

**Beginner teachers' perceptions of their credibility based on displayed  
behaviour in the classroom**

**by**

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## Declaration

I declare that the dissertation, which I hereby submit for the degree Master's of Education in Curriculum and Instructional Design and Development at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'G. K. K.', written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned above a horizontal line.

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31 August 2018

## Ethics clearance certificate



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- Compliance with approved research protocol,
- No significant changes,
- Informed consent/assent,
- Adverse experience or undue risk,
- Registered title, and
- Data storage requirements.

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this dissertation to my family who stood beside me during the most challenging of times throughout this research study. With the continuous words of encouragement and warm smiles, the goal of completing this achievement was reachable. This dissertation is dedicated to my mom, who was diagnosed with chronic leukaemia within the time frame of the completion of my Master's degree. Mom, you are the epitome of who I am and who I am yet to become. Thank you for being the strength in our family despite your encounter with leukaemia. Words will never quantify the gratitude and love I have for you. Strong mind, strong heart.

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## **Abstract**

This qualitative study contours the perceptions held by beginner teachers of own credibility in relation to observed learner behaviour in the classroom. Currently, literature on credibility focusses on the source and how receivers perceive the source, however this study emphasises the importance of the sources' perceptions of own credibility. The study is aimed at understanding perceptions of a sample of beginner teachers' own credibility. This study was supported by a conceptual framework, namely an extension of McCroskey's (2004) model for instructional communication. A case study research design was employed, which was best suited to thoroughly explore participants' perceptions of their own teacher credibility based on displayed learner behaviour. Semi-structured interviews and field notes were utilised as data collection methods. Eight beginner teachers from seven different private schools in and around Pretoria were selected based on a purposive sampling technique. Data were interpreted by means of inductive thematic analysis method. This study revealed that beginner teachers who perceive themselves to have a high credibility with their learners, experience learner behaviour showcasing higher interest, motivation, and discipline levels within the classroom. Learner discipline was used as a direct message that instantaneously alerts beginner teachers as to whether their learners are interested within a lesson. Beginner teachers became more aware of their own judgements within their practices and how their preconceived notions affect their credibility within the classroom. Possible recommendations for this study include public versus private sector schooling and to understand teachers' journeys into the education field.

**Key words:** Beginner teachers, Intermediate Phase, learner behaviour, perceptions, teacher credibility

## Acronyms

DoE	Department of Education
I	Interviewee
IP	Intermediate Phase
R	Researcher

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## CHAPTER 1: PREVIEW OF STUDY

### 1.1 Introduction

As a current beginner teacher, the stresses of administration, classroom management, and curriculum preparation are overwhelming. I formulate my academic argument through my experience as a beginner teacher with a specific focus on the differences in learners' behaviours. I noticed that the behaviours of the Grade 6 learners changed when I was teaching in comparison to when my mentor teacher was teaching. When I taught, learners would feel free to talk whilst I am conducting a lesson, however, when my mentor teacher taught, the learners were listening attentively. Additionally, as soon as the mentor teacher would exit the classroom, a buzz would begin, learners' attention would stray, and informal conversations would occur. As soon as my mentor teacher walked back into the classroom, the learners would sit still and ask meaningful and topic-related questions. I reflected on how the learners' behaviours made me feel through this experience. I then came to the realisation that my credibility felt less developed than the credibility I observed in my mentor teacher. I *perceived* myself as less credible. This boiled down to the quality of effective learning occurring in the classroom when I was teaching in comparison to when my mentor teacher was teaching. Currently, I am a second-year beginner teacher and I see development in my credibility. I feel more structured in a sense where my learners understand my expectations and they understand their responsibilities within my classroom. I have observed a great difference in my credibility development based on learners understanding who I am as their teacher. Trustworthiness, relatability, and immediacy were the factors that I found most important to my learners. I see a change in my learners' behaviours whereby based on my classroom rules, when I talk they listen. Moreover, I am asked meaningful questions by my learners and the learners are more engaged in my lessons. I venture out through this study to explore beginner teachers' perceptions of their own credibility within their practices based on displayed learner behaviour within the Intermediate Phase (henceforth referred to as IP) classroom.

Within this study, I selected three focal components which will be used to guide the reader in optimally understanding the beginner teachers' perceptions of their own credibility displayed by learner behaviour. Within this study I mention the term learner behaviour which is utilised as a three-pronged concept comprising of learner motivation, learner interest, and learner discipline. This three-pronged concept is explicitly explained under section 2.7 (c.f., Chapter 2, 2.7). I selected these three components based on my prior experiences endured during my teaching practice. How I perceived my own credibility in comparison to how I perceived my mentor teachers' credibility elicited a critical thought process which guided me in formulating how I viewed learner behaviour in relation to teacher credibility. As a beginner teacher, I view my credibility based on how my learners react to me as a teacher as well as how my learners respond to my lessons. Thus, in the development of my teacher credibility, three elements surfaced: *learner interest* in relation to my teacher credibility, how curious and involved my learners are in terms of participating and answering questions within my lessons; *learner motivation*, what forms of rewards are required for my learners to actively integrate themselves within the learning process; and *learner discipline*, the physical behaviour of my learners during my lessons in terms of rowdiness versus being seated.

Teacher credibility relates to the social relationships formed between teachers and learners. IP learners are developing social beings who thrive on the idea of social acceptance and emotional competence. IP learners are at a stage in their lives of forming connections with others based on immediacy, trustworthiness, competence, and dynamism (Haskins, 2001; Teven & McCroskey, 1997). These tenets foundation the concept of teacher credibility within this study. The study provides an exploration into how beginner teachers could potentially enhance their teacher credibility within their practices by creating awareness of the profound effect that credibility plays within the classroom context. What if all that we have perceived to know is not what is really known? What if the factor of human interactions lies solely on the quality of interactions between two human beings? What if teacher credibility is the propelling notion toward revolutionising the education system as we know it? Therefore, the focus of this study is directed toward beginner teachers' perspectives of their own credibility within the IP.

## **1.2 Research question**

With this academic argument in hindsight, I ask the following research questions:

How do beginner teachers perceive their own credibility based on displayed learner behaviour in the Intermediate Phase?

This question is inspired by the essence of the exploration of beginner teachers' perceptions of own credibility based on learner behaviour. Considering that learner behaviour within the context of this study is grounded upon a three-pronged approach: motivation, interest, and discipline, I highlight the connection between IP beginner teachers' perceptions of own credibility in relation to the abovementioned tenets of learner behaviour. I segregate each segment of the three-pronged approach in order to compartmentalise the essence of learner behaviour in relation to perceptions of beginner teachers. I utilise this secondary research question: "In what ways do beginner teachers link learner behaviour to their perceptions of their credibility?" to assist me in deciphering each component of learner discipline in order to individually link motivation, interest and discipline to beginner teachers' perceptions of own credibility.

## **1.3 Rationale**

I provide the rationale of this study by referring to tenets of motivation. I begin with my personal justification for undertaking this research. This aspect of the rationale relates to my personal experiences as a beginner teacher during my teaching practical. My personal justification differs to that of my professional motivation. In so saying, my professional motivation relates to searching for reasons behind the difference in the learners' behaviours based on teacher credibility and relevant literature. Furthermore, I explain my conceptual motivation underlying my study. This tenet refers to the various aspects being highlighted in this study, such as beginner teachers' credibility and mentor teachers'

credibility and the displayed behaviours of learners in the classroom. I polish the rationale by briefly shedding light on the scholarly motivation. This tenet highlights the potential influence on existing literature.

### **1.3.1 Personal justification**

Within my mentor teachers' classroom, learners knew how to behave, what to expect from the lesson, as well as what was expected of them throughout the lesson. For example, the classroom rules that were implemented by the mentor teachers ranged from raising of hands when wanting to ask a question, silence when the teacher is talking, and remaining seated throughout the lesson. This relationship formed between teachers and learners stems from credibility. I base this statement on my experience of when my mentor teacher would leave the classroom and the learners would forget about the rules and their responsibilities. The learners' behaviours would change in terms of talking whilst the lesson was being taught, walking around the classroom, and forgetting to raise their hands before asking questions. Learners had not developed this relationship with me as of yet and thus these altered behaviours were stemming from the absence of teacher credibility. Learners were unsure of my expectations as well as their own responsibilities within 'my' classroom.

Within my four years of studying Education at the University of Pretoria, I experienced a sense of incompetency and unpreparedness before entering my teaching practical. This apprehension influenced my credibility displayed throughout my teaching practice, whereby I strictly adhered to the expectations, roles and responsibilities stated within the school code of conduct and the teaching practical guidelines. I neglected the importance of identifying, formulating, developing and maintaining an individualistic and personal connection with my learners.

### **1.3.2 Professional motivation**

Teacher credibility is one of the most critical factors in effective teaching and learning and is often overshadowed in the educational field. Based upon my personal experiences and reflective observations throughout my practical, I arrived at the realisation that credibility developed between the teacher and learners is the driving force behind excellence, discipline, motivation and interest displayed within the classroom. I thus chose to embark on this study with the intent of expanding my knowledge about beginner teachers' perceptions based on credibility in relation to displayed learner behaviour within the IP. I wanted to create awareness to other beginner teachers about how their credibility development may be affected by effective learning occurring in the classroom. Considering that human beings are emotional beings, it is safe to state that learners learn best when they understand, engage and interact with a teacher whom they relate to on an emotional level (Elias, 2003). The phenomenon of teacher credibility, may by all means, be the key to learner effectiveness and quality assurance within the educational sector.

### **1.3.3 Conceptual motivation**

The concept of teacher credibility intrigued me based on my own experiences as a current beginner teacher. I was interested in the relationships developed between IP beginner teachers and their learners and how these relationships influenced displayed learner behaviour within the IP classroom (Roorda, Koomen, Spilt & Oort, 2011). I aimed to find a root phenomenon within the classroom which connected the various elements contributing to the classroom environment: teachers, learners, and behaviours.

### **1.3.4 Scholarly motivation**

This research study was intended to minimise the gap in existing literature that pays little attention to the effects on beginner teachers' credibility and effective learning (Frymier &

Thompson, 1992). This is important because the reflection done by beginner teachers based on their credibility allows for possible development in relaying curriculum content in a more relatable manner (Cubukcu, 2013). The way a beginner teacher may feel about their own credibility sets the tone of teaching that occurs in the classroom (Prince, Snowden & Matthews, 2010).

#### **1.4 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this research study is to explore beginner teachers' perceptions of their own credibility within their practices based on displayed learner behaviour within the IP classroom. By exploring the perceptions held by beginner teachers, this research study will allow beginner teachers to reflect upon their practices in a manner that enhances beginner teachers' professional development within their practices by creating awareness of the profound influence that credibility plays within the classroom context. Brookfield (2006) attests that:

*Credible teachers are seen as teachers who are worth sticking around because students might learn something valuable from them. They are seen as possessing a breadth of knowledge, depth of insight, sophistication of understanding (p. 67).*

This research study is thus necessary in order to assist the exploration and understanding of how beginner teachers perceive their own credibility in the face of displayed learner behaviour. Thus, beginner teachers are encouraged to develop a platform to engage in critical self-reflection. These reflections should be aimed at professional development, growth, and change within the classroom and in a broader sense to the educational system within South Africa. This qualitative research study is propelled by meaningfully contributing to existing knowledge and literature related to teacher credibility.

## 1.5 Positioning myself as the researcher

In the previous section I provided the reader with background information pertaining to this study in terms of the South African education system. Within this section, I locate myself as the researcher in terms of an IP beginner teacher within the South African context.

I am a South African Indian female who strongly believes in the development of my country through the use of our education system. I am a beginner teacher currently experiencing my first year in the education profession. I am an IP Mathematics teacher. My interest in this specific topic was inspired by the education in South Africa. I grew up with the comforting belief that the potential to ignite positive change in our country existed in educating the youth of South Africa. I was born in South Africa and my entire schooling career was completed on South African soil. Over time and with age my motivation to become a South African educator grew immensely. My eyes were awakened to the living potential of my country but my heart was set back by the uncaptured talent of underprivileged citizens. I noticed the untouched treasure of South Africa, the place my aspirations grew into my reality.

I identify myself as a beginner teacher of which I encompass my own experiences, explanations, and endeavours in constructing my teacher credibility as a part of the youth of South Africa. Growing up with the idea of knowing that I wanted to become a teacher provided me with the opportunity of observing and reflecting upon my own teachers and their teacher credibility. I entered university with a set goal of achieving my dream of becoming the best teacher I could possibly be. It was this goal that acted as my driving force throughout my completion of my modules. When I arrived at my fourth year of my degree I was expected to complete a module named Teaching Practice which was aimed at providing students with the opportunity to experience the reality of South African schools. I fell in love with the profession but I was more aware of the underlying flaws of the implemented system which required attention. Some of these flaws included time

management challenges, overloaded curricula, classroom management, and administrative responsibilities by teachers.

As a fourth-year student teacher my observation skills were heightened and my reflective strategies were consistent. I made it my responsibility to explore and understand the art of teaching. Towards the middle of my teaching practice experience I came to the realisation that the learners' behaviour had changed when compared to my teaching and both of my mentor teachers' teaching. Through my daily written reflections, verbal reflections between myself, friends, peers, colleagues, mentor teachers, mentor lecturers, and family members, it finally occurred to me, there exists a grey area which many educationalists seem to miss. Learners just like teachers are social beings, we base our experiences on the quality of interactions and relationships formed. From this experience, my research proposition was founded, how do beginner teachers perceive own credibility based on displayed learner behaviour?

In this section, I located myself within my study by providing a background portrait of who I am. In the following section, I provide the delimitations of this study, highlighting the focus of this study and what is not focussed on in this study.

## **1.6 Delimitations of the study**

This research study is focused on a small sample population which is restricted to the Gauteng region, specifically within Pretoria. I focus on eight primary schools located within the private education sector in and around Pretoria. I will not utilise the findings drawn from this study as generalised findings bestowed upon a wide population. More specifically, I focus on eight IP beginner teachers. All eight of these beginner teachers teach in private schools located in and around Pretoria. I exclude the governmental sector schools in this study as it was more convenient for me to find beginner teachers teaching in the private sector schools. I came into contact with these eight beginner teachers through friends of friends, as well as asking principals to select beginner teachers in their schools teaching in the IP. I specifically chose the IP because my research study was

focussed on the IP schooling sector. Moreover, I am an IP beginner teacher, so I decided to utilise my experiences to guide my study. Also, I utilise IP beginner teachers in and around Pretoria as this was more convenient for me to access and travel to for the interviews.

## **1.7 Overview of methodology**

In the previous section I outlined the delimitations of this research study. In this section, I provide a synopsis of the methodology used within this study.

Table 1.1 provides a visual outline of the research process implemented throughout this research study. This research process will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 3. The epistemology entails how knowledge is perceived through theory, thus how knowledge is applied (Rescher, 2003). This table illustrates the Interpretivist subjective epistemology (Edirisingha, 2012).

**Table 1.1:** Methodology synopsis of this study including paradigmatic lenses and research methodology

<p>Paradigmatic approach</p> 	<p>Within this study, I employed an interpretivist paradigm which allowed for me to explore the personal experiences of my participants. I implemented a qualitative approach to explore and understand the participants' perceptions of their credibility within the South African context (Creswell, 2007).</p>
<p>Research design</p> 	<p>I employed a case study design whereby this design was best suited to thoroughly explore the participants' perceptions of own teacher credibility based on displayed learner behaviour (Zainal, 2007; Miyahara, 2010; Marshall &amp; Rossman, 2011).</p>
<p>Selection of participants</p> 	<p>I purposively selected eight beginner teachers from seven different private schools in and around Pretoria. I employed convenience sampling, thus I used beginner teachers working in Pretoria-based private schools as it was most convenient for me to contact these participants, in terms of availability and access.</p>
<p>Data collection methods</p> 	<p>I collected verbal and written data throughout the data collection process. Participants were asked questions relating to the topic and research questions underpinning this study with semi-structured interviews (Kvale, 2007). The questions were related to beginner teachers' perceptions of their own credibility based on learner behaviour within a South African context.</p>
<p>Data documentation</p> 	<p>I used a researcher journal to capture information outside of the interview questions, such as observations about participant behaviour. Furthermore, I used audio tape recordings (Silverman, 2006) and transcriptions for capturing reliable findings.</p>
<p>Data analysis and interpretation</p> 	<p>I utilised inductive thematic data analysis (Braun &amp; Clarke, 2006), in which I read and reread through the gathered data such that I could familiarise myself with the content of the findings. I then decided to group related information together based on identified patterns, ideas, and similarities (Creswell, 2009). I then began coding the data, whereby I decided to use various colours for each theme and a darker colour for related sub-themes identified within the data.</p>

## 1.8 Conceptual framework

In the previous section I provided the synopsis of the methodology pertaining to this research study. I now present a brief overview of the conceptual framework tying this research study together. I selected McCroskey's (2004) model to underpin this study with an addition to this model. McCroskey's model highlights the instructional communication aimed at understanding the relationship between teachers and learners in sharing information and knowledge.

I chose McCroskey's model for instructional communication as a conceptual model as I aimed to explore beginner teachers' perceptions of own credibility (immediacy, relatability, and trustworthiness) based on learner behaviour (learner motivation, learner interest, and learner discipline). This model assists me in categorising and compartmentalising elements founded in the teacher and learner relationship. I thus borrowed the outline of this model to conceptualise my own synopsis of credibility based on learner behaviour in relation to the topic and purpose of this study.

McCroskey's model for instructional development relays the interactive relationship formulated between teachers and learners by touching on concepts such as: instructional environment, learners, teachers, learners' perceptions of the teachers and instructional outcomes (1981, 1999). This model stimulated a construction of knowledge based on the classroom setup, classroom culture, and classroom climate in which learners interact on a daily basis. Thus, the environment in which the learners learn and teachers teach plays a crucial role in the development of quality relationships between teachers and learners. More specifically, how these environments make the learners feel, how safe the environment is to ask questions, and to critically question what has been taught by the teacher.

Furthermore, I chose this model as it focusses on learners and teachers whereby each connection within an educational context is deemed very personal and unique (cf.,

Chapter 2, 2.6.1). Every learner enters a classroom with a specific skill set, learning abilities and needs, unique learning style, personal background and history, as well as an independent construct of which they view reality (McCroskey, 1999). In a similar spectacle, teachers have an individual set of beliefs, values, and teaching preferences which affects their teaching philosophies. The integration of both components, teachers and learners, allows for the development of social relationships formed between teachers and learners based on some form of relatability, trustworthiness, or immediacy (Teven & McCroskey, 1997).

## **1.9 Research assumptions**

I approached this research study with the following assumptions:

- It is commonly believed that teacher credibility influences learner behaviour (Thweatt & McCroskey, 1998).
- Learner behaviour provides reflection of teacher credibility (Haskins, 2000; Thweatt & McCroskey, 1998).

## **1.10 Ethical considerations**

Preservation of dignity of participants are priority to researchers and thus any harmful or negative effects on participants are held paramount (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000). Throughout this research study, I ensured that I remained cognisant of the underpinning ethical guidelines directing this study which were laid out by the International criteria. Once I successfully defended my research proposal to the Humanities Education department, I completed the mandatory ethics form. The ethics form verified my research study in accordance with the stipulated standards of ethical considerations as required by the ethics committee.

In order to gain access to the beginner teachers, I was required to first contact each school's headmaster to set up a personal meeting to thoroughly explain my research study and to ask permission from each headmaster to contact beginner teachers from their school. Each headmaster that I met with was required to complete and sign a consent form stating that they permit me to contact and interview beginner teachers from their schools (cf., Appendix E). Thereafter, I needed to personally contact each beginner teacher, explain my research study to them in detail, and ask if they would be interested in partaking in my research study. Each participant was required to give written consent of participation in which they each had to read and sign the prepared participant consent forms (cf., Appendix C). Informed consent entails holistically informing the participants regarding the purpose of the research as well as the intention of the design. Moreover, possible risks and benefits pertaining to the participation within the research study needed to be explicitly explained to the participants.

Furthermore, I refrained from exposing any personal information of participants within my study. I thus used pseudonyms in place of the participants' real names. Also, I did not mention any schools' names throughout my research study. Ethical considerations that were employed and observed were extensively discussed under section 3.7.

### **1.11 Quality criteria**

"Interviews and interviews alike bring their own, often unconscious experiential and biographical baggage with them in the interview situation" (Cohen et al., 2002). I acknowledge my personal biases throughout the data collection process. Therefore, I decided to employ the following assurance techniques with the intent of minimising any researcher biases: trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, authenticity, and reflexivity.

### **1.11.1 Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness is interconnected with the reliability of the study (Fraser & Kazeni, 2015). Hence, according to Guba's Four Criteria for Trustworthiness, it is critical to ensure that credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability are consistently implemented throughout the research study (cf., Chapter 3, 3.7.1). I decided to use a researcher journal throughout my research journey in order to consistently capture findings and meaningful observations throughout the data collection process (cf., Chapter 3, 3.7.1). In my researcher journal, I wrote dates, times, notes, and observations after each of the interviews were conducted. These notes included participants' behaviours, the manner in which they answered questions, their interest in the questions, and their answers.

### **1.11.2 Credibility**

Credibility and consistency work parallel to each other whereby findings need to be assessed fairly (Flick, 2009). Thus, credibility is dependent on whether the gathered findings produce a 'true' depiction of the truth. In order to ensure credibility within my study, I prepared a researcher journal and field note question analysis that allowed for me to spend 15 minutes after each interview reflecting and critically analysing the conducted interview and my observations thereof (cf., Appendix G). Moreover, I continuously engaged in active reflective sessions with my supervisor in order to establish the authentic voices of the participants lived experiences and thus minimise researcher biases (cf., Chapter 3, 3.8.2).

### **1.11.3 Transferability**

The purpose of implementing transferability within this qualitative study is to ensure that the gathered findings are not generalisable to the broader population (Morrow, 2005). Therefore, transferability refers to the degree of generalisability in research (Ary, Jacobs,

& Razavieh, 2002). Transferability probes upon relating and connecting ideas and themes to readers' personal prior experiences (Maree, 2016).

#### **1.11.4 Dependability**

Dependability and reliability are closely related concepts in terms of testing whether or not gathered findings can be placed under retesting conditions with the aim of reproducing similar findings (Toma, 2006). Thus, it is crucial to be aware that change in all contexts is inevitable under all conditions and thus the findings of this qualitative research study cannot necessarily be perfectly replicated. Although, similarities in terms of similar views and opinions can be identified (Longley-Cook, 2004). With the aim of promoting dependability, I used multiple methods of collecting data, such as semi-structured interviews, researcher journal, observations, and field notes (cf., Chapter 3, 3.8.4).

#### **1.11.5 Confirmability**

Analysing gathered findings in terms of accuracy and authenticity in comparison to how researchers decode findings establishes confirmability within a research study (Toma, 2006). I engaged in regular reflective sessions with my supervisor in order to ensure that my reflective journal (cf., Appendix B) and decoding methods refrained from any possible researcher biases whilst conducting the semi-structured interviews with each of the participants (cf., Chapter 3.8.5).

#### **1.11.6 Authenticity**

Fairness within research studies is a crucial factor to take cognisance of as findings are required to be free from biases in order to establish authenticity (Morrow, 2005). I ensured that all participants were treated with integrity, honesty and fairness throughout this research study. I ensured that my understanding refrained from biases as I probed the

participants throughout the semi-structured interviews as well as asked further questions that enhanced clarification (cf., Chapter 3.8.6).

### **1.11.7 Reflexivity**

Reflexivity relates to the role of the researcher throughout the research process (Lambert, Jomeen & McSherry, 2010). Within this qualitative research study, I aim to understand the perspectives held by the participants. Thus, the research participants partaking within this study are beginner teachers currently teaching in IP private schools in and around Pretoria. I engaged in constant reflective and feedback sessions with my supervisor in order to refrain from any possible researcher biases in the collection, analyses and decoding of data (cf., Chapter 3, 3.8.7).

## **1.12 Concept clarification**

In the following section, I clarify and conceptualise concepts in alphabetic order that are relevant to this study and the research questions. I use this section to assist the reader/researcher to know the terms that I use throughout the study as well as to clarify the concepts' meanings in relation to this study.

### **1.12.1 Beginner teachers**

*Beginner teachers* include teachers that are new to the educational industry with years of experience ranging from one to five years (Jensen, Sandoval-Hernandez, Knoll & Gonzalez, 2008). Generally, beginner teachers' ages range between 22-27 years. Beginner teachers should have a teaching certificate, diploma, or bachelor degree as a minimum qualification requirement to teach. Beginner teachers in the context of this research study refers to teachers that have less than five years of teaching experience, specifically in the IP classroom. For the purpose of this study, beginner teachers refer to

new teachers who are exposed to dealing with learner discipline, learner interest and learner motivation. Beginner teachers are also referred to as pre-service teachers or novice teachers in other related studies.

### **1.12.2 Credibility and teacher credibility**

*Credibility and teacher credibility* relate to how effectively teachers display trust, care and empathy toward their learners in terms of ensuring that the learners feel important, motivated and involved in the process of teaching and learning (Thweatt & McCroskey, 1998). Teacher credibility includes how readily the learners are able to relate and communicate with their teachers in order to build, strengthen and maintain relationships beyond the mere act of teaching. In relation to the purpose of this research study, teacher credibility highlights how beginner teachers perceive their progress and practices in the light of displayed learner behaviour within their classrooms. In the light of this research study, the focus of teacher credibility lies in paying detailed attention through observation and analysis based on learner discipline, learner interest, and learner motivation within the IP.

### **1.12.3 Intermediate Phase**

*Intermediate Phase* is an academic stage that involves learners who range between the ages of 9 years to 13 years. Learners and teachers associated within the IP are affiliated with grade levels of four, five, and six at primary school level (Department of Basic Education, 2016).

### **1.12.4 Learners in the South African context**

*Learners*, referred to within the context of this study, entails school-going individuals who fall under the Department of Basic Education consisting of Grade one to Grade 12

(Department of Basic Education, 2013). Students and learners are often used interchangeably, but in this study, learners will be referred to when discussing classroom contexts.

#### **1.12.5 Learner behaviour and displayed learner behaviour**

*Learner behaviour* entails the manner in which the learners react to formal and informal situations within the classroom (Llywodraeth Cymru Welsh Government, 2012). Thus, within this study, learner behaviour includes displayed discipline by the learners, the interest levels of the learners, and the motivation displayed by the learners within the context of the classroom.

#### **1.12.6 Perceptions of beginner teachers**

*Perceptions* include how beginner teachers view their practices in terms of the quality of instruction, learning, and assessment (Teven & McCroskey, 1997). Perceptions of beginner teachers are based on how the beginner teachers view or feel about their own teaching; how these beginner teachers feel about the quality of their teaching based on whether or not effective learning is occurring in the classroom. With this in mind, beginner teachers' perceptions are influenced by the displayed learners' behaviours in the classroom. Thus, if the learners are well-behaved, raising their hands to ask questions, and asking meaningful questions, then beginner teachers may feel more positively toward their developed credibility.

### **1.13 Outline of chapters**

The six chapters that are included in my research study will briefly be outlined:

In Chapter 1, I introduce this research study by elaborating upon my academic argument and the research questions. I move on to outlining the rationale of this study in relation to my personal prior experiences. I discuss the information pertaining to the study in terms of situating myself, as the writer, as well as the readers in the contents of the study. I discuss the purpose of the research study. This is followed by a brief discussion of the conceptual framework underpinning this study. Next, I highlight the ethical considerations and I conceptualise and clarify concepts utilised within the study. Furthermore, I briefly outline each of the chapters that are to follow.

The contents of Chapter 2 relate to the synthesis of literature relating to beginner teachers and their perceptions of their own credibility in the classroom. Chapter 2 incorporates local, national, and international literature based on teacher credibility within the teaching practice. Firstly, I discuss beginner teachers and the concept of teacher credibility. Secondly, I elaborate upon the nature of learner behaviour in the IP classroom, which is followed by a discussion on learner behaviour. Thirdly, I bring forward the international landscape and national arena. Moreover, I conceptualise and outline the conceptual framework that underpins this qualitative study, namely McCroskey's model for instructional communication.

Within Chapter 3, I discuss the epistemological framework in which I outline the reasoning behind employing the interpretivist paradigm within the study. I also elaborate upon the methodological framework that underpins this study, specifically conceptualising and connecting the qualitative research approach to this study. I explain in detail the reason as to why I employ the narrative research design and the case study research design as these two research designs optimally magnify the underlying realities experienced by the participants by drawing upon real life experiences. I then discuss the two non-probability sampling methods, namely the convenience sampling and purposive sampling methods. Moreover, I describe semi-structured interviews and researcher journals, which are the two data collection methods which I selected to use within this research study. I briefly explain inductive thematic data analysis. I elaborate on the ethical considerations

including informed consent, privacy, confidentiality/anonymity, the protection of the participants, and reflexivity. Finally, I discuss the implemented quality criteria such as trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability and authenticity.

I present the findings of this research study in Chapter 4. I utilise relevant themes and subthemes that I identified during the progression of interviews conducted with the participants. A clear connection was identified between the development of teacher credibility and learners who displayed higher levels of interest and motivation. Moreover, beginner teachers who utilised observational cues from their learners' discipline within the classroom were more enthusiastic about appropriately differentiating lessons according to their learners' individualised learning needs and abilities, resulting in increased opportunities to develop and nurture credible relationships with their learners. Findings elicited a relationship between beginner teachers' perceptions of their learners' behaviours and their developed teacher credibility.

Within Chapter 5, I position the findings of my study in relation to the reviewed literature. Furthermore, I discuss the gathered findings with regard to the underpinning conceptual framework employed in this study. Resonating around themes drawn from reviewed literature, I outline similarities and differences identified between my study and relating literature. Moreover, I elaborate upon the possible areas of silence and I conclude Chapter 5 by presenting new knowledge that emerged from this research study.

In Chapter 6, I summarise the findings of the identified themes and subthemes. Thereafter, I engage in a critical reflection of my study's limitations and potential value stemming from the study. I revisit the research assumptions and I conclude the chapter by drawing upon possible recommendations.

## **1.14 Chapter summary**

Within this chapter I adopted a three-pronged approach of situating myself, as the reader, within this research study, locating and directing the reader in terms of how this study originated, as well as providing a foundational platform for this study's progression. The research questions guiding the study were stated and briefly discussed. The rationale was discussed based on the origination of this research study and light was shed on the purpose of the study. Moreover, relevant concepts evident within this qualitative study were conceptualised. Finally, I provided a brief summary of each of the proceeding chapters.

In the following chapter, I focus on the review of literature and conceptual framework. Thus, I provide a detailed discussion on various aspects relating to this research study's topic. I then progress to elaborating upon the reworked conceptual framework that underpins this research study.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

*“Teachers who demonstrate to their students that they can be trusted in their teacher-student relationships are perceived as being high in character” (Martin, Chesebro, & Mottet, 1997, p. 433).*

### 2.1 Introduction

The above epigraph foregrounds the importance that the literature review will unpack. The epigraph highlights the element of trust as a tenet of perceived character, which in turn encompasses a component of teacher credibility in this study. In this chapter, I discuss the key elements pertaining to the research question posed by this study, namely the ‘nature’ of beginner teachers, the term perceptions, followed by the historical context of teacher credibility. Next, I shed light on what teacher credibility entails with the use of other researchers’ studies. I combine Haskins (2000), McCroskey & Young (1981), and McCroskey, Teven, Minielli & McCroskey’s (2014) studies to formulate the elements of conceptualising teacher credibility. I highlight the tension between ethos and own perceived credibility and I discuss the relationships formed between teachers and their learners. Finally, I present and explain the conceptual framework that will be adopted and extended upon in support of my study, namely McCroskey’s model for instructional communication (McCroskey et al., 2006). I move onto elaborating on the rationale and the interpretation of the adapted model. The chapter is concluded with a brief summary of the contents captured within Chapter 2.

### 2.2 The ‘nature’ of beginner teachers

I introduce the concept of the ‘nature’ of beginner teachers to shed light on the vulnerable population and the accompanying stresses that beginner teachers face within their novice years of their careers. Bartell (2005) proposes that beginner teachers experience a sense

of hopelessness in terms of teaching and learning occurring within the classroom. Considering several studies affirming that teachers equipped with three years and less are categorised as at-risk entries to the education field as these teachers often are most likely to leave the education field (Hinds & Berger, 2010; Rosaen & Schram, 2006; Bartell, 2005), it has become a concern within the industry to find and keep fully qualified teachers. The high demands for quality teachers are growing in harmony with the pressures placed on teachers entering the profession. These beginner teachers are expected to deal with contextual and cultural challenges (Cubukcu, 2010). Bearing in mind the language diversity, cultural variety, learning needs, learner support, and socio-economic variances amongst the learners, beginner teachers are expected to provide quality education to each learner in a limited time frame.

Beginner teachers, also referred to as novice teachers (DeAngelis, Wall & Che, 2013; Henry, Fortner & Bastian, 2012; Fantilli & McDougall, 2009), experience a shift in responsibility and accountability. They are expected to adapt to a new working environment, a new cultural context, and a new social setting (Bullough, 2005). The essence of beginner teachers' development will lie in their personal perceptions of their reality faced within their teaching careers (Hobson, 2009). According to Jensen, Sandoval-Hernández, Knoll and Gonzalez (2008), beginner teachers spent larger amounts of time per day dealing with classroom management and learner discipline in comparison to more experienced teachers. Additionally, these researchers established that in Denmark, approximately 19% of class time was dedicated to maintaining order within beginner teachers' classrooms compared to 12% of class time being spent by experienced teachers. In addition to the abovementioned statistics, Gavish and Friedman (2010) maintain that beginner teachers experience a sense of apprehension due to a lack of appreciation and acknowledgement from their learners. Internationally, beginner teachers are faced with the challenge of effectively managing their classrooms, ranging from maintaining learner discipline to developing quality relationships with each of their learners, this is an aspect that professionally discourages beginner teachers (Unal & Unal, 2009). In alignment with this statement, Maag (2008) elaborates by stating that by

beginner teachers attempting to effectively manage their learners, this may lead to emotional exhaustion.

According to Hudson's research study (2012) based on beginner teachers' perceptions of becoming effective teachers, he stated that the greatest challenge faced by beginner teachers pointed to classroom and behaviour management. Moreover, Stansbury and Zimmerman (2016) elaborate upon the abovementioned elements by stating that beginner teachers in China, New Zealand, and Switzerland perceived their greatest challenges as being classroom management, motivation of learners, and accommodating for individual differences amongst learners. Internationally, beginner teachers are sharing their experiences of dealing with common challenges, including maintaining learner behaviour, integrated learner interest, and learner interaction within the classroom (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2016).

Therefore, on an international scale, beginner teachers continuously connect their developing credibility to that of how they perceive the behaviour of their learners during lessons. As stated in the above literature, several beginner teachers are faced with the challenge of dealing with classroom discipline and learner behaviour which results in beginner teachers feeling overwhelmed and incompetent. Thus, learner behaviour is directly linked to beginner teachers' perceptions of their own teacher credibility. In a national setting, South African teachers face the challenge of actively integrating diversity within the curriculum content. To develop the skills of differentiating lessons, content, and assessments can be a strenuous task that is aimed at accommodating for learning barriers, learning needs, language barriers, and cultural backgrounds (Spaull, 2013). The purpose of this research study aims to explore the perceptions of beginner teachers of their own credibility based on displayed learner behaviour. Beginner teachers are a vulnerable group that rely heavily on their current perceptions and prior experiences to mould their credibility. This vulnerable nature is directly linked to that of how persistent and critical beginner teachers are when formulating their perceptions of own credibility based on displayed learner behaviour.

## 2.3 Perceptions

I discuss the concept of perceptions as it forms a crucial element to my study. Perceptions of beginner teachers provide information pertaining to the perceptions that they hold about their credibility. It is important to clarify this term as I focus on the perceptions of the beginner teachers and how these perceptions of their credibility are formed based on displayed learner behaviours. According to Freeman (2011), teachers' beliefs and learners' perceptions are often so closely conceptualised that misunderstanding of what true teacher credibility entails may arise. Perceptions can be described as judging a situation or person within a specific context based on preconceived notions (McCroskey, 1984). Perceptions are views that people use as a baseline view in order to make sense of a situation or person. We perceive situations or people based on how we view our individual realities (Tuli, 2011; Sefotho, 2015). Thus, perceptions are indeed subjective views of authored realities. Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2007) argue that perceptions are a combination of belief systems based on subjective realities. Perceptions begin to unveil the paradigm in which we each view our worlds, more specifically the lens through which we live our realities.

Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2007) mention self-efficacy which is closely related to own perceptions. I adopt their quote to foreground the essence of own perceptions: "individual teacher's beliefs about their own abilities to plan, organise, and carry out activities required to attain given educational goals" (p. 69). My study explores beginner teachers' perceptions of their own credibility based on how they perceive their learners' behaviours. Thus, own perceptions in this study relates to beginner teachers' perceptions of their credibility, how and what they believe to be credible within their practice as educators based on the feedback received by their learners' displayed behaviours in the classroom context.

## 2.4 History of source credibility

In this section, I discuss the historical backdrop that source credibility has brought to literature. I bring forward the studies and components that source credibility is grounded upon over time. “Character [credibility] is the most potent of all means of persuasion” (Aristotle, 1960, p. 9). Credibility has long been researched and scrutinised stemming from the ancient Greeks (Haskins, 2000). Specifically, Aristotle took great interest in understanding credibility evident in his work *The Rhetoric*, he stressed that:

*“The character [credibility] of the speaker is a cause of persuasion when the speech is so uttered as to make him worthy of belief; for as a rule we trust men of probity more, and more quickly, about things in general, while on points outside the realm of exact knowledge, where opinion is divided, we trust them absolutely”* (Aristotle, 1960, p. 9).

Considering more recent research suggesting that source credibility is the attitude displayed by a receiver toward a source at a specific instance, Aristotle suggested that ethos consisted of three elements: intelligence, character, and good will (McCroskey & Young, 1981). Aristotle believed that these three dimensions composed perceptions of the receiver in a multidimensional manner.

In the year of 1948, in the study of the effect of credibility on persuasion by Haiman, source credibility included the dimensions of reputation and competence. These two dimensions linked closely to Aristotle’s elements of character and intelligence (McCroskey & Young, 1981). After a decade of work, Osgood introduced his work of the measurement of meaning (Osgood, 1952). It was Osgood’s study that evoked the popularity of receiver perceptions being multidimensional. In 1953, Hovland, Janis, and Kelley investigated the communication during and after World War II, and provoked three dimensions for credibility: expertness, trustworthiness, and intention (Hovland, Janis & Kelley, 1953). In the course of further understanding the multidimensionality of source credibility, in the year of 1961, Andersen’s study introduced the elements of “authoritativeness” and “dynamism” (Andersen, 1961). Later in the very same year, Berlo and Lemert presented a paper that added in the elements of competence,

trustworthiness, and dynamism to ethos (Berlo & Lemert, 1961). Overall, the research directed at conceptualising source credibility has been extensive and rigorous over the years. Credibility is rooted in historical research and I unearth these components in my study. In this section, history unveiled core dimensions of source credibility which I adopt in my study: character; competence; trustworthiness; and dynamism. Despite the several other dimensions mentioned, the overlaps identified over the years were ruled out and similar elements were coined broader terms, as listed below (c.f., Chapter 2, 2.5.1-2.5.4).

## **2.5 Teacher credibility**

The aim of this study is to explore beginner teachers' perceptions of their own credibility within their practices based on displayed learner behaviour within the IP classroom. In this section, I conceptualise teacher credibility in relation to the purpose of this study. Credibility entails factors such as honesty, integrity, trustworthiness and competence (Teven & McCroskey, 1997). Several studies over the years conceptualised source credibility under the following headings: immediacy, trustworthiness, competence, and dynamism (c.f., Chapter 2, 2.5.1-2.5.4; Haskins, 2000; McCroskey & Young, 1981; Berlo & Lemert, 1961; Andersen, 1961; Hovland, Janis & Kelley, 1953). According to Thweatt & McCroskey (1998), "Teachers who are perceived to be more credible will produce more positive affect toward themselves and/or the content of the class and increase the likelihood a student will take another class in the same content area and/or with that teacher" (p. 349). Teacher credibility is based on whether or not displayed competency, portraying a relatable character, and demonstrating a sense of care towards their learners are evident (McCroskey & Teven, 1999).

The South African Oxford dictionary defines the word 'credible' as: "able to be believed, convincing" (p. 202). Based on several international studies (Banfield et al., 2006; Adams, 2013; Zhang & Sapp, 2009; Freeman, 2011), teacher credibility is considered to be a multidimensional concept that comprises of integrated perceptions. Three popular factors that outline teacher credibility relate to competence, caring, and character (McCroskey,

Holdridge, Toomb, 1974; Freeman, 2011; Myers & Bryant, 2004). Myers & Bryant (2004) maintain through gathered findings that “instructor competence is conveyed through content expertise, affect for students, and verbal fluency; instructor character is conveyed through immediacy, flexibility, promotion of understanding, and trustworthiness; and instructor caring is conveyed through responsiveness, accommodation, and accessibility” (p. 26).

Internationally, teacher credibility is perceived as a three-pillared concept comprising of teacher competence, teacher trustworthiness, and empathy displayed by teachers toward the learners (McArthur & Bostedo-Conway, 2012; Teven & McCroskey, 1997). Teacher credibility lies in the notion of learners believing that teachers have worthy knowledge and skills to be taught (Brookfield, 2006). The stance of credibility stems from the idea of creating quality relationships with people who perceive you to be worthy or to display some form of intellectual competence. Teacher credibility explicitly foregrounds education as a profession, highlighting that teachers become the driving force of quality relationships that propel meaningful learning through eminent teaching.

Teacher immediacy and teacher credibility form tangents to one another. Teven & Hanson (2004) state that “The explicit relationship which has been found between perceived caring and affective learning suggests that the nonverbal immediacy behaviours of teachers may be what is cuing students’ perceptions of teacher caring” (p. 41). In alignment with Teven and Hanson’s study, teachers’ and learners’ foundation a communicative relationship within the classroom which initiates a platform for learning to take place. Beginner teachers’ perceptions of their own credibility influences their verbal and non-verbal immediacy displayed in the classroom. This awareness of immediacy allows for teachers to enhance learners’ initiative to learn.

I adopt McCroskey and Young (1981) and Haskins’ (2000) findings of their studies to underpin my study of beginner teachers’ perceptions of own credibility. “Source credibility”, otherwise known as “ethos”, focusses on the communication within the

classroom context. Haskins (2000) describes “ethos” as “the perceived degree of character or credibility that a person believes exists in another person or object” (p. 1). Considering former studies based on credibility (Adams, 2013; Freeman, 2011; Zhang & Sapp, 2009; Haskins, 2000; McCroskey & Young, 1981; Berlo & Lemert, 1961; Andersen, 1961; Hovland, Janis & Kelley, 1953), I decided to use the essence of these studies to outline my study. Many elements related to source credibility are unearthed in the mentioned studies, however I narrowed the various dimensions to broader terms that related to teachers’ perceptions of their own credibility. The main dimensions that spoke to teacher credibility were immediacy, trustworthiness, competence, and dynamism.

### **2.5.1 Immediacy**

Immediacy was conceptualised and established by Mehrabian and directs attention to the degree of physical and psychological closeness communicated between individuals (Mehrabian, 1969). Teacher immediacy provides the foundation to developing a credible relationship between learners and teachers. Teacher immediacy is described by LeFebvre and Allen (2014) as a closeness shared between teachers and learners propelled by verbal and non-verbal perceptions held by learners.

The construction of personal impressions based on teachers’ verbal and non-verbal communicative behaviours within the classroom are crucial factors to consider when perceiving own credibility (Georgakopoulos, 2010). These communicative behaviours encourage a classroom culture that accommodates for openness and comfort shared between teachers and learners (c.f., Chapter 2, 2.5.2). Teachers can enhance their credibility by displaying empathy, sympathy, and caring behaviours towards their learners (Gray, Anderman & O’Connell, 2011) as well as verbal and non-verbal behaviours such as positive comments and smiling during the teaching of lessons (LeFebvre & Allen, 2014; Teven & Hanson, 2004), and by incorporating and integrating suitable platforms of technology within the lesson, thus grasping learners’ attention in a relatable manner (Jernberg, 2008). On the contrary, research validates possible behaviours that dampen perceived teacher credibility, including demotivating language, dishonesty, poor

relationship, unprofessional appearance, poor communication skills, low confidence, and variances in teaching accents (Chesebro & McCroskey, 2001; Knapp & Daly, 2002; Clune, 2009; Zeki, 2009).

Essential researched factors crucial in the process of developing credibility in combination with communicative behaviour include regular eye-contact with each of the learners, the usage of body gestures during the process of explaining concepts, and vibrant uses of facial expressions when communicating with learners (Chesebro & McCroskey, 2001; Hsu, 2006; LeFebvre & Allen, 2014). Learners feel a sense of closeness to their teachers when factors such as eye-contact and smiling are included in the teaching and learning process which establishes the reasoning behind Mehrabian's theory. Mehrabian (1981) maintains that "People approach what they like and avoid what they don't like" (p. 22). In the notion of minimising barriers of communication and the development of quality relationships between teachers and learners, it is important to primarily recall upon our individual forecast, as teachers, presented to learners. Grasping the idea of relating to our learners on an emotional and social platform prior to attempting to establish credibility is crucial. Verbal and non-verbal behaviours relayed by beginner teachers' foundation the degree of interest and care displayed toward the learners, which in turn depicts the type of learner behaviour presented within the classroom, and specifically towards the teacher.

### **2.5.2 Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness allows beginner teachers to communicate with the learners through emotional closeness (Haskins, 2000). Teven and Hanson (2004) define trust as "the degree to which students trust a teacher" (p. 40). Furthermore, Teven and Hanson (2004) highlight the connection between immediacy and trustworthiness in stating that teachers who refrain from embarrassing and belittling their learners strengthen trustworthy relationships. In the classroom context, trust acts as the catalyst for an effective learning and teaching environment. Learners confiding in their teachers, teachers providing

guidance and support to their learners, and teachers playing a role in their learners' holistic development all form elements of trustworthiness (Haskins, 2000).

Haskins (2000) foregrounds sincerity, honesty, and believability when communicating with learners. The modification of messages sent from beginner teachers to learners encompass these elements of trustworthiness. Trust is earned and developed within the classroom. The "openness" shared by beginner teachers within the classroom allows for learners to feel comfortable enough to engage in sincere discussions. I refer to Haskin's (2001) example, beginner teachers should never feel hesitant to state "I don't know" if a question is beyond the taught content. Honesty is highlighted in these situations where perceptions are formed. When learners perceive their teachers to be honest, credibility is developed (Teven & Hanson, 2004).

### **2.5.3 Competence**

Competence is described by Haskins (2000) as "a perception that others have of people concerning their degree of knowledge on topics, abilities to command such knowledge, and abilities to communicate this knowledge clearly" (p. 3). Teachers are continuously being watched and tested on their knowledge of curriculum content. Beginner teachers are expected to step into the classroom exuding confidence and competence. Competence encompasses teachers appearing to be highly organised and prepared for the presentation of their lessons (Haskins, 2000). The ability to deliver content within a lesson in an understandable manner is the epitome of teaching. Delivering a lesson with minimal errors, correct grammar, and accurate pronunciation form part of competency.

To be competent means to be prepared enough to control your lesson and actively facilitate intended learning (Teven & Hanson, 2004). In so doing, teachers are expected to highlight key concepts, evoke critical thinking by facilitating class discussions, and include various opinions on different topics. Beginner teachers often feel overwhelmed by the administrative responsibilities; however, this is an aspect that establishes competent

teachers. Haskins (2000) emphasises the importance of preparing daily lesson plans that showcase organisation and detail. Moreover, he stresses the importance of relatability. Teachers need to continuously connect learners' prior knowledge to relevant contextual and cultural settings and experiences (Haskins, 2000). This element enhances the competence of a teacher, and overall the credibility. Moss, Brookhart and Long (2011) sum up competence by suggesting the following: "They convey to students the destination for the lesson - what to learn, how deeply to learn it, and exactly how to demonstrate their new learning" (p. 66).

#### **2.5.4 Dynamism**

Dynamism is the extent to which learners admire and identify with their teacher in relation to the teachers' displayed charisma and energy (Haskins, 2000). Closely linked to that of competence (c.f., Chapter 2, 2.5.3) in terms of taking control of the lesson, dynamism refers to the ability of the teacher to demand the attention of the learners. Dynamism relates to learners' expectations of teachers being able to lead the lesson and facilitate the discussion with an end goal in mind.

Moreover, dynamism can be linked to immediacy (c.f., Chapter 2, 2.5.1) whereby communicative behaviours displayed by the learners can impact the intensity of the lesson. I refer to the energy brought by the teacher into the classroom to excite and motivate learners to become active participants in the learning journey. Haskins (2000) stresses the importance of voice variation, body movement, and the use of visual stimuli to capture the interest of the learners. Body language, facial expressions, and eye contact are powerful tools that can be used to develop dynamism (Haskins, 2000). Part of teacher credibility relates to developing a powerful style of speaking. Similar to that of competence, teachers need to learn the art of talking with limited vocal hesitations. Becoming a dynamic teacher in light of credibility, strings together aspects found in immediacy and competence. Reference is not only made to how intense and involved a teacher is in terms of dynamism, rather the vigour and panache added to a lesson by that teacher.

## 2.6 Ethos versus own perceived credibility

As mentioned earlier in this study, Haskins (2000) defines ethos as “the perceived degree of character or credibility that a person believes exists in another person or object” (p. 1). Based on Aristotle’s views, ethos is the epitome of persuasion (Aristotle, 1960). More recently, ethos has been conceived as the perception held by the receiver based on the communicator or message (Hamilton, 1998). Haskins (2001) provides a few examples of which he conveys his message about the speakers’ credibility being dependent on the audiences’ perceptions (Haskins, 2001). Haskins’ (2000) study thus refers to the perceptions held by the receiver and suggests that the focus of ethos is the judgement of the source’s credibility in the eyes of the receiver. Haskins (2000) foregrounds the fact that the distortion of ethos was evident in the evaluation of the source based on the receivers’ perceptions. Moreover, McCroskey and Young (1981) stress that source credibility as we know it currently has not been challenged. Several studies focus on the perceptions of the sources’ credibility (Clune, 2009; Haskins, 2000; Baringer & McCroskey, 2000; Frymier & Thompson, 1992; McCroskey & Young, 1981). There was very little discussion of the personality aspect to ethos, despite Hovland et al. (1953) study, the focus of including personality was directed at characteristics of the receivers and not necessarily the source (Haskins, 2000).

Haskins (2000) highlights an element that hauls my attention. He states that:

*“Today’s teachers face a variety of reactions from their students and other constituencies: from simple praise to national awards, from insults to dismissal, from pushing and shoving to physical violence. No matter what the reaction, at the core of the response is the person’s perceptions of the teacher’s credibility”* (p. 1).

Considering a different angle to ethos, my study focusses on the teachers’ perceptions of their credibility. Thus, I shift from the contemporary views of the perceptions of the receivers based on the sources’ communication and I steer toward the perceptions of the source based on the receivers’ displayed behaviours in the classroom. Instead of focussing on how teachers are perceived by their learners based on the dimensions discussed earlier: immediacy, trustworthiness, competence, and dynamism (c.f., Chapter

2, 2.5.1-2.5.4), I venture into understanding how teachers perceive their own credibility in relation to the aforementioned dimensions based on displayed learner behaviour.

This study reminds teachers to utilise a reflective platform to evaluate and develop their practices. Brookfield (2017) suggests that:

*“Without a critically reflective stance towards what we do we tend to accept the blame for problems that are not of our own making. We think that all resistance to learning displayed by students is caused by our own insensitivity and unpreparedness”* (p. 1).

By beginner teacher reflecting on their own perception of their credibility less blame shitting occurs and more productive solutions are foregrounded. Beginner teachers need to become aware of their surroundings and behavioural feedback to utilise this given information to enhance their own development. Ethos is a perception from the receiver, credibility is the teachers' way of formulating own perceptions for themselves. Perceptions need to be utilised for development and self-evaluation rather than loose strands of information gathered by learners. Beginner teachers need to take responsibility, accountability, and ownership of their decisions, actions, intentions, and practice (Brookfield, 2017).

For the purpose of this study, I view ethos as I am the source and I am reflecting on my credibility (immediacy, trustworthiness, competence, dynamism) based on my learners' displayed behaviours in my classroom. Learner behaviour refers to learner interest, learner motivation, and learner discipline.

## **2.7 Learner behaviour**

Considering the learner and the beginner teacher as social beings, it is imperative to remain cognisant of the notion that the classroom is a social space that is the driving force behind learner engagement and, overall, learner disposition to learn (Raktham, 2008). Learner behaviour evident within the context of a classroom may mask various emotional

embodiments of each individual learner's background, personality, behaviour, and environmental associations. Continuous quality interactions that occur within the classroom on a daily basis, between learners, individual learners and teachers, as well as groups of learners and teachers create the foundation of expectations of learners within the classroom, toward other learners, and behaviour displayed toward the teacher (Raktham, 2008).

Learners are products of their parental figures whereby implicit and explicit capsules of knowledge is transferred to children during their developmental phases (Raktham, 2008). Education acts as a catalyst that reiterates and reinforces fragments of learners' prior belief systems, providing learners with a platform to express their emotions as well as teaches learners to accept others' ideas and perspectives (Vygotsky, 1978). As the years of development progress, learners are encouraged to refine their individual perspectives and thought processes in terms of analysing and dealing with emotions, events, and challenges (Raktham, 2008). Hence, these thoughts, inclusive of developed emotional intelligences, formulate learners' motivation and affinity to engage in learning and thrive in learning environments (Raktham, 2008).

Moreover, the concept of behaviour within the context of this study is developed upon a three-pronged approach which includes: motivation, interest, and discipline. Learner motivation focusses on how eager learners are to listen to and grasp discussed content Gregory (2009). Learner interest highlights the degree of concentration experienced by IP learners within the classroom, specifically focussing on how eagerly the learners engage in class discussions (Daskalovska, Gudeva & Ivanovska, 2012). Learner discipline relates to the verbal and non-verbal behaviours displayed throughout the lesson, such as whether learners' raise their hands before talking and if learners are walking around the classroom aimlessly during a lesson (Walters & Frei, 2007).

Within the context of this research study, learner behaviour is associated with learner motivation, learner interest, and learner discipline within the classroom. Williams &

Williams (2011) maintain that motivation is the key ingredient to quality education in enhancing and sustaining effective learning within the classroom. Motivation refers to the first aspect demarcated within the three-pronged concept of learner behaviour. Motivation revolves around the conception of learner interest to which the learner displays curiosity and awareness to content matter that is being taught or relayed within the classroom (Williams & Williams, 2011). The second aspect refers to learner interest which propels intrinsic motivation based on learners' individual priorities to focus on the process of learning. On a macroscale, learner interest influences the retention and meaningful learning that takes place within a lesson, grounded upon the degree of connection that the learner relates to lesson content and teachers' explanations (Wade, 2007).

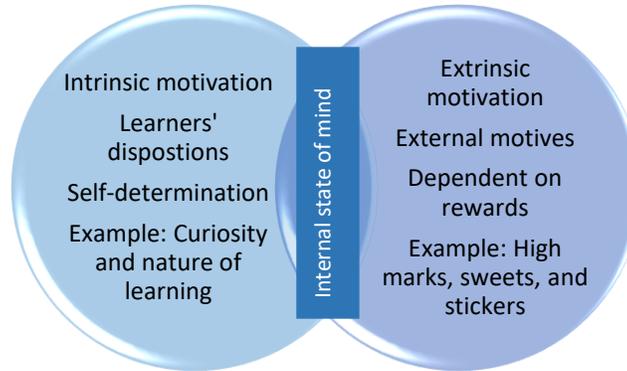
Arriving at the last aspect of the three-pronged concept of learner behaviour, learner discipline relates to displayed moral character within the classroom setting (Mabea, 2013). The moral character of learners refers to the ability to differentiate between what is considered acceptable and what is considered as unacceptable as responsible citizens. Acceptable behaviour refers to respecting adults, using appropriate language, and following teachers' instructions diligently, whereas unacceptable behaviour refers to disrespecting authority figures such as teachers, using vulgar language, and disobeying teachers' instructions. More specifically, how learners conduct themselves in terms of sitting at their assigned desks in an upright seated position versus walking around or slouching throughout the duration of the lesson. Additionally, considering whether learners are silent and listening or taking notes within the lesson opposed to chatting or being occupied by other activities such as completing other subjects' homework or drawing pictures.

Learner interest is closely coupled with learner motivation whereby productive learning occurs when full attention is expended throughout a lesson. According to Lai (2011) "Individual interest refers to a relatively stable trait developed with respect to a particular subject or topic" (p. 10). Examples of displayed learner interest are learner perseverance in grasping content topics, paying attention throughout lessons, the capability to focus

intently, as well as an enhanced curiosity (Lai, 2011). It is important to remain cognisant of the fact that learners exhibit interests in activities that they feel competent in engaging in and completing. Learner interest is thus, to a large extent, based on learners' dispositions to engage in learning specific subject areas that they feel knowledgeable in. Such competencies are drawn from prior experiences such as doing well in assessments, being able to relate to discussed content, and enjoying the content of the lesson.

Learner interest refers to the degree of receptiveness experienced by the learner in terms of engaging in learning above and beyond the stipulated content (Väyrynen, 2008). Learners who are intrinsically involved in lesson content and class discussions are more likely to meaningfully capture related subject knowledge and consolidate this knowledge as part of their current cognitive schemata. In a similar aspect, Renninger and Hidi (2011) highlights that learner interest can be described as a continuous connection between information and emotions. However, Järvenoja (2010) believes that inharmonious emotional attachments of learners can be a distracting factor that shifts learners' attention away from the learning situation at hand. Haskins (2000) mentions that being perceived as a competent teacher enhances learners' interest levels displayed within the classroom (c.f., Chapter 2, 2.5.3).

Järvenoja (2010) highlights that "Motivation can be defined as an internal state of mind, a thought that arouses, directs, maintains, hinders, or inhibits behaviour" (p. 21). When learners feel a sense of involvement they are more likely to be stimulated to answer questions and listen more intently throughout the duration of the lesson. Learners learn best when they are optimally involved in the lesson which is demarcated by behaviours such as asking questions, the willingness to answer posed questions, and an excitement when engaged in class discussions. Motivation is a critical facet within the learning spectrum which is a determinative mechanism comprising of success or difficulty experienced throughout learners' educational careers.



**Figure 2.1:** Visual representation of the differentiation between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation

The effective learning process is dependent upon individuals' motivational disposition toward learning. Lai (2011) situates motivation as an assemblage of intrinsic factors comprising of individual learner beliefs, values, interests, and perceptions. However, Boekarts, Van Nuland, and Martens (2010) imply that it is the combined responsibility of teachers and learners to actively engage in the teaching and learning process, such that teachers ensure that learners feel a sense of capability to complete tasks as a result of teaching and adapting learning materials in a meaningful and relatable manner. Intrinsic motivation is related to learners' disposition and self-determination toward the process of learning (Yoo, Han & Huang, 2008). In the context of this study, intrinsic motivation is connected to how learners perceive their learning and education, thus highlighting the drive behind the learners' decision to learn, such as the love of learning, wanting to feed their curiosity or enjoying the thrill of connecting prior content knowledge to existing knowledge. On the contrary, extrinsic motivation is interrelated ulterior motives that propel learners to engage in the learning process (Mafini & Dlodlo, 2014). Such motives may include of learners aiming to achieve high marks in order to receive some form of reward such as money, sweets or stickers.

Bosman (2012) states that learner discipline creates harmony within a classroom. Teachers who display sensitivity toward diversity, specifically highlighting cultural differences, enhance learner motivation and learner interest within the classroom.

Acceptable behaviours refer to listening while the teacher is teaching, raising of hands when asking questions, and respecting peers. On the contrary, unacceptable behaviours highlight actions of disobedience toward the teacher, a display of rude language within the classroom, and incomplete homework. Displayed behaviours include social, affective, and psychological domains which overall affect the effectiveness of learner discipline. Learner discipline narrates the management and control within a classroom. Learner discipline is thus important in establishing classroom control.

Learner discipline is outlined by the external management of learner behaviour within the classroom context (Walters & Frei, 2007). Discipline is understanding the 'how' behind learner behaviour. It thus becomes the teachers' responsibility to engage in understanding each individual learner in order to manage learner discipline. Discipline is the root of learning whereby orderliness, structure, and expectations are clearly outlined and strictly adhered to. Kapueja (2014) describes learner discipline as a process of fostering and promoting positive behaviour such as raising of hands when answering questions, maintaining silence whilst the lesson is being presented, and commenting in a friendly manner. In its entirety, the golden thread of instilling learner discipline is fostering a holistic developmental approach within the IP classroom.

Reyneke (2013) provides evidence through her study that learner discipline is a common issue that South African teachers face within the classroom context. Such disciplinary issues include "disruptive behaviour, rudeness, dishonesty, obscene language, cheekiness, untidy/incorrect clothing, neglect of duty, telling lies, and absenteeism on a daily, weekly or monthly basis" (p. 68). Several studies state that the majority of South African teachers experience disruptive behaviour in terms of learners consistently talking throughout the lesson (Wolhuter & Van Staden, 2008; Lessing & De Witt, 2010; Reyneke, 2013). Moreover, according to Wolhuter, Oosthuizen and Van Standen's study (2010), factors of "dishonesty, moodiness, cheekiness, the telling of lies, laziness, vandalism, theft, bullying, and violence" resulted in the highest occurrences within the IP. Hence, beginner teachers perceive their credibility in relation to displayed learner behaviour

within the classroom by observing and monitoring learners' behaviours throughout their lessons. The quieter, more settled, and observant the learners are, the higher the teacher credibility is perceived by beginner teachers, whereas, the rowdier, more agitative, and disruptive the learners are, the lower the teacher credibility is perceived by beginner teachers.

## **2.8 Teacher-learner relationships**

Thweatt and McCroskey (1998) maintain that teacher credibility is a crucial factor in developing and sustaining the teaching-learning process and thus propose that “the higher the credibility, the higher the learning” (p. 349). Teachers who are perceived as having high credibility possess the capability of positively enhancing displayed learner behaviour within the classroom. In the process of enhancing positive behaviour, aspects relating to increasing learner motivation, learner interest, learner disposition, and learner academic performance should be highlighted (Daskalovska, Gudeva & Ivanovska, 2012). In accordance with the abovementioned literature, McCroskey, Richmond & Bennett, (2006) highlight the importance of teachers' intentions when stepping into a classroom. Teachers are often mainly focussed on achieving short-term learning goals which has a dampening effect on their learners meeting the long-term educational goals of retaining and relevantly utilising such knowledge within their daily lives.

To this end, Teven and McCroskey (1997) state that: “One assumption often made about teacher-student relationships is that the behaviour patterns of teachers affect the behaviour patterns of students” (p. 167). Therefore, credibility can be explained as patterns of communication shared and understood between teachers and learners (Georgakopoulos, 2010). The concept of teacher credibility encapsulates a platform of varying social dimensions. These dimensions are constructed upon teacher and learner behaviours stemming from verbal and non-verbal communications experienced within the classroom context (Hramiak, 2017). The term perception is an individualistic view that comprises of a combination of subjective realities and individualistic prior experiences

that assist in formulating an accepted idea of a situation (Hoffman, 2011). Teven and McCroskey (1996) maintain that “It is not the caring that counts; it is the perception of caring that is critical” (p. 3). With the essence of the aforementioned quote, perception is an idea of how one formulates an understanding of a teacher with regard to displayed teacher immediacy.

In a study conducted by Ryans (1963), he highlights the imperativeness of “feedback” in the classroom. He suggested that can be received by teachers based on their learners’ responses and reactions within a single lesson (Ryans, 1963). The relationships formed within the classroom are based on the connections made between the teacher and the learners. Again, I refer to the dimensions of credibility mentioned earlier in this study relating to immediacy, trustworthiness, competence, and dynamisms (c.f., Chapter 2, 2.5.1 – 2.5.4). These relationships become the driving force behind reflection. I refer to Jaeger’s (2013) study in which she mentions that:

*“It [reflection] is the ability to recognize the ways in which a given teaching event is similar to and different from other such events that allows the teacher to plan effectively and respond appropriately as the lesson progresses” (p. 90).*

For the purpose of this study, the “relationships” that I discuss are in the perspective of the beginner teacher. Thus, the beginner teachers’ personal background, history, and experiences will depict the retrieval of information from learners’ behaviours (Howard, 2003).

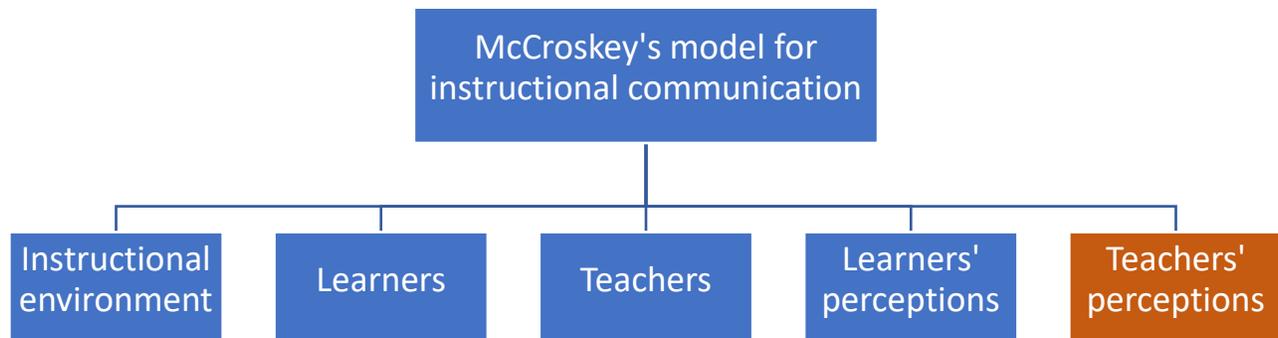
## **2.9 Conceptual framework**

In the following section, I describe and discuss the conceptual framework, namely an addition to McCroskey’s model for instructional communication which underpins this qualitative study. This model assists in connecting this research study to existing literature that places the study in perspective for the readers. I explore the various aspects evident within the abovementioned model and I compartmentalise each of the elements in relation

to how beginner teachers perceive their credibility within their classrooms in relation to displayed learner behaviour within the IP.

### **2.9.1 McCroskey's model for instructional communication extended**

McCroskey's model for instructional communication entails teachers and learners mutually exchanging and sharing information and knowledge with the intent of developing a constructive and progressive learning relationship (McCroskey *et al.*, 2004). Learning in the light of this theory enhances simultaneous learning and accommodates for inferences and synthesis of information to occur between learners and teachers (McCroskey *et al.*, 2004). McCroskey's model for instructional communication exhibits six interrelated components that houses the functioning of the theory, namely the instructional environment, learners, teachers, teachers' verbal and non-verbal behaviours, learners' perceptions of the teachers, and instructional outcomes. In alignment to the purpose of this research study, only four components will be discussed together with own perceptions of teacher credibility. Specifically, instructional environment, learners, teachers, learners' perceptions of the teachers and instructional outcomes. I decided to exclude two of the six components as I wanted to refine the model to best suit my study. As I read more widely, I realised that there was dense research behind teachers' verbal and non-verbal behaviours and instructional outcomes (Sutiyatno, 2018; Wahyuni, 2017; Lim, Morris & Kupritz, 2007; McCroskey, Richmond & Bennett, 2006; Chesebro & McCroskey, 2001; Witt & Wheelless, 2001). With this in mind, I considered these tenets of the model to be research pillars of their own which demanded attention respectively. Therefore, I decided to keep this study related to concepts that are directly connected to the purpose of this research and preserve the two mentioned elements for possible future research interest. "Own perceptions of teacher credibility" is the added concept to this model. I reviewed McCroskey's model and noticed that environment, learners, teachers, and learners' perceptions were included, however there was a gap that this study filled – teachers' perceptions.



**Figure 2.2:** Diagram of McCroskey’s model for instructional communication extended (McCroskey et al., 2004).

## 2.9.2 Rationale for employing conceptual framework

I decided to employ McCroskey’s model for instructional communication as his research was rooted in understanding ethos (McCroskey, Teven, Mimielli & McCroskey, 2014). Running parallel to several of McCroskey’s studies (McCroskey et al., 2014; McCroskey et al., 2006; McCroskey et al., 2004; McCroskey et al., 1999; McCroskey et al., 1981; McCroskey et al., 1974), I wanted to explore teachers’ perceptions of own credibility (immediacy, trustworthiness, competence, and dynamism) based on displayed learner behaviour in the classroom. With reference to the history of teacher credibility mentioned earlier in this chapter (c.f., Chapter 2, 2.4), McCroskey’s work in credibility is pungent. I demarcate my study to the context of the classroom; hence my conceptual framework required the elements evident within the classroom. McCroskey’s model highlighted the setting, the role players, as well as perceptions of learners. With reference to McCroskey and Young’s (1981) study, source credibility was angled to understand the credibility of the source in the eyes of the receiver. On the contrary, my study intends to unearth the perceptions of the source, as explained earlier in this chapter (c.f., Chapter 2, 2.5).

Several studies engage in the perceptions of the receiver based on the credibility of the source (Clune, 2009; Haskins, 2000; Baringer & McCroskey, 2000; McCroskey & Teven, 1999; Hamilton, 1998; Thweatt & McCroskey, 1998; Frymier & Thompson, 1992;

McCroskey & Young, 1981). I found it intriguing that the perceptions of the source were considered, however the element of perceptions by the source were excluded. As a beginner teacher myself, I recognise the importance of the perceptions that my learners have of me based on the four dimensions discussed earlier (c.f., Chapter 2, 2.5.1-2.5.4). Subsequently, I also recognise the importance of understanding and evaluating my own perceptions of my credibility before digging into others' perceptions of my credibility. In order to form a baseline for my own credibility, I am required to reflect on my immediacy, trustworthiness, competence, and dynamism. I need to compare these elements to that of my past experiences, my mentors' practices, the theoretical knowledge gained through my tertiary studies, and the practical knowledge I gained from my teaching practice in my fourth year as an undergraduate. In combination with the aforementioned, I then evoke the process of reflection in my practice based on how I perceive my learners' behaviours. According to Ryans' (1963) study, learners' behaviours can be used for instantaneous feedback within the classroom.

### **2.9.3 Interpretation of conceptual framework**

The first component refers to the instructional environment which highlights the climate and culture of the classroom in which the teachers and learners are exposed to on a regular basis (microsystem) (McCroskey *et al.*, 2004). Learners and teachers engage in active learning within the classroom context in which the climate of the classroom needs to be vibrant and stimulating in order for optimal learning and teaching to be present. Credible teachers are defined by the instructional space they sustain within their classrooms (Ekron, 2015). The culture and climate created in classrooms paves the expectations from teachers of learners. Cultures and climates of classrooms outlines the distinction between the types of learner behaviour that is considered acceptable and unacceptable.

Teven and Hanson (2004) stated that learners' perceptions of teacher credibility are maximised when verbal and non-verbal behaviours are evident within the lesson. The discrepancy between instructional credibility and decreased instructional credibility lies in the notion of how teachers go about instilling classroom cultures and climates by utilising effective verbal and nonverbal cues. Effective verbal cues include using humour whilst explaining concepts, speaking clearly such that all learners are able to hear, and verbally communicating using simple terms that learners are capable of grasping. Additionally, non-verbal cues comprise of smiling whilst teaching concepts, using hand gestures when explaining content, and making consistent eye-contact with all learners as to make each learner feel included within the lesson.

The second and third components of McCroskey's model highlight the aspects of learners and teachers are critical role-players within this theory as these components are directly related to the learning and teaching process (McCroskey *et al.*, 2004). Every classroom situation varies according to the developed culture and climate. Moreover, each learner is unique with regard to learning needs, learning styles, life backgrounds, and home cultures. Additionally, every teacher differs in terms of teaching styles, the usage of learning paradigms, and the implementation of classroom practices. These aforementioned factors affect the learning experiences of each learner in which perspectives of beginner teachers based on their credibility may vary to a large extent. Learners differ with regard to their background situations, learning styles and learning needs, whereas teachers differ in the light of teaching instruction methods, personality and temperament.

The fourth component that will be conceptualised relates to the learners' perceptions of the teacher. This component focuses on how learners view their teacher with regard to affect, influence, and respect (McCroskey *et al.*, 2004). Instructional outcomes characterise the fifth component of this theory in which communication between the teacher and the learners are developed. The mutual communicative channels include

cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domain development of each learner throughout the course of the academic year (McCroskey *et al.*, 2004). The overall evaluation of the teacher is, to a large extent, based on learner observation and mutual communication between the learner and teacher during the teaching and learning process which is accompanied by the development of learner perceptions of their teacher. This development has a direct influence on displayed learner behaviour within the IP classroom, specifically the degree of learner discipline and behaviour, learner interest shown toward the subject matter, and the acknowledged learner motivation to participate within the class.

The sixth component that my study adds to McCroskey's model for instructional communication is teachers' perceptions of own credibility. I have shed light on the rationale behind incorporating this element to the model (c.f., Chapter 2, 2.9.2), however I will provide more of an interpretation in this section. Considering Figure 2.1 above, I have suggested the need for an extended element to the model. Credibility, commonly known as "ethos" or "source credibility", within the classroom is often cemented in the instructional process of teaching. The elements evident in McCroskey's model highlight the key components of a classroom. His model includes the environment – the classroom; the learners – in many studies referred to as the receivers (Clune, 2009; Haskins, 2000; Baringer & McCroskey, 2000; Frymier & Thompson, 1992); the teachers – often referred to as the source or communicator (McCroskey *et al.*, 2014; Haskins, 2000); and learners' perceptions of teachers (McCroskey *et al.*, 2004). I strongly suggest the need for teachers' perceptions of their own credibility. Without the baseline perceptions of beginner teachers' identities (Woest, 2016), teachers cannot rely solely on the perceptions of the learners, as perceptions vary across individual learners, based on prior experiences – which in itself include multiple realities (c.f., Chapter 2, 2.3). Hence, this sixth component focusses on how teachers perceive their own credibility based on the displayed learner behaviour within their classrooms. Beginner teacher will reflect and evaluate their own credibility – immediacy, trustworthiness, competence, and dynamism based on how the information received from observing their learners' behaviours (c.f., Chapter 2, 2.6).

## **2.10 Summary of findings from existing literature**

Important findings that have emerged from the review of literature will be discussed under this section. For the purpose of this study, I refer to teacher credibility as a perception of beginner teachers who evaluate their own immediacy, trustworthiness, competence, and dynamism (cf., Chapter 2, 2.5; Gray, Anderman & O'Connell, 2011; Teven & Hanson, 2004; Haskins, 2000).

### **2.10.1 Perceptions**

Perceptions play a critical component in this study as judgements and views created by beginner teachers are highlighted and scrutinised. The following were findings that were foregrounded through literature:

- Perceptions can be described as judging a situation or person within a specific context based on preconceived notions (McCroskey, 1984).
- We perceive situations or people based on how we view our individual realities (Tuli, 2011; Sefotho, 2015).

### **2.10.2 Teacher credibility**

Teacher credibility is a contouring element to this study. This concept allows for the study to dive deeper into the essence of who beginner teachers are in the classroom in relation to their own perceptions. The following were some of the findings connected to this study:

- Credibility entails factors such as honesty, integrity, trustworthiness and competence (Teven & McCroskey, 1997).
- Several studies over the years conceptualised source credibility under the following headings: immediacy, trustworthiness, competence, and dynamism (c.f., Chapter 2, 2.5.1-2.5.4; Haskins, 2000; McCroskey & Young, 1981; Berlo & Lemert, 1961; Andersen, 1961; Hovland, Janis & Kelley, 1953).

- Beginner teachers' perceptions of their own credibility influences their verbal and non-verbal immediacy displayed in the classroom (Teven & Hanson, 2004).
- The construction of personal impressions based on teachers' verbal and non-verbal communicative behaviours within the classroom are crucial factors to consider when perceiving own credibility (Georgakopoulos, 2010).
- Learners confiding in their teachers, teachers providing guidance and support to their learners, and teachers playing a role in their learners' holistic development all form elements of trustworthiness (Haskins, 2000).
- Competence encompasses teachers appearing to be highly organised and prepared for the presentation of their lessons (Haskins, 2000).
- Dynamism is the extent to which learners admire and identify with their teacher in relation to the teachers' displayed charisma and energy (Haskins, 2000).

### **2.10.3 Learner behaviour**

Learner behaviour was used as a baseline element to understand beginner teachers' perceptions of own credibility. The following findings were highlighted in the review of literature:

- Williams & Williams (2011) maintain that motivation is the key ingredient to quality education in enhancing and sustaining effective learning within the classroom.
- Learner motivation focusses on how eager learners are to listen to and grasp discussed content Gregory (2009). Learner interest highlights the degree of concentration experienced by IP learners within the classroom, specifically focussing on how eagerly the learners engage in class discussions (Daskalovska, Gudeva & Ivanovska, 2012). Learner discipline relates to the verbal and non-verbal behaviours displayed throughout the lesson, such as whether learners' raise their hands before talking and if learners are walking around the classroom aimlessly during a lesson (Walters & Frei, 2007).

## 2.11 Conceptual framework advancement of literature review

I chose McCroskey's model for instructional communication as a conceptual model as I aimed to explore beginner teachers' perceptions of own credibility (immediacy, relatability, and trustworthiness) based on learner behaviour (learner motivation, learner interest, and learner discipline). McCroskey's model assisted me in categorising and compartmentalising elements founded in the teacher and learner relationship. I adopted the skeleton of this model to conceptualise my own synopsis of credibility based on learner behaviour in relation to the topic and purpose of this study.

With reference to the concepts foregrounded in the literature review, namely the 'nature of beginner teachers, perceptions, history of source credibility, unpacking teacher credibility, ethos versus own perceptions, learner behaviour, and the teacher-learner relationship (cf., 2.1-2.8); I connected McCroskey's model for instructional development (2004) focusing on the interactive relationship formulated between teachers and learners by touching on concepts such as: instructional environment, learners, teachers, learners' perceptions of the teachers and instructional outcomes (1981, 1999) (cf., 1.8). Underpinning this model was the construction of knowledge based on the classroom culture and climate in which learners interact on a daily basis. Thus, McCroskey's model (2004) elaborated on the importance of the environment in which the learners learn and teachers teach playing a crucial role in the development of quality relationships between teachers and learners (Hannah, 2013; McCroskey et al, 2004). More specifically, how these environments make the learners feel, how safe the environment is to ask questions, and to critically question what has been taught by the teacher (Hannah, 2013; Fraser, 2012).

The model supported this study as the learners and teachers are elements that form emotional connections within an educational context (cf., Chapter 2, 2.6.1). Learners' individualised skill sets, learning abilities and needs, unique learning styles, personal backgrounds and histories create the atmosphere a classroom develops. Learner and

beginner teachers each encompass an independent construct of which they view reality (McCroskey, 1999) deemed perceptions in this study (c.f., 2.3). In a similar spectacle, teachers have an individual set of beliefs, values, and teaching preferences which affects their teaching philosophies (c.f., 2.6). The integration of both components, teachers and learners, allows for the development of social relationships formed between teachers and learners based on some form of relatability, trustworthiness, or immediacy (Teven & McCroskey, 1997) (c.f., 2.5.1-2.5.4).

## **2.12 Chapter summary**

In Chapter 2 I extensively introduced the literature review and conceptual framework that reinforce this study. I reviewed current literature related to the nature of beginner teachers, perceptions, teacher credibility, and the learner behaviour. Firstly, I engaged in the nature of beginner teachers, I defined perceptions, and I discussed the origins of teacher credibility. Secondly, I reviewed literature based on teacher credibility, focussing on four dimensions, namely immediacy, trustworthiness, competence, and dynamism. Thirdly, I engaged in discussion based on ethos versus own perceived credibility with supporting literature. Next, I discussed the concept of learner behaviour in terms of interest, motivation, and discipline. Finally, I elaborated upon the conceptual framework underpinning this research study, specifically McCroskey's model for instructional communication. I explained my rationale behind extending on his model for the purpose of this study. Lastly, I summarise the findings of existing literature. In Chapter 3, I discuss relevant research designs and I present the specific methodology that supports this study.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

In the previous chapter I presented the literature review that situated my study in relation to existing literature studies. I furthermore unveiled the underpinning conceptual framework informing my research study, namely an addition to McCroskey's model for instructional communication. The core focus in this chapter is to provide details on the paradigmatic lens through which the study lies as well as the methodological framework that I have utilised within this study. Moreover, I provide an interpretation of the research design and explain the sampling techniques implemented. Thereafter, I justify my selected data collection methods and I present a detailed description of how my data was scrutinised and analysed. Furthermore, I provide detailed descriptions as to how I went about ensuring ethical liability throughout this study and the precautionary measures I took in order to ensure that the quality criteria were adhered to.

### **3.2 Role of the researcher**

From a qualitative researcher's perspective, I explored how beginner teachers perceive their own credibility based on displayed learner behaviour within the IP classroom. I was interested in my participants' perceptions, prior experiences, and interactions within real-life contexts (Niewenhuis, 2007a). Aside from conducting semi-structured interviews, gathering observational information, and note-taking in my researcher journal, I was obliged to make informed ethical decisions that directed my research. For example, ensuring that no personal information relating to the participants was exposed, I thus ensured that I assigned and consistently referred to the participants by their pseudonyms throughout the decoding of my findings. Furthermore, before engaging in any research, I made sure that the participants were aware of the ethical considerations, research guidelines, and the purpose of my research study by discussing and allowing them to sign

the prepared consent forms (cf., Appendix D, E) with the intent of ensuring that the participants felt comfortable.

As a researcher, I acknowledge my personal preconceived biases that may have influenced my interpretation of gathered findings. For example, that beginner teachers may be less prone to having an established quality relationship with their learners. I also had a preconceived idea that the beginner teachers might struggle with learner behaviour within the classroom based on capturing learners' interest, capitalising on learners' motivation, and ensuring learner discipline. In the process of dealing with such preconceptions and biases, I consistently used my researcher journal and thus created cross references between my decoding of findings and captured field notes. I replayed the participants' audio recordings from the interviews and segmented each answer to each tenet of teacher credibility and learner behaviour. I acquainted myself with the ethical regulations, research conventions, and theories that accompany qualitative research with the intent of striving for honesty and fairness throughout this study. Part of my responsibility as a researcher was to discuss and make participants aware of the ethical issues pertaining to this research study. Accordingly, in order to monitor my preconceived biases, I decided to utilise a journal which was used to capture observations and experiences throughout the research process such that a secondary platform of reflection was created to cross check with the assistance of my supervisor. This method assisted me in minimising possible researcher biases.

This study was infused with my voice, as a researcher, with the intent of capturing the essence of exploring beginner teachers' perceptions of own credibility based on displayed learner behaviour within the IP classroom. I aimed to ensure that the participants' voices were interpreted as raw as possible with little external influences, such as researcher biases. I wanted to capture the true essence of the participants' storied lives, whereby I wanted to explore their holistic experiences and memories in terms of their current emotions, their prior emotions, their state of mind, their body language, how the beginner teachers explain their answers to the interview questions, as well as how engaged the

participants were in recalling such experiences. In order to interpret and understand the participants' views and voices I was required to adapt and fine-tune my researcher skills, including listening intently, refraining from judgemental perceptions, and adapting to new contexts and ideas.

During the semi-structured interviews, I implemented probing strategies that allowed me to gather additional related information as well as to clarify my own interpretations (Edwards & Holland, 2013). Additionally, whilst conducting the interviews with the participants, I avoided giving my personal opinions as this may have influenced their answers. Mitchell (2010) notes that "One of the most forceful interpretations of the relationship between researcher and participant is the idea that the research process as a whole can in some way be empowering for participants" (p. 29). I ensured that the participants were fully aware of the purpose and topic of this study by thoroughly explaining the contents of the informed consent forms. In so doing, I ensured that I offered no misleading information and thus overall provided the participants with a reflective platform to base their practice on as a form of professional development.

### **3.3 Epistemological framework**

In the previous section, I explained the role I undertook as a researcher within this study. I now foreground my epistemological framework that underpins this study. I discuss how the interpretive paradigm is situated within this study and how this paradigm guides the progression throughout my research study. Finally, I briefly situate my own beliefs and values that I encompassed throughout the compilation of this study (axiology).

Epistemology is related to the nature and systematic assimilation of knowing (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). The epistemological assumptions undertaken in qualitative research are outlined by the justification of how knowledge is developed and synthesised (Scotland, 2012). The ontological framework is guided by how researchers perceive their

own reality in the face of conducting their research. The sound integration of epistemology and ontology paints a descriptive guideline of how the research came about based on the nature of knowing and how what is known, is perceived as reality by the researcher.

The epistemological framework is the lens through which readers are able to relate to and understand the content presented within a study (Maree, 2012). I briefly discuss the paradigm underlying my study and I furthermore discuss the various aspects involved within the chosen paradigm. Within this study, I employ the interpretivist paradigm. The interpretivist paradigm entails a humanistic approach whereby observing and understanding are critical components to implementing this paradigm effectively (Taylor & Medina, 2011). This paradigm is appropriate to my study as it highlights and captures the essence of beginner teachers' perceptions of their own credibility. By understanding beginner teachers' experiences and perceptions, a clearer understanding of phenomena is captured. Interpretivism aims at pursuing the empathetic value of participants' lived experiences. Teacher credibility is a highly sensitive topic that requires a degree of self-disclosure, in this regard, the interpretivist paradigm is most suitable for the purpose of exploring beginner teachers' perceptions of own credibility.

The interpretivist paradigm exhibits a relativist ontology whereby multiple realities are believed to exist (Tuli, 2011; du Plessis, 2016). A relativist ontology relates to experiencing events and experiences in a subjective manner in which experiences are viewed independently in comparison to other peoples' experiences (Tuli, 2011). Capturing the purpose of this study, the participants are encouraged to retell and share their personal experiences within their own practices with the intent of collecting information based on the beginner teachers' personal perspectives. Such perspectives include ill-mannered learners within the IP classroom, disruptive learner behaviour during a lesson, and what credibility means to the participants based on teacher immediacy. This paradigm considers the contextual aspects of participants in which the context plays a critical role within the participants' formulated perspectives (Sefotho, 2015). Moreover, reality and truth are viewed as being relative, whereby truth is a dynamic factor regulated

by personal experiences (Tuli, 2011; Sefotho, 2015). With the aid of relevant examples, I link my study to the abovementioned content of the interpretivist paradigm. Beginner teachers are encouraged to share and retell their personal lived experiences captured through the conduction of the semi-structured interviews. Thus, the core of these questions is based on the exploration and understanding of the raw emotions, perceptions, and reactions of the beginner teachers that will assist beginner teachers to condition a reflective platform. The value of this study is situated in the crux of reliving beginner teachers' experiences based on how they felt toward the awareness and development of their own teacher credibility based on their perceptions of displayed learner behaviour within their IP classrooms.

The interpretivist paradigm follows a qualitative approach whereby the direction of reasoning is guided by inductive reasoning (Soiferman, 2010). Within inductive reasoning, subjectivity and meaning-making is of absolute importance (Sefotho, 2015). Based on the subjective notion of inductive reasoning, I attempted to enhance my decoding of findings by utilising an audio recorder to cross check my questions and the participants' answers. Additionally, I used a researcher journal to capture the process of gathering my findings such that I have the opportunity to cross reference my notes with the assistance of my supervisor. In relation to this study, beginner teachers are encouraged to share their experiences and perspectives based on their learners' displayed behaviour in order to gather information relating to their own credibility within the classroom context. Thus, specific experiences are used as foundational tools in order to probe upon a more generalised idea of reasoning (Sefotho, 2015; Soiferman, 2010). As the data collection progresses, individualised experiences and stories of beginner teachers underpin the crux of the generalised idea of beginner teachers' perceptions of own credibility based on displayed learner behaviour. Therefore, this study gravitates around the subjective experiences of various beginner teachers and coincides to form a holistic proposition of how these findings can be threaded together to formulate a universal perspective of exploration and understanding.

Finally, in interpretivist research, axiology (Ponterotto, 2005) refers to the importance of positioning the role of the researchers' values and beliefs within the transmission of the study. Accordingly, I employed reflexivity throughout my study in order to reflect upon and locate my frame of reference in relation to my field of study. It is thus important to synthesise and remain cognisant of the effects of the assumptions and beliefs brought into the dimension of research. I ensured that my thoughts, perspectives, beliefs, and assumptions were placed in parenthesis with reference to this study by utilising a researcher journal (cf., Appendix B) and field notes (cf., Appendix C).

### **3.4 Methodological framework**

In the following section, I describe and discuss the approach to decoding my findings that I utilised throughout this research study. Furthermore, I discuss the various aspects involved within the approach that guide this study in terms of how teachers perceive their credibility based on displayed learner behaviour.

Qualitative research entails detailed explanations based on analysis and observations instead of numerical data analysis (Maree, 2012). Thus, qualitative research thrives upon social interaction and subjectivism (Sefotho, 2015). This study is a qualitative research study as the purpose of this study is to explore the perceptions held by beginner teachers of their own credibility based on displayed learner behaviour within the IP classroom. The concept of displayed learner behaviour will be referred to as an umbrella term which compartmentalises a three-pronged idea of behaviour. This three-pronged approach of learner behaviour includes: learner interest, learner motivation, and learner discipline.

Subsequently, qualitative research relies on probabilistic causation whereby experiences and events occur by chance and are therefore considered unpredictable (Andrade, 2009). In relation to this study, beginner teachers differ from one another based on personal paradigms, structured perceptions, and varying background contexts and cultures. Qualitative research makes use of a subjective reality and multiple participant meanings,

in which reality is interpreted as relative with regards to the different contexts, cultures and perspectives of the participants (du Plessis, 2016).

### **3.5 Research design**

Within this study, I use the case study research design as it is crucial to ensure that I have been exposed to the underlying realities faced by beginner teachers based upon their credibility within their practices. I thus highlight advantages and limitations of utilising case study research design within this study. The purpose of implementing the case study research design is to assist me in understanding the perceptions of teacher credibility based on displayed learner behaviour within classrooms. I decided to employ the case study research design as I intended to explore the selected participants' perceptions within their individualised settings. Additionally, I chose to employ the case study design as I was in search of a design that would assist me in unravelling the beginner teachers' prior paradigms in relation to who they have become in this current moment within their professions.

Case study research design includes in-depth critical inquiry based upon participants' life experiences in terms of the interrelationship between phenomenon and contextual settings (Zainal, 2007). Furthermore, this research design encourages aspects such as descriptions, analyses, and explorations in the collection of data (Yin, 2002). Utilising case study research design within this study allowed for me to critically analyse, explore and describe teachers' credibility in relation to displayed learner behaviour (Unluer, 2012). Moreover, the collaboration between the participants and researchers enhanced my understanding of the lives lead by the participants within their direct environments (Cohen et al., 2007). By actively interacting with participants within their natural environments, I was encouraged to observe participants' behaviours. Thus, utilising the case study research design allowed for me to formulate a holistic understanding of how beginner teachers perceive their credibility based on learner behaviour within South African classrooms.

On the contrary, an evident concern when implementing case study research design arises whereby utilising a variety of case studies may divert the focus of the study and thus mislay the purpose of the study (Unluer, 2012). In order to ensure that the focus of this study was relayed throughout the conduction of the interviews, I structured my semi-structured interview questions in such a manner that it encouraged the participants to tap into their lived stories as well as to bring these stories to life through the answering of the related questions. By focusing my questions around this study's topic and research questions, I was enabled to direct the participants' thought processes in a direction that struck a balance between sharing their emotional experiences and answering the posed question in a non-threatening manner.

I selected a case study research design which enables qualitative researchers to explore a system or phenomenon by employing defined and in-depth data collection methods within a specific contextual setting (Zainal, 2007). In this study, I chose a case study research design as it allowed for me to explore the multiple facets of realities experienced by the beginner teachers with the account of extrinsic influences such as contexts, environments, cultures, and beginner teachers' perceptions. In a similar stance, Zainal (2007) attests that "Case studies, in their true essence, explore and investigate contemporary real-life phenomenon through detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions, and their relationships" (p. 2). In my study, I focussed on understanding beginner teachers' perceptions of their own credibility in which the tenets of learner interest, learner motivation, and learner discipline provided the framework in which these mentioned perceptions were interpreted and reflected upon. Thus, the relationships that Zainal (2007) mentions are the crux of this study as the interactions between beginner teachers and their perceptions of learner behaviour compels beginner teachers to re-evaluate their views of their credibility as IP teachers.

By utilising various methods of data collection, I was enabled to explore the complexity of each beginner teachers' individual story based on dynamics such as body language,

facial expressions, and tones of voices. Similarly, Becker (1970) integrates his views on flexibility in case studies: “It prepares the investigator to deal with unexpected findings and, indeed, requires him to reorient his study in the light of such developments. It requires him to consider, however crudely, the multiple interrelations of the particular phenomena he observes” (p. 76). As a qualitative researcher employing a case study method, I implemented this aspect of flexibility that Becker (1970) mentions. I was required to explore beginner teachers’ perceptions in a neutral manner but also incorporate a method of holistically and objectively perceiving the participants’ experiences and responses based on body language observations as well as verbal responses to posed questions. My study aimed to understand beginner teachers’ perceptions of their own credibility and thus my focus was not directed at generalising my findings to a population.

In summary, I employed the case study research design as I aimed to explore the perceptions held by beginner teachers on their teacher credibility in their professional practices. By utilising case study research design, I sought to intricately comprehend each participants’ experiences in its purest form. I intended to explore and understand how beginner teachers perceive their own credibility based on learner behaviour in the IP classroom. The selection of this research design assisted me in unravelling the truth behind the meaning-making process of each participant.

### **3.6 Research strategy**

With the aim of outlining the process of how research was conducted within this qualitative study, I present the research strategy that underpinned the development of this study.

### **3.6.1 Participant profiles**

I selected eight beginner teachers from seven different primary schools in Pretoria. A beginner teacher, in this study, is referred to as a teacher who has one to five years of teaching experience (cf., Chapter 2, 2.2). Age and gender were not considered within the selection process of participants as I wanted the study to remain unbiased with regard to these factors. I used a hat metaphor to visually highlight personality differences of the participants (cf., Chapter 4, 4.2). I used a cap to describe Aria as she displayed a relaxed personality type. She likes to engage with her learners in an informal and personal manner. I used a police hat to depict Charlotte's character as she describes herself as strict and fair. For Retabile's profile, I used a graduate cap as she often highlighted her skills and professional development. I chose a sun hat for Carmen as she explained that she is flexible and supportive. Lauren's personality matched a laid-back sun hat as she shared that she uses her own learning preferences when communicating with her learners. I selected a cow boy hat for Kaleb as he describes himself as very chilled and not bothered by small incidents in his class. A construction hat was chosen for Lupita, as she expressed a nervous character and very aware of her surroundings. For Carla, I chose a spring hat because she was soft-spoken and viewed herself as approachable in comparison to her colleagues.

### **3.6.2 Research sites**

Contextual differences are evident and need to be considered when analysing the findings whereby each beginner teacher endured a different experience of developing their teacher credibility throughout their teaching practices. Different schools in various cultural settings encompass different school management teams who have subjective paradigms and pedagogies. Within my research study, I selected seven very different schools in Pretoria to explore the differences of beginner teachers' perceptions across cultural and contextual borders. These seven schools varied in location, culture, climate, population groups, and academic status. The first school I had selected intensely focussed on the holistic development of the learners, in which learning and teaching was

primarily adapted to the individual needs of the learners. The second school that I selected stressed the importance of learner achievement and academic performance. The third school included within my study focussed much of their attention on the religious upbringing of their learners, in which the cultural setting of the school was very prominent with regard to how the school functions. The fourth school included within this research study concentrates a large portion of their culture to the development and integration of sporting events. The fifth selected school integrated academic excellence into the systematic development of their learners. The sixth school structures their academic outlook on enhancing and nurturing the relationship formed between the teachers, parents, learners, and headmaster. Finally, the seventh school that I visited relied on the uniqueness of the interaction and integration of different cultures, traditions, and religions in the development of their learners. These evident variances require beginner teachers to suitably adapt to various contexts, cultures, and learner behavioural traits in order to effectively develop and maintain credibility within their classrooms.

### **3.6.3 Purposive sampling**

Within this section I discuss the purposive sampling technique used within this study. I briefly highlight the advantages and disadvantages of utilising purposive sampling. Sampling methods refer to the sample size characteristics as well as how researchers go about collecting data and findings based upon their study's focus (Maree, 2016).

Purposive sampling entails the selection of participants who adhere to a specific purposeful criterion, such as only focussing on beginner teachers or only selecting participants who are a part of the private schooling sector (Maree, 2016). By utilising purposive sampling, I selected samples with a specific purpose in mind, namely eight IP beginner teachers within various private schools in and around Pretoria. I selected eight beginner teachers as my findings became saturated after the eighth interview. Moreover, I selected schools in the private sector as one of the major differences between private and government schools is the learner-teacher ratio. This factor was important to my

study as the personalised relationships formed between beginner teachers and their learners required time and interaction. Also, it just so happened that the selected participants were beginner teachers in private sector schools, which made the collection of data easier to gather in terms of convenience and availability of the participants. The selected beginner teachers had to have between one to five years of teaching experience. Gender and age were not specified criteria as I was more focussed on the experiences of the beginner teachers. These selected beginner teachers had not interacted with me on a personal level at any time before the compilation of this study.

#### **3.6.4 Data collection methods**

Data collection methods entail researchers actively employing specific chosen approaches that are suitable for effectively gathering important information from samples pertaining to the purpose of the study (Maree, 2016). Maree and Van der Westhuizen (2009) attest to the premise of the validation of findings evident in research by stating that the use of crystallisation ensures that gathered findings are scrutinised with the intent of employing various data collection methods. I utilise semi-structured interviews. I conceptualise and describe this data collection method in relation to the context of this study. Moreover, I highlight some of the advantages and limitations of employing semi-structured interviews.

I utilised semi-structured interviews that allowed for me to receive a wide range of data based upon various participants' perspectives and experiences. Semi-structured interviews entail critical inquiry directed at probing participants by utilising a predetermined set of questions relating to the topic of study (Greeff, 2011; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). I use 25 open-ended questions which are monitored by probing techniques in order to establish clarification of answers (Maree, 2016; Scott & Usher, 2011). Sharing a similar perspective with Yin (2002), interview questions possess the ability to capture experiences in an empathetic manner whereby participants are able to share lived stories with researchers. I selected semi-structured interviews as a method of

data collection for this study as this method allowed for me to accurately decode the lives lead by the beginner teachers in terms of understanding the perceptions of IP beginner teachers' credibility based on displayed learner behaviour.

The semi-structured interviews consisted of a sequence of beginner teacher credibility questions that were designed with the intent of exploring beginner teachers' perceptions of their own credibility (Appendix A). Furthermore, if I encountered any unclear or ambiguous answers from the participants I was able to utilise various probing techniques that would enhance my understanding of participants' responses (Appendix A). These interviews were conducted at a time that was convenient and suitable for the beginner teachers. Each interview was allocated to a 60-minute time slot. However, utilising semi-structured interviews made it easy to lose focus of the interview (Edwards & Holland, 2013). To overcome this challenge, I utilised my prepared probing questions (cf., Appendix A) which directed the flow of questioning within the semi-structured interviews. Moreover, in order to find a balance between maintaining the focus on the posed questions and sustaining a comfortable environment for the participants, I utilised clarifying questions (Appendix A) which propelled me to direct the answering process as well as to gain additional insight to the participants' holistic experiences.

The implementation of case study research design enabled me to highlight the beginner teachers' perspectives pertaining to their own teacher credibility by drawing upon the participants lived stories and experiences. I conducted the interviews within the second term of the academic year at each of the participant's schools. The 25 questions that I prepared within my semi-structured interview schedule orbited around the concept of IP beginner teachers' teacher credibility, specifically zoning into beginner teacher immediacy, beginner teacher relatability, and beginner teacher trustworthiness. These questions allowed for me to direct the interview toward how beginner teacher feel about their own teacher credibility in terms of learner interest, learner motivation, and learner discipline. The aforementioned concepts were intertwined in the purpose of exploring how beginner teachers perceive their credibility based on daily events that occur within their

classrooms embedded in personal experiences and growth points within their individual journeys.

### **3.6.5 Data process**

The data process (commonly referred to as the audit trail) assisted me in organising and highlighting key components pertaining to this study. I selected eight beginner teachers (cf., Chapter 3, 3.6.1) from seven different private schools around Pretoria. All eight participants were very different in terms of race, backgrounds, and cultural settings of their schools. I used these diverse backgrounds of the participants to support each of their interviews. By using audio tape recordings, field notes, and a researcher journal, I was enabled to cross-check my data capturing processes in a more rigorous manner before finally running it by my supervisors. Before transcribing any data, I listened to the details of the participants' answers in relation to my captured field notes and my journey undertaken within my researcher journal. With these three pillars as a form of direction, I was able to reflect critically on the manner in which I decoded, categorised, and grouped the data.

To describe the term learner behaviour, I decided to use a three-pronged approach. This three-pronged approach to perceiving learner behaviour includes *learner motivation*, how eager learners are to want to learn as a form of personal growth; *learner interest*, the manner in which learners engage within the classroom environment such as listening intently or fiddling with stationery; and *learner discipline*, thus (but by no means limited to) the degree of self-control in terms of adhering to classroom rules such as sitting down at their desks instead of walking around the classroom during the lesson. Qualitative research aims at understanding the perspectives and paradigms of various participants within various contexts in order to better grasp different outlooks (Sefotho, 2015; Tuli, 2011). It is important to note that the study is not focussed on learner behaviour, rather I am interested in exploring the participants' perceptions of own credibility in relation to observed learner behaviour.

In the measure of sustaining credibility within my research, I ensured that the participants felt comfortable in their environments, which is why I ensured that the interviews were located at a place that the participants felt secure in (their schools). Moreover, by employing semi-structured interview questions, I allowed for the participants to answer the questions in a comfortable and open manner. Thus, the participants were placed in control of the degree to which they felt comfortable in answering the questions. In so saying, each beginner teacher answered each of the semi-structured interview questions very differently in relation to their personal outlooks and experiences as credible teachers. One beginner teacher may value credibility in a higher regard than another based on their personal teaching paradigm and philosophy. This slight difference, in turn, encompassed the potential to change the entire direction of the interviews based on beginner teachers' perceptions. Thus, each interview occurred within its own dimensions based on the beginner teacher. The essence of qualitative research relies on subjectivity and individuality which underpins and directs the unpredictable nature of probabilistic causation.

### **3.6.6 Data analysis and interpretation**

Within this qualitative research study, I use inductive thematic data analysis. I describe the various steps included in inductive thematic analysis and the accompanying advantages and limitations. I describe the data documentation. Then I discuss the hat metaphor which I used to analyse the data.

Inductive thematic data analysis entails identifying, scrutinising and evaluating various apparent themes within the data (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2011; Braun & Clarke, 2006). One of the approaches employed in qualitative research utilises the induction approach as a means of reasoning (Soiferman, 2010). This means that phenomena being studied such as the perceptions of beginner teachers' credibility within their own classrooms based on displayed learner behaviour will move from specific aspects to a

more generalised theory. This analysis method enhances the authentic voices of the participants in terms of their prior life experiences of perceived learner behaviours (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Demonstrating rigor using thematic analysis: A hybrid approach of inductive and deductive coding and theme development. *International journal of qualitative methods*, 5(1), pp.80-92.). The advantages of implementing thematic data analysis within this study relates to guiding me in the process of decoding the data and thus optimally allowing for me to grasp the underlying themes evident within the collected data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Joffe & Yardley, 2004). Subsequently, the disadvantages of utilising thematic data analysis within this study includes dealing with substantially large amounts of information which made it a challenging task of separating the information and minimising errors as a result of researcher biases (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

I used field notes which is a primary source of data that is unpublished (Maree, 2016). Thus, by utilising field notes I was encouraged to keep track of my observations and gathered information from the participants and thus I created a platform upon which the research process and decisions were captured and updated regularly. However, field notes have a limitation of being highly prone to researcher biases which results in fabricated data being recorded (Ortlipp, 2008). Hence, with regard to the purpose of this study specifically understanding the perceptions of beginner teachers' credibility on displayed learner behaviour within classrooms; I utilised my field notes guided by my researcher journal as a method of critically observing and decoding various gathered information.

Axiology refers to the importance of researchers' experiences in relation to the development of the study (Tomar, 2014). I decided to consistently capture the holistic dimensions of each participant with the intent of breathing life into the stories that were being shared within the interviews. With the aim of structuring my journal and my field notes, I prepared a set of questions (cf., Appendix B, C) that I used to document my perspectives and experiences in order to develop the participants' stories. The recorded

audio clips from each interview were transcribed by an external transcriber. From the transcriptions, I categorised prominent themes evident within the captured data in order to develop a framework for analysing and understanding the data within this study. To save me time on transcribing the audio clips, I used an external transcriber. For accuracy purposes, I listened to the recordings and read the transcriptions to ensure that I understood the feedback clearly. I thoroughly read the data and colour coded the three identified themes in order to preserve what I had gathered under the various themes (Carvalho-Malekane, 2015). The three themes included perceptions of beginner teachers, learner behaviour, and teacher credibility development.

I decided to use a hat metaphor to introduce and visually construct the eight participants. I used this hat metaphor as I believe that the differences in hat styles describe each of the participants' personalities. The common perceptions of various hat styles support the participants' characters highlighted in each of their interviews.

### **3.7 Quality criteria**

Throughout implementing this qualitative study, I strictly adhered to the outlined quality criteria based upon the findings evident within this study in order to be considered authentic and accurate. I describe six pillars that I regard crucial in ensuring that the stipulated quality criteria are adhered to. The six pillars that guide the quality endurance of this study include trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability and authenticity. Finally, I briefly highlight the centrality the concept of reflexivity in relation to my study in which I emphasise the roles I fulfilled throughout the research process.

#### **3.7.1 Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness is interconnected with the reliability of the study (Fraser & Kazeni, 2015). Hence, according to Guba's Four Criteria for Trustworthiness, it is critical to ensure that credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability are consistently implemented throughout the research study (Fraser & Kazeni, 2015; Guba, 1981). Subsequently, I implemented trustworthiness within my study by utilising a researcher journal in which I regularly reflected upon my choices, changes and progress throughout conducting the research. This data collection provided me with a guideline of ensuring that the data analysis methods are in line with the purpose of this research study which is to explore the perceptions held by beginner teachers based on displayed learner behaviour in relation to their developed credibility within the IP classroom. Also, this pillar guided me in capturing my gathered information from the semi-structured interviews as accurately as possible by minimising possible researcher biases through meticulously working through the field notes. No school names, participant names, or identification details are exposed within this study. Moreover, I arranged regular contact sessions with my supervisor in order for my supervisor to cross-check the information such that personal information remains confidential.

### **3.7.2 Credibility**

Credibility is established through the reliability of the findings produced within the study whereby consistency of the findings is measured (Kumar, 2011). Thus, credibility is dependent on whether the gathered findings produce a 'true' depiction of the truth (Carvalho-Malekane, 2015). I did not have any prior relationships with the participants. Thus, to maintain fair and accurate findings, I used field notes and a researcher journal to guide my decoding process. Moreover, I continuously engaged in active reflective sessions with my supervisor in order to establish the authentic voices of the participants lived experiences and thus limited any possible researcher biases. I believe that the conclusions drawn from the collected data provides an accurate depiction based on the semi-structured interviews, field notes, and researcher journal which provides a platform that supports the perceptions held by the beginner teachers (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011; Toma, 2006).

Both of my supervisors engaged with the research process through peer review in which academic debates and discussions were held. These sessions assisted me in highlighting my personal biases. I did not use member checking as the interview questions were not extremely guided. Participants were told to state their opinions and views as blatantly as possible in order to capture the rawness of their experiences. Furthermore, participants were not stopped or interrupted throughout the interviews, whereby their storied experiences were merely guided not structured by the interview questions.

### **3.7.3 Transferability**

Transferability aims to ensure that the gathered findings are not generalisable to the broader population (Morrow, 2005). In place of generalising findings, transferability probes upon relating and connecting ideas and themes to readers' personal experiences (Maree, 2016). I ensured that the participants within this study were fully aware of the research purpose by providing them with a detailed abstract of what this study entails (cf., Appendix D). The findings are aimed at transferring information to other settings.

The participants' experiences within their classrooms breathed life into the contexts and cultures included in the study. I used field notes and a journal to capture the essence of background information (cf., Chapter 3, 3.6.2.2). By providing detailed descriptions of phenomena relevant to this study, researchers and readers are able to transfer these findings to other settings (Morrow, 2005). It lies in the readers' discretion to use the findings evident within this study to transfer to similar settings (Morrow, 2005).

### **3.7.4 Dependability**

Within qualitative research studies, dependability and reliability are closely related in terms of testing whether or not gathered findings can be placed under retesting conditions with the aim of reproducing similar findings (Toma, 2006). Thus, it is crucial to be aware that change in all contexts is inevitable under all conditions and thus the findings of this qualitative research study cannot necessarily be perfectly replicated, although similarities in terms of similar views and opinions can be identified (Longley-Cook, 2004). In order to establish a record of all decisions, changes and updated thoughts throughout the research process, I utilised a researcher journal during the semi-structured interviews and during the decoding procedure in order to track my thought process and connect gathered information accurately (Maree, 2016).

I used field notes and semi-structured interview questions to comprehensively document the implementation methods and strategies that were employed throughout the research process. The audio-taping of the participants, the transcriptions (cf., Chapter 3, 3.6.3), and the field notes contributed to the depth of this study. Furthermore, I prepared a semi-structured interview consisting of 25 questions. I ordered the questions in such a manner that key components underpinning this study were highlighted. Thus, participants were guided by the questions whilst retelling their storied experiences.

### **3.7.5 Confirmability**

Confirmability entails data within a study being confirmed by an individual besides the researcher (Toma, 2006). Therefore, confirmable findings are justified views of participants instead of researchers' bias constructions of the findings (Toma, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 2005). I engaged in regular reflective sessions with my supervisor in order to ensure that my reflective journal and decoding methods were free from any possible researcher biases whilst conducting the semi-structured interviews with each of the participants.

I employed reflexivity by consistently reflecting upon my experiences as a researcher within my researcher journal. I utilised this journal to capture my experiences, opinions, and personal assumptions. In order to awaken the realities and experiences faced by the participants, I decided to holistically conceptualise their stories by utilising field notes, audio-recordings, and transcriptions.

### **3.7.6 Authenticity**

Fair, true, genuine, and sincere research studies are crucial as findings are required to be free from biases in order to establish authenticity (Morrow, 2005). I ensured that my understanding refrained from biases as I encouraged the participants throughout the semi-structured interviews as well as asked further questions that enhanced clarification. Furthermore, I ensured that my supervisor was actively involved within the decoding process in order to obtain authentic understanding of the participants' true voices based upon their lived experiences relating to their perceptions of their credibility development. I decided to use a researcher journal and an audit trail to assist me in accurately understanding the participants' perceptions.

### **3.7.7 Reflexivity**

Reflexivity relates to the role of the researcher throughout the research process, whereby within this qualitative research study I explore the perspectives held by the participants (Lambert, Jomeen & McSherry, 2010). I engaged in constant reflective sessions with my supervisor in order to refrain from any possible researcher biases in collecting, analysing and decoding of data. The reflective sessions assisted me to decode the data according to my own experiences throughout my teaching practice and to further obtain additional perspectives from my supervisor throughout the research process (cf., Chapter 3, 3.2).

Accordingly, I used a researcher journal (cf., Appendix B) in which I used to capture and reflect upon my own values and personal biases that may have influenced the collection of my findings. Furthermore, in the case of vulnerable populations I ensured that adequate measures were taken in which my supervisor and lecturers were available for participants to communicate with in the case of any misunderstandings or if further clarification was required. I was in contact with the participants of this study and thus I engaged in several contact sessions with my supervisor in order to refrain from any possible researcher biases and to thus obtain a second opinion that was neutral.

### **3.8 Ethical considerations**

Ethical considerations involve a predetermined set of guidelines reinforced by the researcher prior to engaging within the research process with the aim of protecting the participants (Maree, 2012). I ensured that data was collected according to the stipulated ethical conditions. Furthermore, I engage in discussion relating to the various ethical concepts that will be employed throughout this research study. The aforementioned concepts include informed consent of the participants, privacy, confidentiality/anonymity of the partaking participants, and finally the protection of the participants from any possible harm. Moreover, possible ethical implications are highlighted and discussed with regards to the data collection methods utilised within the context of this study.

#### **3.8.1 Informed voluntary consent**

I ensured that the research purpose and aims were clearly stated and explained to the participants prior to their engagement within the research process. Prior to arranging interview times, I prepared the consent forms for the beginner teachers. This form of consent ensured that the headmasters and beginner teachers were fully aware of the research purpose as well as their roles within the research and thus clearly stated that all participants are permitted to withdraw from the research process at any stage of the research process without any consequences (Corti, Day & Backhouse, 2000). The

informed voluntary consent form ensured that the participants were made aware of their roles and responsibilities throughout the research process and thus understood that their participation is completely voluntary and will be utilised for research purposes only (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delpont, 2005). Furthermore, the participants were informed about the potential benefits of engaging within this research study as well as possible risk factors, if any. I did not provide any materialistic benefits for participation. However, I did explain the benefit of becoming more aware of their own credibility development through continuous reflection and observation of their learners' behaviours (cf., Chapter 3, 3.8.4). I obtained written and verbal consent from the participants. The prepared informed consent form (cf., Appendix D, E) highlights and clarifies key aspects pertaining to this research study, including the purpose, roles of the participants, interview procedures, time allocations, and possible risks and benefits. Voluntary participation is stressed within the consent form ensuring that the participants are well aware that withdrawal from the research process is permitted without any consequences (Kvale, 2007; De Vos et al., 2005).

### **3.8.2 Privacy, confidentiality and anonymity**

Privacy and confidentiality aspects of ethical considerations within research entail the protection of the participants' identities throughout the research process (Corti *et al.*, 2000). Thus, within this study I ensured privacy and confidentiality by utilising pseudonyms in place of the participants' actual names. Also, with all of the conducted interviews and researcher reflective journals, I edited out any confidential personal information provided by the participants.

Since confidentiality is connected to the safeguarding of participants' personal information in relation to the data, I did not document any information pertaining to participants' names, surnames, and school locations. Participants' names and locations were recorded in my field notes and journal and shared with my supervisor, but this personal information was removed during the transcription process onto my laptop. The confidential coding

was stored in a secure file saved on my laptop with restricted access and password protected (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest & Namey, 2005). Furthermore, I protected the participants' personal data by storing the audio material, transcriptions, and additional captured data in a highly-secured office at the University of Pretoria for 15 years.

### **3.8.3 Protection of the participants from harm**

The protection of the participants from any possible harm stemming from the research process was to be clearly stipulated prior to engaging in the research process. Participants needed to be ensured that they will be protected from any of the possible risks, in terms of physical risk factors or psychological risk factors (Orb, Eisenhauer & Wynaden, 2000). Within this research study, I strongly implemented principles such as honesty, empathy and vulnerability in terms of attempting to understand the participants' viewpoints from their feedback and semi-structured interviews. Thus, I regularly highlighted the benefits of engaging within this study and thus ensured the safety in all regards to the participants. I also made the study's purpose very clear, stating that the aim of this research study is to understand and not to elicit change of any kind. Moreover, institutional implemented rules and regulations were adhered to throughout the research process in terms of limiting possible risk factors experienced by participants.

### **3.8.4 Possible benefits**

There were no material benefits or incentives offered for participation. However, a platform of credibility development was exposed through participation as participants were made aware of feedback held in observing learner behaviour. Words of appreciation were shared after each interview, whereby I thanked the participants for their time and involvement.

### **3.9 Chapter summary**

Qualitative research studies orbit the notion of seeking theoretically based and valid answers to posed questions. Questions included in-depth investigation of contextual settings, lived experiences, and retelling of stories (Berg, 2011). Within this chapter, I highlighted my role as the researcher. I presented the epistemological framework in which I explained the lens through which this study was conducted. Subsequently, I shed light on the methodological framework propelling this study based on how aspects of qualitative research entangle in the development and progression of this study. Then, I justified the selected research design, namely the case study research design as well as discussed purposive sampling. Next, I explained the data collection methods and the process in which the data were scrutinised and analysed. I elaborated on the quality measures which I utilised as a guideline to augment the quality of the study. Lastly, I described how I ensured ethical practice throughout the study. In the following chapter, I present the findings of this study.

## CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I introduce the participants' profiles in which I provide biographical details about each participant. I decided to present the data through a hat metaphor. This metaphor assisted me in depicting each of the participants' voices and personalities throughout the interviews. I selected one hat that best described each of the participant's personalities based on my field notes. Table 4.1 (below) represents the outline of the themes and subthemes. Thus, I introduce Theme 1: Perceived perceptions of learner behaviour and the relating subthemes: teaching styles and methods and dealing with learner discipline. Theme 2: Participants' perceptions of learner behaviour is discussed next, followed by the accompanying subthemes: learner interest; learner motivation; and learner discipline. Thereafter, I discuss Theme 3: Participants' emotional responses to learner behaviour. I use the following subthemes to guide Theme 3: Managing feelings; feelings of being trusted; and feelings of success. Moreover, the order of the presented data followed the order in which each of the interviews took place. Within the presentation of my findings, I used the participants' words verbatim to support my explanations and perceptions portrayed in this chapter. I use Chapter 4 to foreground the similarities and differences between the seven participants in terms of their behavioural and perceptual elements.

**Table 4.1:** Table capturing the various interrelating themes and subthemes

Themes	Subthemes
4.3 Perceived perceptions of learner behaviour	4.3.1 Teaching styles and methods
	4.3.2 Dealing with learner discipline
4.4 Participants' perceptions of learner behaviour	4.4.1 Learner interest
	4.4.2 Learner motivation
	4.4.3 Learner discipline
4.5 Participants' emotional responses to learner behaviour	4.5.1 Managing feelings
	4.5.2 Feelings of being trusted
	4.5.3 Feelings of success

## 4.2 Biographical details

I introduce each of the seven participants in within this study by providing some background information on the participants. I interviewed eight participants in total. However, this study will only include seven of the eight participants' feedback as I decided to reduce the data to only seven participants and I use a hat metaphor in order to visually assist the reader to formulate a connection of personality to each of the participants based on the shape and denotation of each hat. I chose a hat metaphor as I felt that hats would best describe my participants as I easily related to hats. I considered using animals and flowers, however hats seemed to be more descriptive in terms of highlighting traits evident in my participants. The hats were connected to reserved personalities, relaxed beginner teachers, and bold participants. Each hat represents a typical function which matches a personality trait of each participant. I present the participants in the same order that I interviewed them.

### 4.2.1 Aria



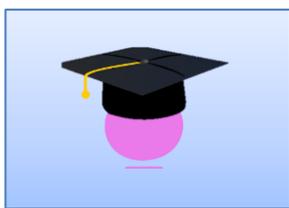
Aria completed her Bachelor of Education degree in 2015 and is in her second year of teaching English and Social Science to Grade 4 and 5 learners. She describes herself as a punctual and organised teacher. Aria chose to become a teacher as she explained that she enjoys helping children to learn to the best of their abilities. Moreover, Aria expressed a love for the teaching profession as she shared that: *“The fact that I have a passion for teaching, because I want to help the children, because I enjoy helping the learners, I am going to want to do it every day, that’s why I enjoy waking up in the morning and coming to school and teaching them”*. Based on my field notes, my perception of Aria is that she is an out-going person who really has a passion for working with people. She claims to value her job as a teacher as she aims to utilise her expertise to assist her learners in feeling comfortable in their academic environment. Aria shared that she believes that learners require support in which teachers are to aspire to act as role models for their learners with the intent of developing learners to become responsible citizens of society. She stressed that it is important for learners to be able to distinguish between right and wrong and to understand that their actions have consequences. She stated that: *“You have to speak to the child as if, as if you are trying to teach them to be responsible. So you need to teach them to be responsible human beings because they are obviously going to need to be responsible when they are older”*. Aria also stated that: *“Well I, I think that they, the learners are very comfortable with me because I am, I am a very open person, I am not, I am not very closed off and I am not like I don’t, I am very relaxed and open with my learners”*. I selected the informal, casual cap to describe Aria’s relaxed personality.

### 4.2.2 Charlotte



Charlotte obtained her Bachelor of Education degree in 2015 and is in her second year of teaching Grade 6 and 7 Mathematics. Charlotte describes herself as a well-rounded teacher who is fun, yet structured and strict in the classroom. She aspired to be a teacher to help minimise gaps of knowledge experienced in teaching and learning Mathematics. Furthermore, Charlotte expressed her passion for teaching Mathematics: *“I needed to be taught ways in learning how the steps are formed and how I was brought up but they always skipped the skips so I never knew how to grasp the concept of Mathematics so in order to actually help future generations I felt that maybe I should become a teacher so that I can actually show them the proper steps so that they don’t see Maths as a scary subject”*. With reference to my field notes, my perception of Charlotte is that she is a go-getter and exhibits a direct and straight-forward personality. She identifies herself as being upfront and just in her teacher identity. She shared: *“So I am more the teacher who is straightforward with them and say what the hell is your problem or you guys are really ungrateful, you don’t even bother to say thank you for free calculators I arrange for you type of thing, and they know I won’t take nonsense but I am also fair”*. Therefore, I selected a stern police officer hat to describe Charlotte’s structured and ordered teaching style.

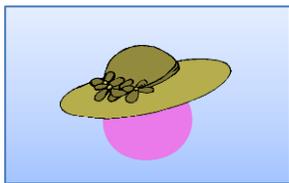
### 4.2.3 Retabile



Retabile is currently completing her Bachelor of Education Master’s degree and is in her first year of teaching English to Grade 4 learners. She describes herself as an enthusiastic and passionate teacher who is skilled in her profession. She explained that she chose to become a teacher as she feels fulfilled. She shared that: *“You know I, you know, I just, I get a lot of like fulfilment from giving others’ knowledge. So, basically like, I feel like, if I am changing a life, ja, that’s good for me. You know, imparting knowledge is life-changing basically”*. Moreover,

Retabile expressed her interest in the teaching profession as she stated that: *“I am very enthusiastic about teaching, and ja, I enjoy, I enjoy the profession very much”*. Retabile mentioned that there are a lot of pressures placed on beginner teachers in terms of administrative duties, dealing with parent concerns, as well as integrating socially within the school context and culture of her school. She explained that: *“It is just that it is very challenging, in a lot of ways and ja, like you said, there is admin, and discipline is a big issue in most, in most schools, basically. So, ja I think that is one of the biggest challenges for me”*. She explained that her academic skills refined throughout her studies play a critical role in her teaching career. Retabile stated that: *“Basically I think, well having studied for so many years, I think I am equipped with the necessary skills”*. Based on my field notes, my perception of Retabile is that she is a diligent learner and teacher and utilises her knowledge gained through her years of studying as a platform to foundation her progress as a beginner teacher. Therefore, Retabile’s personality as a beginner teacher is summed up with a graduation cap. She is strong-willed and nurtures her academic success.

#### 4.2.4 Carmen



Carmen recently obtained her Master’s degree and is currently in her fifth year of teaching English and Mathematics to Grade 4 learners. She describes herself as a passionate yet strict teacher. Carmen chose to become a teacher as she stated that she believes that it was *“God’s plan”*. She explained her statement by sharing her journey: *“I originally started psychology, and I wanted to do educational psychology. And I’ve applied 3 times, even-though I passed my Honours with cum laude, golden key, all of that, the University just wouldn’t allow me, to do my educational psychology. So, I think, I really feel like God wanted me here. And ever-since I was a little girl, I always wanted to be a teacher, and when I got older, I was like no this is what I want to do”*. Furthermore, Carmen expressed her purpose for becoming a teacher as she shared that: *“I’ve got certain standards that I set for my children, and at the end of the day, I want them to reach their maximum human potential. And I don’t think that all*

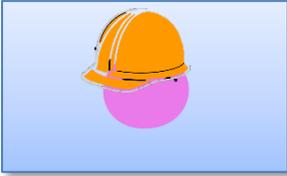
*the students are the same, which I think makes teaching very interesting*". Based on my field notes, my perception of Carmen is that she is a jovial spirit who brought a refreshing atmosphere to the educational needs of learners. I selected a petite sun hat for Carmen's personality, as she is a mature and more experienced beginner teacher who draws on her educational background to encourage her learners to learn. The sun hat portrays a personality that is confident and determined.

#### 4.2.5 Lauren



Lauren graduated with her Bachelor of Education degree in 2015 and is in her second year of teaching Natural Science to Grade 4 learners. She describes herself as a caring and confident teacher. She uses her own learning experiences to guide her teaching philosophy. Lauren expressed that: *"I believe that I am a good teacher because I am a good learner. Uhm, I have gained lots of confidence, I believe that now I am confident, and caring as a teacher"*. She chose to become a teacher as she enjoys being a teacher and working with children. She explained her journey that lead her to the teaching professions: *"I just wanted to go more into child psychology. Then later on I decided that – I realised that I needed to have more contact with children. If I am going to do anything in educational psychology for instance; I need to know what happens and be in contact with children. And later on I decided that I actually like being a teacher and for now I'm not a psychologist, I'm a teacher"*. Based on my field notes, my perception of Lauren is that she is a beginner teacher who faces various challenges with a poised smile on her face and encourages her learners. Lauren shared that it was uplifting to be a part of a study that focusses on the perspective of the teacher and thus allows for the teacher to be given a chance to reflect on their development. So, I selected a relaxed, laid-back sun hat to describe Lauren's personality.

#### 4.2.6 Lupita



Lupita completed her Bachelor of Education degree in 2012 and is in her fifth year of teaching Afrikaans to Grade 5 learners. She started working at her current school this year and is still trying to find her identity as a beginner teacher in a new environment.

Lupita's home language is Afrikaans and this language difference also affects her confidence in integrating herself within an English-medium school. She describes herself as a motivated and kind-hearted teacher. She expressed that: *"I would say I am a very motivated teacher, I like to see uhm the best uhm of every child, and uhm I am a very kind uhm hearted teacher and trustworthy person"*. Lupita chose to become a teacher as she wanted to make a difference in her learners' lives. She shared that: *"I really genuinely care for people, uhm, that's why I became a teacher, I would like to make a difference"*. Based on my field notes, my perception of Lupita is that she is shy and reserved. She is highly conscious of her surroundings. She avoids openly stating her opinion and looks for reassurances from her colleagues. She stated that: *"I am always nervous when there is people around"*. Therefore, I paint Lupita's personality through this construction hat, depicting a sense of safety and security as a beginner teacher in a new environment. From my field notes, I gathered that Lupita is very timid.

#### 4.2.7 Caroline



Caroline completed her Bachelor of Education degree in 2013 and is in her third year of teaching Social Sciences to Grade 5 and 6 learners. She describes herself as a relaxed and approachable teacher. She shared that: *"I can see myself being a more laid-back teacher in terms of uhm, other teachers that teach my children. Uhm, however I do see myself as a more approachable teacher"*. Caroline chose to become a teacher as she stated that it was her calling and knew in her heart that teaching is the profession for her. She expressed that: *"I chose to become a teacher because of a calling that I had. I just*

*felt like this was the right thing to do ever since I was little. I knew. I just knew it in my heart that I needed to be a teacher*". Based on my field notes, my perception of Caroline is that she is a kind and caring beginner teacher, who views her teaching career in an optimistic manner. She avoids conflict and enjoys receiving praise from her learners. She shared that: *"I do have my rules that they need to follow. So uhm, that's how I see myself as a teacher, and hopefully a fun teacher as well"*. Additionally, she expressed that: *"I base my success on how many children come to me and say to me; "Ma'am, your lesson was amazing," or how many people say you know; "I really enjoyed your lesson today"*. So, I selected this dainty spring hat, as it draws upon the perception of a calm and collected personality. Moreover, based on my field notes, Caroline seems to need validation and her perceptions of own credibility lies in how others' her.

I provide a tabulated summary of the seven participants in Table 4.2. The purpose of this tabulation is to assist the reader with a summary of the individualisation element of the selected sample. Within this table, I provide the participants' pseudonyms. Thereafter, I provide a description of the selected hat for each of the participants. In the following column, I state each of the participants' qualifications, number of years of experience in the teaching field, and their specialisation subject areas. In the last two columns, I state the participants' ages in terms of age groups and their personal reasons behind becoming teachers, providing additional information about each of the participants' journeys, respectively.

**Table 4.2:** Tabulated summary of the seven participants

Participant name	Hat type	Qualification	Experience	Subjects	Age group	Reason for becoming a teacher
Aria	Casual cap	Bachelor of education degree	Two years	English	22-27	Enjoys helping children to learn to the best of their abilities
Charlotte	Police officer hat	Bachelor of education degree	Two years	Mathematics	22-27	To help minimise gaps of knowledge experienced in teaching and learning Mathematics
Retabile	Graduation cap	Studying towards a Bachelor of education Master's degree	One year	English	22-27	She feels fulfilled
Carmen	Sun hat	Bachelor of education Master's degree	Five years	English and Mathematics	22-27	"God's plan"
Lauren	Flimsy sun hat	Bachelor of education degree	Two years	Natural Science	22-27	Enjoys being a teacher and working with children
Lupita	Construction hat	Bachelor of education degree	Five years	Afrikaans	22-27	Wanted to make a difference in her learners' lives
Caroline	Spring hat	Bachelor of education degree	Three years	Social Sciences	22-27	Her calling and knew in her heart

In the following section, I introduce the themes and subthemes that underpin my data analysis. I begin with Theme 1: Participants' perceptions of own teaching behaviour.

### **4.3 THEME 1: Participants' perceptions of own teaching behaviour**

*(Interview: Q1-4, 6, 11, 20, 24, (25))*

In this section, I will elaborate on the subthemes of Theme 1, namely teaching styles and methods and dealing with learner discipline.

#### **4.3.1 Teaching styles and methods**

I aimed at analysing how the participants decided to structure their lessons with the intent of optimally adapting their teaching styles to best suit their learners' learning needs and styles. Below, I report back on a few of the participants' voices which echo their teaching methods. Several beginner teachers explained that bringing the learners prior experiences into the classroom enhances the relatability that learners experience within the classroom based on meaningful understanding of taught concepts.

Aria implements an active style of teaching whereby she decides to use kinaesthetic techniques to enhance learner understanding. Similarly, Carmen utilises play to elaborate on taught concepts such that learners are given the opportunity to connect their prior experiences to the taught concepts. She shares the following:

*"A maths lesson, I would, if it is a new concept, it will be, like a cool thing that I do, you know, where we either have a little shop and we're selling things, to introduce money, or we have clocks and we work with the clock with time, where I just explain, well, let them experience it a bit, and then we explain, you know, I break it down for them. And then we work on white boards, we work in jotters, we work in groups".*

Moreover, Lupita states that:

*“We will try to do the lesson also practically, by doing, I will get them involved by say for example I am teaching Afrikaans then we will get up in class and I will say okay get, <sup>1</sup>staan op jou stoel and then they will stand up and stand on their chairs”.*

Three out of the eight participants employ methods such as group work, pair work, explain, discuss, share and individual work. Charlotte, Retabile, and Lauren utilise similar approaches that stray away from physical learning and focuss more on interactive social learning. Charlotte states that she focusses on direct instruction where she introduces and discusses the theory and thereafter she gives them examples to practice in pairs and then on their own. Retabile enjoys allowing her learners to engage in group work activities as she believes that it allows for shy learners to interact and engage within the lessons. Lauren implemented a hat system within her classroom and explained:

*“For instance, we have the bonus hats uhm, and I will say; “Okay, this task is to see if you can think for yourself. You are not allowed to ask me if this answer is correct or not.” They will be putting on a blue hat, because the blue hat is about thinking”.*

All eight of the participants stressed the need for beginner teachers to effectively accommodate their learners. They continued to explain that in order to optimally accommodate for diversity through the differentiation of lessons, beginner teachers need to know their learners on an individual and personal level in order to allow for their learners to relate to the concepts and analogies unpacked within a lesson.

Aria described her strategies and techniques in accommodating for diversity within her classroom, she stated that:

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<sup>1</sup> Afrikaans: staan op jou stoel, English: stand on your chair

*“And then we have a lot of materials at this school where, uhh if learners doesn’t understand something, you can take the material to help them understand it better because usually they say if there is, if uhm if there is an actual thing in front of them”.*

Carmen added her methods of variation in her mathematics lessons by explaining that:

*“Okay so, like, a maths lesson, I would, if it is a new concept, it will be, like a cool thing that I do, you know, where we either have a little shop and we’re selling things, to introduce money, or we have clocks and we work with the clock with time, where I just explain, well, let them experience it a bit, and then we explain, you know, I break it down for them”.*

Lauren shed light on how she actively accommodates for diversity within her practice. She explained that she employs a hat game whereby each hat colour represents a rule based on the type of activity. Thus, various hat colours that represent thinking for yourself, think-pair-share activities, group work, and so forth enhances her learners’ participation as well as creates an opportunity for learners to critically think about the activities that they are engaging in. She shared that:

*“...but they are more than just a brain. So it’s very important to develop that kind of relationship with them. For instance, we have the bonus hats uhm, and I will say; “Okay, this task is to see if you can think for yourself. You are not allowed to ask me if this answer is correct or not.” They will be putting on a blue hat, because the blue hat is about thinking”.*

Aria, Charlotte, Retabile, Carmen, Lauren, and Lupita find value in the differentiation of their teaching methods and styles. All seven of the participants share their insights into which teaching methods work and shed light upon some of the methods that seldom show positive outcomes. It is critical to keep in mind that these differentiated strategies that beginner teachers choose to employ are grounded upon the strengths and needs of their learners in relation to understanding their learners’ learning needs and styles. As we can

assume from the above statements, many learners seem to learn quicker through visual and kinaesthetic stimuli which stems from the concept of practical learning. This is a common strategy used by many of the participants in order to enhance the relatability between learning content and learners' contexts and environments.

#### **4.3.2 Dealing with learner discipline**

This category is associated with beginner teachers holistically developing their learners to become responsible citizens of the world. The mannerisms instilled within learners are depictions of who they will become in adulthood. Thus, the main purpose of the schooling system is to develop well-rounded citizens who are socially equipped, and not just academically equipped, to relate to various people in various contexts.

Subsequently, five out of the eight participants highlighted the use of operant conditioning techniques in their practices. Operant conditioning was a behaviourist theory founded by B. F Skinner who justified a "stimulus-response" mechanism (Passer, Smith, Holt, Bremner, Sutherland & Vliek, 2009). Utilising positive reinforcements and negative reinforcements imprinted idealistic behaviours based on rewarding acceptable behaviours and ignoring unacceptable behaviours (Passer, et al., 2006). Within this study I use the term 'operant conditioning techniques' to demonstrate the participants' personalised versions of this theory that best suited their practices. I aimed to unpack the essence of how the participants use their learners' behaviours to formulate and alter their perceptions of their own credibility.

Considering that operant conditioning functions around the mechanics of learning through actions and consequences, the adaptation and implementation through school policies in each school adopts a teaching and learning nature of reinforcement and punishment. This theory supports the process of shaping and shifting the behaviour of learners (Skinner, 1985; Robarts, 2014). Charlotte explained that she normally refers to positive reinforcements within her classroom practice, and if it is not positive reinforcement that

she implements within her classroom then she resorts to negative reinforcements, including break detentions or reducing learner privileges. In addition to Charlotte's statement, Carmen elaborates on utilising her school's policy within her classroom, she states that:

*"Well I am, at our school we've got a positive behaviour approach, to discipline, where we only have 5 rules in the classroom, and we focus a lot on encouraging and praising positive behaviour, and less on the negative behaviour".*

Lauren evolved her teaching style and integrated her method of teaching with life values. She explained that her school utilises a system of *'peace makers'* and *'peace breakers'* which focusses on individual children's behaviours and choices. She further explained that she uses a group behaviour approach where she brings forward the consequences and responsibilities of each learner.

*"If they get a minus one as a class – just because of one person; then the positive peer pressure comes in. They are able to adjust each other; adjust themselves – so they learn; "Okay, there is a consequence for everything that we do, and it also didn't just affect me – but it can affect those around me"."*

Lupita reinforces positive reinforcement as an element of her teaching practice and shares that: *"We have got a system at school where we rather award the children for good behaviour than demotivate the children by giving demerits so we rather use positive reinforcement"*. Similarly, Caroline adopted her school's policy approach to maintain discipline within her classroom. She explained that she uses a form of bad choices that records individual learner's misdemeanors. However, she prefers to focus more on good behaviour displayed within her classroom. Below are some of the beginner teachers' feedback involving their perspectives on their holistic approach to learner development in relation to learner discipline displayed within their practices. Aria focusses majority of her attention on teaching her learners the core value of responsibility. She stated that:

*“So, you need to teach them to be responsible human beings because they are obviously going to need to be responsible when they are older. So, if a learner does something wrong or does something that, it's not correct, then I as a teacher I have to speak to the learner to ensure that they understood that what they did was wrong and that they understand that they shouldn't do what they did again”.*

She emphasises the value of taking ownership and being accountable for her learners' actions. Furthermore, Carmen agrees with Aria, whereby she stated that:

*“So, some children will need a lot more support, just to guide their own behaviour. Especially, I feel learners come from different cultures and different backgrounds, and I feel that definitely plays a role in how learners behave. So, I would say my discipline practice is a lot focussed on, a lot more focussed on teaching values”.*

Carmen strays away from “disciplining” and pays more of her attention on teaching and reiterating values within her learners.

On the contrary, a new pattern arose within the data, whereby Lupita and Caroline shared similar opinions based on the value that all actions have consequences and the discipline is a continuous cycle. Lupita explained that:

*“The most important thing is that you have to be consequent, so rules apply to, to everybody, if I have got a difficult learner in my classroom I would give him a very important role to play in the classroom and in my experience when you do that then the learner's discipline is automatically a lot better. If you give him an important job”.*

Moreover, Caroline confidently shared that discipline needs to start from the very beginning of the academic year and needs to be consistent.

This category relates to how beginner teachers perceive their classroom discipline in terms of employed classroom rules. Beginner teachers thus reflect upon their practices based on classroom procedures and learner behaviour in response to such procedures.

In agreement with the statement from Rahimi and Karkami (2014): “the way teachers discipline their classes has a profound impact on the way they project themselves as effective teachers” (p. 59). The perceptions constructed by learners are a crucial segment in the effectiveness of the development and implementation of classroom rules.

Lupita and Caroline shared very similar feedback with regards to their classroom rules and regulations. Being well-behaved and settling down before entering the classroom seemed to work well for these two beginner teachers in maintain discipline and structure within the classrooms. Lupita shared that:

*“Well from the first minute you have to have good discipline outside of the classroom before they come in, and they stand behind their chairs and would properly greet each other. Uhm they would know from day one as well what the rules in the classroom are and everybody will have to just sign that they agree with the class rules. We also have a discussion in the classroom, uhm and they can also give their ideas of the classroom rules”.*

Lupita emphasises on involving her learners in the construction of her classroom rules, such that the learners feel involved and responsible for their actions. Furthermore, Caroline stated that: *“So to start off the lesson; they line up outside of my class in lines, and it usually helps to get them in line with themselves; “Do I have my books?” Do I have everything with me?” And usually if they are more organised then there is more discipline”.* Caroline further explained that her discipline begins at her door, instructions have been given to her learners and they are aware of the procedure of standing behind their chairs. She stated that procedure and routine are key factors on establishing and maintaining classroom discipline.

Carmen employs a more playful method of instilling her classroom rules through routine, she explained that she believes that physical activity is just as important as all other domains of development within the curriculum and thus enjoys allowing for her learners to engage in exercise to begin the school day, she stated that: *“So I like to start my day,*

we always start the day with some, like a physical activity, we call it morning aerobics or exercises, just to, I've realised that it helps centres the children as well, as prepares them for the day”.

#### **4.4 THEME 2: Participants' perceptions of learner behaviour**

*(Interview: Q5, 7-10, 12-18, 21-23, (25))*

This theme refers to the perceptions of learner behaviour as viewed by the beginner teachers. I identified supporting categories that formed the crux of understanding how beginner teachers perceive learner behaviour within their classrooms in relation to the beginner teachers' development of their credibility. As mentioned earlier, within this study, learner behaviour acts as an umbrella term that foregrounds the following elements, namely learner interest, learner motivation, and learner discipline. Three identified subthemes are discussed, specifically displayed learner interest during lessons; learner motivational characteristics; and learner discipline displayed within the classroom boundaries. I utilise these three subthemes to assist me in understanding how beginner teachers perceive their own credibility based on displayed learner behaviours.

##### **4.4.1 Learner interest**

This category refers to how beginner teachers perceive learner behaviour in relation to displayed learner interest during lessons. Thus, behaviour relating to learners' showing signs of interest during a lesson that reassure the beginner teacher that the learner is meaningfully involved in the lesson by means of the learners' body language and behaviour. I used this category to outline the exploration of how the participants perceive their own credibility based on their preferences of learner behaviour. Furthermore, I intended to understand what the participants expected from their learners in terms of behaviour and how these behaviours affected their perceptions of their own credibility.

The beginner teachers received a large portion of their learners' feedback relating to learner interest levels through their learners' behaviour and body language. Harackiewicz and Hulleman (2010) state that "being interested in something can mean that we care about it, that it is important to us, and that we have (mostly) positive feelings towards it" (p. 42). Similarly, the beginner teachers addressed their learners' level of interest in a manner that showcased positive feelings toward the lesson and its content.

Below are a few of the beginner teachers' feedback relating to what they perceive as their preferences of learner behaviour with regard to learner interest during lessons. Aria stated her preference very boldly in her statement: *"When I am teaching the learners, I do like it when learners are attentive and they are focussed on their work and they listen"*. For Aria and Lauren, learner engagement and active participation are the elements that stand out to them when identifying interested learners. Thus, Lauren shared that: *"When you have their full attention; their hands are up, they are all engaged – they want to speak – they have something to say"*.

In a similar stance, Retabile, Kaleb, and Lupita all provided similar feedback whereby learner interest is in correlation with learner enthusiasm, answering questions, and a sense of eagerness to partake in the lesson. Retabile stated that: *"They do show a lot of like enthusiasm. And they can't wait to begin with the lesson, so they tend to like shout at the other ones"*. Running parallel to Retabile's opinion, Kaleb shared that his learners ask several questions and eagerly want to answer the questions: *"You can also pick up the vibe in the class. When I would ask them a question and multiple hands come up and people will stand on the desk and then people are like; "Pick me! Pick me!"*. In correlation with the "vibe" that Kaleb mentioned, Lupita's feedback overlaps with Kaleb's feedback whereby she states that: *"You can see there is a lot of energy in the room, uhm, when they ask questions"*.

Another pattern that I identified within this cluster of information was that Kaleb and Caroline identified enthusiastic learners when they experienced their learners' eagerly

researching beyond the scope of the curriculum and bringing this information into the classroom context. The learning took on a critical thinking platform which elevated learners' interest experienced within a specific topic. Kaleb shared that:

*“They bring extra research or extra information, on their own, I didn’t ask for it”.*  
Moreover, Caroline stated that: *“When they start bringing extra information to you, you know they are very interested in a subject”*

and this acts as an indicator of how Caroline perceives and reflects upon her own credibility based on displayed learner behaviour within her classroom.

#### **4.4.2 Learner motivation**

In the process of finding answers to my research question, I foundation this category to assist me in unpacking the contents of how eagerly beginner teachers are in understanding their learners. This factor streamlines a connection between how the participants perceive their own credibility based on how well they enable themselves to get to know their learners and the reasoning behind their learners' displayed behaviours.

Beginner teachers shared their perspectives on learner motivation in relation to displayed learner behaviour. Overlaps in data were identified in Aria, Charlotte, and Carmen's feedback on how they perceive a motivated learner. Aria stated that:

*“Getting to know each other on personal level, not very personal but just so that I can have a little bit of background of each learner, because I have a learner in my class, who, he is not the greatest speller and he is not the greatest, he can’t do sentence construction or anything like that, but he obviously he tries to do it because he knows that he want to, so even though he is making mistakes and all of that, he is still going to try and try again”.*

Similarly, Charlotte shared that a learner who takes responsibility and initiative to learn independently shapes a learners' mindset and integrates a world of possibilities based on

the notion of personal motivation. Carmen's statement overlaps perfectly with that of Aria's: *"And even-though they're not good academically, they have a different way of being"*. Similarly, Caroline shared that: *"Even though they don't get eighties or the best in the class that they are able to keep themselves motivated is really important. Even though if they do bad, you know that they keep themselves motivated"*.

Moreover, Charlotte, Lauren, and Kaleb explain that in order to elaborate upon learners' interests and motivations, teachers need to understand each of their learners' backgrounds and life stories. Charlotte stated that: *"You have to get a sense of who the student, who the class is"*. Similarly, Lauren shared that: *"You have to get to find out what their interests are and link those interests with your lessons"*. Moreover, Kaleb elaborated by saying that: *"They all have different personalities so a personality is not the contributing factor, it's - I don't know, they have this, like, hunger within them"*.

#### **4.4.3 Learner discipline**

Within my interviews, the participants described their learners' behaviours throughout a typical school day. They explained that they dealt with the daily changes in their learners' behaviours by using their prior discipline experiences in the classroom. These questions also allowed for beginner teachers to feel comfortable in identifying and broadening their perspectives on just how critical behaviours of learners can affect the school day, but also to integrate the beginner teachers in the lives of their learners.

I report back on a few beginner teachers' thoughts and answers to some of these questions. From the gathered feedback received by the beginner teachers, there was a trend in their answers based on the question of whether or not they think that their learners' behaviours are consistent on a daily basis. Grounded upon these beginner teachers' experiences within their practices, all of their feedback referred to the latter section of the question directed toward their learners' behaviours altering on a day-to-day basis. Aria explained that:

*" Because kids, learners also have bad days and good days, so when they having a good day they are going to come and they are going to be more excited and you know, but when they are having a bad day from home already, they are going to act different but it is not going to be the whole day, because, I mean they are children and they are very, you know, they can jump back to how they were. So, they will be upset in the morning and then they will be better again a few hours later".*

Likewise, Lauren mentions that: *"I don't know if it has to do with their uhm, personal situations; because that also affects them, or their interests as we were talking before about a particular topic".*

Interestingly, several beginner teachers mentioned the element of friends' influences on their learners' displayed behaviours throughout a typical school day. Remaining cognisant of the phase in which IP learners are developing through, a mixture of social acceptance, individual thinking, integrity orientation, and hormonal fluctuations, Aria describes her experience:

*"They are not the same when you see them at home, and they are not the same when they are working, but they definitely different when they are with their friends, because they feel more comfortable around their friends and they feel that they, sometimes they feel that they need to do what the other friends are doing so that they can still with the group or whatever, so they tend to be more, irresponsible when they are with their friends, whereas when, when they are alone or they are with some, or with the teacher, then they show a different type of behaviour because they want to try and you know do their best for themselves or for their teacher ".*

Correspondingly, Charlotte adds: *"When they start hanging around with a different group. They start hanging around with the different people and those people are not exactly how they should be".*

Furthermore, Retabile agrees with the feedback received from Aria and Charlotte and stated that: *“Not the same every day. It just depends also what’s going on in their life and how they’re experiencing the day, with their friends, I would say”*. Lupita refers to her personal experiences within her practice and elaborates on peer pressure, friendship fallouts, and behavioural shifts:

*“Uhm when something happens at home, when they are not getting along with friends and they feel they are getting left out, uhm, when they had a bad experience maybe with a different teacher in class, uhm if I had to maybe get angry about uhm something they have done wrong, that definitely uhm makes a difference in their behaviour, or if I reward them that changes their behaviour as well in a very positive way”*.

Furthermore, Aria and Caroline stated that learners feel comfortable with a routine and this assists them with managing learner discipline in their classrooms. Aria shared that: *“But I feel that uhm, children do need structure”*. Similarly, Caroline explained that: *“And as soon as they get into a routine, I feel like that helps with the discipline in the classroom”*.

#### **4.5 THEME 3: Participants’ emotional responses to learner behaviour**

*(Interview: Q17, 18, 22, 23, 24, (25))*

This theme refers to the beginner teachers’ perceptions of their developed credibility with their learners. I identified supportive subthemes that informed this theme of understanding how beginner teachers’ perceptions of own credibility develops with their learners as determined by learner behaviour. As mentioned earlier (cf., Chapter 2, 2.4) within this research study, teacher credibility is underpinned by three interrelating elements: teacher immediacy, teacher relatability, and teacher trustworthiness. Two identified subthemes are discussed, specifically beginner teachers’ sense of self and beginner teachers’ reactions to learner behaviour.

### 4.5.1 Managing feelings

In this section, I describe beginner teachers' behaviours throughout the school day. I was eager to explore how the participants perceived their own classroom behaviours. Three out of the seven participants explicitly connected the notion of relatability to how they relay messages about themselves within the classroom. Learners are also social beings who are highly sensitive to behaviour and change; which beginner teachers often forget amongst all the other stresses. The participants explained how their daily feelings may have affected their teaching, and ultimately displayed classroom behaviour.

Carmen explained that:

*“So, I also think that it [my daily behaviour] depends on the teacher as well, because if I am like in a bad mood and I am like very strict with them, then automatically that will also influence their behaviour. No there definitely is like, I can see like, say now I've got a headache and I am like owe you know, I am not really lus for this, then I can see that they, they're automatically naughty, because they can see that you're not interested or not with them completely”.*

Similarly, Lupita acknowledged that her behaviour on a specific day alters her learners' behaviours:

*“Well if, if I am feeling a little bit down the day and uhm, ja I am not in a good mood, the children definitely picks up on stuff like that, uhm they, they won't be as enthusiastic, uhm if I don't show a lot of energy they tend to also not show a lot of energy”.*

However, Charlotte, Retabile, and Caroline decided to alter their emotions or behaviours based on their learners' behaviours and thus decided to leave their personal issues outside of the classroom. These beginner teachers are able to mask their emotions within the classroom in order to focus on their teaching. Charlotte stated that:

*“No there’s not really because recently I had been put to the test for that and I’d rather focus on the kids and their problems and everything than my own. It was kind of the case where I felt like breaking down but one of the kids were coming to me crying and I just had to breathe and just put them first and I carried on that way”.*

Moreover, Retabile shared her experience: *“As a teacher, you know, we also have our days where things are not going very well and so, it depends. But I personally tell myself that, the way I feel shouldn’t affect my learners”.* Also, Caroline explains her techniques of coping with her personal issues versus her learners’ behaviours:

*“When I first started teaching, I used to – my own feelings and mood on a specific day would you know, be completely out of balance with the kids, when I started teaching but as soon as I started getting to knowing how the kids feel and just coming in with understanding and empathy with the children and just knowing; okay this one is having a bad day... having that empathy with them helped me understand that no matter what mood I’m in; I need to be, I need to keep myself stable for them. This constantly, you know, consistent with them and in my mood as well. I mustn’t let that affect my, how I treat them”.*

#### **4.5.2 Feelings of being trusted**

This category refers to beginner teacher-learner relationship development whereby I focus specifically on beginner teacher trustworthiness evident within presented lessons. I explore teacher credibility developed between beginner teachers and learners based on how beginner teachers engage with their learners grounded upon a mutual ‘closeness’ in terms of verbal and nonverbal behaviours displayed by beginner teachers. This mutually inclusive relationship foundations the possibility and the quality of the perceptions held by the beginner teachers based on their own credibility. The formation of this bond elicits a sense of stability and growth within the classroom context.

Below are some beginner teachers' feedback relating to what they perceive as their experiences in establishing and nurturing their trust with their learners. Several beginner teachers mentioned the element of their learners feeling a sense of comfort within their classrooms in the process of establishing and maintaining immediacy within the classroom context. Aria shared that based on her open and relaxed personality with her learners, she allowed for the learners to develop a sense of comfort within her presence. She stated that:

*“Well I, I think that they, the learners are very comfortable with me because I am, I am a very open person, I am not, I am not very closed off and I am not like I don't, I am very relaxed and open with my learners so when, they know when it's time to work, it's time to work, but if it's break or after school and they want to talk to me about something, they always come to me and they always tell me, so I think that even though I have only known them for a little while they are already so comfortable with me, they are already telling me a lot of their things”.*

In a similar stance, Charlotte explained that her learners experienced a sense of comfort grounded upon their exposure to her routine and procedures within her classroom. She elaborated by saying that:

*“They only became more comfortable with me because they know they became more accustomed to how I taught because I am a new teacher and they don't know me and that's the reason why they became more comfortable in that sense”.*

The participants shared similar opinions based on the notion that learners develop according to the rules and thus grow accustomed to the teacher's routines. This structure allows for learners to find comfort in these specific routines. Caroline's feedback was in alignment with this statement, she stated that:

*“Throughout the last three years that I have been working here, the children will just know my ways of doing things and they will, it takes a lot to, for them to do something but eventually they know that's the way we do those things in my class”.*

Lauren raised the fact that despite classroom discipline, she wanted her learners to feel safe and comfortable within their learning environments based on the element of making learning enjoyable for her learners, she shared that:

*“Even though I want them to learn discipline and things like that but I wanted them to be comfortable. To be comfortable in their classroom, comfortable with me and I wanted them to be happy and you know - enjoy learning. It’s fun”.*

However, Caroline and Aria shared their challenges in facing the realities of building these teacher-learner relationships. These beginner teachers explained that although the comfort levels of the learners are an important factor to integrate within their teaching practices, being aware of the accompanying challenges is equally important. Power struggles and emotional blackmail are a few of the challenges faced by these teachers. Caroline shared her experiences by stating that: *“So they do get comfortable with you eventually. Uhm but I feel like they can take advantage of it because they know my soft side”*. Moreover, Aria explained her journey of credibility development by stating that:

*“Well when I first began teaching I would obviously knowing what I know now, is just that I need to, I would have needed to have the teacher learner like relationship instead of them seeing me because I was younger and I was, I didn’t look as old as most of the teachers. They rather saw me as an older sister than a teacher so they would take advantage of that. So, if I, if I had to tell myself when I first started, is just be, not be more, uhh, okay you can say be more strict so that I can just, they can know the line between teacher and learner”.*

The key element of trustworthiness lies in the structuring and reinforcing of credibility between beginner teachers and their learners based on the idea that all learners are social beings. Beginner teachers set aside time for their learners to emotionally open up to their teachers. This allows for learners to feel a sense of emotional support and guidance. Beginner teachers explained the importance of getting to know their learners

on an individual and personal basis in order to gain a holistic understanding of each of their learners.

Aria explained that: *“I have actually a lot of them that come to me and tell me, tell me stuff that they would rather keep just between myself and them, because they, they feel that they can trust me”*. Furthermore, she uses personalised journals to create opportunities for her learners to communicate with her in a safe environment:

*“And also my learners have journals, also, and they write in their journals and only I am allowed to see their journals. And then when they, and in their journal they always address, Dear Aria, so it's always to me and they usually telling me and that's all of them. So that is 27 learners telling me at least once a day about something”*.

Similar to the feedback received from Aria, Carmen explained her methods of developing trust between her learners and herself, stating that:

*“I also have a box in my class, where I tell them they can write to me. So they can, so they can write, but my rule, I gave rules down like, I am not allowed to see you write the note, so you can't do it in my class-time, but you are allowed to take a paper home and write it, and come put it in, whenever you have time, or when you're finished with your work, you are allowed to write. So, like I've got a girl who's a little bit big, and she will write to me you know, mam I feel so fat today and I am going to be fat for the rest of my life and, so then through that I try and support her you know like, give her advice”*.

Lauren employed a verbal approach to dealing with her learners' personal problems. She explains that: *“I wait for the children to come to me as well and if they don't come to me then I will go and ask them to talk to me one on one”*. Charlotte shares her own perception of her learners' comfort stating that: *“They only became more comfortable with me because they know they became more accustomed to how I taught because I am a new*

teacher". She further adds that: *"I have a few of them that come and they ask me for advice or uhm whether it be on home life or school"*. Moreover, Retabile explained that her learners have become more comfortable with her over time:

*"All the time they do become more comfortable. At the beginning it is always challenging because, like when you're experiencing new learners and you are new to them. So, ja, it is challenging. But after a while, like I would say even, after the first like 2 weeks, or even a month, they, everyone is like, we meet like on common ground. They understand you, you understand them."*

Similarly, Caroline highlights the process of learners settling into a routine of understanding her as a teacher:

*"The children will just know my ways of doing things and they will, it takes a lot to, for them to do something but eventually they know that's the way we do those things in my class. So they do get comfortable with you eventually."*

Lupita highlights the importance of self-confidence:

*"In the beginning you are also a little bit unsure of yourself and with experience you also gained, you gained confidence and you are a lot more sure about what is expected uhm from you. The learners get uhh more comfortable around you if you are uhm, full of self-confidence."*

### **4.5.3 Feelings of success**

When asked what they base their success on, five out of the seven participants referred to marks obtained by the learners and the interest of their learners.

Aria believes that successful teaching is when the taught content becomes a part of the values her learners live by. She shared that:

*“You need to make sure that what you are teaching the learner will obviously carry out for the rest of their life, so they will be able to, not, not only remember it, but they will be able to say, oh, this teacher was the one who taught me this valuable lesson and you know it is just something that they will be able to carry out with them”.*

Charlotte, Carmen, and Caroline have similar viewpoints in terms of how they perceive their learners' interest in opposition to their learners' achievement standards. Charlotte stated that:

*“Even though they might not be academically strong but they could be that their attitude towards studying something has changed and that they are understanding that it takes hard work and it takes dedication”.*

Charlotte tends to focus more of her attention on the holistic development of her learners. Similar to that of Carmen's feedback, she stated that she does not base her opinion of her learners' interest in a topic on passing or failing but rather on each learners' developmental progress throughout the academic year. However, Caroline utilises her learners' feedback as a form of her own reassurance in combination with her learners' comfort and happiness:

*“I base my success on how many children come to me and say to me; “Ma'am, your lesson was amazing,” or how many people say you know; “I really enjoyed your lesson today,” or “when are we going to do this?” I think the most important for me is that they enjoy the lesson. And it's not so much of how much who got the highest marks and if my marks where the highest; I don't mind if they didn't come through or they failed”.*

On the contrary, Lupita shared that her learners' marks form an important element in her perception of her learners' successes and progress throughout the academic year. She

stated that: *“Definitely the results is very very important to me, I would like everybody to succeed, uhm and I base my success on that”*.

In this section, I elaborated on the three themes and provided supporting quotations from the semi-structured interviews to present the collected data. In the following section, I provide a brief conclusion to this chapter by summing up what has been discussed.

#### **4.6 Discussion of findings**

The application of inductive thematic analysis (c.f., 3.6.6), patterns emerged based on the participants perceptual feedback. The teaching styles used seem to be trending amongst the participants, in terms of adjusting and modifying pedagogies based on learners’ interest and understanding. Adaptations of teaching styles for the benefit of learners begins the process of building credible relationships between learners and teachers (Davis, Sumara & Luce-Kapler, 2013). In relation to adopting and modifying teaching styles, the participants shared similar views of how they deal with learners’ discipline in their classrooms. A similar approach and initiative are implemented which seems to mainly follow school policies and protocols, such as merits and demerits, order charts, and value-driven consequences to actions. Thus, in Theme 1, the participants seemed to find comfort in adhering to school policies and change their approach to teaching and dealing with discipline accordingly.

In Theme 2, there was a wave a similarity in what the participants explained as learners being interested, motivated, and disciplined within the classroom. Common terms, such as “engagement”, “excitement”, and “eagerness” were used to describe the behaviours of interested learners. Three out of the eight participants shared their experiences about learners eagerly wanting to participate and share their answers in their lessons, and this was referred to as learner interest. Four out of the eight participants shared that they perceive learner motivation as being learners who persistently try and give their best under all circumstances. Terms such as “try harder”,

“give their best”, and “never give up” were used to describe learners interest. Two out of the eight participants shed light on the innate personality trait of being a motivated learner and striving for excellence, thus propelling learners to want to try and achieve higher marks (Jones, 2015).

Theme 3 spoke directly to the participants’ emotional investment in their learners. At least half of the participants agreed that there was a correlation between their emotions and their learners’ behaviours, supporting the idea that credibility is a social bond based on teachers and their learners (Catalano, Oesterle, Fleming & Hawkins, 2004). All participants highlighted the importance of trust between them and their learners. This supported that credible relationships required the building block of trust. Only one participant related the idea of success as a teacher based on learners’ marks. On the contrary, the remainder of the participants highlighted that learners learning a life-long value of being a good person was success all in itself.

From these findings, the participants who spent more time talking to their learners, getting to know their learners beyond the classroom and curriculum, the participants who valued time spent on building trust, and those participants who were confident in finding success in developing value-driven learners seemed to have focused more on the holistic development of their learners. Therefore, participants who displayed greater care to the details of their classroom culture and social bonding were perceived as more credible beginner teachers than those who simply focussed on the curriculum and being accepted by their learners.

#### **4.7 Chapter summary**

Within this chapter I unpacked and decoded the gathered data collected from each of the seven semi-structured interviews conducted with the seven participants. I utilised three themes to aid my decoding process which I further structured subthemes to provide direction to each theme. I ensured that I aligned each of these mentioned themes with the underpinning research question: How do beginner teachers perceive their own

credibility based on displayed learner behaviour in the IP classroom? Theme 1 highlighted the participants' perceptions of own teaching behaviour in which I focussed on teaching styles and methods and dealing with learner discipline. Theme 2 unveiled the participants' perceptions of learner behaviour. This theme was guided by learner interest; learner motivation; and learner discipline. Finally, Theme 3 foregrounded the participants' emotional responses to learner behaviour. This theme was contoured by managing feelings; feelings of being trusted; and feelings of success. In the following chapter, I focus on the discussion and analysis of the gathered and decoded findings.

## **CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

Within Chapter 4, I acquainted the reader with each of the eight participants in this study and I presented the three main themes and accompanying subthemes as they arose from this study's findings. In this chapter, the findings foregrounded within this research study will be analysed against the outlined existing literature. I first describe the integration and discrepancies of the identified similarities and differences between the findings of this study and those elaborated upon under the literature review section. I then engage with the findings established within this study that assimilate with those evident within the literature based on beginner teachers' perceptions of their own credibility grounded upon displayed behaviour within the classroom context. Thereafter, I highlight the identified differences between my own findings and those evident in the literature. Next, I elaborate on two emerged 'silences': Findings from literature that did not explicitly speak to my own emerged findings from my study and findings that emerged within my study but I did not encounter in literature. The latter 'silence' propels the subsequent section, which elaborates on the generation of new knowledge. In conclusion, I reflect on the holistic conundrum and I align the significances with interpreted tenets pulled from my own study and literature.

### **5.2 A description of the integration of this chapter**

Chapter 5 portrays the elaboration of this study's findings at a multi-levelled perspective. Firstly, the term 'integration' refers to the assimilation and discrepancies identified based on the underlying similarities and differences unveiled throughout the progression of this research study. Within Chapter 4, I identified three key themes that delineated the crux of this study. Considering that these three themes are, in many ways, integrated; it became challenging to singly isolate similarities and differences. Thus, I decided to analyse the three themes under different headings in order to create some form of

organisation: Findings resonating with the literature; Differences; and Areas of silences in this study. Although these headings provide structure to the analysis, it is important to remain mindful that these themes and headings will be deliberated as integrated elaborations.

Secondly, the term *integration* resonates the connectedness between the analysis of findings from this study in relation to the designed conceptual framework evident under section 2.7. This designed conceptual framework aligns with the three identified themes underpinning this study. McCroskey's (1997) model for instructional communication provides a backdrop of how beginner teachers and learners share information and knowledge with the intent of mutual learning and understanding. This model draws on the tenets of simultaneous learning based on expanded learning opportunities occurring between beginner teachers and their learners.

### **5.3 Findings resonating with the literature**

The findings evident in the three themes in Chapter 4 were in alignment with the findings in the related literature. The three themes under sections 4.3, 4.5, and 4.7, namely characteristics of beginner teachers; characteristics of learners in the IP; and developed credibility between beginner teachers and learners. Within this section, I integrate the findings of each of the three themes with similar findings within the relevant literature. Furthermore, I specify how these findings of this study coordinate to tenets drawn from the conceptual framework, as delineated in Chapter 2 section 2.6.

#### **5.3.1 Characteristics of beginner teachers**

In the first theme, the findings were related to how beginner teachers perceive themselves as teachers within the schooling system grounded upon the implementation of school policies and classroom practices which influenced their learners' behaviour. Evident

findings related to this theme speak to this study's research question: How do beginner teachers perceive their own credibility based on displayed learner behaviour in the IP? Under this section I elaborate on the emergent findings in connection with the relevant subthemes, namely: Beginner teachers' perceptions of presented lessons; Beginner teachers' sense of selves; and Influences on beginner teachers.

### **5.3.1.1 Beginner teachers' perceptions of presented lessons**

Within this study, findings unveiled that several beginner teachers' practices are directed by their current school policies which are grounded upon the concept of operant conditioning techniques. The beginner teachers perceived their lessons to be vibrant and fruitful based on their classroom management strategies. Such strategies commonly included break detentions, class order charts, and the absence of treats. However, several beginner teachers, such as Aria, Retabile, Carmen, Lupita, and Caroline preferred to highlight and focus more attention on stressing good behaviour displayed by their learners and chose to incorporate positive reward systems that considered the learners' social understanding of their behaviours.

According to Rahimi and Karkami (2015): "A non-threatening learning environment develops a sense of belonging among students (Freeman, Anderman, & Jensen, 2007), makes them self-initiated and self-confident, and thus increases their desire for learning" (p. 58). With reference to the responses received by this study's participants, the beginner teachers preferred to employ classroom management and classroom discipline strategies stated within their school policies, such that demerits and break detentions were used as a ground source tool. Moreover, I noticed a sense of creativity implemented by these beginner teachers, whereby they incorporated their learners' sense of reasoning, such that a holistic development was highlighted instead of merely solving the current discipline incident. For example, Lupita utilised a system that incorporated "peace makers" and "peace breakers" which allows for her learners to take responsibility for their misbehaviours and align these behaviours to the holistic class consequences. Thus, the

findings depict the perceptions of beginner teachers in a positive manner, whereby these beginner teachers personalised their classroom management and lesson presentations in a scene that best suits their learners' overall behavioural patterns.

The importance of understanding the differentiation used by beginner teachers is reflected through the time and efforts spent by beginner teachers in ensuring that each of their learners are actively involved within the presented lessons with the intent of meaningful learning taking place (Levy, 2008). By beginner teachers deciding to take that additional five minutes or to adapt a lesson through differentiation in order to enhance learner understanding provides the basis of the development of teacher credibility within their practices. Thus, this category stresses the extent to which the beginner teacher is willing to go to in order to ensure that each learner has been reached through the modification of the beginner teachers' presentation of lessons and content.

Levy (2008) maintains that "The core of differentiated instruction is flexibility in content, process, and product based on student strengths, needs, and learning styles" (p. 162). Hence, Aria, Charlotte, Carmen, Lauren, and Lupita explained that they focus on ensuring that their learners are practically exposed to the concepts before traditionally teaching the subject content. With reference to Levy's statement, it is without a doubt that learners are diversified on several platforms, including learning styles, needs, and abilities, which is why it is so crucial to incorporate the learners' prior experiences and practical senses when introducing new concepts. Based on the learners' prior experiences, it is more likely that the assimilation process between prior knowledge and new content will be much smoother in comparison to segmented chunks of knowledge relayed to the learners.

### **5.3.1.2 Beginner teachers' sense of selves**

Reconsidering the crux of this study, I refocus the element of beginner teachers being social beings. It is crucial to understand how beginner teachers think, understand, assimilate knowledge, as well as perceive their practices. I wanted to explore the essence

of each of the beginner teachers in order to assist me in painting a fair but holistic image of the participants. The positioning and contextualisation of each beginner teacher allowed for me to further understand my participants and their individualised paradigms.

I decided to ask this question as an opening question to each of my semi-structured interviews, which allowed for the beginner teachers to open up and feel more comfortable as well as to allow for me to gauge who my participants were in terms of educators as well as social beings. Several responses directly related to who each of them was as beginner teachers, but others felt a sense of discomfort and brought forward a sense of uncertainty. I noticed two frequent terms: “passionate” and “caring”, whilst others highlighted points such as classroom “challenges” and “behaviours”. McCollum (2010) states a common challenge experienced by many of these beginner teachers:

*“Beginning teachers are often presented with unique challenges. The challenges of beginning teachers usually start when they experience difficulty transferring theory and knowledge from college preparation programs into practical application within the classroom (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Feiman-Nemser, 2012). Preparation programs often fail to translate effectively into classrooms (Panesar, 2010) and beginning teachers find that there are many responsibilities that come with the job of being a teacher (Moir, 2009; Panesar, 2010)” (p. 4).*

The beginner teachers shared elements of their personalised experiences within their beginning years of teaching, which directed and sculpted their practices and learning within the teaching field. Common aspects such as overload of administrative responsibilities, learner discipline issues, classroom management experience, building confidence, as well as developing a relationship with their learners were commonly mentioned. Perceptions are broadened and paradigms are shifted in the endurance of experience as a beginner teacher.

Sharing a similar stance with Vuori (2015), the construction of identity is the roadmap leading to a destination with the propelling forward force based on reflection of the road that has been travelled. The cruciality of beginner teachers knowing who they are as teachers is the groundwork of how they go about developing their teacher credibility structured within the quality of communication and interaction that occurs with each of their learners. This category supports this notion directed at beginner teachers being able to describe themselves based on prior experiences within their practices. Teacher identity development does not exist or develop in a vacuum, but rather occurs in the essence of locating oneself through their journey (Vuori, 2015).

### **5.3.1.3 Influences on beginner teachers**

Within this research study, the perceptions formulated and shared by beginner teachers are rooted in tenets drawn from each of their introductions into the field of education. Bounded by the category of “vocational calling as opposed to second choice profession”, the experiences and perceptions of beginner teachers thereof integrate intensely throughout the beginner teachers’ educational careers. Interestingly, I found a clear discrepancy between the development and quality of the beginner teachers who flourished off of vocational callings in comparison to those beginner teachers who entered the teaching profession via second choice streamlines. Buijs (2005) elicits a strong opinion on teaching as a vocation as opposed to teaching as a profession:

*“Whether we think of teaching as a profession or think of it as a vocation does make a difference in how we deal with students, what we do in the classroom and beyond, how we interact with colleagues, what commitments we are willing to make, what expectations can be reasonably imposed, what career goals we might set, by what standards we should measure success, and how we view our relationship with the institution in which we work” (p. 327).*

Within this study, Claire, Retabile, Carmen, and Caroline were beginner teachers who were entered into the education realm via a vocational calling path. With these

participants, I clearly noticed a distinctive imprint of care toward their learners as well as an indistinguishable quality of credibility developed between the beginner teachers and their learners. Factors such as “fulfilment”, “God’s plan” and “in my heart” were included under this section. Caroline mentioned that she knew that she wanted to become a teacher from the time she was a child and this translated throughout her life in steering her choices in becoming an educator. Furthermore, she shared that it was a calling for her to become a teacher and she knew this in her heart.

With the above mentioned in mind, I must note that not all cases based on second choice profession resulted in less credible educators. Participants such as Carmen and Lupita are beginner teachers who had a passion for teaching but chose psychology prior to entering the education field. They both have a passion for teaching and love their professions but did not enter the profession via a clear-cut vocational calling streamline. Both these beginner teachers value their teacher credibility in a high regard and utilise their own creative methods to incorporate differentiation of instruction with the intent of accommodating diversity within their classrooms. However, Kaleb entered the education system via second choice profession and enjoys his line of work but has less of an interest in nurturing the development of his teacher credibility with his learners.

Reverting to Bieg, Backes and Mittag (2011), the teaching profession foundations itself upon the quality of relationships and connections developed between people. Bieg et al. (2009) maintain that “Interpersonal relationships and students’ perceptions of teachers’ behaviour in the classroom are important determinants for students’ motivation and engagement” (p. 123). The quality of these relationships is grounded upon the perceptions formulated by both beginner teachers and learners. Subsequently, in the context of this research study, I reinforce the importance of locating each beginner teacher as an individual entity stemming from unique journeys prior to the selection of the teaching profession. Influences endured by these beginner teachers play a critical role in the development of their practices as well as how these beginner teachers perceive teacher credibility within their professions.

### **5.3.2 Behaviour of learners in the Intermediate Phase**

The second theme relates to the behaviours displayed by learners within the classroom context. This theme directly speaks to the primary research question: How do beginner teachers perceive their own credibility based on displayed learner behaviour in the IP? Several similarities were identified in relation to existing literature. I elaborate the findings against the backdrop of Theme 2 subthemes: Displayed learner interest during lessons; Learner motivational characteristics; and Learner discipline displayed within classroom boundaries.

#### **5.3.2.1 Displayed learner interest during lessons**

Interest is a facet drawn from mental capacity incorporating attributes of positive emotions and the eagerness to participate in the learning process with the intent of gaining something valuable in return, such as learning or academic achievement (Harackiewicz & Hulleman, 2010). Within this study, I focus on learner interest displayed during lessons within the classroom context. I explore beginner teachers' perceptions of their learners displayed interest throughout presented lessons.

The findings of this study highlighted beginner teachers' preferences of learner behaviour and learner interest in lessons as opposed to learner achievement. Several participants, including Aria and Lauren mentioned attentiveness and focus from learners during their lessons, which is a sign to them that indicates that their learners are interested in the lesson and topic. However, Retabile, Carmen, Kaleb, and Lupita share similar views stating that they perceive learner behaviour inclusive of enthusiasm, excitement in terms of jumping up and raising of hands to answer questions, as well as asking a lot of relevant questions as being categorised as learner interest within their classrooms. Moreover, both Kaleb and Caroline shared that when they find that their learners are bringing extra information on a specific topic, they immediately notice an increase in learner interest.

Learner interest is a distinctive factor that directly indicates learner involvement and assimilation of new information in learners (Harackiewicz & Hulleman, 2010).

Moreover, Carmen and Caroline explicitly stated that they do not base their learners' success or understanding on the results, but rather on the holistic development of their learners throughout the course of the year as well as the excitement and feedback from the learners after the lesson. These types of perceptions provide the backdrop to quality relationships between beginner teachers and their learners and assists the nurturing of teacher credibility (Rahimi & Karkami, 2015). Furthermore, Charlotte identifies learner interest with a change in learners' attitudes towards learning. Thus, enhancing a passion towards learning, rather than basing the excitement on marks, she stresses the importance of her learners intrinsically developing a passion for learning.

Meaningful learning is a segment of learners' holistic development in which beginner teachers are required to compartmentalise each learning unit in such a manner as to ensure that learners are not viewed and treated as empty vessels but rather integral elements that bind together to construct and extend upon each and every one of their learners' current schemata. In so saying, teacher credibility relies on the concept of formulating and sustaining a relationship focused on enhancing learners' interest in the content being taught in place of segregating and focusing on learner achievement. Although learner interest and learner achievement are seen to work simultaneously (Harackiewicz & Hulleman, 2010), it is important to highlight that beginner teachers should not place themselves in the perspective of viewing learner achievement as meaningful learning.

### **5.3.2.2 Learner motivational characteristics**

Within Subtheme 2.2, I foreground the learners' motivational characteristics. I progress onto evaluating the second aspect encompassing learner behaviour within the context of this study, namely learner motivation. This subtheme embellishes how beginner teachers perceive their actions relating to enhancing learner motivation within their classrooms, specifically stressing how well beginner teachers deem to know their learners on an individual basis. The unique element of beginner teachers getting to know each of their learners seated in front of them enables a platform of credible growth which stems from beginner teachers being aware and informed of specific learning needs, learning styles, possible adaptations of lessons, modifications to teaching methods, and a newfound insight into the selection of appropriate learning and teaching support materials. I intend to further understand how beginner teachers perceive their own credibility based on the displayed behaviours of their learners.

Within the context of this study, motivation is a concept that is subdivided into two elements: intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation exhibits traits whereby learners feel positive emotions toward a specific task, such as wanting to learn about black holes, whereas extrinsic motivation relates to learners feeling the need to be propelled by a stimulus in order to engage in a task, such as obtaining a high mark on a test (Mafini & Dlodlo, 2014). Therefore, it is crucial for beginner teachers to know each of their learners personally in order to prepare effectively for the execution of lessons and content in a stimulating manner. I explored the ways in which the participants linked their learners' motivational behaviours to that of their own perceptions of their credibility.

The difference between learner interest and learner motivation lies in the location of energy. Learner interest can be moulded and planted in the formation of lessons and the utilisation of materials. Beginner teachers have the opportunity to connect in some manner with the learners in order to shift learners' attention and enhance learners' interest. On the contrary, learner motivation is an already decided internal element within

each learner. More specifically, learners are more inclined to already know what motivates them and what demotivates them. Beginner teachers, therefore, need to learn each of their learners with the intent of situating this already-located energy source and simmer on methods and strategies to ignite this energy within the classroom. This key contributing factor is the notion of developing and sustaining teacher credibility.

Lai (2011) raises attention to the notion that: “Teachers should attempt to give students more autonomy or control over their own learning by allowing them to make choices and use collaborative or cooperative learning approaches” (p. 2). With this in mind, beginner teachers should utilise their personalised knowledge of each learner to prepare and plan lessons in order to centralise the idea of connecting learner motivation to personal bonds with each learner in the process of constructing teacher credibility.

Learner motivation within the context of this study envelops two identities: *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* motivation displayed by learners within the classroom setting. In this study, I embark of exploring the holistic depiction of learners’ individuality and how beginner teachers perceive this depiction within their practices. Below is a condensed description that sums up the essence of learner motivation by Gregory (2009):

*“Student motivation naturally has to do with students’ desire to participate in the learning process. But it also concerns the reasons or goals that underlie their involvement or noninvolvement in academic activities. Although students may be equally motivated to perform a task, the sources of their motivation may differ. A student who is intrinsically motivated undertakes an activity “for its own sake, for the enjoyment it provides, the learning it permits, or the feelings of accomplishment it evokes” (Lepper, 1988). An extrinsically motivated student performs “in order to obtain some reward or avoid some punishment external to the activity itself,” such as grades, stickers, or teacher approval (Lepper, 1988)” (p. 1).*

During the semi-structured interviews with each of the beginner teachers, I heard a few extrinsic strategies that were implemented within the classroom, such as the use of stickers, sweets, merits, certificates, and positive appraisal. However, the overall remarks of learner motivation were thrust towards the beginner teachers placing higher value on developing intrinsic motivation for their learners, in a sense whereby learner motivation was perceived as learners' having a sense of devotion and commitment to continue trying and giving their best in learning. Aria stated that is crucial to understand her learners on a personalised level before placing judgement on their learning styles and displayed motivation towards learning. She explained that she has a learner in her class that struggled with spelling, but he is still so driven and determined to continue trying is best, and in her perspective, that is how she defines learner motivation. In a similar stance, Kaleb mentions that he is a firm believer in allowing for each learner to exude their individualised personalities in the classroom with the intent of understanding the level of hunger for knowledge in each of his learners.

As beginner teachers, it is important to remain cognisant of the role of instilled classroom discipline in relation to the resultant learner discipline and behaviour displayed within our classrooms. In congruency with the following statement by Rahimi and Karkami (2014): "That is, the way teachers discipline their classes impacts how well they teach and this impacts students' motivation" (p. 65). There is a direct linkage between the outlining of classroom discipline and learner motivation.

### **5.3.2.3 Learner discipline displayed within classroom boundaries**

Under this subtheme, I categorised two areas of interest: holistic approach to learner development and influences of beginner teachers' classroom rules. With reference to Rahimi and Karkami's (2015) study, displayed discipline within the classroom context involves continuous talking, unclear instructions, sleeping in class, incomplete homework, and walking around. Rahimi and Karkami (2015) further state that there is a direct linkage between classroom discipline and learner motivation, grounded upon the notion of higher

disruption in the classroom results in a decrease in cognitive processing and diminishes learner motivation.

In accordance with Rahimi and Karkami (2014), learner discipline is the underpinning element of relaying values to the younger generations. It is crucial to remain cognisant of the role that beginner teachers play in the development of learners, and macroscopically, the sculpting of the future.

Aria and Carmen both shared similar perspectives in terms of their approach to learner discipline. They stated that learner responsibility evokes crucial changes in learner behaviour when reinforced correctly. Guiding the learners to reflect critically on their behaviours and relevant consequences ensures that learners are exposed to the development of their social responsibility to peers and surrounding people. Moreover, Carmen stated that all learners have individualised personalities, whereby not all approaches will work on all learners. She continued by sharing that some of her learners required additional support and guidance in realising the effects of their behaviours, in which she highly values teaching values instead of faulting learners' misbehaviours. Furthermore, Lupita and Caroline mentioned that assigning different responsibilities to each learner assists in alleviating learners' misbehaviours within the classroom. Lupita further adds that it is important to enforce fair and consistent consequences from day one in order to minimise confusion amongst the learners.

Lupita and Caroline stated that classroom rules are a key component in eliciting classroom management and control. Both of these beginner teachers employ a similar strategy when implementing classroom rules. These rules include ensuring that the learners line up outside of their classrooms as this routine calms the learners down before they enter the classroom. Moreover, both of these teachers have a set routine in greeting their learners before they are allowed to be seated. Lupita prepares an agreement with the assistance of her learners in which she asks each of the learners to sign this agreement in the beginning of the school year, such that each learner is aware of their

responsibilities and the expectations within the classroom. Caroline employs a rule of learners' raising their hands when wanting to ask a question throughout lessons, if this rule is not obeyed, learners are put on break detention for that day.

It is evident from literature and the abovementioned participants' data that when beginner teachers actively integrate their learners' inputs in classroom decision makings, it is highly probable that these learners will display more responsible behaviour (Lewis, 2001). Moreover, learners are more likely to build a personalised relationship with these beginner teachers based on showing more positive affect and expressing a greater understanding toward the implementation of various interventions within the classroom (Lewis, Romi, Katz, & Qui, 2008).

### **5.3.3 Developed credibility between beginner teachers and learners**

Theme 3 refers to the quality of relationships formed between beginner teachers and their learners in the development of teacher credibility. This theme relates to this study's secondary research question: In what ways do beginner teachers link learner behaviour to their perceptions of their credibility? Under this section, I integrate the findings from Theme 2 and Theme 3 in order to get a holistic depiction of beginner teachers' perceptions. I focus on the subsequent subthemes: Beginner teacher immediacy displayed during lessons; Effects of beginner teacher trustworthiness developed with learners; and The correlation between beginner teacher relatability and learner understanding.

In a study by Rahimi and Karkami (2014), I was enlightened by the effects that care elicits in the classroom context. This idea spoke directly to the crux of my research study, whereby I based the influences of teacher credibility on the notion that beginner teachers as well as learners are, first and foremost, social beings. We are evolved into the comfort of the illusion of relationship-based development. We ground all our decisions and actions on the quality of interactions developed between ourselves and other people. Thus, within

Rahimi and Karkami's (2014) study, I was able to connect this concept to the education realm. Caring teachers find value in the essence of relationships. This highlights the notion that learners are more likely to perceive caring teachers to be more effective teachers and therefore, learners are more inclined to listen intently to what the teacher has to say and offer during a lesson.

### **5.3.3.1 Beginner teacher immediacy displayed during lessons**

Under this subtheme, I focus on the category of the development of the beginner teacher-learner relationship. With reference to dos Reis da Luz's (2015) study, the fundamental components in encouraging learner excellence lies within the quality of the relationship formed between teachers and their learners. He further adds that supportive teachers who nurture such relationships with their learners are regarded as supportive teachers. These types of teachers create a positive learning environment which encompasses learner discipline as well as enhanced levels of learner motivation within the classroom context (dos Reis da Luz, 2015). According to the beginner teachers' shared experiences, Aria stated that her learners have become a lot more comfortable with her throughout her beginning years of being a teacher based on the element of her teacher identity. Aria perceives herself as being a relaxed and open-minded beginner teacher who accepts her learners' individuality and encourages her learners to incorporate their uniqueness within the classroom atmosphere. Similarly, Charlotte mentioned that her learners' levels of comfort have increased considerably based on her learners becoming accustomed to her methods and styles of teaching. Thus, from the aforementioned two beginner teachers' responses, learners become more comfortable as they spend more time integrating themselves within the classroom atmosphere and becoming accustomed to the culture created within the beginner teachers' classrooms.

Ballester (2015) states that: "Verbal and nonverbal immediate behaviours on the part of the teacher enhance positive and effective instructional interaction, which has direct effects on the students' attitudes towards the teacher and the course and the students'

willingness to learner” (pp. 9-10). Beginner teachers are often judged on their behaviours displayed during the presentation of their lessons. Beginner teacher immediacy, thus becomes a crucial factor to consider when exploring the credibility relationships formed between beginner teachers and their learners in terms of how effectively they foundation a platform of stability and comfort for credibility to develop. The connection that is developed between beginner teachers and their learners based on how frequent and dynamic the interaction of personal and social growth establishes teacher immediacy within the classroom context.

Additionally, according to Caroline, Lauren, and Aria, it is crucial for beginner teachers to develop a strict teacher-learner relationship in order to allow for the learners to understand their roles, responsibilities, and expectations within the classroom context. Aria shared that she experienced challenges when engaging with her learners as she felt that she may have been too lenient with her learners. As a result, learners took advantage of her classroom rules and this affected the learners’ displayed behaviours. Correspondingly, Caroline shared a similar outlook stating that because her learners adjusted to her expectations and methods of teaching, some of her learners became too comfortable within her classroom and this affected her classroom management as she stated that learners began to take advantage of her softer side as a beginner teacher.

### **5.3.3.2 Effects of beginner teacher trustworthiness developed with learners**

I utilised the category of “developed mutual understanding between beginner teachers and their learners” as a backdrop to draw upon tenets foregrounded in Fosen’s (2016) study:

*“Cornelius-White (2007) and Roorda et al (2011) demonstrate that in addition to being linked to learning achievement, the quality of teacher-student relationships is strongly related to students’ motivation to learn. ... In other words, the link between good teacher-student relationships and achievement is mediated by*

*students' feelings of motivation (Hughes et al., 2008; Martin and Dowson, 2009; Roorda et al., 2011)" (p. 20).*

This *mutual understanding* is a component that is directly linked to the teacher-learner relationship embellished throughout this study. The above quotations string together the facet of learner motivation and teacher-learner relationships in a dimension that places continuous value on teacher credibility. Learners feel closer to a beginner teacher who supports and guides them, and in turn, learners develop a higher value for listening to what the teacher has to share within lessons. This is the beginning element of establishing intrinsic learner motivation, in addition to building a trustworthy relationship between learners and the beginner teachers. Aria mentioned in her semi-structured interview that she often deals with her learners' personal problems, whether it be within the home or school environment. She perceives herself as being a beginner teacher who has a high level of teacher credibility with her learners, as she states that she feels that her learners can completely trust her. She further added that beyond teaching the curriculum, she sets time aside, on a daily basis, for her learners to write in their personal journals and this provides her learners with a platform to personally communicate their current struggles and experiences with her.

"By nature," Ashworth (1990) exerts, "human beings are social creatures...biologically intended to live, work, play and succeed together...deeply influenced by others and how they treat us" (p. 6). In the abovementioned statement, clinging connections are reinforced in the idea that trustworthiness directs the quality of development of interactions between beginner teachers and their learners. The critical element of social linkages is often neglected in the realm of educating our youth, although the recurring element of trust allows for the establishment of mutual understandings and interpersonal relationships to be developed within the classroom context requires more attention.

Carmen employs a similar method in her class whereby she has a personal box in the front of the class where learners are free to write notes to her based on the feelings and

emotions. She then reads these notes and replies to each note. Her replies would be advice, encouraging words, and supportive methods that assist the learners in dealing with their emotions and feelings. However, Lauren has a different approach, whereby she waits for her learners to come and talk to her about their issues or feelings, and if they do not approach her, she will personally go to the learner and have a discussion. This allows for her learners to open up to her and feel comfortable to voice their concerns in a safe space.

### **5.3.3.3 Correlation between beginner teacher relatability and learner understanding**

Relatability, within the context of this study, orbits the notion of the relevance of the relationship developed between beginner teachers and their learners. I zone in on exploring how efficiently beginner teachers are willing to accommodate for diverse learning needs and abilities within their classrooms. I focus on unveiling the perceptions held by beginner teachers in terms of the degree to which their learners' behaviours/moods affect their academic sailing as well as the degree to which the beginner teachers' behaviours/moods on specific days affect their practices. I use Fosen's (2016) words to capture the essence of beginner teacher relatability within my study:

*"The need for relatedness, or belonging, refers to a human being's tendency towards wanting 'to feel connected to others; to love and care' (Deci and Ryan, 2000, p. 231). Osterman (2000) notes the concept of belonging is broad and is also referred to as a sense of community, support, or acceptance. Deci and Ryan (2000) depict the need for belonging as 'a deep design feature of social organisms' (p. 253). Likewise, Baumeister and Leary (1995) argue that the need for belonging is so strong that individuals seek to develop relationships even in adverse situations. The need to belong is a powerful motivation in itself (Baumeister and Leary, 1995)" (p. 20).*

According to Aria, spends a large amount of her time on attending to the social needs of her learners. She stated that in her perspective, it is important to be aware of the learners' overall needs and not just focus on their academic needs. She further stated that if she sees that her learners are struggling to grasp a taught concept, she often utilises the school's learning support materials to enhance her learners' understanding through practical learning. Moreover, Carmen also perceives practical learning to be most effective within her classroom practice. She believes that it is more relevant to a child's cognitive development to incorporate kinaesthetic learning instead of the usual chalk-and-talk methods. Lauren stated that she perceives her learners to be more than just a working brain, she values her learners' opinions and eagerly adapts her lessons and teaching styles to optimally accommodate for her learners' learning needs and styles. Lauren shared that she uses physical objects and colour schemes to incorporate structure and guidance to the learners. For example, she uses coloured hats to represent the type of lesson that will be conducted for the day, such that learners are immediately made aware of the type of behaviour that is expected of them. Thus, the blue hat is representative of individual work and thinking on your own, thus overall no talking whilst completing this task. Additionally, Lupita is another beginner teacher who finds value in practical learning. She teaches a language subject and thus incorporates actions whilst explaining content, such as standing on top of a chair, such that her learners are able to link a physical and visual stimulus to that section of work.

With the intent of understanding beginner teachers' perceptions based on the degree to which their learners' behaviours/moods influence a typical school day, I used this question as a platform to explore how beginner teachers' correlate their learners' behaviours to that of their teacher credibility. In agreement with Rahimi and Karkami (2014), it is more likely that learners react with enhance positive behaviours toward learning when they are shown more empathy by beginner teachers. This involves beginner teachers being able to place themselves in the perspectives of each of their learners with the intent of viewing various situations from their learners' points of views. With this being said, it is crucial for beginner teachers to remain cognisant of the notion that in order to effectively relay learning materials to their learners, the optimal pathway to do so needs to be established.

In this case, beginner teachers need to understand their learners' personal feelings as well as their individual learning styles and needs. Beginner teachers are thus required to gather pieces of personal information about their learners and quickly piece together a holistic depiction of their learners in order to differentiate lessons with the intent of accommodating for diversity amongst their learners. This conceptualisation delivers the idea of relatability between the beginner teacher and their learners within the classroom context.

Aria stated that she does not believe that her learners moods remain consistent on a day to day basis and shared that her learners have good and bad days. She focusses on the finer details displayed by her learners and utilises changes in their behaviours to structure each school day accordingly. She noticed a distinct difference in her learners' behaviours when they are around their friends, and states that learners within the IP are highly influential by their peer groups. In a similar stance, Charlotte mentioned that she can see a huge difference when a learner begins spending time with a different group of friends. In agreement with the abovementioned, Retabile, Lauren, and Lupita maintained that their learners do not elicit the same behaviour on a daily basis. They state that their learners' behaviours largely correspond to the occurrences within their lives – home and school environments.

In terms of localising the perceptions held by beginner teachers based on how they locate the degree to which their own behaviours/moods affect their teaching practice and classroom atmosphere, I utilise the findings gathered within this study to platform my exploration thereof.

Aria stated that she feels that there is no direct correlation between her own behaviour/moods and her learners displayed behaviours. However, she did mention that her behaviour/moods are affected by her learners' behaviours, for example if a learner is continuously disrupting her lesson, she would have to deal with that misbehaviour accordingly, but another learner usually cheers her up. She further utilises her developed

emotional intelligence as a beginner teacher to control and redirect her anger in a more effective and positive manner such that this method results in more effective teaching throughout the school day. In a similar stance, Charlotte indicated that she feels that there is no correlation between her moods and the development of each school day based on a recent experience. She shared that she rather utilises this energy to focus on the needs of her learners. Charlotte decides to silence her own emotions within the classroom context and deal with the learners in front of her.

Retabile, however, sheds a new perspective on this category and shares that as a beginner teacher, she too has emotions and moods and not every day is the same scenario. She acknowledges the changes in her behaviour/moods within the classroom context, but often reminds herself that how she is feeling internally should not affect her learners. Moreover, Carmen stated that this fraction of the teaching profession is largely dependent on the beginner teacher. She shared that when she is in a bad mood, she tends to be stricter with her learners, and automatically she notices a difference in her learners' behaviours. She elaborated on this answer by mentioning that when she is in a bad mood, the learners tend to become more disruptive based on the perception that the beginner teacher is not completely present in the classroom. Lupita adds to this discussion stating that when she is in a bad mood, her learners read her behaviour nearly instantaneously, and as a result her learners display less enthusiasm and energy within a lesson. Caroline further stated that the key to teacher credibility is a balanced relationship with her learners. She values the behaviours of her learners and directs her own behaviour/moods accordingly. She stated that despite her own mood on a specific day, she will always consider the moods and behaviours of her learners and reminds herself that her mood cannot and should not affect how she treats her learners. In the following section, the evident differences between discussed findings bound by literature and findings eluded from this study will be discussed.

#### **5.4 Differences between findings from this study and existing literature**

In this section, I foreground the differences that I unveiled in the comparison between findings grounded in relevant literature and findings unearthed within this research study. Although some elements overlap between literature and findings from this study, slight differences will be highlighted within this section, in particular discrepancies outlined in relevant literature and how findings from this study manifested. I utilise the following headings in guiding this section: Selection of perceiving behaviours and Reality of social beings.

##### *Selection of perceiving behaviours*

Interestingly, existing literature and findings drawn from this study resulted in slightly unaligned segments whereby the techniques employed by the operant conditioning theory is one which is widely used across classrooms globally. However, findings from this study reported a refreshed perception of employing operant conditioning within the classroom context. It was clearly evident that beginner teachers are beginning to stray away from the strict measures of this behaviourist theory and move toward a more enlightened platform of positive reinforcement in the light of holistically developing their learners (Knoster, 2014; Korpershoek, Harms, de Boer, van Kuijk, & Doolaard, 2014). Beginner teachers seem to be relocating their practices to instilling classroom management instead of classroom discipline, which noticeably encouraged the beginner teachers within this study to socially interact with their learners in highlighting their misbehaviours in a more personalised manner and to integrate such learning experiences in a socially acceptable light. Beginner teachers focus on developing socially apt learners, whereby teaching life lessons and human relations takes preference to pinpointing misbehaviours within the classroom.

Based on Carmen's response in the semi-structured interview, she stated that: "we focus a lot on encouraging and praising positive behaviour, and less on the negative behaviour". Moreover, Lupita indicated the following: "we rather award the children for good behaviour

than demotivate, uhm demotivating the children by giving uhm demerits so we rather use positive reinforcement". Carmen rests her main focus on holistically developing her learner within the academic year she has with her learners, she states that: "I can see in the beginning of the year, this is my child, and where is their ability, and are they reaching their ability". Additionally, Aria highlights her outlook on being a beginner teacher and mentions that: "you need to teach them to be responsible human beings because they are obviously going to need to be responsible when they are older".

### *Reality of social beings*

Based on the underpinning crux of this study, both learners and beginner teachers are social beings and are by all means affected by internal and external forces evident in life which contributes to the changes in behaviours and moods displayed from both parties on a daily basis. However, many beginner teachers confidently answered that their behaviour/moods have no effect on their classroom practices. Moreover, the participants stated that they decide to silence their personal behaviours/moods in order to focus on their learners' behaviours and learning needs. Aria answered that: "Well no there is no, there is not really a correlation between their behaviour and my feelings or mood". Similarly, Charlotte indicated that: "No there's not really because recently I had been put to the test for that and I'd rather focus on the kids and their problems". Retabile shared that: "I personally tell myself that, the way I feel shouldn't affect my learners" and Caroline mentioned that: "I need to keep myself stable for them. ... I mustn't let that affect my, how I treat them".

However, according to several studies, there is a clear-cut correlation between beginner teachers' behaviours/moods and learner behaviour within the classroom context (Spilt, Koomen, & Thijs, 2011; Dolev & Leshem, 2016; Ramana, 2013). Beginner teachers' interpersonal and emotional involvement within the classroom encourages learners to integrate their experiences to that of the learning environment, further enhancing the classroom atmosphere (Spilt et al., 2011). Parallel to the importance of displayed learners' behaviours and moods within the classroom context, beginner teachers' life

experiences and emotional flexibility enables a more characteristic classroom culture that exudes social competence, emotional intelligence, and community integration formed between beginner teachers and their learners. Emotions, behaviours, and moods do not exist in isolation, and thus cannot be silenced within the primary context of community integration. Both teachers and learners are social beings, in which the central connection enabling social development and growth is grounded upon integrating life experiences.

## **5.5 Areas of silence in this study**

In this section, I discuss elements pertaining to beginner teachers experiencing work overload and burnout mentioned in existing literature but were not apparent in this study.

Classroom environments and classroom cultures are integral tenets of the creation of conducive and stress-free learning environments (Freeman, Anderman, & Jensen, 2007). Morgan and Craith (2015) maintain that: “There is also evidence that teachers experiencing high job satisfaction and lower stress levels create a climate that is conducive to the development and maintenance of a safe, supportive learning environment where children feel cared for and respected. This in turn results in high performance expectations, commitment to the academic success of all students, and openness to parental and community-involvement (Greenberg, 2006)” (p. 6). However, amongst the several challenges faced by beginner teachers, a sense of work overload and beginner teacher burnout are resultant components.

The beginning years of teaching is a challenging, yet enlightening journey that strengthens beginner teachers’ sense of selves as well as boldly foregrounds the element of teacher identities. Although several beginner teachers mentioned their ventures to encourage and sustain conducive learning environments for their learners, a sense of apprehension elicited from the interviews. In addition to beginner teachers creating ‘comfortable’ classroom atmospheres; a persistent demand is placed on beginner

teachers to swiftly find a balance between credibility and authority within the classroom environment. Aria, Lauren, and Caroline explicitly stated that in dealing with learner behaviours in a positive manner within their classrooms creates room for some learners to take advantage of the beginner teachers and thus more energy is required from beginner teachers to manage their learners accordingly. This, in turn, results in beginner teachers facing a constant battle in maintaining classroom discipline and adequately dealing with persistent learner misbehaviours. Subsequently, this becomes a pinnacle source of beginner teacher burnout and a sense of work overload (McCallum, 2010; Morgan & Craith, 2015).

## **5.6 Generation of new knowledge**

The following section focusses on findings unveiled by this particular study that were not necessarily apparent in existing literature. The discussion of these silences contours the contribution of this study to the existing body of knowledge in the relevant field relating to beginner teachers' perceptions of learner behaviours within the classroom context. This study, furthermore elicits a wide range of interpretations and draws upon various elements of perceptions of beginner teachers as well as readers. Additionally, this study conjures upon other disciplines of knowledge, namely communication and behavioural psychology. Within this section, I will collaborate the integrated conceptual model underpinning this study with that of the findings cultivated from this study. This study platforms a paradigmatic telescope that assimilates perceptions held by beginner teachers with regard to the three-pronged concept relating to displayed learner behaviours: learner interest, learner motivation, and learner discipline. Apparent findings drawn from this research study can be considered under the following subheadings: Paradigmatic shift in perceiving learner behaviours; Beginner teachers' perceptions across multicultural backgrounds; and The power relations between social beings and teacher credibility.

### **5.6.1 Paradigmatic shift in perceiving learner behaviours**

According to the construction of perceiving learner behaviour within the context of this study, three broad themes were utilised in establishing structure in exploring the concept of learner behaviour. By zoning in on displayed learner interest, learner motivation, and learner discipline within the classroom, I was able to pinpoint coercive tenets embedded in the perceptions of the beginner teachers.

The focus of learner discipline was reformed in a more encouraging manner, in which the direct reference to learner behaviour was not instinctively learner misbehaviours within the classroom, but instead holistic behaviours displayed by learners. This finding can be considered a contributing factor of knowledge to the development of teacher identities. More so, this finding creates a reflective platform for beginner teachers to employ throughout the first five years of their teaching careers with the purpose of highlighting various learners' behaviours within the context of the classroom. Thus, this research study allows for beginner teachers to move away from connotating learner behaviour with that of learner misbehaviours and learner discipline and directed toward a more holistic manner of observing learner behaviour, accentuating learners' interest levels in teaching content areas, learner motivational characteristics – imprinting on locus motivation, distinguishing between internal and external motivation, and learner disciplinary measures observed within the classroom.

### **5.6.2 Beginner teachers' perceptions across multicultural backgrounds**

Within this research study, I tried to incorporate a sense of diversification amongst the beginner teachers with the intent of integrating diverse backgrounds and perspectives of beginner teachers. I thus interviewed a multicultural array of beginner teachers which span over various racial groups as well as various school contexts. More specifically, the eight beginner teachers that I interviewed delivered a diverse range of perceptions pertaining to displayed learners' behaviours within their schools.

Through the incorporation of multiculturalism and multi-contextual schools within Pretoria, this study exposed various beginner teachers' perceptions based on their personalised backgrounds, classroom cultures, and diversified experiences within the education field. I was enlightened by the responses from each of the participants, as the responses I received were personalised and realistic to each of the eight participants.

This study depicted clear discrepancies in the beginner teachers' perceptions based on the culture and setting of each school. What one beginner teacher may have perceived to be important in the development of his/her own teacher credibility, another beginner teacher thought otherwise. For example, Aria made consistent references to the development of her learners' responsibility and how she perceived this quality in her learners to be quite dominant in developing her own teacher credibility. Considering the school policy implemented within Aria's school, a culture focussed on holistic learner development contained in a positive culture of teaching was evident. However, a beginner teacher such as Lupita shared a different perspective, highlighting her drive toward high academic performances displayed by her learners. Again, the school culture plays a role in formulating the beginner teachers' perceptions, whereby Lupita is based in a school that values parental involvement and high academic performance as part of successful learner development. It is thus evident within the study that beginner teachers' perceptions of teacher credibility are highly dependent on the schools' culture and implemented policies. Throughout the conduction of this study, all eight of the participants made clear referrals to their schools' policies and expectations, which provided the beginner teachers with direction to how they are required to teach and engage with their learners within the learning environment.

### **5.6.3 The power relations between social beings and teacher credibility**

Throughout the progression of this study, I highlighted and continuously reiterated the underpinning crux of this study pertaining to the importance of the element of social

identities of beginner teachers and their learners in relation to the development of teacher credibility. I now foreground this study's findings in terms of the effects of understanding and incorporating social beings in the teaching and learning contexts.

Instead of treating the learning context in a routine-like manner, with regard to the interviews that I conducted with the eight participants, I was enlightened by the beginner teachers' perceptions in terms of how they engage in the education realm and how they socially integrate themselves as beginner teachers within the teaching and learning contexts in relation to the behaviours observed within the classroom. Aria stressed the importance of developing responsibility amongst her learners as she focusses on evolving responsible social citizens of South Africa. Aria and Retabile both highlight the age groups of their learners and describe various methods of engaging with these learners. I noticed that both Aria and Retabile employ positive reinforcement strategies amongst their learners in order to establish acceptable social behaviours within the classroom. Carmen enthusiastically implements differentiation within her lessons and continuously reinforces diversity within her classroom. She shared that she perceives her learners' learning abilities and styles as highly important pieces of information that allow for her to actively cater for her learners' needs. Additionally, Carmen mentioned that although discipline begins within the learners' home environments, she makes it her duty to establish and reinforce teaching values and norms within the school environment. The practicality in developing teacher credibility within the classroom is largely dependent on the quality of relationships formed between individual learners and their teachers. The participants showcased perceptions grounded upon interrelations and integrative behaviours rather than academic excellence. Teacher credibility is linked to how learners behave in different situations and why learners react to certain stimuli such as learning methods, teaching techniques, beginner teachers' methods of discipline, and the degree of interest displayed by the beginner teachers.

Furthermore, Caroline shared that her perception is directed by her learners' responses before, during, and after her lessons. She perceives herself to be an enthusiastic beginner

teacher that values the relationships she forms with her learners. She is motivated by her learners' feedback after each lesson and utilises this information as a sense of direction based on the quality of her teaching. Caroline relies on this source of information as a tool for her daily reflection and moulds her teaching techniques accordingly in order to further involve her learners within her lessons. Lauren further stated that she does not perceive her learners as mere brain matter, instead she treats her learners as learning opportunities and utilises her relationships with each of her learners to turn each lesson into practical learning experiences.

## **5.7 Synopsis of findings of this study**

In this section, I provide a synopsis of the unearthed findings in this study (cf., Chapter 2, 2.10). Through this research study, I aimed to magnify a slice of the vast concept of beginner teachers' credibility by exploring beginner teachers' perceptions of their own credibility based on displayed learner behaviours. This study fit into a complex and integrated network of literature, theories, and findings. Opening up the arena of beginner teachers' perceptions induced a realm overflowing with possibilities and personalised experiences that shed light on the topic from various angles. Focussing on these perceptions allowed for me to enter journeys that incorporated rich elements that drew upon common tenets of life within the classroom. Beginner teachers' perceptions of their own teacher credibility, the effects of learner behaviours on beginner teachers' credibility, and learner behaviour explored in terms of learner interest, learner motivation, and learner discipline were among the key concepts constructing this study.

Furthermore, the perceptions held by beginner teachers depicted an integration of beginner teachers' professional identities, prior experiences, and displayed learner behaviours within the classroom context. The study elicited a reflective synopsis for beginner teachers to structure their perceptions according to observations that they were exposed to on a daily basis but did not necessarily realise these observations and their influences within their professional development. Beginner teachers were enlightened as

to the degree to which they utilise their learners' behaviours as feedback mechanisms that propel beginner teachers' practices, differentiation of strategies, and social development between their learners and themselves. Beginner teachers became more aware of their own judgements within their practices and how their preconceived notions affect their credibility within the classroom.

The influence drawn from each of the three-pronged approach of learner behaviour provided beginner teachers with a reflective feedback platformed. Both direct and indirect learner behaviours were used as observational tools by beginner teachers within the classroom. Learner discipline was perceived to be a direct source of information pertaining to learner behaviour, whereas learner interest and learner motivation were perceived as being indirect behavioural tools. However, in accordance with these elements of this study, teacher credibility was highlighted grounded upon what the beginner teachers did with this information and how they perceived these behaviours within their own classrooms. Within this study, I stress the importance of teacher credibility against the backdrop of how eagerly a beginner teacher is willing to perceive learner behaviours and utilise these sources of information to create a caring and comfortable learning environment. I focus on how enthusiastically the beginner teachers utilise the interest levels and motivational aspects displayed by their learners to differentiate their lessons with the intent of actively accommodating for their learners' individual learning needs and abilities. Through the implementation of these mechanisms, the root of teacher credibility is established grounded upon the perceptions of beginner teachers in combination with the developed perceptions of the learners. Beginner teachers thus showcase an environment to their learners that foundations fundamentals of beginner teacher immediacy, trustworthiness, competence, and dynamism.

Findings highlighted that the higher the displayed learner interest, the stronger the teacher credibility. Thus, learners' eagerness, enthusiasm, and curiosity drastically enhanced the beginner teachers' drive to build and nurture credible relationships with their learners. Moreover, learner motivation was directly linked to beginner teachers'

motivation, whereby beginner teachers stated that they use the workbooks and working paces of intrinsically motivated learners to identify the overall learner progression and learner understanding. Learner discipline was used as a direct message that instantaneously alerts beginner teachers as to whether their learners are invested and interested within a lesson or whether their learners experience a sense of boredom or disinterest within specific topics. According to the beginner teachers, the element of learner discipline is perceived to have a direct connection to observational behaviour in which beginner teachers use this form of behaviour to identify learners' interest and motivational levels toward subject areas and topics.

## **5.8 Chapter summary**

Within this section, I discussed the findings unearthed within this research study in relation to literature. I then foregrounded three categories of importance: Beginner teachers' perceptions of presented lessons; Beginner teachers' sense of selves; and Influences on beginner teachers. Next, I discussed the behaviour of learners in the IP, focussing on displayed learner interest during lessons; Learner motivation characteristics; and Learner discipline displayed within classroom boundaries. I then highlighted the developed credibility between teachers and learners in terms of beginner teacher immediacy, effects of beginner teacher trustworthiness, and correlation between beginner teacher relatability and learner understanding. Thereafter, I introduced and elaborated upon the differences between related findings in literature and findings discovered within this study. Next, I highlighted areas of silence within this study whereby I focussed on elements pertaining to beginner teachers experiencing work overload and burnout mentioned in existing literature but were not apparent in this study. Finally, I discussed the generation of new knowledge, in which I utilised three subheadings to direct my discussion: Paradigmatic shift in perceiving learner behaviours; beginner teachers' perceptions across multicultural backgrounds; and The power relations between social beings and teacher credibility. Lastly, I provided a synopsis of this chapter's findings as well as silhouetted the findings of this study in accordance with related literature.

## CHAPTER 6: SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE INQUIRY

### 6.1 Introduction

In this section I provide a brief overview of my study, highlighting Chapter 1 through to Chapter 6. I discuss the significance of the inquiry and I highlight the limitations of the inquiry. Then, I explain possible recommendations for future research with accompanying research questions. I revisit and reflect on the research assumptions discussed in Chapter 1. Finally, I provide a personal reflection of the inquiry.

### 6.2 Brief overview of my study

Within *Chapter 1*, I outlined my study's interest and discussed my rationale underpinning my research. I linked this study to my personal experiences as a beginner teacher finding myself through my credibility development. I highlighted the need for further understanding of teacher credibility in the classroom, which formed the basis of the purpose of my study. The purpose then was aligned with my posed research questions. With the aim of relevantly positioning my research to the readers, I introduced the topic of beginner teacher credibility on a local and international scale. I used McCroskey's model for instructional communication and extended upon this model to conceptually guide this study. Thereafter, I highlighted and briefly discussed the research assumptions depicted in this research. Followed by the ethical considerations and quality criteria underpinning my study. Finally, I moved onto clarifying common concepts used throughout the research.

*Chapter 2* explored literature relating to the topic of my study. This chapter formulated the supporting backbone to my research. I began by combing through the relevant literature pertaining to beginner teachers and credibility, focussing on learner behaviours. Current literature relating to credibility was used to foundation my research on and similar strands

of information were discussed. For learner behaviour, I focussed on learner interest, learner motivation, and learner discipline. Thereafter, I elaborated on the international landscape of literature pertaining to teacher credibility and the local arena of credibility. I discussed the theoretical frameworks used to support my study, namely McCroskey's model for instructional communication and an extension to this model.

In *Chapter 3*, I explained my role as the researcher and I justified the epistemological framework relating to this study. I discussed the use of a qualitative methodological approach. I moved on to explaining the case study research design, highlighting the advantages and disadvantages. Thereafter, I introduced the participants of this study by briefly explaining each of the seven participants' profiles. I outlined the research sites, specifically providing the reader with more information about the seven schools that were visited. Next, I discussed the use of purposive sampling and how this technique was used in this study. Furthermore, I explained the data collection methods used, specifically semi-structured interviews. I explain the data process in which I provide information pertaining to how I gathered my data and the manner in which I captured and decoded my findings. Finally, I highlight the quality criteria and ethical considerations in more detail.

*Chapter 4* highlighted the presentation of my data in terms of themes and subthemes. Firstly, I introduced each of the seven participants by creating participant profiles. Secondly, I elaborated on the three themes that I used to underpin the presentation of my findings. Theme 1 focussed on participants' perceptions of own teaching behaviour. The subthemes that guided Theme 1 were teaching styles and methods and dealing with learner discipline. Theme 2 was dedicated to the participants' perceptions of learner behaviour. This theme was accompanied by the following subthemes: learner interest; learner motivation; and learner discipline. The final theme included participants' emotional responses to learner behaviour. The subthemes underpinning Theme 3 were managing feelings; feelings of being trusted; and feelings of success.

In *Chapter 5*, I described the integration of the chapter. I discussed the findings uprooted in this study in relation to the literature. Then, I highlighted the differences and the areas of silences. Finally, I elaborated on the generation of new knowledge.

*Chapter 6* orbited around the significance and implications of the inquiry. I provided a brief overview of my study and elaborated on the significance of this inquiry. Then, I highlighted the limitations of the inquiry and the recommendations for future researcher. I revisited my research assumptions discussed in *Chapter 1* (cf., Chapter 1, 1.9). I provided a reflection of the inquiry.

### **6.3 Significance of the inquiry**

This study proves its significance as it focussed on further understanding beginner teachers' perceptions of their own credibility based on displayed learner behaviour in the classroom. Teacher credibility research has been criticised and scrutinised by authors who highlight the deficit in literature focussing on the pinnacle points of teacher credibility development within the classroom (Glascok & Ruggiero, 2006; Frymier & Thompson, 1992). This research study meaningfully contributed to the relevant body of knowledge on exploring beginner teachers' perceptions and teacher credibility, in that the unveiled findings were directed toward the configurations of realities faced by beginner teachers in their journeys to finding their personalised teacher credibility based on their observations of their learners' reactive behaviours within the classroom. More specifically, this study drew upon a three-pronged approach which embodied the concept of learner behaviour: learner interest, learner motivation, and learner discipline; and these categorised the areas of interest for readers and researchers. The study zones into uplifting the crux of teacher development and contours the pinnacle points of beginner teachers' development based on their own teacher credibility as a form of continuous reflection and moulding mechanisms.

Through thorough analysis of beginner teachers' perceptions of the development of their own credibility, I was exposed to the effects that coexist when unveiling the findings. Considering the reflective platform that this study provided the beginner teachers with in terms of critically analysing and becoming aware of personal perceptions, the resultant behaviours displayed by the learners showcased an array of feedback that beginner teachers may not have been mindful of. Beginner teachers were posed with the ultimate question of: How does my own perceptions of my teacher credibility relate to that of what I observe within my classroom? What do my learners' behaviours relay to me about my professional practice? How does my perceptions affect my learners' behaviours? What does my learners' interest levels, motivational standpoints, and classroom discipline reveal to me about how I am perceived by my learners? Further investigations and research can be conducted thereof and may enhance relevant literature accordingly.

Through this study, I was hopeful in reviving a renewed sense of energy into beginner teachers. To allow a support platform that enabled beginner teachers to feel comfortable to question their professions and practices in a safe environment and to find solutions through this reflective process. The mouldable mindset of beginner teachers provides a comparable image to current teachers to regenerate enthusiasm and establish new perspectives outside of their own comfort arenas. This social movement through personal and professional reflection not only advances beginner teachers throughout their lifelong development, but also empowers learners through their own perceptions of their teachers and classroom atmospheres.

#### **6.4 Limitations of the inquiry**

This research study was qualitatively conducted and engraved with rich descriptions and drew upon vibrant experiences. It is with this knowledge that the findings cannot be generalised. Findings unearthed from this study should be considered contextually following the individualised roots of each beginner teacher's credibility development. I would thus have liked to utilise different contextually based schools in order to understand

the cultural effects of teacher credibility development. Considering that South Africa is draped in a diverse set of cultures and contexts, I would have liked to expose this study to a greater variety of contexts and cultures indigenous to South African schools. One of the most evident restrictions I faced within this study was receiving similar feedback on the types of learner behaviours. Although my participants were of diverse cultures and backgrounds, the schools that they worked at were fairly similar in terms of cultures and climates.

## **6.5 Recommendations for future research**

In the following section I provide two suggestions for future research. Furthermore, I briefly discuss possible areas of research that could potentially use this study's findings, followed by proposed research questions.

First, for the purpose of gathering suitable participants for this research study, I contacted various private primary schools within Pretoria. I had chosen the private sector of schooling to explore the realities faced by beginner teachers within diverse contextual, cultural, and academic settings and because it was convenient for me to sample participants from private sector schooling as opposed to public sector schooling. However, the depth of this study defies stereotypes and conducting a study on beginner teachers' perceptions within the public-sector schools to compare the experiences and perceptions of private and public realities could be beneficial to literature concerning teacher credibility. I was intrigued as to why beginner teachers chose private sector schools over public sector schools. The reasoning behind this preference seemed obvious based on stereotypes such as less learners per class, enhanced facilities, stricter learner discipline, and greater levels of school management. However, these assumptions were contested by the participants' shared perspectives through the conducted semi-structured interviews about their own credibility within the classroom, learner discipline, and overall learner behaviour. This critical analysis led me to the following research question:

- Why do beginner teachers prefer teaching at private schools as opposed to public schools?

I forecast a second potential gateway for future research and this refers to how beginner teachers perceive their own credibility based on socio-historical backgrounds relating to prior teachers, family members, vocational callings, and second profession options. I utilised this avenue as a comfort zone for beginner teachers to open up about who they are in the interviews. However, I found it intriguing that there may potentially be a connection between teacher credibility development and how beginner teachers chose or were directed toward the teaching profession. This study focussed on the beginner teachers' perceptions of their own credibility based on displayed learner behaviour. However, to further travel into the individualised histories of beginner teachers and relate these histories to the realities they may be facing within the classroom in terms of developing their credibility may be a discovery of underlying factors that enhance or inhibit teacher credibility within the classroom. I thus pose the following research questions:

- How does vocational calling as opposed to second choice profession influence the development of beginner teachers' credibility?

I state and discuss recommendations grounded upon findings elicited from this study, with reference to a potential beginner teacher collaborative progression programme.

Theoretically, tertiary institutions meet the holistic criteria of relaying and reinforcing educational concepts, strategies, techniques, creating awareness of inclusive education methods, differentiating lessons, and accommodating for diverse learning needs and abilities. However, a disconnect is experienced by beginner teachers when faced with the realities of the teaching world. A gap lies between the construction of theoretical knowledge and practicality of reviving such theory within the classroom. With respect to the abovementioned, I propose the following:

During the three to four years of critically and continuously engaging with educational terms, ideas, strategies, and techniques, beginner teachers are introduced to the construction of their personal teacher identities. Instead of allowing for student teachers to venture out into their fourth year practical and expect them to construct their teacher identities and effectively prepare and conduct lessons, based on differentiation and accommodation techniques; a collaborative group of student teachers should be created from their first year of their undergraduate degree and these collaborative groups should complete semester modules of teaching in various schools throughout the duration of their bachelor of education degrees.

This proposal enhances student teachers' confidence in teaching, provides a continuous support structure for student teachers to communicate within, and provides a platform for student teachers to share and reflect on their practices, ideas, perceptions, and experiences. This continuous interaction between theoretical underpinnings and practical experiences to reinforce these segments of theory, allows for student teachers to be better equipped in terms of skills and knowledge to tackle the realities of teaching within the South African classrooms. Furthermore, creating a collaborative group allows for student teachers to engage in reflective discussions spanning from their first year of training to their final year of their degrees. This encourages student teachers to explore their horizons of who they choose to be as beginner teachers, this platform allows for beginner teachers to feel a sense of comfort when stepping into their own classrooms. Overall, beginner teachers will be more eloquent in choosing and constructing their teacher identities and developing their teacher credibility within their beginning years of practice.

## **6.6 Revising research assumptions**

I acknowledge that assumptions were made throughout the progression of this study and these assumptions need to be reconsidered, which is what I dedicate the following section to.

**Assumption 1:**

*It is commonly believed that teacher credibility influences learner behaviour (Thweatt & McCroskey, 1996).*

Findings within my research study concurred with Assumption 1. Beginner teachers who highly value the social relationship developed between their learners and themselves experienced higher levels of learner interest and learner motivation. Moreover, beginner teachers stated that intrinsically motivated learners felt closer to them and learning became more meaningful. With this being stated, beginner teachers expressed a concern of experiencing a sense of dampened creativity within their professions, due to the time constraint and work overload. Additionally, beginner teachers mentioned that academic institutions do not adequately prepare them for the reality of education, as they have the knowledge of interventions and innovative teaching strategies but are not provided with the opportunities to implement them. The gap lies between teaching with the purpose of social development but not provided with opportunities to socially develop.

**Assumption 2:**

*Learner behaviour provides reflection of teacher credibility (Haskins, 2000; Thweatt & McCroskey, 1996).*

Findings elicited from this study agreed with the abovementioned assumption. Beginner teachers clearly stated that they use their learners' behaviours to gage their credibility with their learners. Beginner teachers stated that they look to their learners' body language, level of interest, and learners' motivation when reflecting on how successful a lesson was. Learner behaviour communicates instant feedback to the beginner teachers, allowing for the beginner teachers to make quick decisions in order to enhance their credibility within the classroom.

## 6.7 Reflections on the inquiry

Conducting and being a part of this study allowed for me to develop as a beginner teacher and as a researcher. Through this study, I have been exposed to various schooling contexts and cultures across Pretoria. I was able to communicate with various beginner teachers who are experiencing similar challenges and journeys to my own. This made it easier for me to relate to my participants and to reflect on their experiences in an empathetic manner. It was comforting to be reminded that many beginner teachers face similar challenges within the classroom and it was encouraging to hear and to learn about the various techniques that beginner teachers use. I have adopted some of these strategies and incorporated them into my practice. It was inspiring and motivating for me to hear the teachers' perspectives and to really fine-tune my understanding of credibility. I am now more aware of my credibility development within my practice. I have created a space for daily reflections of what I bring into my classroom and how my learners react to my behaviour.

Beginner teachers experience a vast amount of stresses. Administrative duties, classroom management, integration into new contexts and cultures are amongst the many pressures endured by beginner teachers. My academic argument shed light on my personal experiences as a beginner teacher. I focussed this study on displayed learners' behaviours with the intent of understanding beginner teachers' perceptions of own credibility. By focusing on the elements of teacher credibility in this study, namely immediacy, trustworthiness, competence, and dynamism, I have become more aware of my own perceptions in the classroom.

The three-pronged concept used to describe learner behaviour comprised learner motivation, learner interest, and learner discipline. As a beginner teacher, reflection of my credibility was based on how my learners react to me as a teacher as well as how my learners respond to my lessons. Thus, in the development of my teacher credibility, three elements surfaced: *learner interest* in relation to my teacher credibility, how curious and

involved my learners are in terms of participating and answering questions within my lessons; *learner motivation*, what forms of rewards are required for my learners to actively integrate themselves within the learning process; and *learner discipline*, the physical behaviour of my learners during my lessons in terms of rowdiness versus being seated. Teacher credibility relates to the social relationships formed between teachers and learners. IP learners are developing social beings who thrive on the idea of social acceptance and emotional competence. IP learners are at a stage in their lives of forming connections with others based on immediacy, trustworthiness, competence, and dynamism (Haskins, 2001; Teven & McCroskey, 1997). These connections allow for meaningful relationships to be formed within the classroom context which fosters beginner teachers' perceptions of own credibility.

## **6.8 Chapter summary**

In this chapter, I presented a synopsis of the themes that underlie this study based on the findings. I presented the significance of this study and I highlighted the limitations of this inquiry. I outlined a few recommendations for future research with accompanying research questions. I revisited my research assumptions that were introduced in Chapter 1 (c.f., Chapter 1, 1.9). I concluded with a reflection of this inquiry. This research study discovered that beginner teachers' perceptions are, to a large extent, based on their emotional responses to learner behaviour. Beginner teachers experience a higher sense of credibility when their learners display interest within their lessons, show intrinsic motivation to want to take learning into their own hands, and display discipline throughout the lesson. Beginner teachers linked higher credibility with interest learners who bring additional research to class without being asked to do so. Moreover, when learners displayed disciplined behaviour, such as being seated, raising of hands, and asking meaningful questions, beginner teachers described a higher sense of credibility.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Beginner teachers' semi-structured interview schedule

#### Beginner teachers' semi-structured interview schedule

Beginner teachers' perceptions of their credibility based on displayed learner behaviour in the Intermediate Phase

Time of interview: \_\_\_\_\_ Duration of interview: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_  
Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_ Interviewee: \_\_\_\_\_  
Male/Female: \_\_\_\_\_ Pseudonym: \_\_\_\_\_

Introduction of interviewer/interviewee

Hello, my name is Tanita Reddy, and I am currently conducting a research study in pursuit of my Master's degree from the University of Pretoria.

Before progressing with the interview, I would like to know more about you.

A) Describe yourself as a teacher.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

B) Why did you choose to become a teacher?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

With the abovementioned topics in mind...

Credibility based on learner behaviour

1. What methods do you use to establish and maintain discipline? (Discipline)
2. What is a normal school day like? Tell me more in terms of learner discipline? (Discipline)  
How do you deal with discipline with a group of learners in comparison to a single "difficult learner"? (Discipline)
3. What advice would you give yourself when you first began teaching in relation to dealing with learner discipline? (Discipline)
4. What do you think is more important in your practice: learner discipline or learner motivation? Why? (Motivation and Discipline)

5. Do you think that there is a link between learner interest and learner motivation? Please explain. (Learner motivation and learner interest)
6. How do you make lessons with learners exciting? (Learner interest)
7. When do you think learners are interested in a lesson? (Learner interest)
8. How do you know when learners are interested? (Learner interest)
9. Do you think learners enjoy your classes? Why/Why not? (Learner interest)
10. Do you experience "exciting" lessons often with your learners? (Learner interest)
11. What advice would you give to future beginner teachers based on making lessons valuable in terms of learning? (Learner interest)
12. What does motivation mean to you? (Motivation)  
What do you regard as a motivated learner? (Motivation)  
What do you think is the best way to increase the motivation of your learners? (Motivation)
13. Do you think extrinsic motivation (outer motivation such as rewards or higher results) or intrinsic motivation (learning for the love of knowledge and wanting to feed curiosity) is more valuable in your lessons? (Motivation)
14. Tell me more about the incentives you use within your lessons? (example: sweets, stickers, and so forth). (Motivation)
15. Do you think learners became more comfortable with you throughout your years of teaching? If so, why? (Trustworthiness)  
Are there learners who come to you to discuss problems confidentially? (Trustworthiness)
16. Approximately how much time during one week do you spend on attending to learners' personal problems? (Trustworthiness)
17. Describe the teaching methods you use in a typical lesson. (Immediacy)  
Do you think learners act the same way every day? (Relatability)
18. When do the learners' behaviour change? (Relatability)
19. How does the learners' behaviour correlate to your own feelings/mood on a specific day? Or is there no correlation at all? (Relatability)
20. What do you base your success as a teacher on? Why?
21. Is there anything else you want to add to our conversation?

## Appendix B: Researcher journal

### Researcher journal

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Beginner teachers' perceptions of their credibility based on displayed learner behaviour in the Intermediate Phase

Pseudonym: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of reflector: \_\_\_\_\_ Role of reflector: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Length of reflection: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Researcher journal

Notes:

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## Appendix C: Field notes

**Descriptive fieldnotes**

**Behaviour of participant:**

**Years of experience in practice:**

**Confidence whilst answering questions:**

**Interest of participant:**

**Honesty levels of participant:**

**How well does participant seem to know his/her learners?**

**Organisation skills of participant?**

**Professional development interests of participant?**

**Additional comments:**

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## Appendix D: Participant consent form



### Participant consent form

Research title: Beginner teachers' perceptions of their own credibility based on displayed learner behaviour in the classroom.

#### I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Dear participant,

My name is Tanita Reddy and I am currently studying towards my Master's degree specialising in Humanities Education at the University of Pretoria. I am engaging in a research study of which I am required to explore South African beginner teachers' perceptions of their credibility based on displayed learner behaviour in the Intermediate Phase. I am welcoming various Intermediate Phase beginner teachers working in private schools in and around Gauteng. By partaking in this research study, you will be contributing to the findings of this study in terms of how beginner teachers perceive their credibility based on displayed learner behaviour in the Intermediate Phase.

#### II. PROCEDURE

If you decide to partake in this research study, I (as the researcher) will conduct a semi-structured interview with you based on your perceptions, experiences and observations in order to collect information that will support the purpose of this research study.

- I will ask the teachers various questions relating to their views about their own practices and observed learner behaviour, specifically focussing on learner discipline within the classroom, perceived learner interest during lessons, as well as learner motivation toward the subject.
- If acceptable by participants, I will utilise a voice recorder throughout the conducting of semi-structured interviews in order to ensure that I refrain from possible researcher biases throughout the decoding process. Moreover, I will record important information throughout the interview in a researcher journal, such that I capture all necessary details relating to answers provided by the teachers.
- The semi-structured interview will take place at a time suitable to the participant and a venue that is most convenient for the participant. Furthermore, the interview will not exceed an hour.

#### III. PARTICIPATION

It is crucial that all participants are aware of the fact that participation within this research study is completely voluntary. All participants are permitted to withdraw from this study at any point with no consequences. All participants should understand that there are no risks in engaging in this research study grounded upon the ethical principle of *safety in participation*. Additionally, this research study provides participants with a possible platform to engage in critical self-reflection based on their current classroom practice and displayed teacher credibility through creating awareness of the effects of credibility within the classroom context.

There are no rewards or monetary value in participating within this study.

IV. PRIVACY, CONFIDENTIALITY/ANONYMITY

At all costs, all personal information and identities will be protected. Only my supervisor and I will have access to your personal information. All collected information will be securely locked away in a safe place. After the completion of this research study, the material will be stored on the University of Pretoria property, specifically at the Humanities Education Department. The information collected will only be utilised for research and academic purposes.

All personal information including names, surnames, ages, school names and so forth will not be used or exposed under any circumstances. I will make use of pseudonyms throughout the study. Participant names will be confidential to me and my supervisor.

V. CONTACT DETAILS

- If you have any further questions or queries, please feel free to contact me via email at TanitaReddy93@gmail.com or on my cell phone on 071 926 1726.
- If further information is required in terms of your rights as a participant within this research study, please feel free to contact my supervisor:

Dr. Yolandi Woest  
University of Pretoria  
Department of Humanities Education (Lecturer)  
Faculty of Education  
yolandi.woest@up.ac.za  
071 203 5381

***By signing this consent form, you are providing consent that you are fully aware of what this research study entails and that you are willing to partake within this research study.***

Name of participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of researcher: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of researcher: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Consent form

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (your name), agree/do not agree (cross out what is not applicable) to participate in this research study titled: **Beginner teachers' perceptions of their credibility based on displayed learner behaviour in the classroom**. I am fully aware that I will be interviewed about the abovementioned topic for approximately one hour at a venue suitable for me outside of school hours. I understand that the interview will be audio taped for accuracy purposes.

I understand that the information gathered from the interview and the reflective notes will be utilised for research and academic purposes. The researcher will remain objective at all times and questions will be asked in a non-intrusive manner.

I understand that the researcher pledges to the following principles:

- Voluntary participation* in the research study, ensuring that participants have the right to withdraw from the research at any given time.
- Informed consent*, relating to participants being fully aware and knowledgeable about the research procedure and purposes, thus participants are required to consent to their participation with a signature on the consent form.
- Safety in participation* ensures that the participants should not be exposed to any form of risk or harm throughout the duration of the research process, e.g. physical, psychological or emotional harm.
- Privacy/Confidentiality and Anonymity* entails pseudonyms being utilised in all publications with the security of personal information being assured e.g. names, surnames, and school names.
- Trust* relates to participants being fully aware of the intentions and purpose of this research study with the absence of deceptions or acts of betrayal throughout the research process or publications stemming from this research study.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix E: Headmaster consent form

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### Headmaster consent form

Research title: Beginner teachers' perceptions of their credibility based on displayed learner behaviour in the Intermediate Phase

#### I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Dear Headmaster,

My name is Tanita Reddy and I am currently studying towards my Master's degree specialising in Humanities Education at the University of Pretoria. I am engaging in a research study of which I am required to explore South African beginner teachers' perceptions of their credibility based on displayed learner behaviour in the Intermediate Phase. I am welcoming various Intermediate Phase teachers working in private schools in and around Gauteng. By beginner teachers partaking in this research study, they will be contributing to the findings of this study in terms of how beginner teachers perceive their credibility based on displayed learner behaviour in the Intermediate Phase.

#### II. PROCEDURE

If you consent to partake in this research study, I (as the researcher) will conduct a semi-structured interview with beginner teachers in your school based on their perceptions, experiences and observations in order to collect information that will support the purpose of this research study.

- I will ask the teachers various questions relating to their views about their own practices and observed learner behaviour, specifically focussing on learner discipline within the classroom, perceived learner interest during lessons, as well as learner motivation toward the subject.
- If acceptable by participants, I will utilise a voice recorder throughout the conducting of semi-structured interviews in order to ensure that I refrain from possible researcher biases throughout the decoding process. Moreover, I will record important information throughout the interview in a researcher journal, such that I capture all necessary details relating to answers provided by the teachers.
- The semi-structured interview will take place at a time suitable to the participant and a venue that is most convenient for the participant. Furthermore, the interview will not exceed an hour. The semi-structured interviews will not be conducted during school time and thus will not disrupt any lessons.

#### III. PARTICIPATION

It is crucial that all participants are aware of the fact that participation within this research study is completely voluntary. All participants are permitted to withdraw from this study at any point with no consequences. All participants should understand that there are no risks in engaging in this research study grounded upon the ethical principle of *safety in participation*. Additionally, this research study provides participants with a possible platform to engage in critical self-reflection based on their current classroom practice and displayed teacher credibility through creating awareness of the effects of credibility within the classroom context.

There are no rewards or monetary value in participating within this study.

IV. PRIVACY, CONFIDENTIALITY/ANONYMITY

At all costs, all personal information and identities will be protected. Only my supervisor and I will have access to your personal information. All collected information will be securely locked away in a safe place. After the completion of this research study, the material will be stored on the University of Pretoria property, specifically at the Humanities Education Department. The information collected will only be utilised for research and academic purposes.

All personal information including names, surnames, ages, school names and so forth will not be used or exposed under any circumstances. I will make use of pseudonyms throughout the study. Participant names will be confidential to me and my supervisor.

V. CONTACT DETAILS

- If you have any further questions or queries, please feel free to contact me via email at TanitaReddy93@gmail.com or on my cell phone on 071 926 1726.
- If further information is required in terms of your rights as a participant within this research study, please feel free to contact my supervisor:

Dr. Yolandi Woest  
University of Pretoria  
Department of Humanities Education (Lecturer)  
Faculty of Education  
yolandi.woest@up.ac.za  
071 203 5381

***By signing this consent form, you are providing consent that you are fully aware of what this research study entails and that you are willing to partake within this research study.***

Name of researcher: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of researcher: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Consent form

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (your name), Headmaster of \_\_\_\_\_ agree/do not agree (cross out what is not applicable) to allow Tanita Reddy to conduct research in this school. The topic of research titled: **Beginner teachers' perceptions of their credibility based on displayed learner behaviour in the classroom**. I am fully aware that beginner teachers will be interviewed about the abovementioned topic for approximately one hour at a venue suitable for me outside of school hours. I understand that the interview will be audio taped for accuracy purposes.

I understand that the information gathered from the interview and the reflective notes will be utilised for research and academic purposes. The researcher will remain objective at all times and questions will be asked in a non-intrusive manner.

I understand that the researcher pledges to the following principles:

- Voluntary participation* in the research study, ensuring that participants have the right to withdraw from the research at any given time.
- Informed consent*, relating to participants being fully aware and knowledgeable about the research procedure and purposes, thus participants are required to consent to their participation with a signature on the consent form.
- Safety in participation* ensures that the participants should not be exposed to any form of risk or harm throughout the duration of the research process, e.g. physical, psychological or emotional harm.
- Privacy/Confidentiality and Anonymity* entails pseudonyms being utilised in all publications with the security of personal information being assured e.g. names, surnames, and school names.
- Trust* relates to participants being fully aware of the intentions and purpose of this research study with the absence of deceptions or acts of betrayal throughout the research process or publications stemming from this research study.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix F: Extracts from transcripts

### Extracts from transcripts

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#### Aria Semi-structured interview 1:

- R Hello my name is Tanita Reddy and I am currently conducting research study in pursuit of Master's degree from the University of Pretoria. Before progressing with the interview, I would like to know more about you. Please can you describe yourself as a teacher?
- I Okay well if I have to describe myself I would obviously say that I am punctual and I, I prefer for, for everything that I do to be organised and in order and done before the time so that I am not caught off-guard or anything like that and when I do, when I am teaching the learners I do like it when learners are attentive and they are focussed on their work and the listen and when, when that is, when we are having a conversation or when the children are doing work it's, it's nice when we can, we can get to know each other based on when it is time for work and when it is time for you know getting to know each other on personal level, not very personal but just so that I can have a little bit of background of each learner.
- R Okay uhm why did you choose to become a teacher?
- I Well I obviously chose to become a teacher because I, I like helping people who can't, who can't really help themselves, they, they still have to learn how to get through it and to be able to do something and to master it to the best of their ability.
- R Okay so with these questions in mind, I am going to start on question number one. What methods do you use to establish and maintain discipline in your classroom?
- I Well at, in the school that I am in, you are not really allowed to, you are not really allowed to shout and punish and all of those things. You have to speak to the child as if, as if you are trying to teach them to be responsible. So you need to teach them to be responsible human beings because they are obviously going to need to be responsible when they are older. So if a learner does something wrong or does something that, it's not correct, then I as a teacher I have to speak to the learner to ensure that they understood that what they did was wrong and that they understand that they shouldn't do what they did again. So I, I am not, I don't degrade and I don't uhm punish but rather I instil uhh a type of responsibility so they can you know, see for themselves what they did was wrong and they can just own up to their, to their actions.
- R Okay. Uhm question number two, what is a normal school day like? Tell me more in terms of learner discipline?
- I Okay well a normal school day, the learners are usually, when, in the classroom we have each, each level or grade has, they have independent time, each one has a specific time when they can sit and do anything they want by themselves and uhm during that time the grade 5's or the level 2's, they are not yet as responsible as the level 3's which is grade 6 or they are not as, if you can say scared, as the level 1's because you know grade 4's they usually still listen to the teacher.
- R Ja.
- I Whereas grade 5 they still, they are trying to you know rebel type of what they also want, some of them want to listen but they want to follow their friends, so with my level 1's and

my level 3's I, I never struggle with discipline, but the level 2's is always talking and fooling around and not focussing and a lot of them they, they are in their independent time and they are meant to be doing homework independently, they instead of doing their work responsibly, they would rather go and do something else, instead of actually focusing on their homework.

R Okay. Okay question number three. How do you deal with discipline with a group of learners in comparison to a single difficult learner?

I Well with, with a group obviously it's, it's easier because if you, if one, if everyone in the group is guilty of the same thing then you can give out the punishment accordingly.

R Ja.

I And but also if the learner, if you are doing it, you know just a single learner, it's sometimes, sometimes is easier to speak to one learner themselves because then you can have like a one on one conversation and you can be honest and you can, you know sometimes it hits them more than when they are in a group, they take it lightly and they tend to joke around more and they, they laugh about it at the end of the day. Instead of taking it seriously. So I think that when, it's easier when you are disciplining a group but it, it hits them more when you discipline, like a single ja. To a single learner.

R Okay. Question number four, would advise would you give yourself when you first began teaching in relation to dealing with learner discipline?

I Well when I first began teaching I would obviously knowing what I know now, is just that I need to, I would have needed to have the teacher learner like relationship instead of them seeing me because I was younger and I was, I didn't look as old as most of the teachers.

R Ja.

I They rather saw me as an older sister than a teacher so they would take advantage of that. So if I, if I had to tell myself when I first started, is just be, not be more, uhh, okay you can say be more strict so that I can just, they can know the line between teacher and learner.

#### Charlotte Semi-structured interview 2:

R Okay. Question two: Why did you choose to become a teacher?

I Because back when I was a student I felt that it was very difficult for me to grasp the concept of how mathematical things were formed and that even though I needed to be taught ways in learning how the steps are formed and how I was brought up but they always skipped the skips so I never knew how to grasp the concept of Mathematics so in order to actually help future generations I felt that maybe I should become a teacher so that I can actually show them the proper steps so that they don't see Math's as a scary subject.

R Okay. So, with these topics in mind I will start with question number one. Question number one: What methods do you use to establish and maintain discipline?

I I normally refer to positive reinforcements if not then I have to resort to negative reinforcements as in break detentions or cutting out what's the word, privileges.

R Okay. Question number two: What is a normal school day like? Tell me more in terms of learner discipline.

- I Normally it resorts to only a few being overactive or completely because they have sugar in the morning, or things like that but normally you have the others trying to ground them, otherwise you will need to put them in time out or separate them from the group.
- R Okay. Question number three: How do you deal with discipline with a group of learners in comparison to a single difficult learner?
- I With a group then I need to actually find out who is the instigator and then I actually with regards to me I take them on as such. I challenge them in a sense that okay do they actually know the work and if they do, then they have actually a sense of okay then I can sort of talk but if they don't even know how to do a simple basic thing, then they have no sense of what's going on in the class and then I broadly tell them no wonder your marks are the way they are. So in terms of being an individual, then I can actually individually say okay, what is your problem, why are you being this way, why are you behaving this way, is it something that has to do with home or whatever it is and then it is easier for me to get to the root of the problem in that sense, with an individual than a group.
- R Okay. Question number four: What advice would you give yourself when you first began teaching in relation to dealing with learner discipline?
- I Drink lots of ginger so your throat doesn't get sore but ah otherwise ah a whistle is very handy and be able to separate the instigators in the class and if not, then you are going to need to work out a different kind of system to get them to work.

### Rochelle Semi-structured interview 3:

- R Question number 6. How do you make lessons with your learners exiting?
- I I try to incorporate a sort of game with them. Like usually with literature, we have a quiz in the classroom. So they read ahead like for the week, for each week, and I prepared questions, and we have a quiz. So they learn a lot in that way. And at other times we play like spelling, because spelling is important to them so, ja. We have girls versus boys, they really love that competition.
- R Okay.
- I Ja, so.
- R Okay. Question number 7. When do you think learners are interested in a lesson?
- I What do you, elaborate on that.
- R So, what do you see with your learners when you know that they are interested? Like what type of behaviour do you see?
- I They are, like they are focussed, you know, and I think they're interested when, obviously when they realise that the lesson is going to be interesting, that's what I'm usually like, I try and do it in a game form because with the young ones they like something that has competition and creativity, or some form of creativity, because I have a lot of learners in my class who are creative. So, if it is anything to with using colour and beads and all sorts of patterns or drawings, they would like something like that. So ja basically by incorporating things any artistic elements or gaming into it, then they tend to enjoy it, and are more focussed. With regard to the discipline, like I said, sometimes it is just 1 or 2 learners who have a learning challenge. So, they tend to be disruptive, even-though you implement some sort of gaming.
- R Ja. Okay. Question number 8. How do you know when learners are interested.

I Wasn't that the question now?  
R Oh.  
I How do I know when the learners are interested.  
R Ja like, okay but what type of behaviour, do you see with them?  
I They are more focussed.  
R More focussed.  
I Ja more focussed and like they do show a lot of like enthusiasm.  
R Okay.  
I And they can't wait to begin with the lesson, so they tend to like shout at the other ones like, let we keep quite now so that they can get started.

Carmen Semi-structured interview 4:

R Okay. Question 7. When do you think learners are interested in a lesson?  
I I don't understand, like when?  
R Like, based on their behaviour, their interaction in the lesson.  
I Okay, so I would say, when they're excited you immediately notice that they are, you know, they will say ha cool, whatever. So, but I, I'd say I can, I can more realise when a learner is not interested.  
R Okay.  
I Then when they are interested.  
R By?  
I By their behaviour, by the work that they've completed, by the quality of work.  
R Okay.  
I I also like discussing things with them a lot. So, if they're not interested they don't really want to discuss and be part of what is happening.  
R Okay.  
I And I must say, I don't really, with that, I think it is more the children who are behaviour issues who automatically won't be interested.  
R Ja.  
I It is not really, I would say the rest of the class who, I've never really experienced that [laughing] where the whole class is not interested.  
R [laughing] At least.  
I Ja.

- R Question 8. How do you know when, no I just asked that hey, in learners are interested. Question 9. Do you think learners enjoy your classes? Why or why not?
- I I think it, it also depends on the learners and what lesson it is. I know like I am teaching, most of my kids are English and not Afrikaans. I can see the Afrikaans children will enjoy Afrikaans lessons, because they're good at it.
- R Ja.
- I When you compare it to the rest of the class. But I always try to make it fun for them, or involve them in, you know, teaching each other, learning from each other. So ja.

Lauren Semi-structured interview 5:

- R Ja. Question number 5.1: What do you think is more important in your practice? Learner discipline or learner motivation? And why?
- I I think both are very important. Uhm, I think they go hand in hand. You do need to discipline uhm, - I believe so. The discipline and motivation are both very important – they work hand in hand because uhm, I believe that if a learner is not disciplined; they don't learn to be motivated about their work. And if they don't have the motivation; then they don't get disciplined. Uhm, for instance; if you are motivated to learn about plants then you will be disciplined to sit and actually do your work as an individual. So I think they complement each other.
- R Okay. Question 5.2: Do you think that there is a link between learner interest and learner motivation? And please explain.
- I Yes, definitely. I have actually been speaking to a parent about one of these things. Uhm, when a child doesn't have interest in a particular kind of subject or a theme; I find that it's actually quiet strenuously for you because you have to work extra hard. It's something that they need to learn but they have no interest in, so you have to find ways to help them to gain interest in order that they might learn. So these two are also interlinked.
- R Okay. So you don't pick one over the other?
- I I wouldn't pick one over the other.
- R Okay. Question number 6: How do you make lessons with learners exciting?
- I I get them to take over. Once they take over; it becomes theirs and they are very happy, instead of me just sitting there and just talking the whole time. I try and uh, I try and see what their strengths are or what their learning styles are. And some are visual so I use videos, sometimes I'll just use an audio, or pictures or get them to talk, get them to present – get them to do stuff. So when they take over and the lesson becomes theirs then it's more exciting – hands on, then they enjoy it more.
- R Okay. Question number 7: When do you think learners are interested in a lesson?
- I I think once you get – capture their attention and you ask them probing questions; like for instance; in the beginning of my lessons, I don't just introduce a topic by saying; "We are going to do this today..." I will find a question in relation to that. If we are going to learn about planes; uhm, I would ask; "What do you think will happen if there is a plane that landed in the ocean?" Then it gains their attention, it captures their interest. That's what works for me at least. [laughs]

Kaleb Semi-structured interview 6:

- R Okay. Question number 7: When do you think learners are interested in a lesson?
- I Their work rate; it becomes very high. For an example; a lesson at 30 minutes a pop could take less than 30 minutes and then we end up working on the extension. Whereas if it's something that they really don't like, or something that they have done before too many times, uhm, particularly with over laps, over the years in the syllabus; so like, the things that the grade 4's have done, the grade 5's have done, now I have to do it again...
- R Mhmm.
- I They're tired of it. They've done it, they're bored of it. I still have to cover it but their interest has been depleted on it. The lesson becomes the same lesson that is 30 minutes long ends up dragging on for like, two maybe three lessons. Discipline freaks out, children don't like it; you can check the general, uhm, body language of the class; flop around, play with things and walk around and when they start asking completely irrelevant questions; then I think to myself; "Oh, why? Why are we now there and not here?"
- R Mhmm.
- I Ja.
- R Okay. Uhm, question number 8: How do you know when learners are now interested?
- I Questions.
- R Questions?
- I They ask a lot of questions. You can also pick up the vibe in the class. When I would ask them a question and multiple hands come up and people will stand on the desk and then people are like; "Pick me! Pick me!"
- R Mhmm.
- I Or "Sir please can I answer?" or "She always answers! Can I please answer?" Then I realise; "Okay, so I've got most of you here with me right now on the topic and most of you know what's going on and most of you seem very excited to pitch the answer." So I'm going to guess their reaction to a question.
- R Okay.
- I Ja.
- R Question number 9: Do you think learners enjoy your classes? Why or why not?
- I Sorry?
- R Question number 9: Do you think learners enjoy your classes? Why or why not?
- I I think they do. I think it's because I'm younger than the rest of the staff. We have a different kind of relationship in class. We can talk about things differently. Not that they couldn't talk about certain things to other staff, it's just I think the age gap is – the age gap to them is more from their parents to them.
- R Mhmm.
- I It's just respectful and reserved when it comes to questions, I think. Because I'm young and maybe they feel like they can relate to me better? Or I can relate to them better. I often

throw in some slang when I teach or the odd word here or there or the odd joke here and there that they'll click. Uhm, which I don't think the older, more experienced teachers have. They might click on a different level but I don't think they have them *here* where as I think I do. Ja.

R Okay. Question number 10: Do you experience exciting lessons often with your learners?

I If it's practical, yes.

R Okay.

I They love it. They get a lot – they get very rowdy so when practical comes around and everybody gets a chance to do something, everybody wants to talk, wants to say something, everyone wants to be - or partake, which is natural. And then, uhm, ja.

#### Lupita Semi-structured interview 7:

R Okay question number ten, do you experience exciting lessons often with your learners?

I Mmmm sometimes, uhm trying to get through the syllabus is always some of the, somewhat of a challenge, so you can't have too many exciting lessons if you have to get through the syllabus.

R Okay

I And teach difficult concepts.

R Question eleven, what advice would you give to future beginner teachers based on making lessons valuable in terms of learning?

I I would say planning is very very important, uhm, to plan your lessons, what extra resources you might need, uhm the time allocations, it's also very very important, uhm, make sure that it's in there world frame, uhm and incorporate a little bit of fun in the lesson.

R Okay question number twelve, what does motivation mean to you?

I Uhh, it's doing your best in every aspect of, uhm of your life, uhm, yes ...[laughing]

R Question thirteen, what do you regard as motivated learner?

I Uhh it's a learner that always does his best, they prepare well a test, uhm, they come with prepared questions to class, uhm, ja.

R Okay. Question number fourteen, what do you think is the best way to increase the motivation of your learners?

I Well my learners really like extrinsic uhm motivation.

R ...[laughing]

I When they get rewards, I have got a big jar of sweets in my classroom and I try to uhm get very nice cool stickers.

R Okay.

I Uhm in their book and they work towards a certain amount of sticker, stickers in their books and then they will also receive like a little reward.

R Okay. Question number fifteen, do you think extrinsic motivation such as rewards are higher results or intrinsic motivations such as the love of learning or wanting to feed curiosity is more valuable in your lessons.

I Uhm I would say intrinsic motivation is a lot more important, uhm I have seen in my class children with more intrinsic motivations, uhm, their academic results are a lot better than the people, uhm that's motivated by extrinsic motivation.

#### Caroline Semi-structured interview 8:

R Okay. Question 18: Are there learners who come to you to discuss problems confidentially?

I Yes. There are learners that do come to me to discuss problems. Ja.

R Okay. Question number 19: Approximately how much time during one week do you spend on attending to learners' personal problems?

I Uhm, maybe three times a week. Ja. If not less. Maybe less than that.

R Okay. Question 20: Describe the teaching methods you use in a typical lesson?

I Okay. I use; I usually work from our notes. So uhm, we use ja, we use our notes and we read. There is a lot of comprehension that we do. Discussions, debates. Uh, I use pictures and videos and then we discuss those. Uhm, what else do I use? Ja. That's pretty much...

R Okay. Question number 21: Do you think learners act the same way every day?

I No. No, definitely not. [laughs]

R Why do you say this?

I Uhm, often learners are affected by you know, the time of the day, or uhm, events that have happened before or during the day. So they are often affected by those things and you as a teacher need to adjust yourself so that you can be on the, you can be understanding towards them. So ja.

R Okay. Question number 22: When do the learners behaviours change?

I Like I said, it can be throughout the day. It could be the end of the day when they are really tiered or they just not focused because they have had a long day. It could be straight after break, sometimes they can be very distracted or uhm or you know very unfocused. And uhm, they change, sometimes the behaviour changes when a different teacher walks into the classroom. That can happen sometimes, when a different teacher walks in and all of a sudden their behaviour can change. And I think that's the impact that those teachers can also have on a classroom.

R Okay. Question number 23: How does the learners behaviour correlates to your own feelings or mood on the specific day or is there no correlation at all?

I When I first started teaching, I used to – my own feelings and mood on a specific day would you know, be completely out of balance with the kids, when I started teaching but as soon as I started getting to knowing how the kids feel and just coming in with understanding and empathy with the children and just knowing; okay this one is having a bad day... having that empathy with them helped me understand that no matter what mood I'm in; I need to be, I need to keep myself stable for them. This constantly, you know, consistent with them and in my mood as well. I mustn't let that affect my, how I treat them or how, you know. But you are human at the end of the day so it does affect you. So ja.

R Ja, okay. Question number 24: What do you base your success as a teacher on and why?

I I base my success on how many children come to me and say to me; "Ma'am, your lesson was amazing," or how many people say you know; "I really enjoyed your lesson today," or "when are we going to do this?" I think the most important for me is that they enjoy the lesson. And it's not so much of how much who got the highest marks and if my marks were the highest; I don't mind if they didn't come through or they failed or whatever. Uhm, ja, so I base it on how I, if I got through to them with the subject or with whatever I was teaching. If they realised; "Oh but I learnt this." Or you know, so it's based on how actually the child enjoyed it or not.

## Appendix G: Extracts from researcher journal and field notes



### Extracts from researcher journal and field notes

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Researcher journal: 15 December 2016: After finally completing my year of honours, I had some time to critically reflect and give some thought to where my passion may lie in the education faculty. I have done some research and I have reflected upon my personal experiences as a student teacher and I managed to identify a discrepancy between beginner teachers and experienced teachers that bothered me. I read up on existing literature relating to teacher credibility, teacher immediacy, and learner behaviour. I would like to gain more insight into the relationship formed between beginner teachers and learners in relation to providing quality education to our youth in South Africa.

Researcher journal: 5 January 2017: I am currently working closely with my supervisor in adapting and modifying my proposal as I intend to defend my research study in February 2017. I am currently working on my proposal in addition to Chapters 1, 2, and 3 of my dissertation.

Researcher journal: 17 February 2017: I have presented and defended my research topic, I am now organising my ethical clearance paperwork in order to begin with the data collection process. I do have four beginner teachers in mind that I know of through mutual modules attended during my undergraduate degree who could potentially be participants within my study.

Researcher journal: 13 March 2017: Currently on my second draft of my Chapters 1, 2, and 3 – adapting and modifying where necessary. I have prepared the semi-structured interview questions as well as the guidelines of my researcher journal for each conducted interview.

Researcher journal: 15 May 2017: I am setting up interviews times with possible participants. I have contacted four participants thus far.

Researcher journal: 18 May 2017: I conducted the first interview today, it went well. I am concerned about participants feeling nervous and anxious which may hinder their voices. I have decided to have a bit of an informal chat with them before the interview just for them to get to know me and feel a little more at ease when engaging with the questions.

Field notes: 19 May 2017: Having listened to the interviews thus far, I am identifying a few recurring themes, such as the main influences on learner behaviour relates to the learners' circle of friends. This makes sense as learners in the IP are in the process of finding who they are as individuals, but more importantly, who they are in terms of how they identify with others'.

Field notes: 21 May 2017: I am highly intrigued by how the participants go about answering questions 17, 18, and 19. These questions are directly related to teacher credibility and the quality of the relationship that is formed between the beginner teachers and their learners in a space that is grounded upon teacher immediacy and relatability. Interestingly, some beginner teachers value these abovementioned aspects more highly than others and it is profound to connect how beginner teachers describe themselves in relation to how their learners relate with the beginner teachers.

Researcher journal: 25 May 2017: Some of the participants struggle to understand a few of the interview questions. I have discussed this matter with my supervisor and we have come to the conclusion of splitting question 5 into two separate parts in order to enhance participant understanding as well as to gain more valuable insight into the participants' answers and lived experiences. Additionally, the researcher journal guidelines are really helpful in assisting me in depicting a holistic picture of each of the participants in which I am enabled to draw upon these field notes as a means of enhanced understanding of participants' voices.

Researcher journal: 3 June 2017: I have decided to contact various private school headmasters via email in order to arrange more interview times with possible beginner teachers as I am unsatisfied with the collected data – I do not feel that my data is saturated at this point with only four participants. Many schools ignored my emails, which propelled me to phone each of the schools and I directly spoke to the headmaster explaining my research study and the data collection process. Time slots were arranged and beginner teachers were selected by the headmasters. About three schools did not respond to my emails or calls in relation to being a part of my research study.

Field notes: 4 June 2017: Beginner teacher advice to themselves at the very beginning of their careers as teachers (first term of this year or 4 years ago) provides insight as to how much reflection beginner teachers actually do and how much value is returned from these reflections in terms of developing themselves as beginner teachers. Considering that teacher credibility is a sensitive topic, many of the beginner teachers were honest in their answers in terms of stating that not all learners are interested in the beginner teachers' lessons. Also, in reading the interviews over, I am aware of how many of the beginner teachers actually struggle with learner behaviour within the classroom.

Researcher journal: 8 June 2017: Participants felt more at ease toward the middle of their interviews. However, a lot of the critical information was shared with me during the informal chats that I engaged in just before the recording of the interviews as well as after the interviews. I have interviewed eight participants thus far and I am satisfied with my data – the data is now saturated and I intend on decoding as soon as possible in order to get started with Chapter 4.

Researcher journal: 15 June 2017: Reflecting in this journal provides a platform for me to critically evaluate my position as a researcher within my study as well as to relate the interview content to that of my own personal thoughts based on my topic. Interestingly, several participants shared a similar view in stating that they feel overwhelmed as beginner teachers, especially the beginner teachers who are enduring their first year in the profession. I am able to relate to these teachers' experiences as I, myself, am a first-year beginner teacher. Many beginner teachers additionally shared an appreciation in the topic of this study as so much of time and effort is focussed on the learners, but very little support is provided to teachers.

Researcher journal: 25 June 2017: As I venture on this journey of enduring my first year as a teacher in addition to completing my master's degree, I am appreciative that I am able to live out my experiences as a beginner teacher alongside my masters. It allows for me to reflect holistically on my own experiences which provides me with direction and insight into how I can valuably add to my literature review as well as how I can adapt my teaching experiences in relation to hearing what other beginner teacher have to say and share through their interviews.

## Appendix H: Research study schedule

### Research study schedule (2016/2017)

Interview number	Participant	Initial contact of school	Initial contact of participant	Headmaster consent form signed	Participant consent form signed	Semi-structured interview conducted	Completion of researcher journal
1	Aria	Contacted headmaster via email on the 14/05/2017	Contact through Whatsapp on the 07/05/2017	18/05/2017	18/05/2017	18/05/2017 15:35-16:00	18/05/2017 17:00-17:20
2	Charlotte	Contacted headmaster via email on the 14/05/2017  Phoned the school secretary and principal on the 22/05/2017	Contact through Whatsapp on the 04/05/2017	22/05/2017	22/05/2017	22/05/2017 15:30-15:45	22/05/2017 16:30-16:45
3	Rochelle	Contacted headmaster via email on the 14/05/2017  Phoned the school secretary on 24/05/2017	Contact through Whatsapp on the 07/05/2017	24/05/2017	24/05/2017	24/05/2017 15:50-16:15	24/05/2017 17:30-17:45

4	Carmen	Contacted headmaster via email on the following dates: 14/05/2017  15/05/2017  19/05/2017  Phoned the school on the 22/05/2017	25/05/2017	25/05/2017	25/05/2017	25/05/2017  15:10-15:40	25/05/2017  16:00-16:20
5	Lauren	Contacted headmaster via email on the following dates: 29/05/2017  30/05/2017	05/06/2017	05/06/2017	05/06/2017	05/06/2017  15:00-15:25	05/06/2017  16:00-16:20
6	Kaleb	Contacted headmaster via email on the 14/05/2017  Phoned the school secretary and principal on the 22/05/2017	06/06/2017	22/05/2017	06/06/2017	06/06/2017  16:00-16:35	06/06/2017  17:30-17:50
7	Lupita	Contacted headmaster and school secretary via	07/06/2017	07/06/2017	07/06/2017	07/06/2017  15:20-15:40	07/06/2017  16:30-16:50

		email on the following dates: 31/05/2017  01/06/2017					
8	Caroline	Contacted the headmaster and school secretary via email on the following dates: 04/06/2017  05/06/2017	08/06/2017	08/06/2017	08/06/2017	08/06/2017 15:30-15:50	08/06/2017 16:30-16:50

