant B's quotation and her school's vision statement, which emphasises skills development, relevance, and globalisation, I believe the school might be inclined towards progressive education. Furthermore, the school's emphasis on E-learning platforms, simulated learning activities, community outreach programmes, research and international student exchange programmes seemed to suggest an alignment to a progressive education philosophy. The philosophy of progressive education holds that the school should teach learners how to think as opposed to teaching learners what to think – a characteristic of traditional and conservative teaching approaches (Weiss & Weiss 2005; Labaree 2005; Dewey 1938). Progressive educationists assume that true learning happens when students are allowed to discover knowledge on their own through engaging them in activities that nurture certain skills (Murray 2009; Weiss & Weiss 2005; Dewey 1938). The common activities in a progressive school include field trips, group research, simulated learning, use of case studies, community-based projects and analysing literary and newspaper articles and films, which are common activities in Participant B's school (Murray 2009; Kohn 2008). The teaching strategies used in progressive schools are meant to encourage diverse opinion, which celebrate learners' differences in the classroom and in their communities – attributes Participant B emphasised (Murray 2009; Labaree 2005; Weiss & Weiss 2005).

### ***Category B: Beginner teachers' knowledge of the schools' expectations***

From the philosophical knowledge of what informs their schools' curriculum, the participants had constructed knowledge of what is expected of them as teachers in that particular school. Participant B commented that she was expected to guide learners to obtain good results. Participant D, on the other hand, was expected to uphold the behavioural standards at class level:

- *Just like in all the subjects, the school expects good results despite the challenges we might face in teaching aspects like Shakespeare. They still expect good results. As a teacher you are forced to go out of your way to get resources. The resources are limited but you have to help pupils pass the subject (B:19).*

- *Our school standards are strict and behaviour is always in line with the rules. I understand that my role as a teacher in this school is to uphold strict standards of behavior in and outside the classroom (D:61).*

In addition, Participants A and C commented that their schools expected of them to be role models. Participant A indicated that her school required of her to be exemplary in dressing and general social etiquette, while Participant C noted that her school expected of her to mould the learners' spiritual and academic fortitudes:

- *My school requires that I behave in a manner that is socially accepted through dressing and in the way I interact with my learners (A:8).*
- *I am expected to mould the students to the Christian and academic standards. I love this role; I feel that I am contributing to the nurturing of tomorrow's generation in a very tiny way (C:44).*

In this dual role, Participant C was mandated to monitor the learners' academic and spiritual progress by planning for activities that could lead them to achieve ideal standards. During the observation in Participant C's class, I noticed indications that she loved her role as moulder. Although I observed Participants A, B and D encouraging and motivating learners to participate in class, only in Participant C's class did I feel that the act was natural and genuine. She appeared to be encouraging learners for life beyond the classroom. It was interesting to note that learners who had sat for, and passed the June 2014<sup>14</sup> examinations still attended her class even though they were not required to do so.

The participants exhibited a theoretical knowledge of the curriculum from knowing the philosophical orientations informing their schools' worldview. It was easy to identify the schools' philosophical orientations as they were captured in the mission statements, which were displayed in prominent places in the administration buildings. However, the participants' identification of the schools' expectations from its philosophical underpinnings shows the participants' experiential knowledge. The schools' expectations are implicit, as they seem to be suggested by the context of the school. The participants had constructed their own definitions of what it meant to be a

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<sup>14</sup> In Zimbabwe, learners have the option to sit for their O Level National Examinations in June or November of each year. In Participant C's school, when a learner sits for the June examinations and obtains a pass symbol, s/he is not expected to continue attending that class. The learner is allowed a library period during that class to study for other subjects.

teacher at their school. For example, Participant A commented that she was not taught how to dress appropriately for her school standards. She noted the following:

- *I did not have an induction into the accepted dress code and general etiquette but I noticed how other teachers dressed and related to the learners and I adopted it. Our school is not British influenced, as we have been accused, we are more traditional in our approach to teaching and learning (A:12).*

Participant D also mentioned that she did not initially belong to the Christian denomination that owned her school. When she started teaching at the school, she was not forced or coerced to join the school's denomination. From the school's context, she learnt how religious activities were valued. She commented as follows:

- *I have to admit that initially it was difficult to be in this school. The teachers and pupils approach their religion very seriously. Religious activities are important, for example, we have fasting and prayer programmes before pupils sit for their examinations. Teachers and pupils are not forced to participate but after you see positive results from fasting and praying, you get motivated to join. I had to learn to be part of the school and in the process I was converted to my school's denomination (D:65).*

#### **4.3.2 Subtheme 2: Beginner teachers' knowledge of the syllabus**

According to the participants, their knowledge of the syllabus refers to what they know about the topics studied in Literature in English and the assessment criteria used to determine learners' literary competence. Therefore, the beginner teachers' knowledge of the syllabus is their knowledge of the O Level Literature in English syllabus content and knowledge of the examination structure. The participants described their knowledge of the syllabus as critical in their role as subject teachers. I discuss the categories in detail below.

##### ***Category A: Beginner teachers' knowledge of the Literature in English syllabus***

All the participants commented that they had knowledge of the subject focus for the Literature in English syllabus. They stated that they knew the topics, concepts, novels and skills that they were teaching for O Level Literature in English:

- *I had to discuss the syllabus with pupils. I explained to them what books are in the syllabus, objectives and the examination structure. The students have*

*to know that we are reading A Cowrie of Hope, The Merchant of Venice and Animal Farm (A:1).*

- *As the teacher, you must know the books you are teaching. With the class, we opted for The Merchant of Venice, A Cowrie of Hope and Animal Farm. As it is, the books that are in the syllabus in 2014 have been phased out in 2015. You must also know the subject expectations in Literature in English from the syllabus. The EOs (Education Officers) are now emphasizing on reading the novels in the classroom with the students (C:37).*
- *First, our syllabus deals with two novels, which is African, and contemporary texts, which now, for this class are Animal Farm by George Orwell and The Merchant of Venice. We are also reading A Cowrie of Hope from Zambia (D:57).*

The participants' knowledge of the syllabus included the knowledge of the objectives, learning outcomes and the novels that are taught during a particular period. However, I discovered that the beginner teachers' knowledge of Literature in English syllabus focus was limited. Furthermore, in Literature in English, assigned texts are called novels, poems, plays or short stories. I found that participants continuously referred to novels as books. In addition, although the participants knew that the syllabus covered subject objectives, they were not very clear about them. I also observed that in the scheme/plan books the teachers had planned for discussions on themes and characterisation without specifying the objectives for studying them. For example, Participant A had planned to teach *Animal Farm* themes (cf. figure 3.1). Her objective was that learners should be able to support the themes using textual evidence. Unfortunately, her objectives remained at the foundational level, as they did not call for a higher, critical engagement from the learners. I noted that the participants' failure to capture objectives in their scheme books was an indication of their inadequate knowledge of the syllabus objectives and focus.

What is interesting to note, is that all the participants claimed that they planned for their classes through reflecting on the practical needs of their learners and the syllabus objectives. They mentioned the following:

- *The needs of your pupils and the syllabus guide your planning for the week, term and year (A:10).*
- *I scheme according to the syllabus and my departmental target. When students lag behind, I continue with the planned work and give them individual teaching (B:20).*

- *The syllabus is my guide to planning but I also look at the pace of my students (C:42).*
- *The second and third term are for me revision time. I have already finished the syllabus. Based on my pupils' weaknesses from 2013, I am now targeting those areas where I know my pupils have challenges. Through individual consultation, I now want to address the pupil as individuals. I do not want to plan for a whole lesson when I know there are pupils who are not yet at that level (D:71).*

The participants' syllabic knowledge also influenced their actual planning/scheming for Literature in English. For example, Participants A and B planned for Literature in English as part of English Language even though they taught the subjects differently. Participants A and B said:

- *I plan for Literature as a part of English Language. I am thinking now, why do we do that since the syllabuses of the subjects are different? That is how I was inducted. In our school literature is part of language (A:9).*
- *I am planning the way I do because it is a departmental policy. I was shown how to plan like this when I started teaching Literature. Literature has a small section for planning within the English Language scheme book. I feel the planning space for Literature is inadequate, so what I do is that I formulate my own lesson plan on my laptop that helps a lot. When I started teaching Literature in 2013, I also found it awkward but now I am used to it (B:27).*

Planning for Literature in English as Participants A and B did, immediately alerted me to the significance the school assigns to the study of Literature in English. Each subject in the school curriculum has a scheme book where the teachers indicate the subject's national, school and class objectives. By planning for Literature in English as part of English Language, the school denies its importance. Nevertheless, Participants C and D planned for Literature in English separately from English Language:

- *In the school, Literature is a separate subject; I plan for it as a separate subject unless it is for ZJC. We consider Literature as a separate subject from English Language. No one plans for History and Ndebele in one scheme book, even if they teach both subjects. Why then would I plan for Literature in English and English Language in one scheme book? (C:53).*
- *My planning is learner-centred. I know they may be pressured to do a format, but I insist that my teaching should be based on the needs of my learners. I*

*usually use lesson plans which I am not required to do but which I have found to be a more detailed way of planning. The lesson plan shows the developmental stages of my lesson. I plan how I am going to introduce it, how I am going to develop it, and how I am going to conclude it. This also helps me plan for my teacher/pupil activities and I plan for the questions that I am going to ask my pupils. I do not want the questions to be impromptu. I know my pupils and I know as I plan for each lesson where their learning difficulty may come from (D:71).*

Participant C insisted that, from her syllabic knowledge, Literature in English is a stand-alone subject and should be planned for separately. Although Participant D also believed Literature in English to be a separate subject, her knowledge of the learners made her plan using lesson plans instead of a scheme/plan book.

Although the participants indicated that they held syllabus knowledge, they did not seem to possess a metacognitive grasp of the subject focus for Literature in English. During the interviews, they reverted to the theoretical definitions of topics, concepts, skills and novels. Through document analysis, I was able to identify that some participants interacted with the syllabus knowledge on a theoretical level as shown by the objectives that they had planned for in the scheme/plan books. For example, Participants A and B had planned for learners to summarise the novel and discuss the historical background of *A Cowrie of Hope*. I realised that what they had planned for was actually copied verbatim from the syllabus. Participant B further indicated that she taught the way the Education Officers suggested she should. From this I inferred that the participants might be presenting their theoretical syllabic knowledge. However, the participants seemed hesitant and less conversant about experiential syllabic elements.

With reference to Participants C and D, there was an indication that they possessed theoretical knowledge of the syllabus. They were aware of the genres of Literature that were to be taught for the O Level syllabus, as well as the methodological strategies that the syllabus suggested for enhancing literary competence. However, their implementation of the syllabus seemed highly practical and contextual. Participants C and D substantiated Schön's (1983) reflect-in-action and reflect-on-action model in their Literature in English classrooms (cf. section 2.5.4). The participants' reflect-in-action was through experiencing and interacting with the syllabus in its theoretical and practical aspects. From this exercise, the participants



were able to identify areas that presented them with challenges. The participants' subject planning was a function of their theoretical knowledge, but how they laid out and structured their planning appeared dependent on the needs of the learners. In reflect-on-action the participants indicated that they made decisions about how to present the syllabus to the learners in such a way that they acquired skills. At this level, participants were making learning and teaching decisions from contextual analysis. The participants also indicated that they were not provided with induction programmes that could have helped them with simple tasks like planning, subject focus and assessment criteria. The common trend was to provide beginner teachers with scheme books of previous teachers from which to copy the format of how it was done in the school.

### ***Category B: Beginner teachers' knowledge of the examination requirements***

The participants mentioned that they held knowledge of the examination requirements in Literature in English. They explained that they knew the structure of the examination and its assessment:

- *I know that I need to teach characterisation and themes as they are what the final examination is made up of (A:11).*
- *The students need to be able to discuss the characters and themes. They should discuss the themes and support their discussion with evidence from the text. The important thing is that the students are able to interpret the demands of the question (B:25).*
- *We know that we always have a question on character or theme in the examinations all the time. The question can require students to discuss the theme of friendship in Animal Farm, as was the case in the June 2014 examination (C:52).*
- *The final examination for Literature in English is made up of characterisation and thematic issues questions. I know my learners are prepared for the national examinations as I have taught those elements (D:70).*

All the participants illuminated that the national examination required learners to be able to answer questions on character and themes.

Apart from the academic preparation, Participants A, B and C knew how to emotionally prepare their learners for the national examination:

- *The learners need the confidence; without that confidence, it is very difficult to sit for an examination and do well. You have to build their confidence to approach the examination. You saw that during the class presentations I wanted them to discuss their argument clearly. I am nurturing that skill for the examinations and life (A:6).*
- *When a lesson is just beginning and this being the time towards the exams; sometimes as a teacher you feel like there is a lot of tension among your pupils. It is necessary to relieve that tension by using humour as I was doing. The pupils need to learn in a relaxed atmosphere, it is not like they are in a military camp, they have to enjoy learning (B:21).*
- *I have come to know that it is useless to shout at learners who have not finished reading the assigned books. The learner is already panicking; calm him/her down. What I have done with one student who had this problem is that I gave him commentaries and extra work. I also have extra lessons with him and from his work, I know he will get a B or better (C:47).*

According to the participants, they prepared their learners for final examinations by paying attention to their emotional well-being. The participants advocated for an environment in which the learners' faculties were positively stimulated, such as the use of humour to alleviate examination tension.

It appeared as if the participants' theoretical knowledge of the examination focus was restricted, as it was limited to themes and character. I also observed a similar trend from the scheme books that I analysed. Participants A, C and D had planned to teach characters and themes from *A Cowrie of Hope*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *Animal Farm*. Participant B planned for *The Lion and the Jewel* instead of *The Merchant of Venice*. In addition, from the class observations I discovered that the participants' focus was on characters and themes. I noted with concern that the participants were involved in superficial teaching of these aspects as they concentrated on character traits and narration of the thematic issues without deep analysis. Such analysis could have come from discussing and analysing the literary functions of characters and the ideological background of the novels and plays (ZOLLS 2013; DiYanni 2000). The use of the interactive methods such as presentations, peer and group work and class discussions masked the fact that there was very little teaching of important literary concepts. Furthermore, the learners were involved in a process of merely taking notes. Participant B dictated notes to the learners – an activity I perceived as a clear demonstration of her lack of knowledge of teaching strategies. Participant B justified

the use of note taking and dictation as a way of guiding the learners on what was expected of them.

Moreover, during the observations and interviews I noticed that participants were teaching around the examination and not for literary competence. For example, during my second observation of Participant C, she asked learners to give characteristics of Nasula, a character from *A Cowrie of Hope*, and encouraged them to support their answers with textual evidence. Although this was a good way of discussing the plot of the story, it ended on a desultory level without the learners assessing the characters' literary functions in the novel. One of the aims of ZOLLS (2013) is the use of Literature in English as a tool for self and community evaluations. Interestingly, it appeared as though this syllabic focus was lost to all the participants.

With regard to their knowledge of the examination, the participants indicated that they were knowledgeable about the assessment criteria used to grade Literature in English examinations. Unlike other participants who talked about formal assessment knowledge, Participant A revealed that she had knowledge of the informal assessment as well. Participant A stated that informal assessment takes place in the classroom and gives immediate feedback to the teacher about the learners' progress and acquisition of a skill:

- *It is an assessment that I am making whether the pupils are following everything we are doing. When we begin the present lesson I am assured that I am not alone, it is a way of checking and assessing if they are revising their work (A:9).*

The informal assessment that Participant A referred to was similar to Schön's (1983) reflection-in-action, which takes place during teaching to determine whether learners have acquired the skills or concepts that are being taught (cf. section 2.5.6). Formal assessment on the other hand, indicates the participants' knowledge of the ways in which Literature in English is assessed according to the syllabus. These methods include essay writing and emphasise textual evidence to support one's argument:

- *Literature is assessed from three aspects. The assessment includes the pupils' knowledge, their interpretation of the novel's events, and their analysis and evaluation of characters and events. It is about what the learner knows about the events in the novel, the evidence that is provided and the learner's*

*ability to react to it. Literature assessment calls for higher engagement of the learners' mind (A:10).*

- *For the learners to do well in Literature they need to be able to write essays, support their answers by using textual evidence. The learners' presentation should have minimum concord issues (B:22).*
- *I think it is easy to obtain a good grade in Literature because what the students are required to do is demonstrate that they can give support evidence for each point they give to answer a question. For example, a question on discuss the theme of hope, the examples we were giving during your first observation are the ones they are supposed to give to answer such a question (C:50).*
- *I believe assessment in Literature is based on the learners' ability to show their knowledge of the text. As it has a language aspect, the pupils' language usage is also assessed (D:69).*

The participants' knowledge of formal assessment comes from the examination bodies such as the Zimbabwe School Examination Council (ZIMSEC) and Cambridge International Examination Syndicate (CIES). This means that participants' assessment knowledge was a narration of the requirements of the ZIMSEC and CIES examinations. The participants' assessment knowledge of both formal and informal assessment was related to their syllabic knowledge. For example, all participants appeared knowledgeable about the inclusion of themes and character in the formal assessment of the learners in Literature in English as they perceived it from the syllabus and previous examinations. I observed that the participants' syllabic knowledge seemed incomplete as the subject focus in Literature in English included ideological and social backgrounds of the authors and style and plot, which they did not plan for (cf. section 2.2.1; figure 2.2). An analysis of the scheme/plan books demonstrated insufficient subject focus knowledge.

The participants' informal assessment in class was based on teaching of character and themes, which I observed was aligned more to drill exercises than effective learning. For example, in Participant B's class, I observed that although learners had knowledge of *A Cowrie of Hope*, it was difficult for them to use sequence to connect the events in the novel and the teacher continuously corrected them without explaining why she was doing so. This observation was also made by Gordon (2012) who mentions that Literature in English teachers usually use the lecture method, drill

exercises and dictation to teach – strategies which make it difficult for learners to acquire literary competence.

#### **4.3.3 Interpretation of theme 1: Beginner teacher's knowledge of the curriculum**

The participants' knowledge of the curriculum included knowledge of the syllabus and the examination. Researchers such as Turner-Bisset (1999), Shulman (1987), and Elbaz (1983) include curriculum knowledge as part of teacher knowledge and they view curriculum knowledge as the teachers' knowledge of materials, topics and programmes designed for each school level. The participants in this study also provided a detailed account of their knowledge of the curriculum as indicated by the above-mentioned researchers. The participants constructed knowledge that was practical from interacting with classroom experiences and the documents that govern the teaching and learning environment.

The participants provided reinforcement of my assumption that beginner teachers' knowledge is influenced by theoretical elements and classroom experiences (Grossman *et al.* 2009; Grossman & McDonald 2008). Although the participants possessed knowledge of the curriculum from documentation such as the national and school syllabus and assessment and examination guidelines, they reflected and interpreted them according to the needs of their classroom. What this suggests is that beginner teacher knowledge is formulated by both theoretical and practical practices (DeGraff *et al.* 2015; Cheng *et al.* 2012; Buitink 2009; Dewey 1933). Moreover, Elbaz's (1983) understanding of knowledge of the curriculum as being interpreted theoretically and practically is similar to that of the participants. The participants explained that they had a theoretical understanding of the curriculum and its philosophical orientations. In agreement with Buitink (2009) and Elbaz's (1983) practical orientation to curricular knowledge, the participants used their knowledge of the school's expectations to inform their teaching practices.

According to the participants, their knowledge of the curriculum has a philosophical underpinning influenced by the school's ethos, culture and expectations. The knowledge of the philosophy that informs the school curriculum is also part of Shulman's (1987:10) curricular knowledge, which he explains as "those programs,

and the set of characteristics that serve as both the indications and contraindications for the use of a particular curriculum or program materials in a particular circumstance". In support of Shulman's definition, Turner-Bisset (1999) adds that as part of the curricular knowledge, teachers should be able to evaluate the curriculum materials for appropriateness. Unlike Turner-Bisset (1999), Participants A, C and D did not highlight knowledge of evaluation of the curricular materials as part of the knowledge base. In line with Turner-Bisset (1999), Participant B mentioned that she lacked resources that were needed in her classroom, which meant that she was unconsciously involved in some form of curriculum evaluation.

As I looked at the participants' curriculum knowledge, I realised that beginner teacher knowledge is interrelated (Shulman 1996; Day 1994). This implies that teachers' dispositional knowledge influences their interpretation of the curriculum (cf. section 4.6.2). The teachers' knowledge of the school and learners' attitudes towards teaching and learning of Literature in English, coupled with their knowledge of self, influenced how they interpreted the curriculum. For example, while Participant D commented on her knowledge of the syllabus and examinations, she interpreted these against the backdrop that Literature in English was perceived as being inferior to science subjects. Thus, her interpretation of the school curriculum was motivated by a need to assert Literature in English as an important subject. This confirmed my understanding of teacher knowledge as spiral, eclectic and pragmatic (Trent 2015; Grossman *et al.* 2009; John 2002; Golombek 1998; Elbaz 1983). Through interacting with the requirements of the syllabus and examinations, the Literature in English teachers were involved in a pragmatic selection of aspects that informed their teaching, and which inevitably became their teacher knowledge (Lampert 2010; Buitink 2009; Grossman *et al.* 2009). Interestingly, the knowledge of self, (cf. section 4.6.2) also plays an important part in the construction of the teachers' curriculum knowledge. The participants' own recognition of their teaching practice reflection process is important in understanding their interpretation of the curriculum and the knowledge they construct from the process (Buitink 2009; Akbari 2007; Zeichner & Liston 1996; Schön 1983).

For example, understanding a beginner teacher's theory of education is valuable in appreciating the syllabic decisions they make in class (McGlynn-Stewart 2015; Grossman *et al.* 2009; cf. section 4.3.2). The participants' indication that they knew

the curriculum confirmed them as constructors of their teaching knowledge. All the participants highlighted that they integrated the curriculum requirements in their classrooms from looking at the needs of the learners (Buitink 2009; Cochran-Smith & Lytle 1999; Golombek 1998). I also realised that beginner teacher knowledge contained both constructivist and sociocultural elements as these events intersected in the classroom to formulate teaching knowledge that was both theoretical and experiential (Lampert 2010; Grossman *et al.* 2009; Elbaz 1991). I was apprehensive about the knowledge of the syllabus that the beginner teachers held. The knowledge of the syllabus from which the teachers were supposed to formulate their content knowledge was somehow limited. I commented in my field notes that teachers were teaching for the examinations. I felt that the greatest part of teaching that took place in the classroom was more drill exercises than teaching.

As I listened to the participants talk about their examination knowledge, it seems their teaching is examination oriented. They are equipping learners for the examinations, not teaching them. My worry is that they may be unaware that they are not teaching the learners (Field notes: 4 October 2014).

#### **4.4 Theme 2: Beginner teachers' knowledge of teaching**

The participants confirmed that they held knowledge of teaching. Knowledge of teaching existed in two types, general knowledge of teaching (GTK) and pedagogical content knowledge (PCK). The beginner teachers' general knowledge of teaching was in the participants' ability to use theories of teaching to inform their professional practice. It encompassed three categories, namely beginner teachers' knowledge of personal teaching philosophies, teachers' knowledge of teaching as a profession and teachers' knowledge of classroom management. Pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), on the other hand, consists of beginner teachers' knowledge of the nature of Literature in English and the beginner teachers' knowledge of methods of teaching Literature in English. PCK was the teachers' ability to teach Literature in English in a way that enhanced learners' literary competence by paying attention to the methods of teaching Literature in English. The subthemes and categories are discussed in detail below.

#### 4.4.1 Subtheme 1: Beginner teachers' knowledge of general teaching

All the participants agreed that they possessed general knowledge of teaching, which they had constructed from their training and classroom experiences. The participants' general knowledge of teaching included their knowledge of personal teaching philosophies, teaching as a profession and classroom management knowledge. Although the participants failed to describe what they knew about general teaching, they managed to identify personal philosophies that informed their teaching.

##### ***Category A: Beginner teachers' knowledge of personal teaching philosophies***

The participants emphasised that they had personal philosophies that informed their teaching. These philosophies made them the professionals they had become. The philosophies are self-defined descriptions of what they hope learners embrace from their classrooms. Participant A stressed that she favoured teaching that empowered learners:

- *In class, I actually empower the pupils with appropriate skills, which can make them pass the examinations (A:1).*
- *I am empowering the learners. They have to learn the subject independent of my way of thinking. They must understand that the teacher only guides them. They must research and discover on their own (A:11).*
- *As a teacher at a girls' school, I talk a lot about girl power. Girl power is all about empowering the girl to participate effectively in the school and in the community. My girls know that I am expecting a lot from them (A:2).*

During the observation in Participant A's class, I identified some of her philosophies in action. For example, she asked the group that was presenting during the second observation to speak loudly. She went on to say that the world would not have patience for women who appear apologetic of who they were. She said: "When you go in front of an audience, Martha<sup>15</sup>, show them you are a woman who knows her place" (Observation notes: 25 September 2014). Participant B, on the other hand, mentioned that her teaching was influenced by her belief that it was a partnership between the teacher and the learners:

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<sup>15</sup> Pseudonym



- *Peer teaching is a good way of teaching. The learners, in their groups or in pairs, research on specific topics and present them in class. As a teacher, I work as a guide. The students have to discover on their own. I have also realised that it is a way of boosting their confidence. I feel as if I am whispering to them that they are responsible enough to be teachers (B:27).*

Participant B teaches at a modern school with smart boards, interactive E-learning platforms and internet connectivity. However, I failed to identify how Participant B used the available resources to enhance her teaching. I sensed that there was a slight difference between what she hoped her class to be and her actual teaching. With all the interactive platforms available to her, Participant B dictated notes to learners during all of the observations I had with her.

Participant C talked about responsible teaching. She explained that she allowed her learners to be involved in decision-making about how they learn. The learners in Participant C's class were responsible for decisions on their class attendance:

- *I told them what we were going to cover in the weeks that are left before they write their final examinations. They need to know what they will miss if they do not come to class. I am making them responsible for their time. I do not force them to come to class. I always make it a point to inform them what we are doing and why we are doing it and then I leave it to them to decide if they are coming to class. Since I have been using this strategy, I do not have truancy problems with my learners. They come to class and they participate effectively. When I delay in coming to class I will find that they have started and they are discussing what I said will be done. In such situations, I just apologise to the one leading for being late and I sit down (C:43).*

Participant C's class was interesting to observe because of the tranquil environment that immediately exuded as you entered the class. I found the learners highly motivated and focused, for a minute I forgot that I was in a class with teenagers. I wrote the entry below indicating how surreal the feeling of being in Participant C's class was for me

I enjoyed the time I spent in Participant C's class; her learners are well groomed and responsible. They all seem focused on learning. As I was sitting at the back of the class and seeing the sun rays come through the louvre windows, it was as if I was witnessing something surreal as I have not seen learners so well behaved and interested in learning Literature (Field notes: 25 September 2014).

Participant D's teaching is based on her understanding that teaching is a partnership. She commented that she viewed teaching as a partnership between her and her learners:

- *Generally, I do not want to view myself as a fountain of knowledge. My pupils participate in the learning process. Learning is a process because I learn from pupils and they learn from me. I make sure that the pupils explore and research for themselves. They do not only wait for the teacher to initiate learning but are actively involved in their learning process (D: 65).*

Participant A understood teaching as an empowering tool. Learner empowerment means that learners have to learn independently of the teacher's way of thinking. Furthermore, from her contextual understanding of teaching, empowering meant dealing with hegemony in education. Participant A was passionate about girl child empowerment as a way of redressing the gender imbalances that she purported existed in the education system. Participant B allowed learners to be partners with her in teaching. She believed that by allowing learners to conduct presentations, peer teaching and research, she was motivating and boosting their self-confidence. Participant C also used a similar approach to teaching as Participants A and B. She mentioned that she fostered responsible learning by allowing learners to decide whether they would attend class. This was her teaching philosophy, as she believed that learners should be held accountable for their own learning. Participant C used her philosophy of teaching to create and maintain trust between her and the learners. She said the following:

- *Tell yourself that the students are like your children at home. How do you treat your children at home? Do you embarrass them in front of people when they do something wrong? When there are visitors, you wait for the visitors to go, then you correct them. You do not shout at them in front of the visitors. When you are teaching a class, treat them like your own children. In that way you are creating trust. Even if you go to them now and ask them which teacher they love, they will tell you Mrs \_\_\_\_\_. That is what I have created. I have shown them motherly love and even if they see me walking, they shout: "Ma'am!" It is not that you are trying to buy their love. You are trying to make them feel that they belong (C:46).*

Participant D's paradigmatic orientation comes from her participatory teaching orientation. She stated that her teaching was meant to engage learners in ways that motivated them to appreciate the subject.

All the participants' personal orientations in teaching adhered to the principle that teaching should be a partnership between the learners and the teacher. The learners should be involved in the discovery and generation of new knowledge.

**Category B: Beginner teachers' knowledge of teaching as a profession**

Participants explained that they paid attention to how they taught Literature in English as they adhered to a code of conduct as professionals. Participant A commented that Literature in English was a subject that allowed learners to be in touch with their emotional side, and when teaching it, she was conscious of making learners feel appreciated. She mentioned the following:

- *Sometimes if you are too hard on them, especially when they give you answers and you tell them "No!", or "That is incorrect", or just ignore them, it discourages them. They begin to think "I am hopeless" and once a child tells herself "I am hopeless", nothing will come out of that child. When they give a wrong answer, I always want to panel beat it and invite other to help her. I will say, "I think she wanted to say this", and then at the end she will say: "Yes! That is what I wanted to say". At the end of the day everyone is happy, feels appreciated and feels that they have contributed (A:7).*

Participant A seemed to know that the practice of teaching placed value on building learners' confidence and self-esteem by acknowledging them as important. Participant D also highlighted that teaching could be used to build the learners' academic and self-worth:

- *My philosophy is that everything should be done in class to foster pupil understanding of concepts, skills, and self-worth. I sometimes use L1 to motivate them. If you noticed, I did not use the L1 to teach them. I used it to encourage them. I believe sometimes when you are in a dark maze and you hear your mother tongue, you wake up. At times, I have found myself resorting to extreme measures to get the pupils to understand (D:70)*

### **Vignette 1: Participant D's extreme measures that improve learner knowledge retention**

I have been teaching these pupils for the past two years. I always try to get my pupils to understand events in the novel, but sometimes it is not easy for them. I had a difficult experience one time, as the pupils did not understand why Snowball was chased away from the farm in *Animal Farm*, when it is obvious that all the animals liked Snowball. I knew I had to think about a way that was memorable for my pupils to grasp that event in *Animal Farm*. As the July 2013 presidential elections were taking place, I asked my pupils if they understood what it meant to vote for the leader of a country. I observed that most of the pupils did not have voter knowledge. I told the learners that we were going to carry out polls in class as a way of teaching them about the voting system in Zimbabwe, but we were going to use an example from *Animal Farm*. I asked two of the pupils to be Snowball and Napoleon. Without letting the pupils know, I arranged with some pupils from a different class to come during the voting exercise and disrupt it in a similar way the dogs did in *Animal Farm*. I asked Snowball and Napoleon to campaign and the class seemed to favour Snowball. Napoleon tried to campaign but since you know that he is not much of a talker, he did not do much and the animals were not in favour of him. I then asked the pupils to cast their ballots but when we were counting the votes, my dogs came in and forced Snowball out of the class and Napoleon took the leadership. I was trying to show the pupils how it happened in Russia as the satire suggests. I am saying at times this is not present in the syllabus but you have to do something memorable to help your learners comprehend concepts and skills.

### **Category C: Beginner teachers' knowledge of classroom management**

Classroom management was included as part of general teaching knowledge by Participants A and D. Participant A knew that classroom management was part of her teaching knowledge as she highlighted that the learners needed to perceive her as having the ability to control the learning environment, or teaching would not take place:

- *It is important for me to manage my class. When I am teaching in front of the pupils, I am in charge and in control. For my objectives to be achieved I have to*

*be in control of the class. I control the lesson development but not my learners' thinking (A:8).*

Participant D emphasised that she managed her class through verbal and nonverbal communicating with the learners. She noted that she had developed a way of communicating with her learners that helped her manage her Literature in English class:

- *If I keep to the board, so much will happen in the class. I have to move around the class to see what is happening. Moving around the class keeps the learners engaged and it helps them to concentrate because concentration for them cannot be extended for longer hours. By coming closer to them, I am trying to get them to concentrate. They know I am very alert and I am watching them. I think that is the reason for all the movements you saw. It is a way of saying, I am here for you. I am closing that psychological distance that may impede their understanding (D:70).*

As part of their knowledge of teaching, participants indicated that they held general teaching knowledge, which I noted as emanating from both their theoretical and experiential domains. The participants had knowledge of personal teaching philosophies, teaching as a profession and classroom management. The participants' general teaching knowledge was aligned to Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (1999) pedagogical knowledge, Turner-Bisset's (1999) general pedagogical knowledge and Shulman's (1987) general pedagogical knowledge. The participants defined GTK as referring to their knowledge about the general principles of classroom management and organisation that goes beyond their area of specialisation. I understand this to mean that general teaching knowledge is the teachers' tools of the trade as it separates professional teachers from lay people (Fenstermacher 1994).

In accordance with Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (1999) findings, the participants revealed that they had knowledge of teaching as a profession. Unlike Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999), the participants included knowledge of teaching as a profession as a category in the beginner teachers' general teaching knowledge theme. Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (1999) model is prescribed for teacher training, but the participants' general teaching knowledge was based on both their theory of education and experiential knowledge (Buitink 2009; Grossman *et al.* 2009).

In addition, participants explained that their general teaching knowledge changed according to the context and the nature of the learners in one's class (Grossman & McDonald 2008; Hegarty 2000; Chaiklin & Lave 1996). Golombek (1998) and Elbaz (1983) note that teachers' way of teaching is influenced by their personal beliefs of how the practice of teaching should be. In agreement, Participants A, B, C and D respectively viewed teaching as empowering, interactive, partnerships and participatory. This implies that their general teaching practice is a function of their worldview (Hammerness *et al.* 2005; Golombek 1998; Elbaz 1991; Schön 1983). For example, Participant D, whom I surmised was a pragmatic beginner teacher, was involved in class activities such as research, presentations, peer and group work and role-plays, which were common activities in her teaching orientation.

#### **4.4.2 Subtheme 2: Beginner teachers' pedagogical content knowledge**

Pedagogical content knowledge is a way of knowing how to teach a subject, in this case, Literature in English, based on an understanding of its nature and methodology. The participants indicated that they held pedagogical content knowledge as part of their Literature in English teaching knowledge.

##### ***Category A: Beginner teachers' knowledge of the nature of Literature in English***

The participants argued that they knew that the nature of Literature in English required a certain way of thinking and involvement from learners. Participants A and B indicated that Literature in English beginner teachers should know the history of literature, which informs its nature for effective teaching to take place:

- *Literature is a subject of royalty. From my reading, in England, it was a subject of the royal family, the intellectuals; people who thought deeply. Everyone who is a learner in the subject should get involved. That is how it can be interesting and meaningful. You need to be involved, think, and make your own analysis about what you are reading (A:4).*
- *You know it is different from teaching isiNdebele. With isiNdebele I feel like I am just teaching, but the nature of literature and the type of students I have, I feel like I am making a difference (B:22).*

In addition, having knowledge of the nature of the subject meant that the beginner teachers were aware of the skills needed for the learners to perform well in the subject.

- *The nature of the subject requires the pupils' own analysis. It requires what they think. Even when they write examinations, they have to include first-hand information. The nature of the subject again, calls for pupil involvement. They have to be part of the lesson. They have to be involved in the learning rather than being passive. That is why they have to think and be able to analyse and go and research, present and argue. There are questions that require them to argue so if they are passive and they are used to just receiving information when the examination comes and a question requires them to present an argument, how will they be able to do it if they do not practice? (A:3).*
- *Literature requires the students to think deeply about issues of life (B:22).*
- *Pupils should be willing to think about the world around them. The novels only highlight a small portion of the world, it is up to the pupils to extend that world (C:40).*
- *Literature is about life, it is about thinking about life. I always tell my pupils that when you go through the Literature class you won't think like the rest of the world. Your thinking is beyond the ordinary. You see patterns and connections others do not see (D:67).*

The participants commented that they knew that the history of Literature in English was important in understanding how it should be taught. Literature in English is a subject that was once reserved for royalty; its teaching ought to be approached with such seriousness. The participants knew that learners needed to think while learning Literature in English. However, when probed further, the participants failed to explain what they meant by thinking. I observed that it was a commonly used word in the Literature in English class, but was not planned for in the teachers' scheme books. I commented about the use of the word "think" in my field notes.

There are perpetual requests by the teachers for the learners to think. Participant A is fond of asking her class: "What do you think about that?" Participant B tells the learners to think. Participant C asks the learners to imagine and give her feedback. Participant D and her learners break into a "hissing" sound as indication that the learners need to think. However, I realised in the scheme books that the teachers had not planned for thinking as a lesson objective. Why do they emphasise it during teaching? What do they need learners to do when they ask them to think? (Field notes: 5 October 2014).

### **Category B: Beginner teacher's knowledge of methods of teaching Literature in English**

The participants noted that knowledge of the nature of Literature in English motivated them to embrace specific teaching methods. Participant A commented that she assessed the classroom situation before using a teaching method:

- *You have to assess the situation and use the methods which are applicable at that particular time depending on the calibre of the students that you are teaching (A:1).*
- *When we are studying plays, we normally dramatize. For example, with The Merchant of Venice we did a lot of dramatization because a play is actually meant for the stage. We also dramatized novels like A Cowrie of Hope. We would pick a few chapters that we used. Besides going to research on essay questions, the students also engage in debates on the novel's thematic issues. I can give you an example of one debate question that we once had on The Merchant of Venice. Shylock is responsible for his downfall, do you agree? They had to present a debate on that. While some are saying he is responsible others are saying no. The evidence they use is strictly from the text (A:5).*

Participant A's methods of teaching Literature in English included drama, essay writing and debates. She also added an interesting aspect of her pedagogical knowledge as she included repetition as a way of improving learners' knowledge retention. She knew that through emphasis and repetition learners could master literary concepts and skills:

- *... you need to do a lot of emphasis on certain skills and keep on repeating and making the pupils do a lot of work to show the extent they have mastered a particular skill (A:5).*

Participant C noted that before deciding on a teaching method to be used in Literature in English, there is a need to know the learners and their weaknesses. She noted that Literature in English was learnt through interactive methods such as group work, classwork and class presentations. Participant C said the following:

- *You have to try to move with pupils. They were complaining that Literature is difficult, especially Shakespeare. I said to them: "Let us do it this way, we will read The Merchant of Venice act by act", and somehow they could understand through that method. Since they are teenagers, they have a*



*lot on their mind. You have to find ways of dealing with them and using interesting teaching methods to capture their interests (C:35).*

- *There should be group work even if they are reading; it is not one person who is reading, you have to rotate them. If it is a play, there should be characters and a narrator (C:37).*
- *I use group work, classwork, class presentation and there are times when they have to present something to the class. Once a student presents something, what usually happens, is that they will not forget it (C:38).*

Participant D knows that the use of drama, discussion, role-play, code switching, inter-subject learning, and E-learning platforms, such as blogs, enhance the learning experience in Literature in English. She posited that learners retained literary knowledge through dramatizing it. She said the following:

- *The approach to use in teaching Literature in English is that you should vary your teaching methods. Sometimes I take my learners out of the classroom and into nature. I have taught from a park, a dam, on a bus and on the sports field (D:57).*
- *They have already performed a drama, which is The Merchant of Venice. At first, they watched the movie and they obtained ideas on how to perform. I also give them a brief background on how to dramatize. I asked a History student from a local university to come and have a discussion with us on what life was like in Italy in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The Geography teacher also gave us a video about trade in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, which we watched. From that preparation, they dramatized in class. The tip that I normally give them is that they have to find many adjectives to describe a character. For example, if they say Boxer is hard working and committed, I ask them to put on a face of a committed person and you will find the pupils putting an effort to make the character believable. The main objective is for them to remember the role of that particular character (D:59).*
- *I chose the discussion strategy because we want pupils to participate. It is a way of encouraging pupils' participation. You will realize that from both the lessons you observed I did not supply the answers – they came from the pupils. I am saying, if they can answer in the class discussion, then they must be able to do it in the examination. From what they have read in the novels, they should be able to discuss about it without looking at their notes (D:66).*
- *I sometimes use isiNdebele in an English class. Firstly, I must admit it comes in as a form of weakness (laughter) – that code-switching element. You do not always stick to one language every time. I am not supposed to do that but I resort to it because I am trying to communicate to the pupils. You know sometimes when you talk you feel you are falling short of*

*expression, so at times I speak isiNdebele. I am trying to express myself. I am saying it in English then I will repeat it in isiNdebele so that I communicate with the pupils. At times, you are trying to bring yourself to the level of the learners. I have had situations where a learner raises his hand and says: "Madam, ngicela ukukhuluma ngesiNdebele" (may I speak in isiNdebele). I am not supposed to allow it, but it comes in handy. On a positive note, the pupil feels good in giving that answer and they know my teacher understands me (D:68).*

Participant B acknowledged that some methods are specific to teaching Literature such as E-learning platforms, but she was unsure how she integrated them in her teaching. She stated that learners used the internet for research; she occasionally screened Shakespearian movies but she "*just used them (p.28)*" as a whimsical afterthought. I believe that E-learning platforms are very important in her Literature in English class. Participant B stated that "*learners are able to comprehend concepts through interactive means such as pair work, class discussion, blogs and WhatsApp*" (B:22). Participant B might be unaware that she had formulated ways of teaching Literature in English that were not commonly used; methods such as blogs and WhatsApp appeared to be part of her teaching methods.

Participants held pedagogical content knowledge as part of their Literature in English teaching knowledge. Their pedagogical content knowledge encompassed knowledge of the nature of Literature in English and methods of teaching Literature in English. Both Turner-Bisset (1999) and Shulman (1987) conceptualise teacher knowledge as including pedagogical content knowledge. However, they define pedagogical content knowledge differently. Shulman (1987) defines teachers' pedagogical content knowledge as the combination of content and pedagogical aspects of a subject, while Turner-Bisset (1999) regards it as an integrative domain that includes all the knowledge that teachers have on a subject.

The participants in this study seemed to be aligned with Shulman's definition, as they believed that pedagogical content knowledge was the combination of the knowledge of the nature of the subject (content) and methods of teaching (pedagogy). The participants agreed that there was a unique way of teaching Literature in English that was different from the teaching of other subjects. Theoretical knowledge that participants had of methods of teaching was re-constructed practically in the classroom to suit the context of the learners and the area of study in Literature in

English (Cheng *et al.* 2012; Grossman *et al.* 2009; Lampert 2010; Buitink 2009; Golombek 1998; Chaiklin & Lave 1996). The teachers' classroom experiences informed the type of methods they used to teach Literature in English. Participants A and B noted that Literature was learnt through allowing learners to read the literary works, research and present in class. Participant C argued that Literature in English was easily taught by allowing for class reading, group work and class presentations. On the other hand, Participant D stated that Literature in English was learnt through other subjects like History and Geography and by using different venues to teach such as teaching in a park or next to a dam. Each method that the participants suggested highlighted their understanding of the nature of Literature in English as a subject and their knowledge of methods that motivate their learners. In accordance with Shulman and Shulman's (2004) understanding of pedagogical content knowledge, participants indicated that their pedagogical content knowledge was a result of interplay between their theoretical persuasions and their experiential orientations.

#### **4.4.3 Interpretation of theme 2: Beginner teachers' knowledge of teaching**

In the literature, knowledge of teaching is referred to by different names. Golombek (1998) and Elbaz (1983) call it knowledge of instruction, while Turner-Bisset (1999), Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) and Shulman (1987) refer to it as pedagogy. The cited researchers acknowledge, as did the participants, that beginner teachers possess a general knowledge of what it means to teach, informed by their teacher training (Grossman *et al.* 2009; Hammerness *et al.* 2005). Like Shulman (1987) and Turner-Bisset (1998), who separate teaching into two domains, namely general teaching knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge, the participants also regarded teaching as existing in generic and subject specific forms.

The participants' knowledge of teaching included general teaching knowledge (GTK) and pedagogical content knowledge (PCK). My initial data analysis seemed to suggest that participants' PCK was largely based on their methodological knowledge of teaching Literature in English. My hesitation came from knowing that PCK separates subject knowers and subject teachers and without PCK, I believed the participants were merely teachers (Berliner 1986). Shulman's (1986) description of

PCK made me realise that the participants, in fact, had that type of knowledge. Shulman (1986:9) describes it as follows:

...regularly taught topics in one's subject area, the most useful forms of representation of those ideas, the most powerful analogies, illustrations, examples, explanations, and demonstrations and an understanding of what makes the learning of specific topics easy or difficult: the conceptions and preconceptions and misconceptions that students of different ages and backgrounds bring with them to the learning of those most frequently taught topics and lessons.

The participants described their knowledge of teaching as comprising of their general understanding of teaching practice. I, however, felt that their general teaching knowledge was limited. The participants held practical constructed philosophies, which they used to approach teaching, but their knowledge lacked credence to suggest a deeper understanding of what it meant to teach. Although I was somewhat dismayed by the teachers' general knowledge of teaching, my enthusiasm was regained when I revisited Shulman's (1986) definition of PCK. I realised that the participants were very insightful on their PCK. According to the participants, pedagogical content knowledge in Literature in English included knowledge of the nature of the subject, methods of teaching Literature in English and areas of learners' difficulty.

From the findings, I came to the realisation that teachers' pedagogical content knowledge was not constructed once, but that it was a function of reflection of the practice of teaching Literature in English, which is a continuous process (Olivero 2015; Farrell 2012; Akbari 2007; John 2002; Hegarty 2000; Stanley 1998). I understood then that teachers were in a continuous process of refining their ability to teach a subject (Hackett 2010; Buitink 2009; Connelly *et al.* 1997; Elbaz 1991). The key elements of this reflection on practice in pedagogical content knowledge appear to be context, learners and curriculum objectives. The implication was that subject knowers, not subject teachers, created PCK. I believe subject knowers have the ability to recognise the instruction methods that could enhance teaching (John 2002; Hegarty 2000). Participants' pedagogical content knowledge is integrative, as it integrates context, learners and curriculum objectives for effective teaching to take place (DeGraff *et al.* 2015; McGlynn-Stewart 2015; Cheng *et al.* 2012; Hammerness *et al.* 2005; Chaiklin & Lave 1996). Its integrative characteristic means

that by omitting one of the aspects, it renders pedagogical content knowledge useless (Turner-Bisset 1999). For example, having a good method to teach Literature in English without knowledge of the curriculum and its objectives produces ineffective teaching.

#### **4.5 Theme 3: Beginner teachers' knowledge of learners**

The participants indicated that they had knowledge of learners, which included teachers' knowledge of how learners learn Literature in English. This knowledge had two subcategories, namely knowledge of learners' academic ability and knowledge of strategies of motivating learners' in Literature in English classes. Knowing learners' psychological well-being, according to the participants, meant understanding their maturity levels, social background and temperaments, which informed the teachers' judgements of the type of teaching that takes place in class.

##### **4.5.1 Subtheme 1: Beginner teachers' knowledge of learning in Literature in English**

Under this subtheme, the participants discussed the knowledge they possessed of their learners' academic ability and the strategies they used to motivate Literature in English learners. The participants knew how learners performed according to the school's placement and from their classroom experience.

##### ***Category A: Beginner teachers' knowledge of learners' academic ability***

The participants highlighted that they knew the learners' academic ability first from their placement and from experiential practice. From the quotations below, Participants A and C also highlighted that Literature in English learners were considered as low achieving learners:

- *I know our school considers Literature in English learners weak (A: 5).*
- *This subject is given to weaker students. They feel it is an easy subject, yet it is the most difficult subject. It needs someone who has a good command of English and person who easily understands concepts. Fortunately, the group I have this year is not that weak, they are hard workers (B:25).*

Participants C and D indicated that, based on their knowledge, learners who were continuously called academically weak, ended up feeling inferior. Participants C and D indicated that they had knowledge of how to counsel learners as a way of boosting their self-esteem:

- *I sometimes have counselling lessons where we do not have Literature lesson but a counselling lesson. The students state their problems and we discuss them. The first lesson I had with them was a discussion on the syllabus. I then talked to them candidly because sometimes they feel inferior as they are labelled weak students. I made them understand that they are high performers. I promised I would help them achieve their goals. Once you create that excitement and self-value, they seem to understand the subject better. As you saw them during the observations, did they appear as weak students? (C:36).*
- *The other time when we had an interview you remember, I spoke about having a close relationship with the pupils. I also mentioned that they learn in an environment where they receive negative attitudes from other pupils and teachers about being weak and dull. I embrace them, their ideas and I talk to them. I never force them to do something. I ask them and I negotiate with them. I collaborate with them as I teach them. If I do not do that, I might be forcing them to believe the stereotypes around them. I want them to be able to be open to express themselves and be confident (D:68).*

This suggests that teachers' knowledge of learners' academic ability inexorably lead them to another knowledge construction that deals with strategies to motivate learners in a Literature in English class. These strategies are discussed below.

### **Category B: Beginner teachers' knowledge of strategies to motivate learners**

The teachers' knowledge of the learners' academic ability led them to the knowledge of how to motivate learners in Literature in English. Each participant had come up with strategies, which they believed motivated their learners to attain literary competence. Participant A used participatory class activities such as drama to motivate her learners. Participant B revealed that she at times used dictation as a method of teaching because she knew her learners needed such motivation to learn. Participant C shared that she knew that her learners appreciated being loved and cared for as a way of motivating them. Participant D extended Literature in English learning to the pupils' own lives to create an appreciation and retention of literary knowledge:

- *When we were studying plays, we dramatized. With The Merchant of Venice we did a lot of dramatization because a play is actually meant for the stage. We also did a stage adaption of A Cowrie of Hope which we presented to the whole school (A:4).*
- *Sometimes I need to assist them. Most of the time if you realized, I think the last observation; I dictated the notes and gave them some chapters to go and write on their own. I know it is good for them to write their notes, I dictate notes to give them guidelines of what is expected of them. As Animal Farm was a new text for them that I was introducing, they needed to be guided on how to write the notes (B:24).*
- *Literature in English students learn when they perceive the teacher as loving and caring (C:35).*
- *I think they learn by relating the text to their own experiences. You need to bring the text and its plot to their actual world, to their practical reality. Then, at times they learn through memorization. We cannot run away from that, they have to quote some texts as evidence, so they memorize. At times they learn through song, for example, the Beast of England from Animal Farm. We actually had a tune, which they attached to the song, and they ended up knowing the whole song. They also learn through interpretation, which means that the text has to have meaning for them, but meaning will vary according to the individuals (D:62).*

The participants indicated that their learners learn Literature in English through interaction, research, indigenous artistic techniques (song), interpretation, memorization, E-learning platforms and by using practical skills, which are related to their life outside the school. The use of learner-centred methods also motivated pupils to learn Literature in English. According to Participant D, learners performed better in Literature in English if it was taught practically:

- *I have made my HoD realize that I teach the way learners want me to. I try to run away from routine behaviourist teaching. You saw that the pupils were few in class. It is because some of them have already passed the subject in the June examinations. 11 wrote and all of them passed with seven As and four Bs and I know the remaining 24 will pass and this is a class which everyone considers as low achieving (D:71).*
- *The pupils should be part of the lesson, this helps them retain information, and this helps boost their confidence. You realize when a pupil gives a correct answer, I affirm. I am trying to boost their confidence – help them feel good about the answer they have given so that next time they can also participate. I spoke about life skills in the previous interview. I am teaching them to talk, I do not want Literature pupils that are docile and unable to express themselves, so language skills are being developed as they participate (D:72).*

Participant C mentioned that she motivated her learners by accepting that she did not know everything about Literature in English. In situations where learners asked a question she had no answer for, she admitted that she did not know. Furthermore, she told her learners to do research and in the next lesson, the whole class participated in answering the question:

- *I admit when I do not know something. I ask the students to go and research on it and I do the same. In the next class we discuss until we are all satisfied that we understanding the aspect under discussion. My students asked me a question from a previous final paper, which I failed to answer. I looked for Mrs \_\_\_\_\_ last week to help me with the question. I could not say that to the students you will see it in the examination. I had to ask other teachers how the students answer the question, I was equipping my students and myself (C:56).*

### **Category C: Beginner teachers' knowledge of learners' academic growth**

The participants acknowledged that Literature in English learners learn well if their academic growth is monitored. Participants A and B suggested that they allowed learners to work on their own to discover new knowledge as a way of tracking academic progress. Strategies like researching, homework, and class presentation helped teachers to check on the learners' academic growth:

- *They are allowed to access internet in the library for research purpose. If they do not get a chance to do it at school, they can do it with their parents at home. I give the students a lot of homework for them to acquire skills on their own. I am always pleasantly surprised and encouraged by what they find out (A:7).*
- *When we are called for an emergency staff meeting, I use that opportunity to give the students some work to discuss as groups. I even allow them to write on the board and when I come back I discover there is a lot they have done, I learn from the pupils (B:21).*

The participants used some form of scaffolding to nurture learners' academic growth. The scaffolding process begins with learners' involvement in class, individual, pair and group work until they grow to be researchers and presenters in Literature in English. Participant D regarded learners' academic growth as related to their ability to use skills from the classroom in daily experiences, which was aligned to her pragmatic approach to teaching:



- *They need to present ideas that are practical. I am preparing them for life. They should know that life is not a bed of roses. Literature can help them know that hard work pays like was the case with Nasula and Sula in A Cowrie of Hope. Literature should also help them to know how to fight for themselves. I do not want them to be docile recipients of everything. They need to learn that at times you have to fight in order to be recognised (D:60).*

The participants' knowledge of learners included knowing their characteristics based on their cognition, learning and motivation. The participants also acknowledged that they possessed knowledge of learners. This knowledge includes the learners' ability and strategies that motivate them to Literature in English competence. The participants noted that the difficulties learners experienced with a subject could largely be traced back to their attitudes towards the subject. The participants suggested that knowing learners' attitudes towards a subject was important in understanding their academic performance. They stated that learners' performance in a subject might not be an indication of their intellectual abilities, but of their attitudes. In this context, the participants highlighted that they had generated strategies which were motivational tactics aimed at minimising negative learner attitudes towards the study of Literature in English (cf. 4.6).

#### **4.5.2 Subtheme 2: Beginner teachers' knowledge of learners' psychological well-being**

Participants' knowledge of learners' psychological well-being refers to their knowledge of social and emotional factors that lead to an enhanced and optimal learning environment in Literature in English. Participants indicated that they knew their learners' social and emotional backgrounds as part of their knowledge of learners' psychological well-being. The categories under this theme are discussed in detail below.

##### ***Category A: Beginner teachers' knowledge of learners' social background***

Participant A acknowledged that learners' social background was part of her teacher knowledge as it assisted her to understand the learners better. According to Participant A, knowledge of learners' social backgrounds led to certain teaching judgments that were geared towards creating an environment where effective

learning could take place. She mentioned seating arrangements as one of the ways she used to integrate learners from different backgrounds and academic abilities:

- *Besides their nature of being slow learners or fast learners, they also come from different backgrounds. I also know I am dealing with teenagers who need support and independence, a delicate balance. When I am teaching, I always want to make them feel that they are at the same level. They are all equal and I show that by the way I treat them and their answers. Even the seating arrangement is important, I discourage them from seating as friends as I want them to be well socialised (C:2).*

Participant B's knowledge of the learners' social backgrounds included her knowledge of the learners' racial and religious aspects. Participant B's school had a cross sectional student population. I observed that the teachers and students came from different racial and religious backgrounds. Participant B commented as follows:

- *I have to admit that there are times when you are careful to express some aspects of Literature. For example, a novel like Rumours of Fire indicts the coloured community negatively and we have many coloured students here. I have to move carefully on some thematic issues so that I do not offend any of my students. You need to be a bit carefully when choosing your words. At times, you need to allow your students to discuss issues that make them different as people. There are different races in our school, and I use that opportunity for students to get to understand each other. It is not only a question of race, but also religious practices. You will find that some texts dwell on some religious group and with a school like ours, they are pupils who are from different spiritual persuasions. You will have to use wisdom to make sure students use that opportunity to understand each other's religious beliefs. I encourage them to be involved in racial and religious debates, which are introduced from the novels into their everyday life. You will find a student saying to the other, I did not know that about this religion. In these debates, the students get to correct misconceptions about each other's race and religion. You always need to find a prompt way of navigate the pupils away from concentrating on their difference, but at the same time allowing differences to exist in the class. It is a very unique balance but these Form 4s have taught me how to balance it (B:20).*

On the other hand, Participant D expressed that her knowledge of learners' background encompassed where they actually lived and the different situations they lived in. She initiated a class motto and poem to motivate learners to rise above their social situation:

- *Some pupils are orphaned; some are coming from difficult experiences. It is very important to help pupils to learn by paying attention to them. I know I*

*must understand that at times this pupil is not concentrating because they have walked a long distance to come to school. I try to be sensitive to pupils' backgrounds. I also attempt to create ways of making them understand that its life and they need to deal with it. Our class motto was a poem from Maya Angelou, Still I Rise, which we adapted for our purpose. I made the learners recite that poem individually. I recited it with them and we felt encouraged even in the deepest of our despairs (D:61).*

I remember reading Maya Angelou's poem, *Still I Rise*, as a first-year student at university and instantly falling in love with it. For a long time it was my poem. I felt her words spoke directly to my situation, and I believe that finding such literary genres at a young age is important in shaping the learners' aesthetic appreciation of poetry. Participant D adapted Maya Angelou's poem for her class as shown below.

## Vignette 2: Participant D's class poem

### Still I Rise

You may write me down in history  
With you bitter **labelling**  
You may trod me in the very dirt  
But still, like dust, I will rise

Does my **brilliance** upset you?  
Why are you beset with gloom?  
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells  
Pumping in my **heart**.

Just like moons and like suns,  
With the certainty of tides,  
Just like hopes springing high,  
Still I'll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?  
Bowed head and lowered eyes?  
Shoulders falling down like teardrops.  
Weakened by my soulful cries.

Does my **brilliance** offend you?  
Don't you take it awful hard  
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines  
Diggin' in my own back yard.

You may shoot me with your words,  
You may cut me with your eyes,  
You may kill me with your hatefulness,  
But still, like air, I'll rise.

Does my **brilliance** upset you?  
Does it come as a surprise  
That I dance like I've got diamonds  
**In my brains?**

Out of the huts of history's shame  
I rise  
Up from a past that's rooted in pain  
**I rise**

Maya Angelou  
(Adapted for the 3C 2013 class poem)

### **Category B: Beginner teachers' knowledge of learners' emotional well-being**

Participants A and D mentioned that they held knowledge of learners' emotional well-being. The beginner teachers valued learners' emotional well-being as they provided emotionally appropriate environments that enhanced learning. The teachers' knowledge of learner's emotional well-being was a process in which teachers sought to understand each individual in their class. Participants A and D commented as follows:

- *I treat my learners the way I do because I am trying to be diplomatic. Why I am being diplomatic? Because I have background knowledge about the pupils I am teaching. There are certain things that I know are sensitive to them so I handle them with care. Most of my girls have gone through a lot (A:11).*
- *When I talk about my knowledge of pupils, first I want to refer to their individual temperaments. I always have a general idea of who this person is. I know when they get excited and angry. I have had a long run with them. Two years is enough to know and understand your pupils (D: 62).*

Knowledge of learners' emotional well-being was, therefore, practically oriented and harnessed from the teachers' experiences with the learners in class. This suggested that knowledge of learners' emotional well-being was individually influenced. The teacher had to know learners' temperaments in order to know how to teach them effectively. Participants shared that their knowledge of learners' emotional well-being had led them to a maintain classrooms in which their learners' self-esteem and confidence were nurtured:

- *I think I do try to boost the learners' self-esteem because I make it a point that everyone feels important. We digress a bit from the lesson to lighten the mood and during those moments, I encourage and motivate the learners. The fact that Literature is an interactive subject that relates to our day-to-day life, our social life, our culture and our tradition, allows the learners to open up. Novels like A Cowrie of Hope have helped me see the depth of my students as they react to Sula's quest for education (B:22).*
- *When you came in into our class, I had to prepare the students to receive you. I made them understand who you are, even if they had those letters from you. I was trying to make them aware of who you are. I wanted them to be emotional ready to have a stranger in class and learn at the same time (C:49).*

- *Two boys in my class were labelled delinquents. When they came to my class, I had to counsel them and show them that I appreciate them. They were under a lot of pressure. However, when they came to the Literature class I gave them a different feel as I embraced them. I did not want to be too strict to condemn them. I gave them room to be themselves. I even allowed them to speak in their slang in class. When it came to writing I said no to that form of expression. I know I am dealing with someone who is going through troubled times, I try to make the pupils feel they belonged (D:63).*

Participants emphasised the creation of spaces in the classroom that could be points of encouragement and safety, which were used to guide learners' emotional well-being. The participants used the classroom as a place for building learners both socially and cognitively. Participant D indicated an interesting aspect of learners' emotional well-being that other participants did not touch on. She posited that learners' emotional well-being included knowing learners' maturity levels:

- *As a teacher, it is important to understand the pupils' maturity levels. The pupils we are talking about are between the ages of 16 to 18 years but the maturity levels differ. I can give an example of a boy in my class who is 18. He is the oldest in class but he is very immature. As a teacher, I must know that I should always keep him engaged. If I fail to do that, he will fiddle a lot and disrupt the class. He is always playing with something – he can always create a toy. It is my responsibility as the teacher to keep him engaged but how do I do this? I must know the pupils as individual! (D:60).*

Participant D was the only participant who explicitly talked about learners' maturity levels being part of her knowledge of learners' emotional well-being. Other participants did not specifically refer to the learners' maturity levels, but I inferred from some of their statements that they might have possessed knowledge of learners' maturity as part of their teacher knowledge. For example, Participants A and C commented that they found certain teaching methods useful in class because learners were at a certain level of maturity:

- *When the pupils are doing group work, someone is in charge of the group and another will present in class. Some will be leading, others following and when others are leading, it is a motivation to those who are seated. They are saying to themselves: "Next time we want to be presenters". It is emotionally preparing them to emulate worthwhile endeavours such as leadership and oratorship (A:2).*
- *Since they are teenagers, they have a lot on their minds. They are in need of emotional and life guidance (C: 30).*

The participants also highlighted that they knew how to use the learners' backgrounds to enhance learning. For example, Participant B, who taught at a school where racial and religious differences among learners were apparent, embraced these shades to enhance effective teaching and learning. In addition, because of the communities where the schools were located and the type of learners that came from those locations, the participants explicated that they knew the learners' background and took care to use that knowledge to inform their teaching.

#### **4.5.3 Interpretation of theme 3: Beginner teachers' knowledge of learners**

The participants' knowledge of learners was divided into teachers' knowledge of learning Literature in English and knowledge of learners' psychological well-being. In line with Shulman (1987) and Turner-Bisset (1999), the participants also revealed that they held knowledge of learners' psychological well-being. However, Shulman (1987) and Turner-Bisset (1999) call this knowledge learners' cognition, which relate to the teachers' knowledge of the learners' developmental stages and social background. The participants' knowledge of learners' psychological well-being included the knowledge of the learners' background and their emotional levels, which extends Shulman (1987) and Turner-Bisset's (1999) definitions. The participants revealed that they knew about the learners' temperaments and personalities. Shulman (1987) and Turner-Bisset (1999) do not refer to the learners' temperaments or personalities explicitly under knowledge of learners' cognition, but such could be inferred from Elbaz (1983) and Golombek's (1998) teacher knowledge models with their emphasis on practical knowledge. By extension, Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (1999) call for an inter-disciplinary approach to teaching would be aligned to the teachers' knowing about learners' temperaments and personalities from their formal teacher training. The participants highlighted that as an emotionally charged subject, it called upon learners to feel, think, and react. Teachers were better equipped if they knew their learners' temperaments and personalities (Sadler *et al.* 2013; Hackett 2010).

The findings indicate that knowledge of learners could be summarised into two broad forms. The first form was the knowledge that helped learners learn Literature in English, such as knowing their academic strengths and weaknesses, performance, methods that enhanced learners' study of Literature in English and learners'

academic growth (knowledge of learners' academic ability). The second form was the strategies of motivating learners to learn Literature in English, such as knowing their social background, temperaments, emotional well-being and maturity levels (knowledge of learners' psychological well-being). From this understanding, knowledge of learners has both academic and socio-psychological underpinnings (Turner-Bisset 1999). In addition, the findings also reveal that teachers' knowledge of the learner was contextual. This implied that the teacher developed situational knowledge according to the type of learners they had during a particular period.

It is evident that beginner teachers' learner knowledge was formed through a gradual process, with the first step being the teachers' knowledge of learners' academic ability. The beginner teachers then developed knowledge of learners' psychological well-being as they made teaching judgments about methods that worked as they tried to address the learners' academic needs. This process was on-going, as the teachers dealt with the learners' academic abilities, which inevitably improved on their knowledge of learners' psychological well-being. At this level, the participants were involved in a process of combining theory and practice (Grossman *et al.* 2009; Verloop *et al.* 2001).

The themes I have discussed above, namely knowledge of the curriculum (Turner-Bisset 1999; Golombek 1998; Shulman 1987; Elbaz 1983), knowledge of teaching (Cochran-Smith & Lytle 1999; Turner-Bisset 1999; Golombek 1998; Shulman 1987; Elbaz 1983) and knowledge of learners (Cochran-Smith & Lytle 1999; Turner-Bisset 1999; Golombek 1998; Shulman 1987; Elbaz 1983), are related to and collaborate with other teacher knowledge models.

The last theme to be discussed, namely teachers' dispositional knowledge, was the new insight that this study added to the body of teacher knowledge. Although dispositional knowledge is not discussed in any of the sources that I consulted for this study, one of its subcategories, namely autobiographical knowledge, is discussed in certain teacher models such as Turner-Bisset (1999), Golombek (1998) and Elbaz (1983). Dispositional knowledge is discussed in depth below.



#### **4.6 Theme 4: Beginner teachers' dispositional knowledge**

The four participants stated that they possessed dispositional knowledge. In the context of this study dispositional knowledge refers to the beginner teachers propensity to act in certain ways in reaction to the learners' and school's attitudes toward Literature in English. It is also the beginner teachers' knowledge of approaches of dealing with attitudes and beliefs that schools and learners hold towards the study of Literature in English. The attitudes that the participants interacted with, had motivated them to develop specific knowledge to deal with situations that presented teaching and learning Literature in English in a negative way. Dispositional knowledge had two subthemes, namely beginner teachers' paradigmatic orientation and autobiographical knowledge. These are discussed in detail below.

##### **4.6.1 Subtheme 1: Beginner teachers' paradigmatic orientation knowledge**

The participants' knowledge of negative attitudes associated with the learning of Literature in English had motivated them to embrace certain teaching worldviews and emblems aimed at motivating their learners. The participants explained that their teaching practices were informed by the knowledge of the perceptions that the school and learners held towards Literature in English.

##### ***Category A: Beginner teachers' knowledge of perceptions***

The participants mentioned that they possessed perceptual knowledge that came from knowing the attitudes that the school and learners had towards Literature in English. All the participants perceived their school and learners as having a negative attitude towards Literature in English. In the four schools Literature in English was assigned to learners who were considered low achievers. From the quotations below it is clear that the schools did place low achieving learners in Arts classes where Literature in English belongs:

- *At first, the students thought it was going to be very difficult to learn Literature but with time, they started appreciating it. They have shown a lot of interest that has inspired me. They have made me realise that no one can be*

*hopeless. In our school, Literature is given to hopeless students. The good ones go to Sciences and Business studies (A:5).*

- *Literature assessment calls for higher engagement of the mind, which may not be suited for low achieving students that it is given to. I have found out through this class, that less achieving learners are able to comprehend literary concepts through interactive means such as pair and group work, class discussion and blogs (B:22).*
- *This subject is given to weaker students. The school feels it is an easy subject, yet it is the most difficult subject. It needs someone who has a good command of English and someone who easily understands concepts. However, it is given to the Arts class. The Arts students' performance is considered poor (C:32).*
- *Our school has a low regard for Literature/Arts subject. We look highly on Science subjects and Mathematics. We view these as noble. It seems as a general tradition in the school. My initial approach is to incite learner excitement to encourage a positive attitude in Literature (D:58).*

To encourage their learners' positive perceptions, participants used all opportunities offered by the learning environment to encourage and motivate. For example, in Participant C's class, when she introduced me to her learners during the first observation, she used it as a point of motivating them to continue with the study of Literature. I realised that her way of introducing me was meant to integrate what I was studying to the learners' career possibilities. Participant C creatively used my presence in her class as a source of motivating her learners beyond the classroom. She used my presence as a source of concretising the limitless career possibilities inherent in studying Literature in English (cf. vignette 3). The participants' knowledge of the negative perceptions associated with the study of Literature in English had motivated them to create excitement for their learners. From this observation, I realised that the beginner teachers developed teaching knowledge from problematic experiences, which were present in and outside the classroom.

### **Vignette 3: Participant C's first class observation**

When the class had finished praying, Participant C introduced me to her learners as the person that had written the letters to them. She went on to explain that I was studying towards a PhD. When she said this, all the learners looked up at me. I felt I had ceased being just a visitor to the learners' class as they looked at me with so much awe. Participant C then asked them if they understood what a PhD was and they all agreed that they knew. She then asked them to guess what I majored in. Some said media, maybe because of the camera I had mounted, but some said education. She then asked them in what area of education, but the learners appeared confused. The learners did not seem to understand that I could major in a certain area of education. Participant C told the learners that I majored in the teaching of Literature in English. At that point, one of the learners, a boy, lifted his hand and asked if it was possible to do that and asked what subject he needed to major in at Advanced Level. Participant C took this opportunity to explain to the learners that there were many career opportunities from studying Literature in English. She outlined career opportunities such as teaching, law, copy-editing and journalism. By the time the class started learners looked visibly motivated and they occasionally stole glances at me, which I read as an imagination of possibilities.

Through the class observations, I identified invitational strategies such as respect, trust, optimism, care and internationality, which participants had incorporated into their teaching to deal with problematic experiences. Participant D said that she used interesting teaching methods to excite her pupils into learning Literature in English:

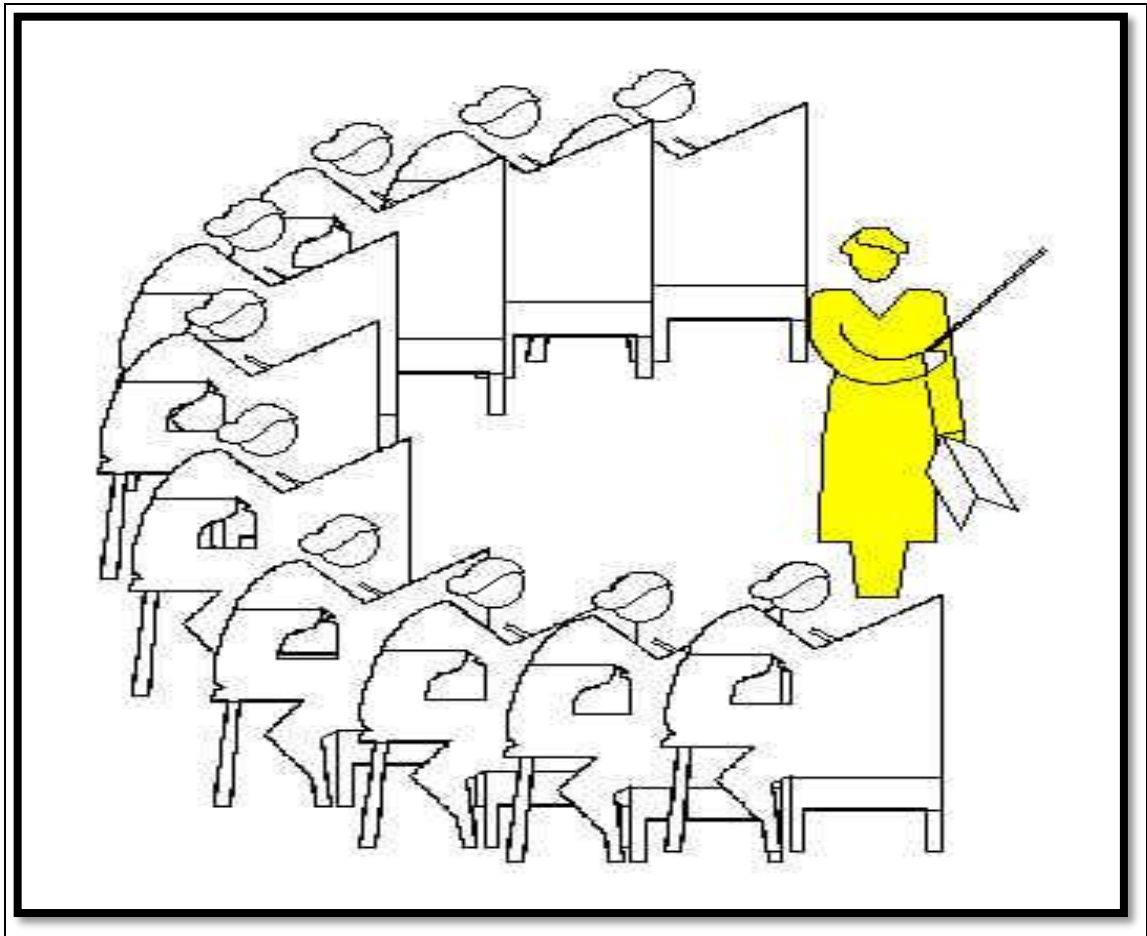
- *Role-play often comes in as an interesting approach – usually when you have varied approach types of learning students enjoy. The problem we have been facing is that the pupils have a negative attitude towards Literature. They feel that because they are doing Literature they are lower level pupils. I know that for them to feel confident I need to give them things that they will enjoy and make them love literature. I love Literature; I want to transfer that attitude to the pupils (D:59).*

The participants emphasised that their knowledge of the school and learners' perceptions about Literature in English and individuals that studied it had motivated them to develop invitational strategies that motivated learners. The seating

arrangement and class mottos were some of such strategies (cf. figure 4.1; 4.5.2). The teachers pointed out that they knew how to elicit positive attitudes from the learners. From the class observations, document analysis and interviews, I did get the sense that participants, through their actions and activities, endeavoured to portray the study of Literature in English in a positive way. The teachers were cultivating positive subject acceptance by demystifying the school and learners' categorisation of Literature in English learners as "*dull students*" (C:35) and "*weak students*" (A5). For example, Participant A's seating arrangement was circular as shown in figure 4.1, which was not a common seating arrangement in her school, but which she used to create uniqueness and engagement to motivate the learners. The participants commented on the school and learners' attitudes towards the study of Literature in English, but they were silent on their own attitude towards Literature in English. I believe that their career choice by extension might be viewed as a source of positive attitude towards studying Literature in English. Nevertheless, the participants expressed awareness that the perceptions they dealt with had in fact helped them construct knowledge on how to counter negative ones. Participant B hinted that she also initially harboured a negative attitude towards her learners:

- *Literature is a subject for the intellectuals. It should be given to the gifted class, but it is thrown to the less gifted. When I first started teaching these Form 4s in Form 3 I used to lament about the unfairness of it all. However, now I am so happy because every time I meet them they challenge me to be better than yesterday. They are so eager to learn and I always make them feel important. You know it is different from teaching isiNdebele. With isiNdebele I feel like I am just teaching, but the nature of Literature and the type of students I have, I feel like I am making a difference (her voice quivering) (B:22).*

The participants acknowledged that dealing with different perceptions about the study of Literature in English had made them more self-aware and reflective.



**Figure 4.1: Participant A's classroom seating arrangement**

***Category B: Beginner teachers' emblematic knowledge***

The participants had developed teaching approaches to the teaching of Literature in English in response to the negativity that associated the subject. The participants explained that learners' placement into the Literature in English classroom was viewed as a reflection of their low academic status by the school and peers. As a counter measure to this, beginner teachers developed emblems, which motivated the learners to develop positive images of self. The first emblem that the beginner teachers used was to hold a positive view of the Literature in English learners. Participants A and B regarded learners as children who needed to be guided into academic and cognitive development. Participant C's class was a home and a sanctuary for learners to grow academically and spiritually. Participant D presented her teaching as a coaching session that taught learners practical skills for life:

- *I believe that spoon-feeding is not good for the learners because they have to develop. You have to help them grow by allowing them to be involved in their learning and to discover on their own (A:3).*
- *The learners are like little children discovering the world. In this world I have allowed the learners to discover about the literary world through reading. The learners read a lot, they are very inquisitive, they want to know about issues in the world (B:23).*
- *I pray with my students to encourage them. They know that I am there for them; I have hugged and counselled them. My class is an extension of my students' homes. I have made them understand that they need to love themselves and others. I know that some of them find relief and sense of belonging through that (C:35).*
- *I think of learning as life. I see myself as a life coach. I do not want to limit my objectives to the passing of the examinations – I want learning to develop life skills so I try to make sure of that by teaching things pupils can relate to, which are applied to their everyday life (D:65).*

The second emblem that the beginner teachers held was their approach to teaching. The participants formulated the second emblem as a reaction to the labelling of their learners as academically weak by the school and peers. The participants mentioned that they used teaching approaches that required their learners to be able to discover, interact and communicate in their Literature in English classroom. By using these approaches, the beginner teachers provided their Literature in English learners with an emblem of pride in both their social and academic esteems. Participant A favoured discovery learning, Participant B supported interactive learning, Participant C talked about a Christian approach and Participant D preferred a pragmatic approach to teaching Literature in English:

- *Discovery learning is also very important because it is a way of learning which is more effective than giving information. I have realised that something you discover on your own you actual value it than something you just get without an effort. When the pupils research to prepare for their presentation, they discover certain things and it also helps them to be able to be analytic such that when they look at a text they are very free to interpret issues individual (A:3).*
- *Literature is an interactive subject. You need discussions. It is not a subject that you spoon-feed the pupils. You teach them an aspect and you allow them to work in groups. Even the manner in which I put the groups, I make sure that they are racial and religious balanced so that the pupils get to interact and know each other better (B:21).*

- *We pray at the beginning and end of the class because we will be asking God to assist us through the lesson. We need his divine intervention. You know it also gives students a sense of belonging. They know God is there for them, it is encouraging (C:34).*
- *I will define myself as a pragmatist teacher. I think my task, my approach, from experience, is to engage pupils in practical activities, I engage pupils' positive attitude to help them to be part of the lessons (D:65).*

I was interested in confirming the teachers' pragmatic orientation during the class observation. I reasoned that, if the teachers had knowledge of a paradigm that influenced their choice of teaching and learning activities, I would see some traces thereof. I observed that the participants were unaware that their theory of practice was different from their espoused theory of practice (Argyris & Schon 1974). Although participants explained that they had knowledge about the teaching approaches they practiced; their actions and activities in class contradicted them at times, as was the case with Participant B. While Participant B claimed to be influenced by interactive learning, which included activities such as free writing and discussion, case studies and problem solving, role-play and interactive demonstrations, I did not see such stimulation in her class or as planned activities in the scheme book. During the first and second class observation, she used a combination of dictation and the lecture method, which are more aligned to positivist teaching orientations.

Unlike Participant B, Participants A and D's espoused worldviews were coordinated with their teaching practice. Participant A's worldview was easily identified from the activities I saw during her teaching. During her interview, she mentioned that she used discovery learning; in her scheme book, she planned for homework and research, and in class presentations she used activities associated with discovery learning. Participant D's actions and activities were practically oriented, as she embraced pragmatism. In the second observation, Participant D used Biblical commandments as a strategy for teaching the rules that changed in *Animal Farm* when Napoleon came into power. Simultaneously, as a Christian teacher she was practically integrating faith and learning. Furthermore, in her scheme book she had planned to use a tune from an indigenous click song to teach the learners the Beast of England song from *Animal Farm*. Her approach to teaching did reveal her knowledge of pragmatism.

Although none of the participants acknowledged it, I discovered from observing and listening to them, that their paradigmatic orientations overlapped. I was excited to come to this awareness, since one of the major assumptions I had made was that teacher knowledge was not stagnant, but that it revolved around the needs of the learners. Hence, I rejected a position that teacher knowledge can be prescribed (Grossman *et al.* 2009; John 2002; Verloop *et al.* 2002). For example, Participant C, who aligned herself to the Christian approach to teaching, actually used interactive learning overtly. I felt that the Christian approach to learning exuded from the moment you stepped into the school. The learners greeted visitors, they directed me to the parking area and assisted with carrying my camera from my car to the classroom. Interactive learning was salient from her teaching. The learners were active and she encouraged them with high fives<sup>16</sup>. However, the interactive learning environment exuded an air of encouraging and motivating that I did not feel in other non-Christian schools. The participants' paradigmatic approach to teaching was largely influenced by the perceptions that the school and learners held towards Literature in English.

Although the participants operated from different contexts, they possessed sociological awareness of their schools that informed the practice of teaching. They knew that their schools' environment could hinder learning and teaching in Literature in English and they had constructed teaching and learning emblems which they used to motivate their learners. I found that the emblems that participants embraced to be pragmatic and situational adjusted to suit the needs of the learners.

#### **4.6.2 Subtheme 2: Beginner teachers' autobiographical knowledge**

Teacher's knowledge of self and the value they placed on Literature in English formed part of their autobiographical knowledge. Beginner teachers' knowledge of self was knowledge of the personal attributes and academic backgrounds that they used to create a sense of value in their Literature in English learners.

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<sup>16</sup> An informal hand clapping gesture of affirmation



### **Category A: Beginner teachers' knowledge of self**

The beginner teachers' knowledge of self is their comprehension of how personal attributes are integrated in constructing their teaching knowledge in Literature in English. Under this theme, the participants focused on how their personal dispositions, roles and educational background influenced their teaching practices. Participants A, B and D used descriptive statements about self to define their roles as teachers:

- *Because of the nature of the students I teach, I can say I am a patient teacher but they have taught me to be patient. Through this class, I have learnt to be even more patient than before. These students need a lot of time for them to master certain skills (A:5).*
- *I think I have the capacity to bring out the best in students (B:21).*
- *I am a facilitator, I facilitate learning (D:65).*

During my observation in Participant A's class, I did see her patience in action. She did not approach her teaching hurriedly; she gave learners time to ask questions, which she answered without haste. Participant B stated that she was able to bring out the best in learners. Participant D described herself as a facilitator. These explicit descriptive statements of self were connected to the participants' teaching world views. For example, Participant D, who was influenced by a pragmatist approach, described herself as a facilitator, a quality related to her paradigmatic orientation. The participants' background knowledge and how it influenced their teaching was also a part of their autobiographical knowledge. Participant A was aware that her background made her enjoy teaching Shakespearean drama and English poetry:

- *I actually enjoy teaching drama and poetry. Maybe it is from my own schooling background I love teaching poetry. I have noticed that drama and poetry is more interesting in the sense that automatically the pupils get involved even without being told to (A:13).*

Participant C knew that her background motivated her to be the teacher she was. Her teacher training prepared her for the teaching of isiNdebele as a major and English as a minor. From her background, she was able to use inter-subject knowledge to aid her teaching in Literature in English:

- *My college background helps me teach Literature. I was doing isiNdebele as a major subject. We were doing isiNdebele in English and giving examples in isiNdebele. We did Literature in Ndebele – these subjects complement each other. In isiNdebele, we have Literature, which you are forced to teach because it is not a subject on its own, it is part of the syllabus, and it is examined. I use that knowledge from isiNdebele in my class (B:42).*

In addition, Participant D knew that as an active person she was unable to stay in one place for long. That knowledge of self might have motivated her to select pragmatism as an approach to teaching:

- *Firstly, I happen to be very active. I cannot keep to one place. Secondly, I am practical in my approach to my own life and that of my pupils. However, my movements in my class are deliberate because I want to come close to my pupils. I want them to hear me speak and when they see me come closer and from my facial expression, they can see I am desperate to communicate a point. That way, subconsciously, they will make an effort to understand what I am saying (D:70).*

According to Participant D, she deliberately incorporated her knowledge of self in the way she approached teaching. Participants included autobiographical knowledge as part of their teacher knowledge. I found the beginner teachers' knowledge of self to be personal and subjective. In addition, knowledge of self was embedded in the social contexts in which the teachers were located and through interaction with learners, the schools' expectations and curriculum and the teachers' perceived roles as teachers. The self-image the beginner teachers held was the label they assigned to themselves as professionals who were in a continuous process of evaluation and reflection on their practice of teaching. From the participants' knowledge of self, I also realised that it was an important aspect for their reflection. The participants held an eclectic outlook of their teaching as they conceptualised who they were in articulating what they were able to do as teachers.

The participants explained that knowing who they were came from their personal disposition, professional responsibilities and the nature of the subject. For example, Participant D's knowledge of self as an active teacher propelled her to a pragmatic orientation of teaching that involved her being practical and active in her teaching. Interestingly, participants also added their academic background as part of their self-knowledge. Prior academic learning situations such as high schools and preparations provided participants with pouches of knowledge, which they used in the classroom

to inform their teaching decisions and judgments. The participants' knowledge of self, integrated with their classroom realities, produced knowledge that was specific, local, contextualised and non-generalizable. This attitude to teaching comes only from having a better understanding of self. The participants indicated that through self-examination they came to know and place value on the act of teaching and the subject they taught.

### **Category B: Beginner teachers' knowledge of the value of Literature in English**

The participants emphasised the value of Literature in English as a way of fostering a change in learners' attitudes in class. Participant C claimed that the only way to get learners to appreciate a subject was to deliberately inform learners what the worth of a subject was:

- *Learners need to know the study of Literature is worthwhile. Right at the beginning you have to work on that before you get into teaching Literature. If you fail to do that, you will find that you will face many problems with students (C:36).*

I found that the participants used both the value that Literature in English has and the learners' backgrounds to inform their teaching practices. Participant C emphasised that before teaching Literature in English she worked on encouraging learners to appreciate its value, as generally they had a negative attitude towards the subject. Participants A and D regarded the practical values of Literature in English as part of their teaching knowledge. Their emphasis on the extrinsic and practical values of Literature was somewhat different from that of Participant C who focused more on its intrinsic value:

- *Literature helps the students to be good readers of character. When they study Literature they learn to interact and socialize well with other people. Learning Literature actually helps them in developing mind and character (A:4).*
- *Literature is about life. I want the students to have that attachment with Literature. I am preparing them to be able to interpret their lives in relation to the text. The text was written a long time ago but we still find some of the traits in the text in real life. I want to help them to interpret life using the text. Literature is about life skills, not only the examination (D:60).*

Participants emphasised that they held knowledge of the intrinsic and extrinsic or practical value of Literature in English. Extrinsic value refers to the secondary benefit of studying Literature in English, like language acquisition. The intrinsic or practical value encompasses the primary benefits of studying Literature that include multicultural understanding, improved human diversity appreciation, literary competence, analytic skills and self- and community evaluation. The participants provided an enthralling insight into the value of Literature in English as they regarded themselves as benefitting immensely from teaching. This was a departure from an emphasis on the value of the teaching of Literature for learners and refocusing it to include the benefit for the teachers.

Participants A and D were more practically oriented in discussing their knowledge on the values of Literature in English, while Participant C focused more on its cognitive benefit. The apathy experienced towards Literature in English came from a failure by teachers to connect it to real life. Although the cognitive value of Literature was obvious to a teacher, it might not be accessible to a teenager in Form 3. As a way of improving learners' attitudes towards Literature in English, practical values could improve subject recognition. In my field notes I commented on the participants not mentioning their reactions to the negative attitudes towards the subject around them.

The participants have talked about everyone's attitudes but their own. They seem to be working in an environment where they are constantly encouraging the learners and navigating their literary appreciation. It will be interesting to determine their attitude towards this role they have assumed, which they did not seem to carry while teaching History, isiNdebele and English Language (Field notes: 30 September 2014).

#### **4.6.3 Interpretation of theme 4: Beginner teachers' attitudinal knowledge**

Participants' attitudinal knowledge comprised four elements, namely knowledge of paradigmatic orientation, knowledge of perceptual knowledge, autobiographical knowledge and knowledge of the value of Literature in English. Attitudinal knowledge was a theme that interested me greatly. From a superficial reading of the data, I

concluded that the teachers had knowledge of the attitudes associated with the teaching and learning of Literature in English, but more importantly, they had constructed strategies of dealing with such conceptions. Other researchers in teacher knowledge such as Turner-Smith (1999) and Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999), Golombek (1998), Shulman (1987) and Elbaz (1983) do not include knowledge of perceptions in their models. I believe that I discovered this new element as a result of working with the specific participants as well as the contexts and the subject under study. I realised from the onset that Literature in English in ESL was neglected in both research and preparation (Gordon 2012). In the process of asking for permission to collect data in School B, the head teacher asked, condescendingly, why I would be interested in researching Literature in English when it was clear that both learners and teachers had a negative attitude towards the subject. This particular head teacher's question made me appreciate the extent of misconceptions I met with during the data collection. I explained to the head teacher in question that my study would be important in our understanding of teaching Literature in English better.

The participants in the study highlighted that they were able to interpret the attitudes of the school and learners towards the study of Literature in English. At this level, participants were able to fashion their classroom actions and activities in reaction to the institutional contexts in which they were immersed. The participants' knowledge of the school's attitude towards, and the educational importance of Literature in English, influenced them to foster certain teaching orientations and activities which were meant to boost learners' positive subject attitude. The participants indicated that learners perceived Literature in English as difficult and unnecessary, while schools perceived it as being expensive. In line with Dewey's (1933) assertion, the participants' attitudinal knowledge acknowledges the reflective processes that they go through as they analyse their teaching. This suggests that teachers are involved in pragmatic actions and activities that influence positive learning in and outside of the classroom (Grossman *et al.* 2009; Hammerness *et al.* 2005; Mustafa 2005). In the four Literature in English classrooms that I visited I observed a feeling that teaching is pastoral in nature, as supportive environments were generated in class to maximise the learners' potential. Thus, the beginner teachers had managed to find their own understanding of what it meant to be a Literature in English teacher in their specific context. The teachers' attitudinal knowledge lead them to explore and seek

ways of making sense of their classroom practices by systematically finding solutions to localised teaching problems from within and outside the classroom (Buitink 2009; Tang 2003).

The beginner teachers' attitudinal knowledge revealed their anticipatory reflective practices (Van Manen 1995). The participants planned and decided on actions and activities that positively motivated the learners. Participants used invitational strategies to minimise the negative perceptions that learners held towards Literature in English. I observed teachers using invitational strategies such as unique seating arrangements, inter-subjective teaching, outdoor learning and interactive discussions to intentionally invite learners to the classroom. I noted a deliberate effort by the teachers to create a teaching environment that promoted learners' positive attitude towards Literature in English. I also observed that the use of activities such as class presentations and debates were used as invitational strategies with a latent intention of improving learner's self-esteem and confidence alongside the acquisition of literary competence.

Teacher knowledge was shaped by the participants' attitude towards teaching, which in turn was influenced by perceptual knowledge of self and the value they placed on Literature in English. The participants' knowledge started to accrue before they became teachers. The participants gathered knowledge from their past experiences as learners in Literature in English classrooms (DeGraff *et al.* 2015; Buitink 2009). These participants' teacher knowledge was shaped within their own history. It was constructed at making sense of their self-knowledge as they dealt with classroom challenges. The question of who the teacher was and what they believed teaching should be was important to these participants, as they made sense of their Literature in English classroom. Their knowledge of self was inextricably related to the passion they brought to teaching. Thus, their teaching knowledge was created at an intersection of theoretical and experiential practices (cf. section 2.6; figure 2.3; DeGraff *et al.* 2015; Cheng *et al.* 2012; Buitink 2009; Connelly *et al.* 1997). Although the teachers had different pasts, they had a similar present experience of teaching O Level learners. However, each individual participant's actions and activities were different but true to the needs of their contexts (John 2002; Chaiklin & Lave 1996). Thus, the participants' past, present and anticipated teaching experiences were autobiographical elements that were embedded in their contextual situations.

The participants shared experiences on knowledge construction that had developed from navigating personal and problematic areas in the study of Literature in English (Farrell 2012; Akbari 2007; Hegarty 2000). As mentioned earlier, even with shared similarities, the participants navigated their teaching as individuals. The participants had developed perpetual allegiance to their learners and the subject by using invitational strategies as a way of minimizing the attitudinal dispositions that had limited learners' ability in acquiring literary competence (Stanley 1998). The participants revealed that their knowledge was conceptually located in their past, present and anticipated experiences as they reflected on the practical needs of the learners (Hammerness *et al.* 2005; Verloop *et al.* 2001; Day 1993). It was noteworthy to appreciate that the teachers' practice in class seemed to be shaped by the autobiographical knowledge and the value they placed on Literature in English as a subject (Buitink 2009; Golombek 1998). This implies that teacher knowledge in Literature in English accrues before the teacher steps into a class. I realised that teacher knowledge takes shape in the history of the teacher (Lampert 2010; Buitink 2009).

In sections 4.2 to 4.5, I discussed the themes from the data analysis. The findings indicate that Literature in English teachers have four types of knowledge, namely beginner teachers' knowledge of the curriculum, beginner teachers' knowledge of teaching, beginner teachers' knowledge of learners and beginner teachers' dispositional knowledge. Table 4.2 provides an overview of the main themes that emerged from the data analysis.



**Table 4.2: Themes, subthemes and categories**

<p><b>Theme 1: Beginner teachers' knowledge of the curriculum</b></p>	<p><b>Subtheme 1: Beginner teachers' knowledge of the curriculum philosophical orientations</b>            Category A: Beginner teachers' knowledge of the school's curriculum philosophical foundations            Category B: Beginner teachers' knowledge of the school's expectations  <b>Subtheme 2: Beginner teachers' knowledge of the syllabus</b>            Category A: Beginner teachers' knowledge of Literature in English syllabus content            Category B: Beginner teachers' knowledge of the examination requirements</p>
<p><b>Theme 2: Beginner teachers' knowledge of teaching</b></p>	<p><b>Subtheme 1: Beginner teachers' general teaching knowledge</b>            Category A: Beginner teachers' knowledge of personal teaching philosophies            Category B: Beginner teachers' knowledge of teaching as a profession            Category C: Beginner teachers' knowledge of teaching class management  <b>Subtheme 2: Beginner teachers' pedagogical content knowledge</b>            Category A: Beginner teachers' knowledge of the nature of Literature in English            Category B: Beginner teachers' knowledge of methods of teaching Literature in English</p>
<p><b>Theme 3: Beginner teachers' knowledge of learners</b></p>	<p><b>Subtheme 1: Beginner teachers' knowledge of learning Literature in English</b>            Category A: Beginner teachers' knowledge of learners' academic ability            Category B: Beginner teachers' knowledge of strategies of motivating learners            Category C: Beginner teachers' knowledge of learners' academic growth  <b>Subtheme 2: Beginner teachers' knowledge of learners' psychological well-being</b>            Category A: Beginner teachers' knowledge of learners' social background            Category B: Beginner teachers' knowledge of learners' emotional well-being</p>
<p><b>Theme 4: Beginner teachers' dispositional knowledge</b></p>	<p><b>Subtheme 1: Beginner teachers' paradigmatic knowledge</b>            Category A: Beginner teachers' knowledge of perceptions            Category B: Beginner teachers' emblematic knowledge  <b>Subtheme 2: Beginner teachers' autobiographical knowledge</b>            Category A: Beginner teachers' knowledge of self            Category B: Beginner teachers' knowledge of the value of Literature in English</p>





Apart from investigating beginner teachers' knowledges in the teaching of Literature in English, I was also interested in understanding the knowledge gaps that participants believed they had as Literature in English teachers. I was interested in knowing the participants' strategies in dealing with their knowledge gaps. I was cognisant that by acknowledging the knowledge gaps, the beginner teachers confirmed teacher knowledge as evolving and perpetual (cf. section 2.4). The next section investigates the knowledge gaps that Literature in English teachers have, as well as the strategies they use to minimise such gaps when they occur.

#### **4.7 Beginner teachers' knowledge gaps and strategies**

Teaching knowledge gaps refers to the teachers' inability to guide learners to a certain competence level with regard to an aspect of Literature in English. The participants in this study indicated that they experienced four types of knowledge gaps, which had to do with the teaching of setting, Shakespearean language, African literature and inadequate teaching resources.

##### ***Knowledge gap 1: Teaching world literature settings***

The participants' knowledge gap in teaching came when they failed to teach an aspect of Literature in English required by the subject syllabus. Participants A, B and C confirmed that they experienced knowledge gaps when it came to helping learners comprehend settings in world/contemporary texts:

- *I have a challenge in teaching setting of novels especially in section B. We have two sections in the O Level Literature in English syllabus. Section A is African Literature and section B is World Literature. The learners are familiar with African Literature as they are more familiar with the culture and settings because Africa is almost the same. It is a struggle to teach Shakespearean works as my students could not relate to the settings. I had a tough time teaching The Merchant of Venice (A:16).*
- *I know my students find the subject difficult even if they try so hard to read and research. Shakespeare and other dramatists are very challenging as I failed at times to get the students to understand the setting (B:30).*
- *The main challenge or the gap I have experienced is helping learners bring foreign texts to their contexts. It is easier with African texts like A Cowrie of Hope for them to understand when they talk about poverty. It is easier for pupils to interpret themes in an African text. However, when you come to Western texts it is difficult for the pupils to understand some of the things that are talked about. For example, The Merchant of Venice is set at sea. For the pupils to understand the transport system and the time gaps in the play was a challenge.*



*The time when Bassanio is traveling to Belmont to go and woo Portia, the pupils think that this is something that will take 10 to 15 minutes. They are interpreting something from their context with easy traveling roads, but in Shakespeare's time, this is something that would take days. I had a torrid time in teaching the setting which is important in understanding The Merchant of Venice. (D:79).*

According to the participants, setting is important to the study of Literature in English as it enhances interpretation of the text, which leads to a deeper comprehension of meaning for the learners. The learners accessed the setting from imaginative simulation based on familiarity with the places that are being described. Participants B and D confirmed that they taught setting in World Literature with trepidation. Participant D provided an example where the learners failed to comprehend the time lapses in *The Merchant of Venice*, which caused them to miss the contextual elements of the play, which are important in understanding its thematic value and the playwright's vision.

Nevertheless, the participants explained that they used varied strategies to minimise the knowledge gaps in teaching settings when they occurred. Participant D used inter-subject teaching to minimise the knowledge gap. Inter-subject teaching refers to invitations extended to other teachers or experts who could help explain a literary concept to learners. Participant D invited the Geography and History specialists to assist learners in visualising the elements of setting they failed to comprehend. Participants A and B used researching and E-learning platforms such as the television, internet and movies to minimise this knowledge gap:

- *I try to encourage interactive learning so I engage other subjects. I do not have to limit learning to Literature so I used Geography to help with setting. I called the Geography teacher to come and help me. To help the learners understand the setup at sea he brought a map and showed them where Venice was located and where Belmont was and the sea between them. When he did that the learners understood. He even explained the type of business that was going on. For example, when Antonio says: "My ships are at sea", they comprehended it. Initially a ship to the pupils was for leisure, a boat cruise, but the Geography teacher used a video from YouTube to help them visualize a ship as a form of trade. I also called a 4<sup>th</sup> year student from the nearby university to explain the history of England during the time The Merchant of Venice was written (D:79).*
- *In The Merchant of Venice, which is set in Italy, the teacher had never been to Italy, but of course, I have read widely. I encourage the students to do their research about the play. I tell them what I know because every time we study the text/play we start by the background. In the background, we talk about the author/playwright and the setting and I encourage them to go and use the internet to research. In any case, the school is connected to the internet so they have time to go and research. (A:16).*
- *It is quite difficult but I think it is made easier because we use E-learning in the form of videos. I normally invite someone from the media department of our*



*school to show movies on the novels we are studying. We watched Animal Farm and The Lion and Jewel and it gave them a clearer picture of the setting. I also encourage the pupils to read widely and research on their own (B:30).*

Participant C did not indicate teaching setting as part of her knowledge gaps in Literature in English.

### **Knowledge gap 2: Teaching Shakespearian language**

Another teaching gap came from the teaching of Shakespearean language. Participant C noted that she had a challenge in knowing how to teach learners to understand Shakespearean language. Participant D also indicated that when learners failed to comprehend the language used in the Elizabethan plays, intellectually intimidated them:

- *I found out that I had challenges teaching Shakespearean language, the students could not understand the language (C:56).*
- *Another knowledge gap I have is teaching Elizabethan language. It is difficult for the pupils to understand some of the terminology that is used is old words, which pupils cannot relate to. This means that it takes them time to grasp the plot of the story. As a result it wounds their spirits – they end up intimidated by the language and discouraged (D:76).*

Participants C and D co-opted study guides, teachers' explanations, and peer teaching as strategies to assist learners to comprehend the language used in Shakespearean plays:

- *I use study guide with modern day English (C:56).*
- *With language, it is a bit of a challenge. I had to use study guide that translate Shakespearean texts into modern day English. The pupils were able to read the old English referencing it to the modern one. As the teacher, I also explained in depth through repetition the plot of the play. However, when I see that my learners are not following I had to repeat myself and have extra lessons to infuse key concepts. Another strategy I used was peer teaching where I allowed learners to teach each other. In cases where I had explained a concept and I still saw in their faces that some of them had not internalized it, I incorporate pupils as part of my teaching resources. At times some of them quickly grasp the concepts so I will sit down on the pupil's desk and ask one of them to come to the front and explain what I have been trying to explain. I will call four or five pupils to explain the same concept. The problem with this strategy is that it is time-consuming, but it is effective (D:76).*

Participants A and B did not indicate language as part of their knowledge gaps.



### **Knowledge gap 3: Teaching African literature**

Only Participant A experienced a knowledge gap in the teaching of African literature. She explained that during her school days she failed to acquire literary competence in African literature due to the nationality of her Literature in English teacher:

- *I have a challenge in teaching African literature. To be honest, it is from my school background. I did not get support on African literature because at O Level I was taught by a German lady who was not interested in African literature, so she did not do much, I just lost interest (A:18).*

Participant A commented that when she encountered this knowledge gap she used self-motivation to minimise it. She used continental pride to encourage herself to teach African Literature:

- *Through team teaching, I have overcome that negative attitude to African literature. Also natural it has come to my senses that African Literature is from my continent and I am part of it. That also inspires me, it gives me encouragement to study African Literature so over these two years I have overcome that lack of interest I had before. I believe slowly I am getting there (A:18).*

### **Knowledge gap 3: Teaching Literature in English with inadequate resources**

Participant B also highlighted another knowledge gap specific to her context, as other participants did not reveal it. According to Participant B she experienced a lack of adequate teaching resources provided by the school as a knowledge gap. She indicated that she did not know how to alleviate the negative perceptions associated with Literature in English, which at times made it difficult to obtain teaching and learning materials:

- *There is a gap I have especially in dealing with the school. The school does not provide all the resources I need. I find it difficult to approach administration about teaching resources I need in teaching Literature, as they believe not much is needed to teach Literature. However, you find that priority is given to other subject because the general belief is that the set books and syllabus are enough for a teacher to teach Literature (B:30).*

Participant B indicated that when she failed to acquire adequate teaching materials she "outsourc[e]d the teaching material [she] need[ed]" (B:30). Participant B did not manage to specify what resources she needed to teach Literature that the school did not provide, even after some further probing. From my observation her school was well equipped with literary texts as I had a chance to view their library while waiting for her



before the observation. I noticed that her class was extremely modern with internet connectivity inside and multi-coloured, comfortable chairs. The learners had iPads and tablets and the school provided her with an iPad and laptop as well. I realised that she might have reacted to the school's low regard of Literature in English and blamed it on a lack of resources, when in fact it was as a result of her feelings of being unappreciated. However, I acknowledge that the school's policies that blocked knowledge access might have been at play, but that it could have been difficult for an outsider to comprehend.

#### **Knowledge gap 4: Use of internet in teaching Literature in English**

The learners' use of the internet was another knowledge gap highlighted only by Participant B. She mentioned that the internet presented her with a quandary where on the one hand, she encouraged the learners to use the internet for research, but on the other hand she discouraged the learners from using the internet as a way of avoiding reading the text:

- *Another knowledge gap I experience is with the Internet. Sometimes you find that learners can flood you with a lot of information they get from outside. They come up with questions that are related to the texts we are studying but not to the syllabus. The internet has too much information for the learners, it sometimes overwhelms me (B:30).*

Participant B mentioned that she kept some of the researched material that learners found. She wanted them to concentrate on acquiring literary competence before reading notes on the texts:

- *I have come up with the ways of helping the learners. I confiscate the information they come up with and say we will not use this now – read the text first. I will bring it later on and say how is the information you came across different from what you read. I have found that this encourages them and they feel they know more than the Internet. You should see how proud they get. Some of my learners research a lot. You have to preserve their spirit by being gentle with them at all times (C:30).*

When she confiscates the learners' internet printouts to minimise this gap, she feels that this may discourage them from further research. However, she said that by revisiting this material at a later stage in her teaching, it encouraged learners to continue researching. Furthermore, Participant B mentioned an interesting aspect about the blended learning environment at her school. Participant B's school emphasised the use of face-to-face teaching alongside online teaching, which is currently the buzzword in teaching and learning methods. Participant B highlighted that without the adequate teacher preparation, blended teaching might be demotivating the learners.



### **Knowledge gap 5: Teaching learners who continuously fail to comprehend literary concepts**

Participant C noted another teaching knowledge gap that was unique to her classroom. She explained that at times it was difficult to assist learners academically after attempts to do so several times:

- *I come to an extent of saying what will I do with these students? Despite your best efforts some students do not seem to comprehend the easiest of concepts. You get frustrated because you wish for the best (C:56).*

Participant C said that she never gave up on learners; she would always look for someone to help her:

- *Then I look for people who can assist me to get my student to read. It's a tiring and challenging experience but extremely rewarding (C:56).*

By someone she refers to anybody who can influence the learner to comprehend the text or even to begin reading. By default it seemed that being a teacher automatically qualified one to pass knowledge to the learners. Subjects like English Language equipped the teacher on how to help learners who lag behind. The same cannot be said of Literature in English. Beginner teachers exit their teacher training programmes without knowing how to help learners who lag behind in literary comprehension. Participant C exhibited the ability to think and solve locus problems without theoretical knowledge in the area. The teacher's knowledge of her learners extends to those individuals that could partner with her to help the learners reach literary competence expected of them at O Level. Participant C revealed an understanding of the African adage that "a child is nurtured by the whole village".<sup>17</sup> She extended that role to others who collaborated with her to inform her teaching practices. Thus, teaching knowledge was also constructed by knowing the individuals that could enhance the learners' classroom experiences as shown in vignette 4.

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<sup>17</sup> Loosely translated from an isiNdebele saying.



#### **Vignette 4: Participant C's strategy of motivating learners to read**

For a long time I had tried to help Njabulo to read *A Cowrie of Hope*, but he was not interested. I tried all the strategies from motivating to "I will need to call your parents", but nothing seemed to work. I observed one day, when I had not gone to the school cafeteria for lunch that Njabulo was joking with the school's security personnel at the gate. I had never seen Njabulo this excited in my class or on the sports ground. I made it a point to observe him at lunch again. I observed that he seemed to interact well with one of the security personnel. I called the person and asked how he knew Njabulo and she explained that she used to be Njabulo's nanny when he was a toddler. I gave her a copy of *A Cowrie of Hope* and asked her to read it during lunch when Njabulo came to see her. I asked her not to tell Njabulo about this. The next day and for eight after that, I observed her reading the novel. On the 9<sup>th</sup> day I saw Njabulo take the novel from her and asking her something. I could not hear much of what they were discussing as I was far from them. When the learners sat for the mid-term progress tests Njabulo scored very high. When I congratulated him, he said to me: "Ma'am, I have problems understanding *The Merchant of Venice*".

I went back to the security member and thanked her, for she had managed to get Njabulo to read. Njabulo got a B symbol in the June examinations in Literature. That is why I say anyone can motivate someone to read. You just need to know someone to find influential people in their lives.

#### **4.7.1 Interpretation of the beginner teachers' knowledge gaps and strategies**

The data confirm the participants' abilities to reflect on their teaching practice and to construct knowledge, which adequately address the needs of the classroom (Freeman & Johnson 1998; Zeichner & Liston 1996; Fenstermacher 1994; Day 1993; Schön 1986; Elbaz 1983). Table 4.3 provides a summary of the teachers' knowledge gaps and the strategies they used to minimise these gaps. The teachers' knowledge of teaching gaps and the strategies they used to minimise such gaps when they occurred, gravitated towards professional development that comes from classroom practices.



**Table 4.3: Participants' knowledge gaps and strategies**

<b>Knowledge gap</b>	<b>Strategies of minimising the gap</b>
Teaching world literature settings	- Inter-subject teaching - Researching - E-learning platforms - Teachers' explanations - Peer teaching
Teaching Shakespearian language	- Teachers' explanations - Peer teaching
Teaching African literature	- Self-motivation - Continental pride
Teaching Literature in English with inadequate resources	- Outsourcing teaching resources
Use of internet in teaching Literature in English	- Confiscating the learners' internet material
Teaching learners who continuously fail to comprehend literary concepts	- Individual teaching - Supplementary teaching

Through the process of reflection, the participants indicated that they were able to identify their own knowledge gaps and come up with strategies to minimise them when they occurred. From the data it was clear that the participants experienced teaching knowledge gaps in teaching. Knowledge of the teaching gaps refers to instances where a Literature in English teacher fails to teach a concept or skill such as Shakespearean setting, language and African literature. When teaching gaps occurred, participants used strategies such as E-learning platforms, team teaching, study guides, teachers' explanations, inter-subject teaching and outsourcing of teaching materials to minimize the gaps.

The participants highlighted that they had dispositional knowledge, curriculum knowledge, knowledge of teaching and knowledge of learners, but they displayed a very limited grasp of subject knowledge. Shulman and Grossman (1988) describe the ability to teach a subject's key facts, concepts, principles and explanatory frameworks, as the teacher's subject knowledge. ZOLLS (2013) indicates that teaching of Literature in English should focus on:

- discussing major literary works from Africa and the World
- distinguishing literary genres such as poetry, drama, short stories and poetry



- communicating literary aspects, which include plot, character, society and social background
- commenting on the authors and thematic values
- identifying the author's surface/deep meaning, the authors' attitude, mood and tone
- reacting personally to different types of literary works by relating it to their experiences

Following Shulman and Grossman's (1988) and ZOLLS (2013) definition of subject knowledge, participants have limited subject knowledge. The participants did not seem to understand and could not identify the meta- and referential evidence of the subject content in Literature in English – even with continuous probing. A question on what subject knowledge was would elicit responses such as the following:

- *In Literature, they need to know all the themes and characters and support it with textual evidence (B:23).*
- *The themes and characters are in the book (C:51).*

The participants concentrated on teaching themes and character. During both of my class observations with Participant B, she dictated the themes and characterisation for 80 minutes while the learners were seriously taking down notes. The participants seemed to have limited knowledge of other aspects of Literature in English besides themes and characters. While conducting the document analysis, I noted the following:

It seems the teachers are teaching themes and characters. All the participants are concentrating on these two aspects and forgetting the other literary skills that the learners have to be taught (Field notes: 20 September 2014).



#### 4.8 Summary of findings: similarities and new insights

To summarise, it is evident from the data that the participants held knowledge of the curriculum, knowledge of teaching, knowledge of learners and dispositional knowledge. The findings showed that the following similarities existed between this study and the literature I reviewed (cf. chapter 2).

- ❖ The beginner teachers' held knowledge of the curriculum. The participants' knowledge of the curriculum from official documentation such as the national and school curriculums, examination requirements and syllabus for teaching Literature in English similar to that of Turner-Bisset (1999), Shulman (1987) and Elbaz (1983).
- ❖ The participants indicated that they held knowledge of teaching. Other studies such as Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999); Golombek (1998); Shulman (1987) and Elbaz (1983) also incorporate teaching as part of the teachers' knowledge. The participants' knowledge of teaching was aligned to both the theoretical and practical practices as in studies such as Golombek (1998) and Elbaz (1983). Participants' teaching knowledge is personal, practical and contextual – qualities described by Golombek (1998), Clandinin and Connelly (1992), Lave (1991) and Hegarty (2000).
- ❖ The Literature in English beginner teachers in this study included knowledge of learners as part of their teacher knowledge, similar to Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999), Turner-Bisset (1999) and Shulman (1987). Knowledge of learners, according to the participants, was based on their understanding of human developmental stages, which informed the type of learning and methods used in the Literature in English classroom (Cochran-Smith & Lytle 1999; Turner-Bisset 1998; Shulman 1987).
- ❖ The participants illuminated teacher knowledge as personal, which is similar to the studies of Connelly and Clandinin (1999), Golombek (1998) and Elbaz (1991; 1983). The participants' knowledge was also contextualised to their classrooms; a characteristic that Connelly and Clandinin (1999), Golombek (1998), Chaiklin and Lave (1996) and Elbaz (1983) identified in their own studies. Participants' teacher knowledge was practical as it assisted them in making teaching decisions in class. Connelly and Clandinin (1999), Golombek



(1998), Lave (1991), Schön (1983) and Elbaz (1983) also indicate this quality of teacher knowledge. The participants' knowledge was tacit as it was automatic and intuitive to their classroom practices. Studies such as Verloop *et al.* 2001, Connelly *et al.* (1997), Golombek (1998), Lave (1991), Shulman (1987), Schön (1983) and Elbaz (1983) also reveal teacher's knowledge as tacit.

I believe that this study provided new insights into teacher knowledge as I delineate below.

- ❖ Teacher knowledge encompasses dispositional knowledge. Dispositional knowledge encompasses beginner teachers' paradigmatic orientations and autobiographical knowledges. Dispositional knowledge is teachers' reactionary knowledge that they embrace when their teaching is affected by negative stereotypes associated with the teaching and learning of Literature in English. The negative perceptions that the school and learners held towards the study of Literature had made Literature in English teachers construct strategies to minimise these. The teachers also used their autobiographical knowledge to inform their practice of teaching. The participants used axiological qualities, emblems and self to motivate positive learner attitudes towards Literature in English.
- ❖ The participants displayed knowledge gaps in their teaching of setting, Shakespearean language, African literature and a lack of teaching resources. The participants used inter-subject teaching, research, E-learning platforms, study guides and peer and individual teaching to minimise knowledge gaps.
- ❖ Beginner teacher knowledge has a reaction quality. The participants indicated that they constructed teaching knowledge as a reaction to the negative attitudes towards the study of Literature in English that they encountered in and out of the classroom. The beginner teachers mentioned that the process of problem-solving and critical thinking had assisted them in constructing subject-specific invitational strategies, which enhanced learning.
- ❖ In addition, teacher knowledge, according to the participants, had an emotional aspect. The participants' teaching knowledge was constructed from emotions. The beginner teachers came to know about teaching Literature in English from addressing the learners' emotional well-being in a school environment that looked down on Arts subjects such as Literature in English. The beginner teachers

mentioned that emotions they experienced as individuals and with their learners helped them make sense of teaching as a social and contextual experience. The participants noted that emotions helped them understand their teaching world as embedded with human compassion and value.

#### 4.9 Conclusion

This chapter presented the data collected from four O Level, Literature in English beginner teachers through classroom observation, document analysis and interviews. The data were analysed using inductive thematic analysis. The aim of chapter 4 was to present the knowledge that four O Level Literature in English beginner teachers possessed. Indications from the data are that the Literature in English beginner teachers hold knowledge of the curriculum, knowledge of teaching, knowledge of learners and attitudinal knowledge.

The beginner teachers also highlighted that they had teaching and learning gaps and that they used internal and external strategies to minimise knowledge gaps when they occurred. It appeared from the data analysis that the sampled teachers had limited subject knowledge.

The final chapter revisits the research questions in an attempt to determine the extent to which the study was successful in answering them. I continuously refer to the literature review (chapter 2), research design (chapter 3) and findings (chapter 4) to demonstrate my understanding of teacher knowledge in the concluding chapter of my study.



## Chapter 5

### Conclusion and recommendations

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#### 5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I reported on the findings of the study. The findings were interpreted in terms of the existing literature in teacher knowledge. In presenting the results in the previous chapter, I emphasised corresponding and contradictory findings in this study and the existing literature.

This present chapter serves as the conclusion of the study. In this chapter, I provide the insights I gained from the review of the literature on teacher knowledge. I then present the study's findings by situating them to the conceptual framework. The purpose of this study was to explore the knowledge that beginner teachers hold for teaching Literature in English. Informed by this purpose, in this chapter I present the Literature in English beginner teachers' knowledge. I also illuminate the new insights that the study provided for our understanding of beginner teachers' knowledge. Finally, I discuss the implications of the study as well as the recommendations for future research.

#### 5.2 Summary of the study

As indicated in chapter 1, the aim of this study was to explore the knowledge held by O Level Literature in English beginner teachers. The main research question was: **"What teaching knowledge do beginner teachers come to possess for teaching Literature in English from their theory of education and experiential practice?"** In carrying out this study, I theorised that Literature in English beginner teachers' knowledge for English Language was not the same as for Literature in English (Gordon 2012; Ncube 2001). I noted that, to date, no study had attempted to organise beginner teachers' knowledge in Literature in English. From the onset of this study, I conceptualised that beginner teachers held some knowledge of teaching from their preparation programmes (cf. sections 1.3.2; table 1.2). Nevertheless, I indicated that Literature in English beginner teachers are prepared more for the teaching of the language aspects of English than for of its literary elements (cf. section 1.3.2; table 1.2; Olivero 2015; Hackett 2010; Buitink 2009). The school curricula, however, require beginner teachers to possess knowledge for teaching English Language and Literature



in English as separate subjects (cf. section 2.2.1; figure 2.2). From my understanding of teacher preparation programmes, coupled with my experiences as a former O Level Literature in English teacher and a university lecturer in the subject, I suggested that beginner teachers were inadequately prepared for this task (cf. section 2.1).

I was cognisant of the fact that the bleak picture I painted about the teaching of Literature in English in the Zimbabwean context did not in any way suggest that learning was not taking place. On the contrary, I hypothesised that beginner teachers had theoretical knowledges from their teacher training programmes prescribed by university-based researchers (Cheng *et al.* 2012; Grossman *et al.* 2009; cf. sections 2.4; 2.5). I looked at studies that prescribed ESL teacher knowledge bases such as Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999), Turner-Bisset (1999) and Shulman (1987) to inform my understanding of beginner teachers' theoretical knowledge in Literature in English (cf. 2.4). I theorised that the beginner teachers' formal preparation laid the foundation for understanding the theory of education that every teacher needed to develop into an effective practitioner (Grossman *et al.* 2009; Grossman & McDonald 2008; Hegarty 2000). However, I understood that teaching was a complex activity that failed to be explained from a prescriptive understanding (Cheng *et al.* 2012; Buitink 2009; Hegarty 2000). Although, I held theoretical knowledge from the beginner teachers' formal training as important, I was aware that teacher knowledge explained from this view was incomplete and restricted by its prescriptive nature (Verloop *et al.* 2001).

My study placed beginner teachers at the centre of their knowledge construction (cf. section 2.6; figure 2.2; Cheng *et al.* 2012; Buitink 2009; Grossman *et al.* 2009; Verloop *et al.* 2001). I focused on teacher knowledge created by the practitioners from their theoretical and experiential practices (cf. section 2.6; figure 2.2; DeGraff *et al.* 2015; Buitink 2009; Grossman *et al.* 2009; Cochran-Smith & Lytle 1999). By embracing both the theoretical and experiential models as integrative, I aimed at minimising the line that separated knowledge generated by university-based researchers and experiential researchers (DeGraff *et al.* 2015; Buitink 2009; Johnson 1999). I rejected the compartmentalisation of teacher knowledge and embraced the view that its richness was anchored in the integration of its theory and practice (McGlynn-Stewart 2015; Grossman *et al.* 2009; Buitink 2009). Thus, from this understanding, I approached the study of teacher knowledge as integrative and collaborative between the beginner teachers' theoretical and experiential practices (cf. section 2.6; figure 2.2; Grossman *et al.* 2009; Buitink 2009).



Thus, this study is significant as it provides a teacher knowledge base for Literature in English as a stand-alone subject within the ESL research tradition, which to date, had been neglected. By being specific to beginner teachers in Literature in English, my study revealed the areas of teacher training in the subject that still needed improvement (Gordon 2012; Freeman & Johnson 1998). Knowledge generated from such an inquiry could be critical in improving teacher training. In addition, through allowing beginner teachers to discuss what they knew, this study was significant in guiding them into an awareness of what they know and what they still needed to know. The study, by default, brought the participants into the consciousness of their knowledge and how it related to their practice of teaching. The study also offered the beginner teachers an opportunity to articulate their teaching experiences by describing the actions they took and the decisions they made as they taught O Level Literature in English which could result in effective teaching practices.

### **5.3 Situating the findings within the study's conceptual framework**

The conceptual framework of this study was drawn from the literature review on theoretical and experiential teacher knowledge models and social constructivism (cf. sections 1.7; 2.6; figure 2.2). I conceptualised that the beginner teachers constructed their Literature in English teaching knowledge from integrating their theoretical and experiential knowledges. I rejected the separation of teacher knowledge domains according to the theoretical or experiential orientations, as I believe that beginner teachers use all the knowledges at their disposal to make sense of their teaching (DeGraff *et al.* 2015; Olivero 2015; Connelly *et al.* 1997; Grossman *et al.* 2009; Johnson 1999). However, I do not suggest that studies such as Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999), Turner-Bisset (1999), Golombek (1998), Shulman (1987) and Elbaz (1983) had not espoused on this collaborative role of teacher knowledge. The contention I carried was that the studies cited above did not seek to understand teacher knowledge from both the theoretical and experiential aspects. I argued that by taking an intentional stance of exploring teacher knowledge constructed from a dialogue of theory of education and classroom-based experiences, I better understood the professional development of reflective teachers who have a high level of engagement as practitioners.

The beginner teachers in this study held theoretical knowledge from their teacher training programmes as I conceptualised (sections 1.7.1; 2.4; figures 1.1; 2.2). Corresponding with the study's conceptual framework, the beginner teachers in this



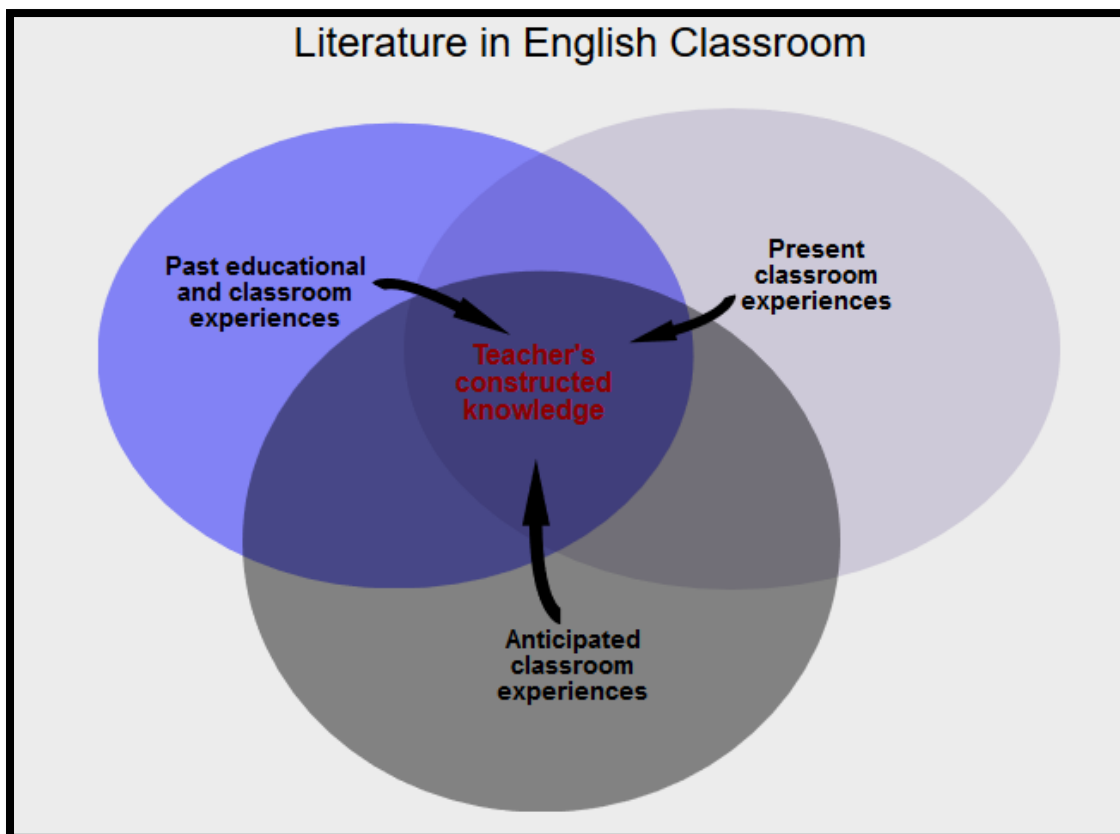
study were involved in a process of contextualising and personalising theoretical teaching knowledge to address their classroom needs (Leeferink *et al.* 2015; Cheng *et al.* 2012; Buitink 2009). From this process of re-ordering theoretical knowledge to meet contextual needs, the beginner teachers acquired teaching knowledge that was individualistic, contextual and pragmatic (Cheng *et al.* 2012; Hackett 2010). However, the beginner teachers did not explicitly separate theoretical and experiential knowledge in their teaching, but integrated the knowledges as part of their overall professional practices (Buitink 2009; Verloop *et al.* 2001).

The beginner teachers in this study acquired experiential knowledge from their teaching practice. Their experiential knowledge was informed by an understanding of learners, Literature in English as a subject, contextual nuances and their autobiographical backgrounds. Their experiential knowledge comprised historical aspects that they brought from knowledges acquired over a number of years in educational institutions and in their current teaching contexts. The social context of the classroom was a richer source of the beginner teachers' knowledge, experimentation and practice (Olivero *et al.* 2015; Cheng *et al.* 2012; Buitink 2009). The beginner teachers' classroom successes and challenges from interacting with the curriculum, syllabus, learners, and examination and assessment criteria influenced their knowledge construction. Thus, the beginner teachers' knowledge was constructed as a product of their situational needs (Farrell 2012; Hackett 2010; Stanley 1998).

In contrast with my conceptualisation of teaching knowledge as constructed from an amalgamation of theoretical and experiential knowledges, the beginner teachers indicated a more elaborate construction schema. Although, acknowledging the theoretical and experiential knowledges as sources of their teaching practices, the beginner teachers in this study indicated that their construction developed from past, present and anticipated classroom experiences. They highlighted that teaching knowledge construction involved multiple sources that included previous educational experiences, present Literature in English experiences and anticipated classroom experiences.

Figure 5.1 provides a visual summary of how beginner teachers constructed Literature in English teaching knowledge.





**Figure 5.1 Beginner teachers' knowledge construction in Literature in English**

The beginner teachers came to possess an idiosyncratic Literature in English teaching knowledge from "an embryonic manifesto of the teacher-self that emerges during a beginning teacher's formative experiences, both as a student at school and university, and during their initial teacher education." (Giovanelli 2015:418). The beginner teachers' previous educational experiences, which included their time as students in teachers' colleges and high schools, provided them with the knowledge that set them on the path of teaching (Leeferink *et al.* 2015; Hackett 2010; Buitink 2009). Interestingly, the classroom experiences eventually revealed to the beginner teachers that their theoretical knowledge was incomplete and as they reflected on this, they constructed knowledge that was personal, unique, reactional, contextual, and practical (Leeferink *et al.* 2015; Lampert 2010; Buitink 2009). The beginner teachers' present experiences in the Literature in English classroom and further academic and professional developments influence their teaching knowledge (Trent 2015; Buitink 2009; Hackett 2010). At the anticipatory level, the beginner teachers planned for the future through a dialogue with learners, school expectations, and syllabic knowledge. Through the anticipatory process, the teachers constructed a scaffolded classroom in which learners' weaknesses were anticipated, identified and possible strategies spontaneously created to minimise them.



## 5.4 Conclusions in terms of research questions

In this section, I conclude the study by answering the research questions I posed in chapter 1. I also highlight the possible contribution of this study to ESL teacher knowledge in this section.

### 5.4.1 Secondary research question 1:

#### **What knowledge gaps, if any, exist in beginner teachers' knowledge of Literature in English?**

In this study, the beginner teachers indicated that they had knowledge gaps in teaching Literature in English. These gaps included world literature settings, Shakespearean language, African literature and knowledge on how to deal with learners who continuously fail to grasp literary concepts as part of their knowledge gaps. I found that the beginner teachers' knowledge gaps in the teaching of Literature in English originated from the nature of both the subject and the learners.

The beginner teachers knew that the O Level syllabus required a comprehension of literatures from different parts of the world. However, they had challenges in teaching different genres and settings of works prescribed in the syllabus. I established that, although they could teach settings as literary devices, they felt challenged when it came to the actual teaching of settings in world literatures. Shakespearean settings in *The Merchant of Venice* were highlighted as an example of this teaching knowledge gap. Furthermore, the archaic nature of the Shakespearean language presented the beginner teachers with another knowledge gap.

I realised that beginner teachers were reflective about their teaching practices. Although they were still beginner subject teachers they were able to identify aspects of their teaching where they lacked sufficient knowledges. In this regard, I theorise that beginner teachers are not merely consumers of their formal training, but are able to identify for themselves the limits of what they know and how their teaching practices are improved as they reflect on how they minimise knowledge gaps.

From the findings, it seems that the beginner teachers did not possess subject knowledge. Although they could identify characterisation and themes as part of their subject knowledge, they were unable to connect these to a deep literary analysis level. An understanding subject knowledge entails the beginner teachers' ability to teach



different genres, literary functions, writers' ideological vision and society and social values (cf. section 2.2.1; figure 2.1).

#### 5.4.2 Secondary research question 2:

##### **How do Literature in English beginner teachers address the knowledge gaps, if any, in their teaching?**

In my study, I found that the beginner teachers used inter-subject, peer- and individual teaching, E-learning platforms and study guides to minimise knowledge gaps when they occurred in their teaching of Literature in English. I established that the strategies that the beginner teachers used involved teamwork and cooperation from colleagues – either in the school or in the virtual world. Thus, they understood that teaching knowledge was a communal and social phenomenon enhanced by collaborative efforts. Based on the results I obtained, I propose that beginner teachers are constructors of the teaching knowledges. Although the beginner teachers need theoretical knowledge to ground their profession in teaching, I realised that they were able to adapt this knowledge to suit their contextual needs.

It was evident from the findings that the beginner teachers in this study were teaching practitioners, as they were able to identify knowledge gaps from reflecting on their teaching. From a reflection on the classroom experiences, the beginner teachers were able to also construct strategies to bridge knowledge gaps. They were involved in exploring, redirecting and reconstructing their teaching practices and processes that extended their teaching knowledge. At this level, the beginner teachers took critical steps into knowledge construction based on personal, reactional, emotional, contextual and practical aspects (cf. 4.6; Grossman *et al.* 2009). Therefore, beginner teachers' reflective practices appeared to improve teaching as it offered them an opportunity to gain in-depth appreciation of what it meant to teach Literature in English (Mustafa & Nurdan 2009; Akbari 2007; Stanley 1998; Day 1993). Figure 5.2 provides a visual summary of the beginner teachers' knowledge gaps and the strategies they employed.

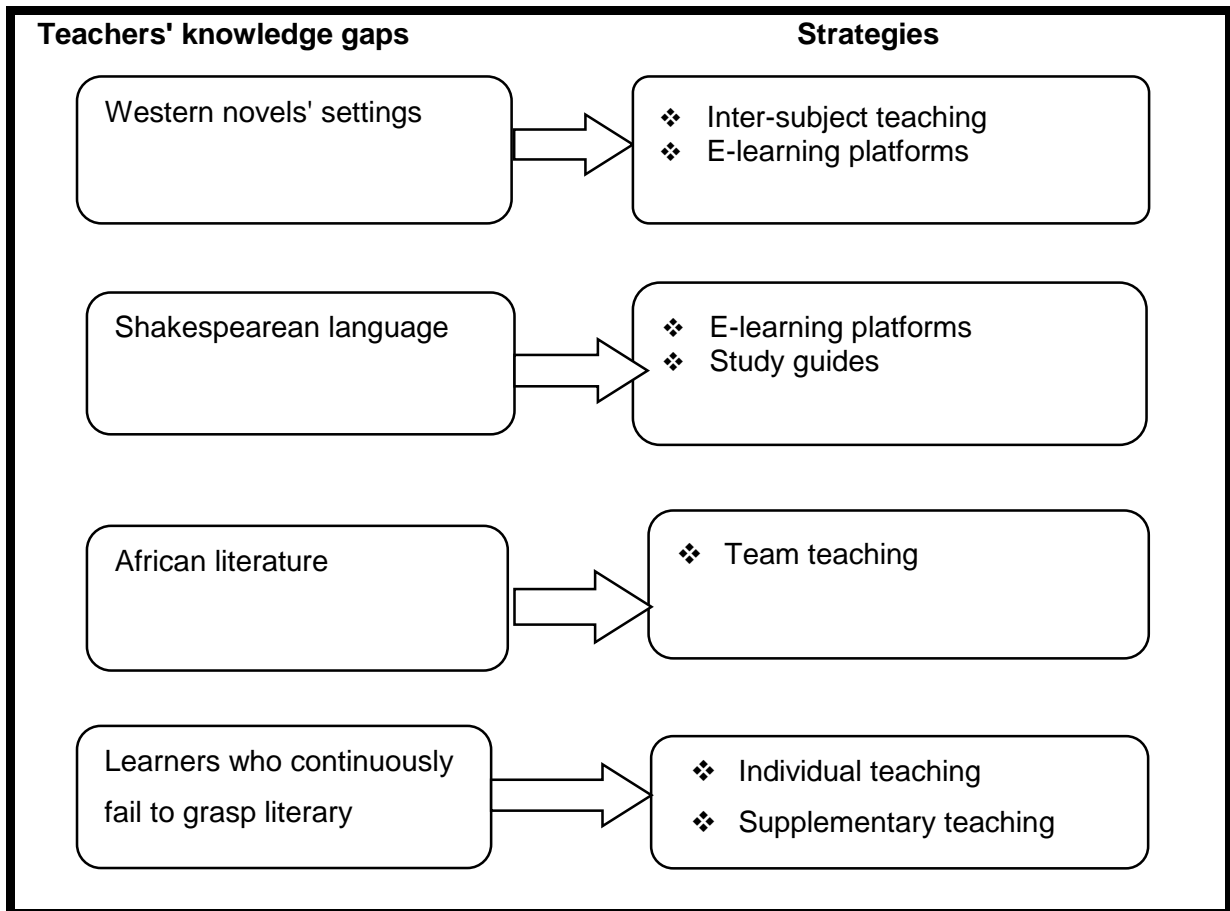


Figure 5.2: Teachers' knowledge gaps and strategies

### 5.4.3 Primary research question

**What teaching knowledge do beginner teachers come to possess for teaching Literature in English from their theory of education and experiential practice?**

The existing and prominent ESL literature on teacher knowledge is limited to the language aspect of English, and studies such as Cochran-Smith & Lytle (1999), Turner-Bisset (1999) and Golombek (1998) focus on European and North American contexts. Thus, in undertaking this study I wanted to contribute to teacher knowledge of Literature in English as a stand-alone ESL subject originating from the Zimbabwean context. In the section below, I highlight the knowledges that beginner teachers had come to hold from teaching Literature in English from a Zimbabwean context.



#### 5.4.3.1 Beginner teachers' knowledge of the curriculum

I found in this study that the beginner teachers possessed knowledge of the curriculum (cf. table 4.2; section 4.3; figure 5.2). The beginner teachers' knowledge of the curriculum is their comprehension of the overall schools' planned learning and teaching goals for all learners. The beginner teachers' knowledge of the curriculum encompassed knowing their schools' philosophy of education and the O Level Literature in English syllabus.

The beginner teachers knew the philosophical orientations that underpinned their schools' teaching and learning aims. I found that the beginner teachers knew that their schools' vision was driven by worldviews such as *Ubuntu/Unhu*, integration of faith and learning, and progressive education. It emerged from this study that the beginner teachers' knowledge of their schools' philosophical orientations also guided them to the knowledge of their schools' general expectations of their roles as teachers. Although these expectations were not explicit, the beginner teachers were aware that their schools required of them to be mentors, role models, moulders and motivators to their learners, aligned to the philosophy of education that the school embraced.

Besides the beginner teachers' overall knowledge of the school curriculum they also knew the O Level Literature in English syllabus. Specifically, the beginner teachers knew the objectives and outline of topics to be studied in the O Level Literature in English course. The beginner teachers indicated that they knew that the O Level Literature in English syllabus focused on African and world literatures. From this knowledge they knew that the works to be studied by their O Level learners were *Animal Farm* and *The Merchant of Venice* for world literature, and *A Cowrie of Hope* and *The Lion and the Jewel* for African literature. Furthermore, they highlighted that they knew that the main objective in O Level Literature in English was that learners were able to discuss the characters and thematic issues of any of the genres they studied. However, I found that the beginner teachers were uncertain about the knowledge of the structure and sequencing of topics in the O Level Literature in English course.

As part of their syllabic knowledge, the beginner teachers also mentioned knowing the O Level Literature in English examination requirements, assessment criteria and structure. They knew that the O Level Literature in English learners were required to respond to questions using essay and short answer formats in the final examination. I

found that the beginner teachers taught learners to answer examination questions in class using the answering formats mentioned above, but that this exercise appeared more of a drilling technique than aiming for literary competence. I observed that the learners were able to identify, for example, characteristics of Nasula in *A Cowrie of Hope*, but they could not relate these to the author's overall vision. Furthermore, the teachers did not probe them further, although high level of engagement is needed for the learners' literary competence.

Interestingly, I found that the beginner teachers' theoretical knowledge of the examination requirements, assessment and structure was interpreted as contextual focusing on the learners' literary needs and progress. I found that their scheming/planning for the O Level Literature in English class integrated their knowledge of the examination requirements, assessment and structure with the learners' literary competence levels. The beginner teachers' knowledge of the examination requirements and contextual nuances motivated them to prepare their learners emotionally and physically for the final O Level Literature in English examination. This preparation allowed them to train the learners on how to answer examination questions structurally and confidentially.

In discussing the teachers' knowledge models in the literature review, I highlighted that international studies had included knowledge of the curriculum as part of the teaching knowledges (Turner-Bisset 1999; Cochran-Smith & Lytle 1999; Shulman 1987). Although the beginner teachers in this study held knowledge of the curriculum obtained from school and national documents, it was interpreted to suit the context of their Literature in English classroom.

#### **5.4.3.2 Beginner teachers' knowledge of teaching**

The beginner teachers held knowledge of teaching. I found in this study that knowledge of teaching is their ability to instruct informed by their general and content knowledges. This means that the beginner teachers possess general teaching knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge for teaching O Level Literature in English (cf. table 4.2; section 4.4; figure 5.2).

In my study, I found that the beginner teachers' general teaching knowledge was informed by theoretical knowledge from their training programmes. The beginner teachers knew their teaching philosophies, professional roles as teachers and



classroom management skills as part of their generic teaching knowledge. I observed that theoretically, the beginner teachers were able to discuss teaching philosophies that influenced their professional worldviews in general. However, the beginner teachers' knowledge of their contexts motivated them to embrace personal philosophies of teaching rather than just educational philosophies. I observed that the beginner teachers' personal philosophies such as empowerment, partnership, responsibility, and participatory teaching were used to underpin teaching in Literature in English from the knowledge school and learners' attitudes. Thus, by using personal teaching philosophies they assisted the learners to acquire confidence for both the academic and social world. It was evident that the beginner teachers knew that their schools lacked an enabling environment to nurture learners' literary competence. By embracing specific philosophies, they created classrooms that were both caring and nurturing as a strategy to reinforce learners' positive attitudes toward the study of O Level Literature in English.

The beginner teachers also knew how to use specific pedagogy to teach O Level Literature in English. Their knowledge of the nature of Literature in English as both a social and communicative based subject motivated them to use strategies such as drama, essay writing, debates, presentations, social media (class blogs and WhatsApp), act-by-act class reading and code switching in their classrooms. Although strategies such as social media were not part of the beginner teachers' theoretical knowledge, their use in teaching O Level Literature in English was a response to their experiential knowing. I noted that the beginner teachers included modern gadgets and platforms in their teaching to make Literature in English interesting and trendy for the teenagers, but at the same time ensuring that they acquired literary knowledge expected at O Level.

The findings illuminate that the beginner teachers' preparation programmes had equipped them with theoretical knowledge for teaching, but the Literature in English classes had given them experiences to reconstruct teaching according to their context-dependant needs. From the findings, I came to the realisation that beginner teachers' knowledge was an continuous process, which the participants admitted was constantly refined by practice within the context in which it existed. Moreover, the beginner teachers highlighted the integrative nature of teacher knowledge through knowing how to teach. This meant that teaching involved integrating interdisciplinary knowledge that enhanced learning and teaching environments. The beginner teachers noted that they used knowledge from psychology, sociology, child development and religious areas to



create a classroom environment that increased learners' chances of acquiring literary knowledge.

#### **5.4.3.3 Beginner teachers' knowledge of learners**

My findings revealed that beginner teachers held knowledge of learners (cf. table 4. 2; section 4.5; figure 5.3). In this study, knowledge of learners refers the knowledge that the beginner teachers possessed of the learners' academic ability and psychological well-being.

The beginner teachers in this study reported that their knowledge of learners meant that they understood the learners' areas of strengths and weakness in Literature in English. I noted that the beginner teachers knew their learners' academic ability from their placement in an Arts subject. I established that the placement of the learners in O Level Literature in English meant that, in that particular school, they were recorded as weak and low achieving individuals. I found that the beginner teachers used an array of motivational strategies such as creating and maintaining a relationship with learners, class-based counselling sessions, songs and poems to create a sense of belonging for the Literature in English learners. From knowing about the learners' academic background the beginner teachers were able to monitor their academic growth in Literature in English.

From this study it also emerged that the beginner teachers knew about their learners' psychological well-being. This means that the beginner teachers knew about the learners' social backgrounds and emotional well-being. I found that the beginner teachers knew the learners' psychological well-being as a way of providing the types of motivation and encouragement that they needed to adopt in the Literature in English classrooms. I established that the beginner teachers' knowledge of the learners' social backgrounds and emotional maturity assisted them to account for diversity in planning for lessons that were gender, racially, religiously and culturally appropriate, without compromising the curriculum and syllabic objectives. What I gathered from these findings was that the beginner teachers' knowledge of learners confirmed that they were involved in deliberate reflective practices that they used to inform the quality of teaching and learning in their classrooms.

Although literature on the theoretical teacher knowledge domain indicates knowledge of learners as important for teaching, such studies do not emphasise the contextual





nuances as influencing this type of knowledge (Cochran-Smith & Lytle 1999; Turner-Bisset 1999; Shulman 1987). However, from an experiential teacher knowledge point of view, the beginner teachers highlighted a strong link between knowledge of their learners' academic ability and their psychological well-being. I found that both knowledges influenced the beginner teachers to create a classroom that addressed not only the learners' literary competence, but also personalities, temperaments and social backgrounds.

#### **5.4.3.4 Beginner teachers' dispositional knowledge**

Through this study, I discovered that beginner teachers had developed teaching knowledge from negotiating negative attitudes associated with the learning of O Level Literature in English (cf. table 4.2; section 4.6; figure 5.4). In my study I found that the beginner teachers' dispositional knowledge took into account their knowledge of paradigmatic orientations, perceptual, autobiographical and literary value. This suggested that dispositional knowledge was constructed as a function of their teaching worldview, stakeholders' perceptions about their work, their background and the merits of studying Literature in English. This theme was identified as a new area in teacher knowledge, as other studies did not include dispositional knowledge as part of their models.

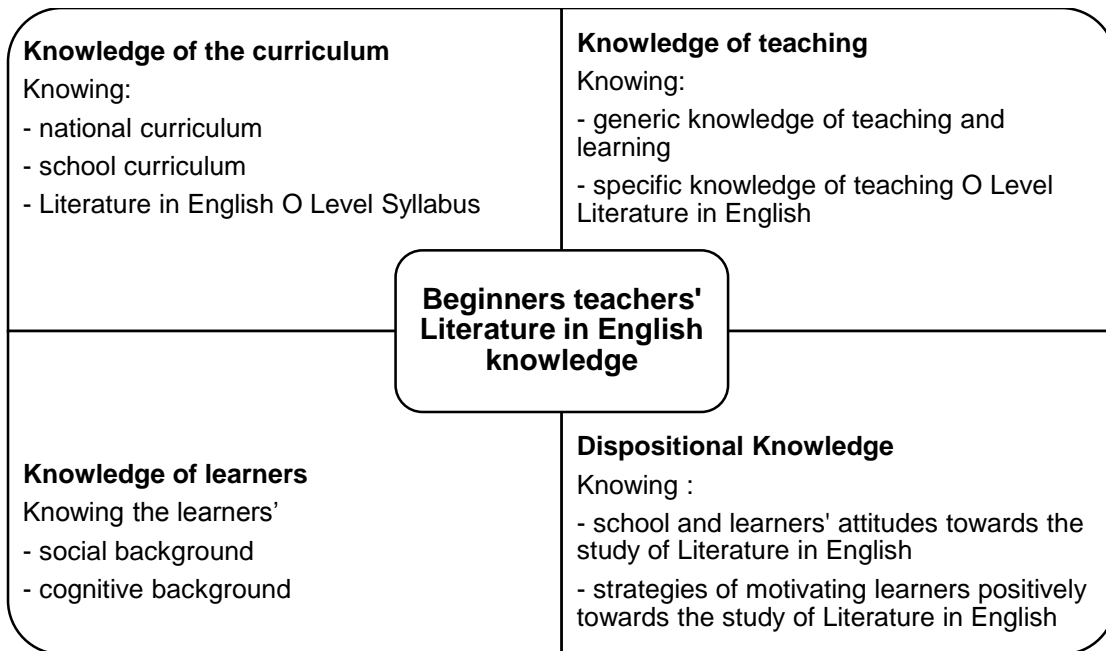
I found that the beginner teachers knew that the school and learners held negative perceptions about learning Literature in English. The school and peers viewed the Literature in English learners' placement as an indication of poor academic performance. The beginner teachers used invitational strategies such as care, optimism, seating arrangements and gestures to motivate learners positively. I also established that the beginner teachers used these invitational strategies as emblems to represent the ideal teaching environment that created excitement among Literature in English learners.

I noted that beginner teachers used discovery, interaction and pragmatism as their paradigmatic orientations to teaching emanating from their theory of education. I found that the use of these paradigmatic orientations were emblems aimed at improving learners' academic and social esteem. By selecting to use these paradigmatic orientations that require of learners to research, present in class, debate and communicate, the beginner teachers countered negative perceptions that labelled their learners as academically weak. I established that beginner teachers did not hold only

one type of paradigmatic orientation, but that they were involved in the selection of those qualities that created a class environment that motivated learners to achieve literary competence.

I also found that the beginner teachers' autobiographical knowledge motivated them to specific attitudes toward the teaching of Literature in English. Firstly, the beginner teachers used their personal backgrounds to inform their teaching in Literature in English. This means they brought into the Literature in English classroom knowledges they had accrued over years in the educational institutions to influence teaching practices. Secondly, I noted that the value that they assigned to the study of Literature in English had a pragmatic function as it motivated their learners to approach its study with a high level of seriousness.

As a result of these findings, I posit that by knowing the attitude of others towards Literature in English the beginner teachers revealed their social awareness that informed the practice of teaching. This type of knowledge was important as a source of constructing invitational strategies that implored learners to a positive frame of mind towards the study of Literature in English. The beginner teachers were involved in a process of reconstructing their roles as a way of motivating and creating positive energy in the classroom. Beginner teachers' attitudinal knowledge was, therefore, an attempt through which the participants demystified inured perceptions about the study and appreciation of Literature in English. Figure 5.3 provides a summary of teacher knowledge in Literature in English as generated by this study.



**Figure 5.3: Beginner teachers' Literature in English knowledge**

#### 5.4.4 New insights derived from the study

I am cognisant that by specifically focusing on Literature in English as a stand-alone subject, this study provided new insights to ESL teacher knowledge research. In the section below I will structure my thoughts on the study's specific contribution to our understanding of beginner teachers' knowledge.

##### 5.4.4.1 The influence of others in Literature in English beginner teachers' knowledge construction

Teaching is a result of many factors that centre on the practitioners' ability to create a classroom environment that nurtures learners' academic and social growth (Hegarty 2000). However, the teachers' practice is shaped and moulded by others within the school community. Specifically, the beginner teacher participants in this study identified their schools' negative perceptions as shaping the knowledge that they eventually came to hold for teaching Literature in English. The beginner teachers were accepting of their role as new subject teachers in an environment where they felt less supported and appreciated. From this knowledge, the beginner teachers constructed attitudinal attributes such as teaching approaches, dedication, care and optimism aimed at improving the value of Literature in English among their learners. In assuming these attitudinal attributes, the Literature in English teachers projected a model that motivated and encouraged their learners beyond the classroom. By choosing to be positive



agents of learners' academic growth the beginner teachers created, within their Literature in English classrooms, communities that supported the former.

I contend that the beginner teachers' dispositional knowledge is important in understanding their overall constructed Literature in English teaching knowledge. Thus, the way they approached teaching, learning, and the curriculum was an emotional reaction to the low regard the school community held for on Literature in English. The beginner teachers in this study could have chosen to conform to the negative perceptions others held about Literature in English, but they were motivational and encouraging to their learners. They used contextual appropriate strategies to illicit learners' desire to acquire Literature in English. The use of emblems, such as teaching approaches that required academically weak learners in the Literature in English classroom to have a sense of accomplishment, were employed. Literary based emblems such as class poems and songs were incorporated into the Literature in English classroom. Through the above initiatives the beginner teachers constructed Literature in English teaching that was illuminated by their theory of education as well as contextual, attitudinal and idiosyncratic persuasions.

#### **5.4.4.2 Beginner teachers' knowledge as a construct of their past, present and anticipated experiences**

As an active process, teaching allows practitioners to construct knowledge from their past educational experiences; present classroom experiences and anticipated experiences within the Literature in English classroom (cf. section 5.3; figure 5.1; Ellis 2006). The social contexts of the Literature in English classroom developed in beginner teachers the intuition to construct teaching knowledge from multiple sources that informed their practice. It is evident that teacher knowledge construction is more elaborate in practice. This means that teacher knowledge is not easily described as just theoretical, experiential or an amalgamation of the two, but it exists in a robust, communal, holistic and fluid state that allows beginner teachers to reflect on their actions in the classroom to suit their contexts. What was unique about the beginner teachers' knowledge construction was their ability to monitor and reflect on their classroom-based actions and construct context-dependent knowledge for their teaching practice.



## 5.5 Reflecting on potential limitations of the study

In this section, I highlight the limitations of this study. One such limitation is that the beginner teachers in this study were still new subject teachers. Their teaching practices lacked finesse that could have been revealed by conducting the study focused on experienced teachers. I was cognisant that ESL studies such as Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999), Turner-Bisset (1999) and Golombek (1998) had focused on experienced teachers, and few, if any, of the prominent teacher knowledge studies had explored beginner teachers' knowledge. Furthermore, as I had conceptualised that teacher knowledge was an integration of the theory of education and classroom-based experiences, I was aware that the beginner teachers readily construct their teaching knowledge from these sources more than experienced teachers do. I contend that it is difficult for experienced teachers' to identify theory of education and experiential knowledges, as their continuous service limits their ability to identify characteristics of each of the knowledges.

Another limitation was the gender of the participants in the study. All the beginner teachers who participated in this study were females. It could have been interesting to describe a male perspective of teacher knowledge construction. However, using the sample criteria for this study in Bulawayo Province, I could not find a male Literature in English teacher.

I studied beginner teachers' knowledge based on observable, planned and declared actions and activities in the beginner teachers' classrooms (Lowery 2002; Edwards & Ogden 1998). I explicated that teacher knowledge was inferred from the actions and activities teachers used during the act of teaching. I embraced Hegarty's (2000:453) understanding that teachers' knowledge was "subjective, context-specific, and not readily communicated other than through demonstration". However, most of what beginner teachers know is cognitive, and what I observed and heard was just a fragment of what the teachers actually knew. Thus, the study's findings represent a limited account of what beginner teachers actually know. As it was impossible to harness teacher knowledge directly from the cognitive domain, in this study the teachers' actions and activities were used to indicate what the teachers knew, notwithstanding the limitations mentioned above.

The literature review that I carried out was mainly based on teacher knowledge in English language (Cochran-Smith & Lytle 1999; Turner-Bisset 1999; Golombek 1998).

Teacher knowledge research in Literature in English was an area that was relatively poorly researched. The study's findings are interpreted and integrated into the body of knowledge in ESL teacher knowledge. This interpretation could have been more robust and informative if other studies in Literature in English teacher knowledge existed and could be studied. '

In setting out the criteria for the selection of the research site, it was not the intention to get a representative sample but to select a site that would yield answers to the research question. For this purpose, Bulawayo Province's high schools were selected as the research site which means the findings of this study cannot be generalised to other provinces in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, the research site were only former group A schools which did not include former group B and rural schools.

## **5.6 Implications of the study**

The purpose of this study was to explore the knowledge that beginner teachers held in the teaching of Literature in English. The study's findings are crucial in that they helped identify areas of adequate teacher knowledge, which needed to be reinforced. On the other hand, the findings did reveal aspects in Literature in English teachers' knowledge where further assistance was required for professional growth. In view of the research findings, the implications are outlined in terms of beginner teacher professional development and subject knowledge development.

### **5.6.1 Implications for beginner teacher professional development**

This study aimed at exploring the knowledge held by Literature in English beginner teachers. The participants explained their knowledge as personal, unique and practical knowledge from their context. To understand the knowledge they held, it was important to explore the actions and activities that the beginner teachers engaged in. From this understanding, teacher knowledge is a social-oriented, multidimensional, and amalgamated phenomenon that accounts for the teachers' theoretical and experiential knowledges. Beginner teachers draw from their formal training and from their experiences to make sense of their teaching practice. The study upholds the importance of the multiple ways in which classroom teachers come to know. My research findings illuminate teacher knowledge constructed through personal, practical, reactional, and contextual ways.



Teacher knowledge, as suggested by the study's findings, is located within the teachers' theory of education and classroom experiences (cf. sections 2.6). From a constructivist understanding, the study links and acknowledges the symbiotic relationship between theoretical knowledge in teaching and the role of teachers in the construction of their experiential knowledge (cf. 2.6). In doing so, the study accounts for teachers' knowledge constructed from theoretical and experiential practice of teaching. The experiences of beginner teachers provided by this study are important in understanding these teachers' reflective practices in the teaching of Literature in English (cf. section 2.5). Beginner teachers' reflections through trial and error confirm their ability to be observers and problem-solvers in their classrooms. The study provided four teaching contexts in which each beginner teacher was active in solving the teaching challenges they encountered. The continuous process of constructing and re-constructing knowledge in the Literature in English classroom was critical in transforming theory of teaching to its more practical and contextual qualities.

The research findings indicate that there is a need to foster connections between theoretical and experiential knowledge in teacher preparation programmes. Beginner teacher education curriculum designers and researchers might use this study to appreciate the fluid nature of teacher knowledge construction. In addition, teacher training colleges might consider using this document to create practical and simulated activities aimed at preparing pre-service teachers for authentic classroom experiences. The simulated activities that are embedded in teacher training programmes have the potential to create teacher readiness for the class.

Since they are beginner teachers, they benefit from environments that stimulate them to construct knowledge through observing experienced practitioners (Grossman *et al.* 2009; Hammerness *et al.* 2005; Hegarty 2000). The above understanding makes a case for the importance of having a supportive environment for beginner teachers. The deliberate creation of induction programmes for beginner teachers is key to the construction of knowledge schemata for problem-solving and decision-making. What the assertions above indicate is that beginner teachers need to be guided into both pedagogical and content knowledge construction by experienced subject teachers.

I hold that teacher knowledge is contextual and that the challenges faced by individual beginner teachers are varied, complex, and situational and complicated, but induction programmes could help facilitate teachers' journeys from students to subject teachers. Experienced teachers could be partnered with beginner teachers in Literature in English



to provide intellectual and practical ways to approach the practice of teaching. Induction programmes that are sustained and interactive might help guide inexperienced teachers into subject-specific teaching (Kearney 2015; Ingersoll 2012).

### **5.6.2 Implications for beginner teacher subject knowledge development**

I had experienced some uneasiness about some of my experiences with the participants. One such moment was the realisation that the beginner teachers lacked the meta-appreciation of the subject focus in Literature in English (cf. section 2.2.1; figure 2.2). I understand that without subject knowledge, the teachers are involved in drill exercises earmarked for examination performance, which denies the learners literary and aesthetic appreciation of Literature in English. Although the beginner teachers' lack of subject knowledge confirmed my initial assumption that they were ill prepared for the Literature in English classroom, I was disappointed by its extent. During the data collection stage I was curious to determine what the beginner teachers knew about the Literature in English subject focus, however, even with deep probing the participants could not discuss what they knew. It became clear that the beginner teachers had a tentative understanding of the areas of focus in Literature in English. Therefore, teachers colleges, universities, and school HoDs might need to place more emphasis on subject knowledge for Literature in English. The study found that beginner teachers had both theoretical and experiential knowledge of the curriculum, pedagogy, educational psychology, educational philosophy, and sociology, but hesitant and limited subject knowledge.

### **5.6.3 Implications for research in beginner teacher knowledge**

Most studies reviewed for this study regard teacher knowledge as prescriptive, personal, practical, contextual, tacit, content-related, and reflective (cf. table 2.6; section 2.5). In addition, my study revealed teacher knowledge as being both emotional and reactional (cf. section 4.6), and that all these teacher knowledge domains are generated in an environment that allows for professional teacher growth.

This study indicated that the beginner teachers worked in an environment in which negative attitudes towards the study of Literature in English were rife. Although they did not comment on the emotional turmoil that they were going through in their working environment, I inferred that such a scenario was not healthy for professional development. The education officers and school Heads of Departments (HoDs) for





Literature in English might be interested in helping demystify the subject and encouraging a positive attitude towards its study. In line with the above recommendation, teachers appeared to exit their teacher training programmes without being emotionally prepared for the impact of the social environment on their teaching. Both teacher training colleges and schools might incorporate preparation programmes on teachers' emotional readiness for teaching.

## 5.7 Recommendations for future studies

The study's findings indicate that there might be a need to carry out further studies in the area of Literature in English teacher knowledge. As this study was a maiden voyage into the world of teacher knowledge in Literature in English, and was carried out using a sample from former group A schools<sup>18</sup>, a similar study in former group B<sup>19</sup> or rural schools could be conducted to corroborate the findings.

Subject knowledge is the aggregate and organisation of knowledge in teachers' cognition in an area they teach. Subject knowledge is important to the teacher as it encompasses concepts in an area of study and how they are connected and related. Subject knowledge helps teachers plan and organise lessons, and without subject knowledge, teachers would not be able to present concepts logically. The study's findings suggest that beginner teachers have limited subject knowledge in Literature in English. It is for this reason that an action research project into building beginner teachers' subject knowledge in Literature in English is suggested.

As a new insight into teacher knowledge research, the study contributes teachers' attitudinal knowledge (cf. sections 4.6; 5.5.4; table 4.1) as one of the knowledges teachers hold. The beginner teachers developed attitudinal knowledge as a reaction to the negative attitude towards the study of Literature in English held by their schools and learners. One of the methods the teachers used to encourage positive attitudes among learners was invitational strategies such as seating arrangements, learning venues and interactive classes (cf. figure 4.1). The beginner teachers created classrooms that were warm and inviting. An examination of the invitational strategies that Literature in English teachers used to improve subject appreciation by learners would be a worthwhile contribution to teacher knowledge.

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<sup>18</sup> cf section 1.3.2.

<sup>19</sup> Refers to Zimbabwean schools that were reserved for black students prior to 1980.



## 5.8 Final reflection

This study once again illuminates that teaching is a complex profession. The teachers indicated that their role required that they simultaneously identify and solve classroom-based problems. The beginner teachers highlighted that teaching Literature in English required of them to be involved in a process of continuous professional growth. The beginner teachers observed the policy, school, classroom and learners as sources of their knowledge construction. Through this exploratory study, I have come to appreciate that every beginner teacher is conscious of the teaching challenges inherent in the classroom. I noted that the teachers' knowledge in Literature in English is illustrated in the past, present and anticipated experiences of each teacher. From the multiple contexts I observed, I found that beginner teachers' knowledge is personal, contextual, fluid, reactional, emotional, practical and dynamic. In all this, I observed and interviewed knowledge constructors in Literature in English, and through this journey affirmed my conviction that teacher knowledge is inherent in the classroom and in beginner teachers as practitioners of the trade.





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ZOLLS, vide Zimbabwean Ordinary Level Literature Syllabus.

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Addendum A: Ethics clearance



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA  
Faculty of Education

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

**CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE**

**DEGREE AND PROJECT**

**INVESTIGATOR(S)**

**DEPARTMENT**

**DATE CONSIDERED**

**DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE**

**CLEARANCE NUMBER :**

HU 13/11/02

PhD

Exploring beginner teachers' knowledge in the teaching of  
Literature in English

Nhlanhla Mpofu

Humanities Education

28 April 2015

APPROVED

Please note:

*For Masters applications, ethical clearance is valid for 2 years*

*For PhD applications, ethical clearance is valid for 3 years.*

**CHAIRPERSON OF ETHICS  
COMMITTEE**

Prof Liesel Ebersöhn

**DATE**

28 April 2015

**CC**

Jeannie Beukes  
Liesel Ebersöhn  
Prof FJ Nieuwenhuis  
Dr L DeJager

This ethical clearance certificate is issued subject to the following condition:

1. It remains the students' responsibility to ensure that all the necessary forms for informed consent are kept for future queries.

Please quote the clearance number in all enquiries.



## Addendum B: Letter of permission to carry out a study - PED

all communications should be addressed to  
"The Provincial Education Director"  
Telephone: 09-69511/69942  
Telegraphic: "SCHOLASTIC"  
Telex: 50531 MPSEMN ZW  
Fax: 09-77027



ZIMBABWE

Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education,  
Bulawayo Metropolitan Province  
P O Box 555  
Bulawayo  
Zimbabwe

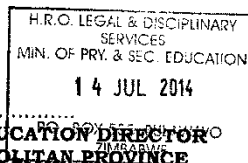
14 July 2014

Ms Nhlanhla Mpfu  
3 Sparrow Road  
Solusi University  
**BULAWAYO**

RE: **PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH: EXPLORING BEGINNER  
TEACHERS' KNOWLEDGE IN THE TEACHING OF LITERATURE IN  
ENGLISH IN BULAWAYO HIGH SCHOOLS**

With reference to your application to carry out a research on the above mentioned topic in the Education Institutions under the jurisdiction of the Bulawayo Province permission is hereby granted. However, you should liaise with the Head of the Institution/School for clearance before carrying out your research.

It will also be appreciated if you could supply the Bulawayo Province with a final copy of your research which may contain information useful to the development of education in the province.



For: **PROVINCIAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR**  
**BULAWAYO METROPOLITAN PROVINCE**



## Addendum C: Letter of request to carry out a study – PED

Faculty of Education

Department of Humanities Education

Mr D. Moyo  
Provincial Education Officer  
Mhlahlandlela Gvt Complex  
Cnr 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue/Basch St  
Bulawayo  
**Zimbabwe**

Dear Mr D. Moyo

### Request for Permission to Conduct Research in Bulawayo High Schools

My name is Nhlanhla Mpofo, and I am a PhD student at the University of Pretoria. The research I wish to conduct for my Doctoral thesis involves exploring beginner teachers' knowledge in the teaching of Literature in English in Bulawayo high schools. This project will be conducted under the supervision of Dr Lizette De Jager (University of Pretoria, South Africa) and Dr Vanessa Scherman (University of Pretoria, South Africa).

Beginner teachers' constructed knowledge in Literature in English is an important area in ESL/EFL research, which Zimbabwe a part is of. Without this present study, learners may be denied the opportunity to optimise all the benefits that come with the study of Literature in English. The major motivation for this study is to allow the teachers the opportunity to discuss what knowledge they construct within their classroom as they look at the contextual needs of their learners. Placing teachers as decision-makers in their own teaching is a strategy that confirms them as important individuals in the construction of the Literature in English knowledge. My research intends to improve teacher generated knowledge in the classroom. Therefore, upon completion of the study, I undertake to provide your office with a bound copy of the full research report.

I am, therefore, seeking your consent to approach Literature in English beginner teachers in Bulawayo high schools who would be willing to participate in this study. If you grant me permission to collect data it will involve document analysis of Literature in English beginner teachers' scheme/ plan books, interviewing of beginner teachers and class observation of beginner teachers. If you allow me to carry out the study in your Province, please sign the consent form attached to this letter. I intend to collect the data from July to October 2014.

I have provided you with a copy of my invitation for the beginner teachers as well as a copy of the introduction letter which I received from University of Pretoria. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.



Yours sincerely,

---

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Department of Humanities Education  
Faculty of Education  
University of Pretoria  
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## Addendum D: Letter of permission (Head teachers )

Faculty of Education

Department of Humanities Education

The Head Teacher  
Bulawayo  
Zimbabwe

### Request for permission to conduct research at \_\_\_\_\_ High School

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Nhlanhla Mpfu, and I am a PhD student at the University of Pretoria. The research I wish to conduct for my Doctoral thesis involves **exploring beginner teachers' knowledge in the teaching of Literature in English**. This project will be conducted under the supervision of Dr Lizette De Jager (University of Pretoria, South Africa) and Dr Vanessa Scherman (University of Pretoria, South Africa).

Beginner teachers' practical knowledge in Literature in English is an important area in ESL/EFL teaching, which Zimbabwe is part of. Without this present study, learners may be denied the opportunity to optimise all the benefits that come with the study of Literature in English. The major motivation for this study is to allow the teachers the opportunity to discuss what knowledge they construct within their classroom as they look at the contextual needs of their learners. Placing teachers as decision-makers in their own teaching is a strategy that confirms them as important individuals in the construction of the Literature in English knowledge.

I am hereby seeking your consent to approach Literature in English beginner teachers in your school who would be willing to participate in this study. My data collection will involve:

- i. Document analysis of Literature in English beginner teachers' scheme/plan books. The scheme cum plans for the term will be photocopied and kept for data analysis. The information will be kept by the researcher and only she and the supervisors will have access to it. In addition, the information will be filed anonymously using pseudonyms for both the teacher and the school. I will make the photocopies of the scheme/plan book at the onset of my data collection. I will need the information to facilitate my interviews and class observation. The documents will be continuously analysed during the course of the term I commence data collection.
- ii. Interviewing of beginner teachers will also be conducted in this study. Interviews will aim at exploring what participants consider as their own constructed knowledge in the teaching of Literature in English. Teachers will be interviewed during convenient times outside their work schedule in their offices. The interviews will be done in their offices four times during the data collection period. The interviews will be audio recorded. Only the researcher and her supervisors will have access to the audio typed information. The identity of the participant and their school will be protected by the use of pseudonym names during data analysis and subsequent publications.
- iii. Observation of beginner teachers in their Literature in English classroom. The learners will be video-recorded during the lesson after consent has been obtained from their parent/guardian. The classroom observation will be 80 minutes; the duration of the entire Literature in English classroom. The observations will be



done twice during the data collection period. The researcher will be a non-participant observer who will video-record the lessons and write field notes. The participants' identity will remain confidential.

The teachers' participation in the study is voluntary and can be withdrawn at any point of the study without prejudice. Further, the identity of your school will not be revealed as pseudonyms will be used. The description of the research site will be done very cautiously to guide against the privacy and confidentiality of the teacher and school involved in the study. At the completion of the study all data will remain in the possession of the supervisor in secure storage for 15 years. If you allow me to carry out the study in your school, please sign the consent form attached to this letter.

I have provided you with a copy of the letter of permission to carry out research, which was granted by the Provincial Education Director (Bulawayo Province). If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

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### Consent form: Head teachers

---

I \_\_\_\_\_ Head teacher of \_\_\_\_\_ grant/do not grant permission (delete what is not applicable) for Miss Nhlanhla Mpofu to carry out a research study entitled **Exploring beginner teachers' knowledge in the teaching of Literature in English**. I understand that she will:

- i. Analyse the beginner teacher's scheme/plan book for Literature in English and make photocopies. Only the researcher and her supervisor will have access to the copies. Interview beginner teachers four times each for about 30 to 35 minutes.
- ii. Observe beginner teachers twice in their classrooms and video-record the lessons during the timetabled periods of Literature in English. Learners will be videotaped but will not participate in the study. Learners' parents'/guardians' consent will be sought before data collection commences. The researcher will be a non-participant observer during classroom observation. The researcher and her supervisors will have access to the transcribed data from the observations and such data will be treated as confidential.
- iii. Furthermore, the researcher undertakes to protect the identity and maintain confidentiality of both the beginner teachers and the schools in data analysis and publications.

Head Teacher's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



## Addendum E: Letter of permission (Parents/Guardians)

Faculty of Education

Department of Humanities Education

Dear Parents/Guardians

My name is Nhlanhla Mpofu and I am a PhD student at the University of Pretoria. The research I wish to conduct for my Doctoral thesis involves **exploring beginner teachers' knowledge in the teaching of Literature in English**. This project will be conducted under the supervision of Dr Lizette De Jager (University of Pretoria, South Africa) and Dr Vanessa Scherman (University of Pretoria, South Africa). The study will require an observation of your child in the Literature in English classroom.

Your child will be part of the learners in the classroom that I will observe twice during the May to August term in their Literature in English class. I require to video-record his/her teacher in the classroom, which will include how the teacher interacts with his/her class. I will not interact with your child but I need your consent to video-record him/her in class. Furthermore, my study will not be in any way harmful to your child. The data I will obtain from the study will be used for research purposes only. Furthermore, the information I will obtain from your child's classroom will be handled with utmost confidence. Your child's name and that of the school will not be used in the study.

The information from this study may benefit the teaching of Literature in English in the child's school. My study will help the teachers reflect on the knowledge that they use to teach your child; what gaps they have in their teaching knowledge and how they can improve on the knowledge gaps that they have identified. Information generated from my study may help improve your child's teacher's instruction, which may improve your child's performance in Literature in English.

If you allow your child to be video-recorded in his/her Literature in English classroom, please sign the consent form attached to this letter. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

---

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[lizette.dejager@up.ac.za](mailto:lizette.dejager@up.ac.za)



## Consent form: Parents/Guardians

---

I \_\_\_\_\_ the parent of \_\_\_\_\_ grant/do not grant permission (delete what is not applicable) for Miss Nhlanhla Mpofo to video-record my child in his/her Literature in English classroom as she carries out a research study entitled **Exploring beginner teachers' knowledge in the teaching of Literature in English**. I understand that:

- i. My child will be video-recorded in her/his Literature in English class, but will not participate in the study.
- ii. I understand that I can withdraw my child from being video-recorded for Nhlanhla Mpofo's study, without repercussions to me or my child, at any time, whether before it starts or while it is being conducted.
- iii. The researcher will be a non-participant observer during classroom observations.
- iv. The researcher and her supervisors will have access to the transcribed data from the observations and it will be treated as confidential.
- v. Furthermore, the researcher will undertake to protect the identity and maintain confidentiality of my child during data analysis and publications.
- vi. By signing the portion below, I give my consent to all of the above.

Parent's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



## Addendum F: Letter of invitation – Participants

---

Faculty of Education

Department of Humanities Education

Dear Participant

### **Exploring beginner teachers' knowledge in the teaching of Literature in English**

My name is Nhlanhla Mpofu. I am a PhD student in the Department of Humanities Education at the University of Pretoria. I am conducting a research study as part of the requirements of my degree in English Education.

I am exploring the knowledge that you generate in your class as you teach Literature in English. The major motivation for this study is to allow you the opportunity to discuss what knowledge you have constructed within your classroom as you look at the contextual needs of your O-level learners. Placing you as decision-maker in your own teaching is a strategy that confirms you as an important individual in the construction of Literature in English knowledge. My study will give you an opportunity to reflect deeply on what you know and what you need to know as you teach Literature in English. Such knowledge about your own classroom teaching can help improve your teaching competence and expertise. Without this present study, learners may be denied the opportunity to optimise all the benefits that come with the study of Literature in English.

I would like to invite you to participate in this study. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to:

- i. Meet with me for an interview about knowledges you have constructed for use in your Literature in English classroom. The interview will be audio-taped if you allow me to do so. It is your right to grant permission or not for the use of the audio tape. The interview will last for 30 to 35 minutes and will be conducted four times during May to October 2014. The meetings will take place at your school at a mutually agreed upon time and place.
- ii. You will also be asked to participate in an observation where I will observe and video-record how you teach in your Literature in English classroom. This will be done three times from the time I commence the study. I am interested in finding out what knowledges are at play as you teach and interact with the texts and your learners. Your learners will be also be video-recorded but will not participate in the study. Your learners will only be video-recorded once I have received consent from their parents/guardians. The recordings will only be viewed by myself and the supervisors and will be kept confidential and safe.
- iii. I will also analyse your scheme/plan book in Literature in English. I am interested in how you reflect on your teaching under the evaluation portion of you scheme book. Furthermore, I am interested in seeing how the evaluation of the previous lesson helps you plan for the next lesson. I will photocopy your scheme/plan book for analysis. All the photocopies will be filed under a pseudonym.

Your participation in the study is voluntary and confidential. The results of the study may be published and presented at professional conferences but your identity will not be revealed. Your participation is anonymous, which means that no one will know what your answers are. So, please do not write your name or other identifying information on any of the study material. Taking part in the study is your decision. You do not have to



be in this study if you do not want to. You may also withdraw from being in the study at any time or decide not to answer any question you are not comfortable answering. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have about the study. You may contact me using the details below. Thank you for your consideration. If you would like to participate, please sign the attached consent form.

Sincerely,

---

Nhlanhla Mpofu  
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+263774002511  
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[+27 12 420 5637 \(fax\)](tel:+27124205637)  
[+27 83 554 2088 \(mobile\)](tel:+27835542088)  
[lizette.dejager@up.ac.za](mailto:lizette.dejager@up.ac.za)



**Consent form: Participants**

**Exploring beginner teachers' knowledge in the teaching of Literature in English**

I.....agree to participate in Nhlanhla Mpofu's research study.

The purpose and nature of the study has been explained to me in writing.

I am participating voluntarily.

I give permission for my interview with Nhlanhla Mpofu to be audio-recorded.

I give permission for my observation with Nhlanhla Mpofu to be video-recorded.

I give permission for Nhlanhla Mpofu to analyse my scheme/plan book.

I understand that I can withdraw from the study, without repercussions, at any time, whether before it starts or while I am participating.

I understand that anonymity will be ensured in the write-up by disguising my identity.

I understand that disguised extracts from my interview and observation may be quoted in the thesis and any subsequent publications if I give permission below.

(Please tick one box )

I agree to quotation/publication of extracts from my interview

I do not agree to quotation/publication of extracts from my  interview

Participant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Full name (please print): .....

Contact number: .....

Email address: .....





**Addendum G: Letter of information – Learners**

**Faculty of Education**

**Department of Humanities Education**

Dear Learner

**Letter of informed consent for participation in the research project on: exploring beginner teachers' knowledge in the teaching of Literature in English**

Sometimes when we want to find out something, we ask people for information to help us explain what we need to know. We then do what is called a project. I would like you to take part in this project so that you can help me find out what I need to know.

Let me tell you about the project first. This project will give me the chance to find out what knowledge your teacher uses as s/he teaches you Literature in English. To help me do this I need to video-record a lesson where you will be in class.

I would like to ask you to be video-taped as part of this project as your parents/guardians have already agreed that you can be part of this project if you want to. If you don't want to, you don't have to. Everything was explained to your parents/guardians and they said you could take part if you wanted to. You can talk to them or your teacher or any other adult you trust first before you decide if you want to take part or not.

This is what will happen: I will video-record the lesson and so people will be able to see your face and hear your voice if I decide to show the video footage at discussions. You do not have to agree to be video-taped. No one will be upset or angry if you don't want to do this. If you don't want to be video-taped during your lesson, you just have to tell me. You can say "yes" or "no" and if you change your mind later, you can quit at any time. It's up to you.

Writing your name here means that you agree to take part in this project and that you know what will happen during the project. You also agree that I can make video-recordings during your Literature in English lesson.

Signature of learner: ..... Date: .....  
Name: .....  
Name of parent/guardian: .....  
Tel.: .....  
Email: .....

Yours sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Nhlanhla Mpofo  
Solusi University  
3 Sparrow Road  
+263774002511  
[mpofunhlanhla@gmail.com](mailto:mpofunhlanhla@gmail.com)

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## Addendum H : Individual interview protocol

### Interview 1

---

#### Exploring beginner teachers' knowledge in the teaching of Literature in English

Interviewer: Nhlanhla Mpofu

Participant:

Venue: Participant Office

Duration: 30 to 35 minutes

1. May you tell me what you understand by the term 'teacher knowledge'?
2. What knowledge have you come to hold from teaching Literature in English?



## Addendum I : Individual interview protocol

### Interview 2

---

#### Exploring beginner teachers' knowledge in the teaching of Literature in English

Interviewer: Nhlanhla Mpofu

Participant:

Venue: Participants Office

Duration: 30 to 35 minutes

1. During the two class observations, I saw the following activities/actions in your Literature in English classroom:
  - 
  - 
  -
2. May you please explain the why you used the activities/actions I saw in your Literature in English classroom.



## Addendum J : Individual interview protocol

### Interview 3

---

#### Exploring beginner teachers' knowledge in the teaching of Literature in English

Interviewer: Nhlanhla Mpofo

Participant:

Venue: Participants Office

Duration: 30 to 35 minutes

1. As I was analysing your scheme/plan book, I saw the following objectives/activities/evaluations in your Literature in English scheme/plan book:
  - 
  - 
  -
2. May you please explain why you planned for them?



## Addendum K : Individual interview protocol

### Interview 4

---

#### Exploring beginner teachers' knowledge in the teaching of Literature in English

Interviewer: Nhlanhla Mpofu

Participant:

Venue: Participants Office

Duration: 30 to 35 minutes

1. May you tell me what knowledge do you think you should have in your Literature in English classroom, but do not?
2. May you explain, when you are confronted with situations where you lack knowledge, what strategies do you use?



## Addendum L: Classroom observation protocol

---

### Exploring beginner teachers' knowledge in the teaching of Literature in English

Participant \_\_\_\_\_ Observation number \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Venue	
Time	
Participant	
Researcher's role	
Descriptive Notes (During the observation)	
Reflective Notes (My thoughts and feelings about what I saw in the classroom)	



## Addendum M: Document analysis protocol

---

### Exploring beginner teachers' knowledge in the teaching of Literature in English

Participant \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Document analysis</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Descriptive account</b>	<b>Reflective account</b>



## Addendum N: Researcher's letter of appreciation to the participants

4 January 2015

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

One day when little Siyabonga was asked to describe her teacher, she said: "My teacher is my friend and teacher in one!" When I entered in your Literature in English classroom, I expected to interact with teachers, but like little Siyabonga, I met your learners' mother, friend and mentor.

I enjoyed being in your Literature in English class because you reminded me of the importance of teaching. You made me re-live the joy I felt as a beginner teacher in Literature in English. You made teaching feel rewarding and enjoyable. Above all this, you created a Literature in English class that was interesting, interactive and focused. I was highly impressed by your learners' zeal to participate in class discussions – it speaks highly of the work you have done to get them to that level. Thank you for allowing me to witness the future generation enjoy Literature in English as much as I do.

I came into your classroom to find out what you knew, which could have caused fear even in experienced teachers, but you allowed me to hear and see what you knew. As you read from my data analysis I sent you, you have teaching knowledge that you have constructed on your own. Teacher knowledge does not come to an end, and every time you receive a new form, you will learn more about yourself and teaching. I hope you enjoy this journey!

Once again, thank you for being part of my study!

Sincerely,  
Nhlanhla





**Addendum O: Zimbabwe School Examination Council 'Literature in English O'  
Level Syllabus (2013–2018)**

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*For Performance Measurement*

**ZIMBABWE SCHOOL  
EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL  
(ZIMSEC)**

**ORDINARY LEVEL SYLLABUS  
2013-2018**

**Literature in English  
(2013)**

## 1.1 RATIONALE

- 1.2 The changes in the 0-Level Literature in English syllabus are intended to make the study of Literature conform to changes taking place in the educational system of Zimbabwe and to:
- 1.2.1 streamline the syllabus such that it is consistent with, and gives relevant background to the Advanced Level Literature in English Syllabus;
  - 1.2.2 stimulate an interest in Zimbabwean literature and a broad range of works of literature in order to help pupils learn about themselves and their society, as well as other societies and experiences;

## 2.0 APPROACH

The study of literature will focus on the artistic and aesthetic qualities of imaginative prose, poetry and drama, the social context, the writer's overall world-view and the pupils' response to this. An interest in literature will develop an important learning component outside the requirements of examinations in promoting awareness of values, morals and attitudes.

### 3.1 AIMS

The aims of the syllabus are:-

- 3.2 To develop reading abilities and skills that:
- 3.2.1 are useful for everyday life, e.g. reading instructions, newspapers, reports;
  - 3.2.2 are essential for reading books on various subjects across the curriculum; including appropriate techniques for intensive and extensive reading;
  - 3.2.3 will motivate pupils to develop a life-long reading habit.

### 3.3 To stimulate

- 3.3.1 an enjoyment and appreciation of the artistic and aesthetic qualities of literature;
- 3.3.2 analysis, comment and informed judgement on a literary text, and the ability to learn and develop from the experiences depicted in literature;
- 3.3.3 the pupil's interest to enable them to express themselves creatively in imaginative writing

### 3.3 To develop in all the pupils an interest in literature

- 3.3.1 as a social product, reflecting the political, economic, scientific and technological life of a people, and promoting certain values, morals and attitudes;
- 3.3.2 as a means of self-knowledge, national identity, and knowledge of other people and cultures.

### 4.1 ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

- 4.2 demonstrate first-hand knowledge of the content of literary texts;
- 4.3 demonstrate an understanding of literary texts in ways which may range from a grasp of their surface meaning to a deeper awareness of their themes and attitudes;
- 4.4 recognize and appreciate ways in which writers use language;
- 4.5 recognize and appreciate other ways in which writers achieve their effects  
(e.g. structure, plot, characterization, dramatic tension, imagery, rhythm, setting and mood);
- 4.6 communicate a sensitive and informed personal response to what is read.

The relationship between the Assessment Objectives and the components of the Scheme of Assessment and the weighting of the Assessment Objectives are shown in the following grid.

The objectives are weighted to give an indication of their relative importance, rather than to provide a precise statement of mark allocations to particular objectives.

These Assessment Objectives are inter-related and it will not normally be possible or desirable to test them in isolation.

Assessment Objective (Paragraph 4 Above)	Overall Weighting
1	20
2	20
3	20
4	20
5	20
TOTAL	100

## 5.1 DETAILED NOTES OF GUIDANCE FOR TEACHERS

At the 0-Level examination, candidates should be able to address themselves to four aspects of a set text, viz:

- (a) Story
- (b) Characters
- (c) Society and social background
- (d) Themes and values

Dealing with these four aspects demand a number of skills, which are listed below as skills objectives.

## 5.2 General Objectives

The candidates should be able to:

- 5.1.1 understand surface meaning;
- 5.1.2 understand a deeper meaning (if appropriate);
- 5.1.3 understand the writer's message/intentions/values/attitudes;
- 5.1.4 appreciate the mood/atmosphere/tone of a poem, episode or situation in a prose-work or play;
- 5.1.5 make a personal response to a literary work- by relating it to the candidate's own experiences; - by relating it to contemporary society; - by saying why the candidate likes or dislikes the work;
- 5.1.6 understand the values/attitudes of people in a literary work.

### 5.2 Specific Objectives: In relation to story, characters, society and social background, themes and values, the candidate should be able to attempt the following:

#### Story

- 5.2.1 narrate the sequence of events in the set text;
- 5.2.2 recognize the plot of the work;
- 5.2.3 evaluate the importance of a particular event towards some given aspect of the set text;

#### Characters

- 5.2.4 identify and describe main characters, and distinguish them from minor characters;
- 5.2.5 outline a character from the candidate's point of view;

- 5.2.6 relate the characteristics of people in the set text to people in the candidate's own experience;
- 5.2.7 trace the development of a character;
- 5.2.8 evaluate the importance of a particular quality in the total character of a person in the set text;
- 5.2.9 evaluate the contribution of a character towards some given aspect of the set text;
- 5.2.10 evaluate a character from the point of view of other characters and in relation to the setting of the text;

### **Society and the social setting**

- 5.2.11 describe the social background of the set text;
- 5.2.12 relate the social background to incidents in the text;
- 5.2.13 discuss the social background from the perspective of a character in the text;
- 5.2.14 contrast the socio-political setting in the text with that of the candidate's own society;

### **Themes and values**

- 5.2.15 state the theme(s) of a set text, with reference to the work;
- 5.2.16 discuss the various themes;
- 5.2.17 relate the theme(s) and values of a text to the candidate's own life, and to problems and issues in contemporary society;
- 5.2.18 discern the writer's own values with reference to the work.

## 5.3 Literary Techniques

In their answers to questions on literature, candidates should be able to recognize and comment on the effect of, for example, imagery, symbolism, satirical and ironic language. In their answers to poetry questions, candidates should be able to recognize and comment on the effect of such literary devices as rhyme and alliteration, and other common poetic devices.

### 6.1 SCHEME OF ASSESSMENT

#### 6.2 Paper One (2% hours) (100%)

#### SECTION A SECTION B

African Literature World Literature

Candidates must answer **four** questions, on **three** texts: one from which must be a play. Candidates must choose **one** text from Section A and **one** text from Section B. The remaining text may be chosen from **either** Section A or Section B.

There will be three questions on each text, the first of which will be a text-based

question. All questions carry the same total mark.

### 7. PRESCRIBED TEXTS

Prescribed texts will be advised in examination circulars on a yearly basis. It is, however, important to always refer to the syllabus for all other syllabus requirements.

## Addendum P: Common works read in 'O' Level Literature in English

'O' Level learners read the setbooks assigned in their original form. The setbooks to be studied are communicated to the schools through Examination Circulars (cf. find examples attached below). Study guides and commentaries are used as supplementary reading for the learners but are not prescribed as setbooks. In the section below, I present examples of World and African Literature setbooks for 'O' Level Literature in English but the list is not exhaustive.

<b>Examples World Literature works studied in 'O' Level Literature in English</b>	
William Shakespeare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Merchant of Venice</li> <li>• The Tempest</li> <li>• Romeo and Juliet</li> <li>• Shakespearean Sonnets</li> </ul>
Charles Dickens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Great Expectations</li> <li>• Oliver Twist</li> </ul>
Thomas Hardy	Mayor of Casterbridge
John Milton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Poetic works of John Milton</li> </ul>
Andrew Marvel	Metaphysical Poems
George Elliot	The Mill on the Floss
Elizabeth Gaskell	Mary Barton
George Orwell	Animal Farm
Charlotte Bronte	Jane Eyre
Nikol Gogol	The Government Inspector
Ibsen Henrik	A Doll's House
Jane Austen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pride and Prejudice</li> <li>• Emma</li> </ul>
Trevor Rhone	Two can play and School's Out
Richard Wright	Native Son
Toni Morrison	Beloved
Maya Angelou	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• And Still I Rise</li> <li>• I know why the Caged Bird Sings</li> <li>• Phenomenal Woman</li> <li>• Letter to my Daughter</li> </ul>
Alice Walker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Color Purple</li> <li>• In Search of our Mothers' Gardens</li> </ul>



<b>Examples African Literature works studied in 'O' Level Literature in English</b>	
Ngugi wa Thiong'o	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matigari</li> <li>• Dreams in a Time of War</li> <li>• I will Marry When I want</li> </ul>
Chinua Achebe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Things Fall Apart</li> </ul>
Doris Lessing	The Grass is Singing
Dick Dawson (Editor)	<b>Sections of Revival: An Anthology of African Poetry</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Piano and Drums</li> <li>• Argument with God</li> <li>• Birth right</li> <li>• I speak for the bush</li> </ul>
George Mujajati	The Sun Will Rise Again
Athol Fugard	Master Harold and the Boys
Bessie Emery Head	Maru
Eski'a Mpahlele	Down Second Avenue
Mariama Ba	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scarlet Song</li> <li>• Song Long a Letter</li> </ul>
Mongo Beti	Mission to Kala
Yvonne Vera	Why Don't You Carve Other Animals
Tsitsi Dangarembga	Nervous Conditions
Charles Mungoshi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waiting for the Rain</li> <li>• Walking Still</li> </ul>
Wole Soyinka	The Lion and the Jewel
Binwell Sonyangwe	A Cowrie of Hope
Buchi Emecheta	Joys of Motherhood
Shimmer Chinodya	Harvest of Thorns



3



For Performance Measurement

**Zimbabwe School Examinations Council**

Examinations Centre, Upper East Road, Mount Pleasant  
P.O. Box CY 1464, Causeway, Harare, Zimbabwe

All communications should be addressed to:  
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Telephone: 302623-4, 302642,  
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Facsimile: 302288; 339080; 333889

**Your Ref:**

**Our Ref :** 15 March 2010

**EXAMINATION CIRCULAR  
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**ORDINARY LEVEL (2013/1) LITERATURE IN ENGLISH SET BOOKS FOR NOVEMBER 2011  
TO JUNE 2016**

This circular **replaces** circular number 7 of 2010.

**SECTION A: AFRICAN LITERATURE**

- |    |                        |                       |                       |
|----|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. | The Lion and the Jewel | Wole Soyinka          | Nov 2011 to June 2015 |
| 2. | A Cowrie of Hope       | Binwell Sinyangwe     | Nov 2010 to June 2015 |
| 3. | Revival                | Edited by Dick Dawson |                       |
|    | *Sections              | (a) Piano and Drums   |                       |
|    |                        | (b) Argument with God | Nov 2010 to June 2013 |

**SECTION B: WORLD LITERATURE**

- |    |                    |                     |                       |
|----|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 4. | Merchant of Venice | William Shakespeare | Nov 2012 to June 2016 |
| 5. | Animal Farm        | George Orwell       | Nov 2011 to June 2015 |
| 6. | Native Son         | Richard Wright      | Nov 2011 to June 2016 |

NB: Due to the unavailability of The Heart is a Lonely Hunter, this text will have its **last** examination in June 2011.

Yours faithfully

J C Maramba

**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR – TEST DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH  
ZIMBABWE SCHOOL EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL**

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20 September 2013

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**ORDINARY LEVEL (2013/1) LITERATURE IN ENGLISH SETBOOKS FOR  
NOVEMBER 2015 TO JUNE 2016**

Prescribed texts will be advised in examination circulars on a yearly basis. ZIMSEC puts asterisks on setbooks to show the number of years they might still have on the syllabus. Some setbooks may not last for the four recommended years because of their size and depth of content. It is important for schools to always refer to the actual syllabus for other syllabus requirements.

**PAPER DESCRIPTION**

**SECTION A: AFRICAN LITERATURE**

- |     |    |                            |                          |
|-----|----|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| *** | 1. | Master Harold and the boys | Athol Fugard             |
| *** | 2. | The Sun Will Rise Again    | George Mujajati          |
|     | 3. | Revival<br>Sections        | Edited by Dick Dawson    |
|     |    |                            | (a) Birthright           |
|     |    |                            | (b) I speak for the bush |

Board Members: Prof N. Maphosa (Chairman); Mrs H. Shindi (Vice-Chairwoman); Dr G. Brookings; Dr W. Dzimir, D. Musiyandaka, Prof Z. Makvavetara, E. Hunziba, Prof P.M. Makhurane, Prof O.E. Marevanyika; Prof S. Moyana, N.H. Ncube; Dr L.T. Nyaruwata, P.T. Nyathi, L. Ross; A.J.P. Sibanda; O.J.Z. Sibanda, E.S. Nhandam (Secretary)

**SECTION B: WORLD LITERATURE**

- |        |                               |                     |
|--------|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| 4.     | The Merchant of Venice        | William Shakespeare |
| *** 5. | Two can play and School's Out | Trevor Rhone        |
| 6.     | Native Son                    | Richard Wright      |

Set also for N2015 and J2016

\*\*\* Set also for N2015, J2016, N2016, J2017, N2017, J2018, N2018 and J2019

*S. T. Moyo*

S. N. T. Moyo  
**A/ASSISTANT DIRECTOR – TEST DEVELOPMENT, RESEARCH AND EVALUATION  
ZIMBABWE SCHOOL EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL**

/SK  
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090780 SOLUSI HANUNISI SEC

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13 October 2014

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**ORDINARY LEVEL (2013/1) LITERATURE IN ENGLISH SETBOOKS FOR  
NOVEMBER 2016 AND JUNE 2017**

**NB:** *This circular serves to cancel **Circular 35 of 2014**. Please note that in Section B, the text, **The Mayor of Casterbridge** by Thomas Hardy has replaced **Great Expectations** by Charles Dickens.*

Prescribed texts will be advised in examination circulars on a yearly basis. ZIMSEC puts asterisks on setbooks to show the number of years they might still have on the syllabus. Some setbooks may not last for the four recommended years because of their size and depth of content. It is important for schools to always refer to the actual syllabus for the other syllabus requirements.

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**Board Members:** Prof L. M Nyagura (*Chairman*); Prof R. Zvobgo (*Vice Chairperson*); Mr A.J.P. Sibanda; Dr C Katsvanga; Mr E Moyo; Mrs M Matinenga; Mr G K Atkinson; Ms P Takawadiyi; Mr S Mugumisi; Ms F Mkwena; Mr W T Mufuka; Mr E.S Nhandara (*Director*)

## PAPER DESCRIPTIONS

### SECTION A: AFRICAN LITERATURE

- \*\* 1. Master Harold and the boys - Athol Fugard
  - \*\* 2. The Sun Will Rise Again - George Mujajati
  - \*\*\* 3. Songs for the Temple - Emmanuel Ngara
- Sequence 1: Knocking on the Sacred Door  
Sequence 2: The Rhythm of Pyramid Drums  
Sequence 3: Stairs of Songs in the Temple  
Sequence 4: Gaia's Lament and the Song of the Underdog

### SECTION B: WORLD LITERATURE

- \*\*\* 4. Julius Caesar - William Shakespeare
- \*\* 5. Two can play and School's Out - Trevor Rhone
- \*\*\* 6. The Mayor of Casterbridge - Thomas Hardy

- \*\* Set also for N2016, J2017, N2017, J2018, N2018 and J2019
- \*\*\* Set also for N2016, J2017, N2017, J2018, N2018, J2019, N2019 and J2020

*E. C. Machingaidze*

E. C. Machingaidze (Mrs)  
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR – TEST DEVELOPMENT, RESEARCH AND EVALUATION  
ZIMBABWE SCHOOL EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL