The perspectives of teachers on the implementation of the CPTD system

by

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I, Rejane Roux, declare that the perspectives of teachers on the implementation of the CPTD system is my own work. It has never been submitted in any form for a degree or diploma before in any tertiary institution. Where the work of others has been used, sources have been identified and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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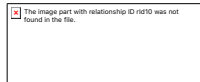
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DEDICATION

I would like to acknowledge my husband, Louis Hager, who makes me believe everything is possible through Jesus Christ. Thank you for helping me keep the faith and to persevere. Thank you, Jesus, for the opportunity and ability to complete this dissertation.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMINOLOGY

CPD	Continuing Professional Development
PD	Professional Development
DoE	Department of Education
DBE	Department of Basic Education
CPTD	Continuing Professional Teacher Development
SACE	South African Council of Educators

Abstract

This study reports on an investigation into the perceptions and experiences of Cohort 3 teachers regarding the Continuing Professional Teacher Development system that is managed and implemented by the South African Council for Educators. The primary research question that guided this study was to find out what the experiences of Cohort 3 South African teachers are regarding the Continuing Professional Teacher Development system. The researcher used sub-questions that focused on Cohort 3 teachers' perceptions and experiences of the implementation of the Continuing Professional Teacher Development system by the South African Council for Educators.

The researcher used an exploratory case study approach to gather the data and embedded this qualitative study in the socio-cultural theory of Vygotsky. Personal interviews were employed as data collection methods. Participants consisted of Cohort 3 teachers from a primary school in Pretoria.

The study examined a range of experiences and perceptions regarding the Continuing Professional Teacher Development system and found that most of the Cohort 3 teachers were showing some frustration with the system so far. The convenience-sampled participants indicated their need for greater variety in the choice of activities in the system and for them to have more of a say over what they should choose to complete as activities to earn them points upon completion. The study found a lack of the individual Cohort 3 teacher's voice in the Continuing Professional Teacher Development system with regard to how the activities are chosen and which acivities are available to Cohort 3 teachers. The literature highlights the context within South African schools that keeps teachers from engaging with professional development. These teachers failed to plan for their own professional development by mapping out their activity choices, based on their preferred areas of growth, due to the aformentioned context they have to deal with. The study found that teachers were not focused on their own professional development since they must face and handle multiple social and economic issues inside and outside their classrooms.

Key Words

Continuing Professional Development, Continuing Professional Teacher Development system, Cohort 3 teacher, Professional Development, South African Council for Educators.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1.   INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

The primary aim of education is to provide quality education that will assist individuals to reach their full human potential (Slabbert, de Kock, & Hattingh, 2009). This can only be done if teachers know what to do and if they do it well. This means that teachers (as the people facilitating human potential) continue to develop their own skills, knowledge sets and attitudes and in doing so, they ensure quality education of learners. Continuing professional development for teachers in South Africa therefore is essential (Department of Basic Education, 2007).

The Department of Basic Education is committed to the philosophy mentioned above. According to the combined Department of Basic Education and South African Council for Education task team (2008), hereafter referred to as the DoE-SACE task team, the primary purpose of continuing professional development for teachers in South Africa is to help improve the quality of education. The efforts of the DoE-SACE task team led to the development and design of the Continuing Professional Teacher Development (hereafter referred to as CPTD) System Version 13A (SACE-DoE task team, 2008), as well as the report entitled *Status of the CPTD Management System* (2012), in order to achieve this main purpose.

A short explanation of the CPTD system is needed to understand the system better. The South African Council for Educators (hereafter referred to as SACE) administers the CPTD system with the support of the Department of Basic Education (hereafter referred to as DBE). The professional development of principals, deputy principals and heads of department was priority, followed by the development of educators and mentor teachers. Individual staff members are expected to earn 150 professional development (or PD) points in each successive three-year cycle by taking part in three types of PD activities supported by SACE. These activities are evaluated based on their contribution to the PD of the teacher and the purpose it serves in the PD of the

teacher. The system is meant to be achievable for teachers financially as well as in terms of time (South African Council for Educators, 2015).

SACE approved the CPTD implementation plan in November 2012. Thereafter, the Professional Development and Research Division had 25 national and provincial meetings with stakeholders and provincial education departments to share the CPTD implementation plan, get buy-in, clarify roles and responsibilities, and identify areas of collaboration. The CPTD system implementation was phased in from January 2014 with the first cohort, namely principals and deputy principals. This smallest cohort group was expected to create a culture of ongoing development in their schools based on their informed position and assist with the implementation of CPTD on a school level (South African Council for Educators, 2015).

SACE (2008) stipulates that PD enhances or increases educators' "mastery of the curriculum and their learning areas, their skills in teaching and facilitating learning, their understanding of young children and young people and their developmental needs and their commitment to the best interest of their learners and their schools". If SACE can accomplish this for teachers in South Africa, educational goals will be more achievable than is currently the case.

The specifics of the plan are discussed briefly. SACE maintains and implements the CPTD system as mentioned earlier, with the support of the DBE. The professional development of Cohort 1 (principals, deputy principals and heads of department) was firstly improved and then educators and the development of mentor teachers would also become a priority. Individual staff members would be expected to earn 150 PD points in each successive three-year cycle by taking part in three types of PD activities, supported by SACE. The SACE activities would be initiated by educators themselves (Type 1), by the school (Type 2) and externally (Type 3). Some activities would be compulsory, and some would be selective.

Some vital points were gathered from the Design CPTD System Version 13A, produced by the SACE-DoE CPTD task team (2008), and emerged from the *Status of the CPTD Management System* (South African Council for Educators Policy and Research devision, 2012). Firstly, employers should pay for employees' compulsory

PD activities. The system should not impose additional financial costs on individual teachers, but the employer of the teacher must cover these costs. Secondly, the time required for professional development should be clear and teachers' workload should be considered. Teachers shouldn't be kept away from their primary goal of teaching due to professional development activities.

Another noteworthy point made from the *Status of the CPTD Management System* (South African Council for Educators Policy and Research devision, 2012) is that although teachers ought to be able to earn the required number of PD points in a cycle at no financial cost to themselves, some teachers may wish to invest their own funds in aspects of their professional development. It is emphasised in the Design of CPTD System Version 13A (2008), as well as in the *Status of the CPTD Management System* (South African Council for Educators Policy and Research devision, 2012) that SACE should promote professional development but not provide it. Service providers should offer and facilitate continuing professional development of teachers.

It is the responsibility of educators themselves to take charge of their self-development by identifying the areas in which they must grow professionally, and it is the role of SACE to guide the educators in this process (Department of Basic Education, 2007). Du Preez and Roux (2008) are of the opinion that educators can be liberated and empowered through the processes of professional development. Continuing Professional Development programmes are employed as an opportunity to give educators a chance to develop themselves by means of training.

From the viewpoint of the researcher, the implementation of the CPTD system is an excellent initiative. From her own experience and that of colleagues, she sensed a need for better professional development and conduct. During the two years working as a teacher, the researcher witnessed a lack of commitment and negative attitudes from colleagues when they had to attend mandatory professional development programmes at school. An example of such compulsory training was when in 2012 teachers had to receive training for the implementation of the revised Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS).

Based on this experience, the researcher started an investigation in teacher training and professional development. She wished to build her own confidence as a teacher and did not want to share in this negativity towards professional development. She found that a policy regarding continuing professional development was in place, but its successful implementation seemed to be problematic. Her personal interest in professional development and the recently increased focus on professional development in education, urged the researcher to identify the current research problem. The unique nature of this research – as a pioneer study in the field of professional development of teachers – made it ever more interesting to her. A limited number of other researcher has been able to attempt an investigation into the professional development of teachers in this way since the development process for Cohort 1 was rolled out in 2012 and for Cohort 3 in 2016 (South African Council for Educators, 2015). This study attempted to capture the voice of the teachers in their perspective of the implementation of the CPTD system.

1.2. STATEMENT OF INTENT AND AIMS

The purpose of this study was to investigate the CPTD system mentioned above. The aim was to investigate the CPTD system from the perspective of the participants (Cohort 3 – Post level 1 teachers). The researcher therefore formulated the following research questions:

1.2.1. PRIMARY RESEARCH QUESTION

What is the experience of South African Cohort 3 teachers regarding the CPTD system?

1.2.2. SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

How do South African Cohort 3 teachers perceive the implementation and management of SACE's CPTD system?

1.3. PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVE

1.3.1. METATHEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS

The paradigmatic perspective is based on the critical realism paradigm. Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014) state that this paradigm explains that the knowledge of reality is due to our experience of social conditioning. Critical realist researchers have the responsibility to expose, critiquing and expose any unjust practices present in society. By doing so, myths are exposed, society is transformed and eventually people are freed from oppression in society. This gives people the power to build a better future for themselves.

The current research aims to investigate the CPTD system from the perspective of South African Cohort 3 teachers. By making the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities or threats of the system known, the system can be transformed. This investigation into the system contributes to the improvement of the CPTD system so as to align it with the professional development goals of teachers in South Africa.

Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.* (2014) further state that the epistemological position of critical realism is to accumulate the appropriate knowledge so as to be geared towards action and to identify practical solutions for problems. This holds true for the motivation for this study. The knowledge needed for this study lay in investigation and knowledge gathering through observation, as well as opinion gathering through interviews. The researcher investigated the inner workings of the CPTD system and consulted governmental publications to understand the intention of the system. The intention (as seen from the government's perspective) and the outcome (as seen from the teachers' perspective) were compared to help identify and address issues within the CPTD system.

Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.* (2014) argue that the ontological position of critical realism points out that unfair treatment of individuals is often the result of dominant ideologies based on illusions, distortions and myths about society. This can be challenging since society's illusion of myths can be subjective and difficult to identify. The researcher can, through investigation, uncover these myths and propose ways in which people

can empower themselves to improve their own situations. The researcher wished to uncover the myth of the lack of teacher professionalism by investigating the CPTD system of SACE and in doing so, she wanted to bring to light the fact that teachers are professional in their daily work and aim to earn the respect of society.

1.3.2. THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS

This study was informed by the socio-cultural theory and framework of Vygotsky (1978), who claims that all human activity is "historically, socially, culturally and temporally situated" (Mansour, El-Deghaidy, Alshamrani and Aldahmash, 2014, p. 950). The researcher investigated how this theory supported the notion that the voices of individual teachers should be echoed in the professional development initiative, since they are the agents of change for their own professional development.

The researcher formulated her data collection choices based on Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory. The latter states that the voice of the individual is vital in terms of human activity, and since education is essential for any human activity that influences life, the researcher supported the notion that teachers' opinion should be heard on how to optimise education through their own professional development.

The researcher's theorising was done inductively and moved from the specific case study of one school to the more general teaching community of South Africa. According to Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.* (2014) inductive reasoning moves from a specific topic to a more generalised topic and builds on an existing theory or develops a new theory. The participants are a specific group, but the research can be expanded to the general teaching society. That, however, goes beyond the scope of this study.

The researcher chose the data collection instrument with the socio-cultural theory as support. Individual interviews were the best-suited choice since the individual voices of the teachers involved was what the researcher wanted to capture in this study.

1.4. RESEARCH APPROACH

The research focused on the experience of individuals within a selected sample of teachers who went through the CPTD system when SACE first rolled it out in 2016.

This was a qualitative descriptive study in which content analysis was applied. Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006) state that qualitative research gathers data by keeping record of opinions and analysing this data through the discovery and classification of subjects.

Participants were purposely selected through convenience sampling and they were willing to participate as a unit of teaching staff from the one school selected for this case study. Five volunteers were willing to participate in the study.

The research approach that was followed will be discussed in more detail later in the study.

1.4.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

Some of the researcher's choices will be introduced in this section and later on discussed in more detail. The researcher used an exploratory case study as research method and investigated the experience that five willing Cohort 3 teachers had with the CPTD system. The meaning and implication of a case study will be discussed later in the study.

Since this was a case study, the sample for this study was chosen based on convenience to the researcher, which will be discussed later. The sample for the current study was a primary school in the Pretoria area and the participants were willing Cohort 3 teachers teaching at this school. The teachers were invited by the researcher to participate in the study by means of a participation letter that was distributed at the school by an acquaintance of the researcher, who is a non-teaching staff member at the school. Samples of these can be found in the Annexure.

The collection of data or information was critical in this research study and it was gathered for the particular issue under investigation. Primary and secondary data sources will be used, since primary data (the data gathered by the researcher from the participants) is needed to understand the perspective of the participants, and secondary data (previously compiled by another researcher) is valuable since the researcher can build on it in this study. More on these choices in the rest of this study.

The data analysis was a recollection of the responses to the questions in the individual interviews, systematically analysed to identify every individual response. This will be discussed later in the study. In the next section the Ethical considerations, etc. will be discussed.

1.4.2. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS, POSSIBLE LIMITATIONS AND ANTICIPATED CONTRIBUTIONS

Ethics can be described as a code that a researcher adheres to or lives up to, their integrity on a personal level. The effect of ethical behaviour reaches far beyond the scope of the individual researcher (Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014). The research study needs to be ethical in every sense. The best way to ensure ethical research practices is to have a clear ethical standard and to adhere to it.

First and foremost, participants in this study were guaranteed that the research would be used only for academic purposes, an invitation and participation letter (Annexure A) was given to the participants as soon as they expressed their desire to participate in the study. This was signed by the researcher to declare to the participants that the research would be used solely for academic purposes. The researcher adhered to this declaration and the participant's information was not shared with anyone else. The participants gave their written consent to take part in the study and the written consent letter (Annexure B) listed the researcher's expectations and the reason for the research. It served as an agreement between the researcher and the participants, and she fully adhered to the agreement.

Possible limitations were the participants not adhering to the same ethical standards and not upholding their part of the agreement. It could also include reluctance to attend and participate in any of the interviews. The willingness of the staff at the chosen school to participate in the research could also be a problem. Since the size of the staff was limited, the required number of participants could perhaps not be reached. Time and budget constraints could also be limitations of the study. It could be difficult to find suitable times and locations that would suit both the participants' and the researcher's schedules.

Regardless of the possible limitations, the researcher anticipated that the study would make meaningful contributions. By gathering and analysing the data, and reporting on the findings, the researcher hoped that the study would help to understand the CPTD system, which is making a huge contribution to the professional development of teachers in South Africa. If the opportunities and threats that emerged from responses in the interviews were investigated for feasibility, the CPTD system would not only be understood, but also improved.

Further research can be based on this study to improve the professional development of teachers in South Africa in particular and to help improve education in South Africa in general.

1.5. LAYOUT OF THE CHAPTERS

Chapter 1	In this chapter the researcher provides an introductory orientation and discussion, where the rationale for the study is stated in conjunction with the research question and accompanying research objectives. This chapter gives an outline of the paradigmatic perspectives of the researcher, as well as an overview of the choices made regarding the research design, research methodology and ethical strategies.
Chapter 2	This chapter deals with the theoretical framework relevant to the study. Literature that relates to the research question is discussed, and a proposed link is offered between the global, regional and national perspectives on professional development of teachers.
Chapter 3	This chapter describes the research process, the aim of the study, metatheoretical assumptions, theoretical assumptions and methodological assumptions. Furthermore, attention is given to the research design of the study, including data collection methods, data analysis and interpretation techniques. The chapter concludes with an in-depth discussion of measures to ensure a rigorous study, in addition to the ethical issues that must be considered.
Chapter 4	This chapter outlines the analysis, interpretation and discussion of findings, alongside careful deliberation based on literature control.
Chapter 5	The last chapter (conclusion of the study) provides a discussion of the findings and recommendations of the study and gives a summarised version of the study. This study investigated the experiences and perceptions of Cohort 3 teachers in terms of the CPTD system. The researcher found literature from a global, regional and national perspective. The literature illustrated the spectrum of professional development from developed countries to developing countries, as well as in South Africa where the current study was conducted.

	The researcher involved five volunteer Cohort 3 teachers. She conducted her research in an ethical way and collected interesting data by adhering to a clear structure. The data was analysed, and many useful findings were extracted from it.
	The study had deep meaning for the researcher in terms of her own beliefs and assumptions regarding the CPTD system.
	Chapter 5 describes the way in which the quality criteria were applied to ensure a trustworthy study and gives an indication of how the role of the researcher unfolded in the study. Finally, the challenges of the study are discussed, as well as ideas for further research.

1.6. SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

Chapter 1 served as an introductory orientation and discussion, in which the rationale for the study was stated in conjunction with the research question. As discussed in the chapter, the research problem of this study involved the experiences of Cohort 3 teachers regarding the CPTD system. The researcher was interested in this topic since she herself was a Cohort 3 teacher who experienced frustration with regard to training opportunities. This brought the researcher to formulate her primary research question: *What are the experiences of South African Cohort 3 teachers regarding the CPTD system?*

This chapter gave an outline of the paradigmatic perspectives of the researcher, as well as an overview of her choices with regard to the research design, research methodology and ethical strategies. The researcher opted to use an exploratory case study involving five participants who were selected based on convenience to the researcher (generalising the findings was not the aim of this study).

In the next chapter, the researcher looks at the literature that was available on the research topic.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1.   INTRODUCTION

It is an exciting time in the South African education system. Since the announcement from the Minister of Education that SACE would be responsible for the management of the CPTD system (Department of Basic Education, 2007), the possibility of development in terms of increasing teachers' professionalism has become a reality. It is widely assumed that initial teacher education and continuing professional development (CPD) should make a difference to teachers' ability to teach specific content knowledge, and this improvement is hoped to be reflected in the enhancement of student learning outcomes (Akyeampong, Westbrook, & Lussier, 2012). So, for the education sector in South Africa, the implementation of Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) came as a welcome announcement.

In this section, the researcher attempted to provide clarity on what CPD is and gave an overview of what exactly CPTD can mean for education in South Africa. The chapter provides an overview of the phenomenon from a global, regional and national perspective. Examining the perspectives of CPD efforts from different areas helps to create a full picture of what exactly is happening and how South Africa compares to the rest of the world.

The global perspective shows the developed state of CPD and different models used in this field. In the editorial of the *Journal of Professional Development in Education,* Kennedy (2016) makes a valid point by stating that collaborative professional learning initiatives have increased enormously in popularity over the past decade or so, together with other initiatives. She states that although these initiatives are "rich and stimulating ideas relating to professional learning, it is clear that even with an international dimension to their origins, the majority are firmly situated within a western, Euro-American-centric paradigm". From the global perspective, we look at some of these initiatives to get an idea of what is currently trending in the field of professional development for teachers.

The regional and national perspectives are more simplified investigations into what the countries have done in terms of CPD. The challenging contexts from where teachers come, and in which they must teach, make South African professional development very different from what is known in the global perspective (Impedovo & Ligorio, 2016).

2.2. UNDERSTANDING THE TERM "CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT"

The term 'continuing professional development' (CPD) describes all the activities in which teachers engage, as well as the process of learning and development of individuals who do so by their own accord, during the entire course of their career (Day & Sachs, 2004). The individual takes control of this ongoing process by means of reflection and action (Meggingson & Whitaker, 2004). Billings (1997) states that CPD is "any deliberate and continuous process involving the identification and discussion of present and anticipated needs of individual staff for furthering their job satisfaction and career prospects". The term is used in many fields. "Continuing Professional Development" is sometimes replaced by "Continuous Professional Development", for instance in the clinical nursing field (Gould, 2001), but "Continuing Professional Development" is the term used in the educational field.

To the researcher these definitions made it clear that Continuing Professional Development should be an individual attempt to improve any and all activities associated with a teacher's everyday doings on a continuous basis. This still only defines a small part of what the broad term really includes, but to really understand the term a much bigger perspective is needed, as will be given in the following sections.

2.3. GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE OF CPD

In this section the high-income or developed countries' perspective of CPD for teachers is discussed. The CPD of teachers is increasingly considered to be a component of school reform initiatives in countries all over the world (Akalu, 2014) and has become a formal requirement for teachers in many countries (Akalu, 2014; Department of Basic Education, 2007; O'Brien, 2011). Governments and education

policy makers are paying more attention to CPTD systems to motivate their country's teachers and encourage them to engage in and reflect better on their own teaching practice (Education Scotland, 2016). In Canada, the Ontario Ministry of Education (2016) values high-quality teaching in an attempt to improve student outcomes and reduce gaps in student achievements. Teachers should engage and reflect on their own practice since they are the key figures who influence student performance, and therefore CPD systems should focus on improving teaching quality (Kuijpers, Houtveen, & Wubbels, 2010).

From a Dutch perspective, Kuijpers *et al.* (2010) found that a correlation exists between what teachers do in their classrooms and what children learn. Since children's academic achievements are influenced, these researchers developed a model for the CPD of teachers that they believe will lead to an improvement of children's academic performance. The model will later be discussed in more detail. Except for the role that teachers play in children's academic performance, CPD of teachers is made up of many more aspects.

In a study done by Moutafidou, Melliou and Georgopoulou (2012) it was concluded that the voice of the teacher needs to be included in CPD. The researchers found that a group of Greek teachers whom they interviewed associated professional development with terms such as "professional skills", "lifelong learning" and "further training". These Greek teachers related their professional development to educational research, since it helped them with creativity, critical thinking abilities, decision making and the flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances (Moutafidou *et al.*, 2012).

A study conducted in Flanders, Belgium, investigated the level of needs of teachers in terms of CPD. Figure 1 shows some of the needs that were identified by the teachers. Among others, instructional practices (knowledge mediation) in their main subject, student discipline and behaviour problems, and teaching students with special needs were the most important needs (Van den Brande, 2014).

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                  │  CPD in Flanders   │
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   ┌──────────────────┐   │   ┌──────────────────┐
   │Instructional practices│  │   │ Teaching students │
   │  (knowledge     │───┤   │ with special needs │
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   │ Student discipline │   │   │ Student counselling │
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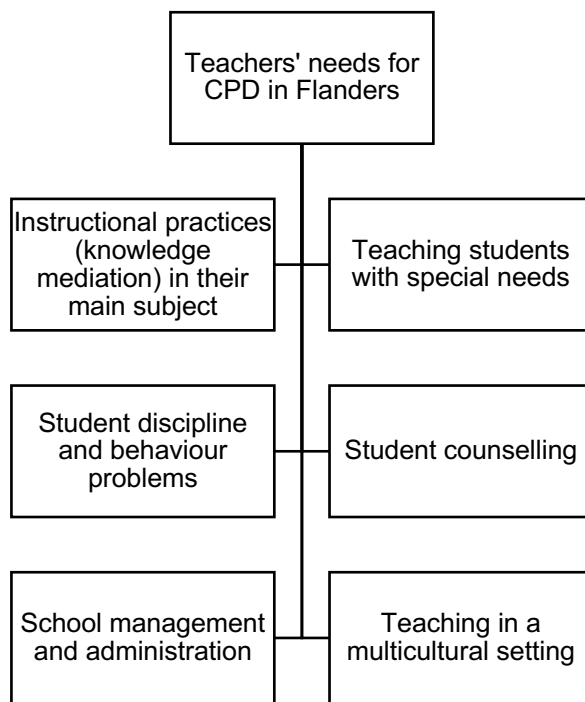
Figure 1: Highest level of needs for teachers in Flanders for CPD (Adapted from Van den Brande, 2014)

From the above-mentioned perspectives it is difficult to capture only one clarification of CPD for teachers from a global perspective, because each school and every teacher has their own area of needs for learning and development. Due to these differences, different CPD systems and models exist to meet the variety of needs. Some of the systems and models are discussed in the sections that follow.

2.4. SELECTED INTERNATIONAL SYSTEMS FOR CPD OF TEACHERS

Sugrue (2004) states that in Western Europe, during the 1990s, national policy makers responded to the calls for national reform by putting more focus on teachers' professional development. As such, the teacher was seen as a continuous and life-long learner. Brussels, for instance, wanted to provide leadership to national governments and formulated a model for life-long learning. By 1996, all member states in the European Union had bought into the idea of life-long learning for teachers, as well as in government departments.

From an Australian perspective, it is argued by Grundy and Robinson (2004) that three principal functions (namely extension, renewal and growth) are served by professional

development and are driven by systemic and personal drivers. They argue that the personal driver should be a private desire and motivation from the individual teachers to enhance or sustain their own professional lives. Grundy and Robinson (2004) also state that in Australia the terms 'life-long learning' and 'professional development' go hand in hand, just as was the case in Brussels. The activities vary from one-hour workshops through to extended courses, depending on what the purpose of the activity is. They mentioned two Australian programmes – 'The Innovation Links' and the 'Quality Teacher Programme' – that both focus on the professional development of school teachers and aim to meet the needs of the teachers and students of Australia – thus ensuring the continuous improvement of professional practice.

In Scotland, every teacher is expected to have a career-long commitment to professional learning. As of August 2014, teachers who are registered members of the General Teaching Council of Scotland are required to participate in the Professional Update, which includes engagement in an ongoing process of Professional Review and Development. The Professional Review and Development process is based on the premise that all teachers are entitled to having access to high-quality professional learning, but it is also the teachers' responsibility to continually improve their own practice (Education Scotland, 2016).

The Professional Standards of the General Teaching Council of Scotland (Education Scotland, 2016) support self-evaluation within professional learning. These standards can be used by teachers throughout their careers to identify their professional learning needs. Education Scotland (2016) states that the professional learning activities that teachers complete are meant to "bring maximum benefit to themselves as practitioners, to children and young people as learners, as well as to their colleagues. Also, it will have an impact on their individual school and across the wider learning community".

Professional learning and growth are encouraged in Canada by providing teachers with meaningful appraisals through the Teacher Performance Appraisal System (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016). The system is designed to follow a process that will foster teacher development, identify opportunities for additional support where required, and help teachers achieve their full potential.

From a global perspective, developed countries have identified that the CPD of teachers improves their motivation and performance. The motivation and performance of teachers lead to the motivation and performance of learners in schools, which is ultimately the aim of education.

2.5.   REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE OF CPD

The regional perspective as discussed in this section focuses on the African continent. Countries that fall within this region of interest are regarded as developing countries (World Bank, 2016). The CPD of teachers as arranged from a regional perspective, varies from the global perspective previously discussed in this study. Akalu (2014) argues that the specific context of developing or low-income countries needs to be taken into consideration when looking at the state of CPD of teachers in these countries. The author further identifies the way in which teachers perform their teaching activities in the schools and how the school is linked to the education system of the country as an important part of this context. Harber and Davies (2002) state that most schools in developing countries are contextually driven and shaped by global economic relationships and local cultural interaction.

The context of the country has an impact on the activities taking place at the school. If the context is negative, as is the case in many African countries, it will affect the activities at schools, which include the CPD of teachers. The demography, economy, resources, violence, health and culture are all factors identified by Harber and Davies (2002, p. 10) as having an impact on operations at schools in Africa. It is important to keep the above-mentioned context in mind when discussing the CPD of teachers from an African perspective.

In Ethiopia, teacher professional development is led by the principle of "good teaching" and the Ethiopian Ministry of Education (2009) identified a set of behaviours included in good teaching. These were categorised as professional knowledge and understanding, teaching skills, values and attitudes, and learning environment. However, if the teachers of Ethiopia were to give their opinion regarding teacher professional development it seems their view would be different from that of their

Ministry of Education. A study done in Ethiopia by Voluntary Services Overseas on teacher morale and motivation found that there is little respect for the role of teachers in Ethiopian society. The study also found that the limited communication between the Ministry of Education and teachers was another factor that gave rise to the lack of value associated with teachers in Ethiopia (VSO International, 2016). This finding can be related to the issue discussed above, namely that context needs to be taken into consideration to understand the CPD of teachers in African countries.

A study conducted by Akyeampong, Westbrook and Lussier (2012) in six African countries (Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Senegal, Tanzania and Uganda) focused primarily on initial teacher training and continuing professional development of teachers in these six countries. Although their study focused on the teaching of early reading and mathematics, the information gained is still useful for this study. The researchers found that many CPD programmes were presented in the six countries, but "they remained small scale, [and they] were often one-off events funded and directed by NGOs who sometimes had their own agendas, for example on HIV or peace education" (Akyeampong *et al.*, 2012, p. 474). This finding again supports the issue of the context within which teachers must operate in these developing African countries – the context seems to constantly create barriers to effective CPD initiatives in Africa.

2.6. AFRICAN SYSTEMS FOR CPD OF TEACHERS

CPD of teachers has for some time been considered a vital component of school improvement in African countries such as Kenya and South Africa (as the study will show in the "National Perspective" section) (see Akalu (2014, p. 179). In Ethiopia, the Ministry of Education (2009) developed a national policy framework for CPD of teachers. As Akalu (2014, p. 187) found in his study, teacher professional development programmes existed in Ethiopia, but these programmes were not adequate and therefore the Ethiopian government introduced the Education Quality Improvement Package of which the Teacher Development Programme was a part. The aim of this Programme, as stated by the Ethiopian Ministry of Education (2009), was "to improve the quality of instruction and therefore student learning by enhancing the capacity of teachers in primary and secondary education".

The study by Akyeampong *et al.* (2012) that was mentioned earlier found specific noteworthy CPD programmes in the six countries that were investigated:

- In Ghana, the National Literacy Acceleration Programme for early primary school teachers is a biliteracy bilingual CPD reading programme that was introduced in 2009. This programme marks a shift in Ghanaian language policy towards greater emphasis on English since 2002. However, it leans more towards curriculum or policy reform and not so much towards enhancing the CPD of teachers in Ghana. This shows how CPD activities are presented and the limited options teachers have when completing CPD activities.

- Well-established Teacher Advisory Centres are found in Kenya, with experienced primary school teachers appointed as tutors. They organise and coordinate seminars, workshops and refresher courses for teachers on curriculum changes and pedagogy and induct new teachers. Financial and managerial constraints unfortunately have a negative effect on the overall effectiveness of these CPD activities. The longest running and largest CPD programme in Kenya is the school-based Teacher Development Programme that provides training to teachers on a national, provincial, and district level. Trained teachers are referred to as the Key Resource Teachers for their respective subjects and there is one for each subject (English, mathematics and science) per school. The key resource teachers are expected to train the other teachers in their schools.

- In Mali, the notion of a 'continuum of teacher learning' is strongly emphasised. An important element of this type of CPD activity is the *Communautés d'Apprentissage* or learning communities that are set at cluster or school level. The practice is to ask the teachers themselves to choose topics for development, use supported self-learning in schools and sometimes even to mobilise support from experts and inspectors. The enthusiasm of the head teachers and their staff at school level has a positive influence on the participation and commitment of the teachers who need to attend these CPD activities.

- Internationally supported CPD initiatives are the programmes with the greatest number of participants in Mali. The Japanese International Cooperation Agency implemented well-established CPD classroom practices that they had already implemented in other countries, in Mali. The most common is the *Cellules d'Animation Pédagogique* programme, a cluster-based training programme that

focuses on active learning and the making and using of teaching and learning materials, with teachers' discussions being a vital part of the training. The participants at school level are supposed to follow up after the training was presented and in 2010 school principals started receiving training to improve the support teachers get at school.

- CPD in Tanzania involves either the upgrading of qualifications or the presentation of short courses. Like in Kenya, teacher resource centres are used, but unlike in Kenya, the centres in Tanzania have greater potential to support teacher development. The participation of teachers at these centres is not very high, though. In Tanzania, the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms where teachers had participated in CPD programmes, involved greater pupil participation and activity. This resulted in higher concentration and ultimately better results. In-Service Education and Training Strategy for Primary School Teachers is Tanzania's five-year strategy. It was developed to enforce continued in-service training and professional growth to develop adequate quality primary school teachers.

- CPD in Uganda is the responsibility of the Department for Teacher Education through the Teacher Development and Management System structures. Coordinating centre tutors, who are college staff members, manage the system. These tutors are deployed to coordinate centres where they lead the professional development activities for school staff members, including principals and management committees. The principals and teachers are trained by the tutors in various areas that are identified by consultation at school level. Informal CPD also exists in Uganda where more experienced teachers train their colleagues during half-day sessions in a school, or even in a cluster of schools.

The unfortunate reality is that most of the literature used in the regional overview speaks of the challenges and shortcomings of CPD of teachers, and the "context" of these developing African countries. In the following section the national perspective is investigated, and South Africa also has a unique "context" to deal with.

2.7. NATIONAL OVERVIEW OF CPD

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, now is an exciting time in the field of education for South Africa, because the CPTD system is being implemented and if it is successful, this system will have great consequences for education in our country. The South African Department of Basic Education has identified the need for CPD of teachers to improve education in South Africa. According to The DoE-SACE task team (2008), the primary purpose of continuing professional development for teachers in South Africa is to help improve the quality of education.

As stated in the first chapter of this study, the primary aim of education is to provide quality teaching that will assist individuals in reaching their full human potential (Slabbert *et al.*, 2009). If teachers are expected to assist learners to fulfil their human potential, then this is exactly why CPD in South Africa is so vital. Teachers also need to realise their own human potential and thus they should be able and willing to continuously develop on a professional level.

Unfortunately, as was mentioned in the regional overview, schools in the South African context are expected to function within an evolving environment characterised by enormous social and economic inequalities. These include persistent poverty, unemployment, huge income disparities and the effects of diseases such as HIV/Aids (Du Plessis, 2014).

Still, regardless of the context in South Africa, the ability to achieve the aims of education is the responsibility of teachers, since they need to know what they are teaching and teach it well (Slabbert *et al.,* 2009). The consequence of this responsibility is that teachers themselves must be willing to refine their knowledge. It is difficult for schools and teachers to cope with the South African context and with this responsibility, but the impact on society at large cannot be stressed enough. This means that a spotlight is shone on the continuing professional development of the educators who provide education to individuals and society (Billings, 1997).

The current need for professional development of teachers in South Africa, as found by Kriek and Grayson (2009), entails more than the traditional 'one-shot' approach.

Such an approach is inadequate and inappropriate in the context of current educational reform efforts, because it is out of step with current research about teacher learning, and the need for a system such as the CPTD is clear. Furthermore, Kriek and Grayson (2009) state that professional development of teachers has been "intellectually superficial, disconnected from deep issues of curriculum and learning, fragmented and non-cumulative".

Without looking at the legislation per se, the following facts obtained from Government documents are very relevant to the current perspective of CPD in South Africa. The declaration by the Teacher Development Summit of 2009 called for the improvement of the national plan for educator development, which led to the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa, 2011-2025 (Department of Basic Education, 2015). This framework stipulated the outcomes and actions of the Department of Basic Education, provincial education departments and the Department of Higher Education and Training with regard to the professional development of educators, and subsequently led to the development and implementation of the CPTD system (South African Council for Educators, 2015).

Agreeing that a clear need exists in the South African context, the Minister of Education granted the South African Council for Educators overall responsibility for the implementation, management and quality control of the CPTD system in the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa (2007). This is already a major improvement for the CPD of teachers, since the development programmes can now be regulated. So, what is CPD from a South African perspective?

Steyn (2010) states the professional development (PD) of teachers has become a major focal point of school improvement initiatives in South Africa. Other local scholars define the act of PD as an ongoing development programme that focuses on a full spectrum of knowledge, skills and attitudes required to educate learners to their maximum potential (Steyn & van Niekerk, 2002). This definition can be phrased differently by saying it involves the participation of educators or educational leaders in development opportunities to be better equipped as educators and educational leaders (Tomlinson, 1997).

Du Plessis (2014) makes three major recommendations to assist with the improvement of CPD in the South African context:

- The right people must become educators.
- Develop them into instructors who can meet the aims of education.
- Make sure the South African education system can deliver the best possible instruction for every child.

CPD of teachers includes any activities in which educators take part to improve their knowledge and skills, to help them think about their attitude and approach towards the education of learners, and to help them improve the quality of their approach to teaching and learning. CPD should build on initial teacher training and induction, and this should lead to development and training opportunities throughout a life-long career, concluding with preparation for retirement (Bubb & Earley, 2004).

The DoE-SACE task team (2008) states that "the development of professional practices is a continuing process that lasts for the duration of the career of a committed teacher". It suggests that teachers take what they learn from their life experience, their own professional practice, their peers and seniors in their schools, the teaching profession at large, their professional reading and formal courses, and they incorporate all this into their classrooms. Thus, teachers – individually and collectively – have a high degree of responsibility for their own professional development and the identification of their own professional needs, because they themselves know what they still do not know.

Against this background, the researcher argues the development of teachers' professional practice is a continuing process that lasts for the entire duration of a teacher's career. She also agrees with the remark made by the DoE-SACE task team (2008), namely that continuing professional teacher development is essential for the establishment of a high-quality and comprehensive teacher education system for South Africa. The complex context of South Africa and the realities faced by teachers can, however, not be disregarded.

The national overview seems to be a combination of the global and regional overviews. There is clear evidence that scholars, as well as the South African government, believe that the CPD of teachers will improve education in South Africa. This correlates with what was mentioned in the global overview, but also acknowledges the same challenges identified in the regional perspective (i.e. that the context of South Africa seems to be a barrier to this effort). The current study will investigate the CPTD system in South Africa. An investigation into this system will help to identify the barriers to success and opportunities of improvement.

2.8. SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

The themes from the three perspectives show the spectrum of professional development for teachers from developed countries to developing countries.

The global perspective shows that developed countries have found that the CPD of teachers improves the motivation and performance of teachers. The enhanced motivation and performance of teachers lead to the motivation and performance of learners in schools, which is the aim of education. The regional perspective shows the challenges and shortcomings of CPD for teachers and accentuates the importance of the "context" of developing African countries. In the national perspective, the CPD of South African teachers also has a unique "context" to deal with.

The implementation of the CPTD system locally was a move in the right direction to improve education, but the perspective of the teacher must to be taken into consideration if one really wishes to measure how the CPD is improving education through the development of teachers. As the aim of this study was to examine the experience of Cohort 3 teachers regarding the CPTD system, these teachers' perspectives of the CPTD system should be gathered and taken into consideration if the national perspective is to be understood.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the researcher describes the aim of this study, what the paradigmatic perspectives are, and how the framework of the research methodology was constructed. The role of the researcher and the measures to ensure rigour in the study are explained in this chapter. The aim of this study was to investigate the CPTD system and gather individual Cohort 3 teachers' experiences with the system.

The researcher chose to use the critical realism paradigm and qualitative research methodology, as she was interested in investigating the CPTD systems based on the experiences of Cohort 3 teachers in their journey towards professional development. The choice of an exploratory case study as the research design was made by the researcher to be able to explore the research area of CPTD, something that has not been explored before. From this exploration, it might be possible to answer the research question: *What are the experiences of Cohort 3 South African teachers regarding the CPTD system?*

3.2. RESEARCH APPROACH, PARADIGM, THEORETICAL APPROACH AND DESIGN

3.2.1. METHODOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS

Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.* (2014) believe that a qualitative research method should be used if the researcher's objective is to explore people's actions. The study in hand meant to explore the CPTD system through the experience of teachers, and therefore a qualitative study was the preferred choice of approach for this research.

If little is known about an issue and an exploratory study is needed to discover more information about this issue, a qualitative approach is useful (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011). The current study needed such an exploration of the CPTD system, since there

is a vast paucity of research in this regard. Another factor that affected the choice of approach for this study was the fact that the researcher had to consider her relationship to those being studied. Hancock and Algozzine (2011) state that the goal of research is to understand the issue from the perspective of the participants and not the researcher. This is called the *emic,* meaning insider's perspective.

Making the choice of a qualitative research approach automatically led to certain compromises that the researcher had to accept. The research lacked objective measurements because the study intended to explore the experiences of teachers – these would not yield quantifiable measurements that could be generalised to the wider population. Without these measurements, there would also be no option of incorporating an intervention with which the issue could be controlled or manipulated. The choice of a qualitative research approach would help to reach the aim of the study, namely, to empower teachers with knowledge regarding the CPTD system to make sensible choices regarding their own professional development. These compromises were acceptable to the researcher.

According to Blanche *et al.* (2006), qualitative research gathers data by keeping record of opinions and by adding to the analysis of data through the discovery and classification of subjects.

3.2.2. PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVE

The study's paradigmatic perspective rests on the critical realism paradigm because the researcher believes in the responsibility of critiquing and exposing systems in society to empower people. Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.* (2014) describe a paradigm as a cluster of beliefs that order what to study in a specific discipline, how the research should be done, and how the findings should be interpreted. In the following section, the researcher illustrates why this paradigm was chosen, why the qualitative research approach was used and what the study's theoretical assumptions are.

3.2.3. POSITIONS OF THE CRITICAL REALISM PARADIGM

The researcher believes that professional development is vital for education and considers the implementation of the CPTD system as a very welcome vehicle towards the professional development of educators. However, the system needs to be exposed and critiqued to empower teachers to realise what it involves. Hence the study uses the critical realist approach.

To expose and critique the system might seem like a cause for scrutiny on the topic, but as Shipway (2011, p. 6) puts it, the aim of research is "to issue an invitation to wide-ranging argument". As mentioned earlier, the aim of the study was to investigate the experience of Cohort 3 teachers regarding the CPTD system. And since it is the voice of the teachers that should be heard regarding this system (as is argued in the next section), they were given the opportunity to share their experience of the system and to critique it in this study.

The critical realism paradigm was created due to frustration caused by the limited scope of positivism and interpretivism (Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014). Positivism was too non-humanistic and narrowly focused, while interpretivism was too subjective. Thus, critical realism grew out of the need for a wider scope and it incorporates elements from both these paradigms.

The epistemological position of critical realism holds that knowledge should not merely be accumulated – it should have practical value and must be geared towards action (Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014). The researcher accepts this position for the study and argues that knowledge of the CPTD system is not merely a "nice-to-know" but should lead to action from teachers. The ontological position of critical realism is that society often does not appreciate the deep structures on which some systems are built, and merely sees a surface reality that people blindly accept because of socialisation or indoctrination (Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014). This is a very important position to be taken in this study because the researcher wants teachers to stop merely accepting aspects of their own profession, like the CPTD system. Teachers should take responsibility and control of their own professional development and engage fully with the CPTD system by selecting activities that are relevant to them. Teachers should not only rely on what their colleagues or other parties tell them about the CPTD system; they should investigate it themselves.

3.2.4. THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS

As indicated earlier, this study was informed by the socio-cultural theory and framework of Vygotsky (1978), who claims that all human activity is "historically, socially, culturally and temporally situated" (Mansour *et al.*, 2014, p. 950). Individual learning and development are made up of a process of internalisation and transformation of cultural tools as individuals take part in social practice (Peck, Gallucci, Sloan, & Lippincott, 2007).

Socio-cultural theory looks at the important contributions that society makes to individual development. This theory stresses the interaction between developing people and the culture in which they live. It suggests that human learning is largely a social process. This implies that a teacher's experiences and context constitute a major influence on that teacher's learning to teach. So, not only challenges, opportunities and contexts should be kept in mind when considering initiatives for professional development of teachers, but also the individual teacher's voice and perspective (De Geest, 2011). The correlation between this study and the understanding of the socio-cultural theory rests on the following argument: if the way teachers learn how to teach is influenced by their social interactions and culture, then the individual teacher has a unique understanding of what teaching is and how to do it well.

Therefore, the voices of the individual teachers should be echoed in the professional development initiatives to which they are subjected, since they are the agents of change towards their own professional development. The individual teachers should identify their own areas of need for professional development. The fact that the CPTD system was only implemented in 2012 means that it would still experience many 'growing-pains'. Teachers' experience with and criticism of the system should therefore not be discarded.

The origin of innovation in teaching practice can often be traced back to the insights and initiatives of the individual teacher (Peck *et al.*, 2007). The individual teacher is

the best resource to engage with the problems of implementation and opportunities aimed at the system's improvement.

According to Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.* (2014), inductive reasoning moves from a specific topic to a more generalised topic and builds on an existing theory or develops a new one. Theorising in the current study was done inductively, moving from the specific case study of one school to the more general teaching community of South Africa. The researcher observed teachers as they became motivated to become agents of change towards their own professional development.

The researcher wished to build on existing theory, but also planned to develop a new theory. Firstly, she investigated the school in the case study to gather information from the teaching staff. Her aim was to prompt the Cohort 3 teachers to share their experiences and opinions regarding CPTD based on the socio-cultural perspective (which as discussed earlier involves realising the importance of letting one's own voice be heard in all human activity). She would establish the teachers' professional development needs, as well as a plan of action to address these needs. Then, by using the information gathered from this sample of teachers, the researcher would expand her theory to the broader context.

3.3. RESEARCH DESIGN

In this section the researcher argues that the selection of the data collection method and data analysis technique was coherent and compatible with the research design. A case study design offered a means whereby the researcher could undertake an in-depth investigation. An exploratory case study design assisted in investigating the CPTD system, which is a new field of study in South Africa since the system has not been investigated fully yet.

A case study design can be defined as an enquiry into an event or set of related events the researcher wants to investigate and explain (Maree *et al.*, 2012). It can also be defined as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon with real life context: when boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clear, and in which multiple sources of evidence are used" (Yin, 1984). Mouton (2001, p.

149) offers a simplified explanation of a case study and states that it is usually a qualitative study that provides an in-depth description of a small number of cases.

Strengths of the case study design include in-depth insights into the phenomenon (Mouton, 2001, p. 150). This is applicable to the study in hand, since the CPTD system needs to be understood in depth. The insights came from the perspectives of the Cohort 3 teachers who experienced the working of the system first-hand. A further strength of the case study design is the ability of the researcher to establish rapport with the research subjects. In the present study, it was important for the researcher to establish rapport with the research subjects, because the study relies on their input in terms of their take on the CPTD system.

Some challenges of this type of design, as identified by Maree *et al.* (2012), may include problems with data collection, since it might be difficult to obtain useful data from the participants if they do not yet have adequate knowledge of the CPTD system. The generalisability of the case study design is also brought into question by Maree *et al.* (2012). Other sources of error in a case study design might include bias of the researcher and a lack of rigour in analysis (Mouton, 2001, p. 150).

Since only a limited number of participants might meet the requirement if a single school was used, the first challenge could be eliminated by expanding the sample to more than one school. Generalising the findings (thus meeting the second challenge) would not have to be an aim of the study if it proved to be a challenge.

An exploratory case study would also be appropriate in this case, as the researcher aimed to explore a research area that has not been been fully explored before (Mouton & Marais, 1992).

3.3.1. DATA COLLECTION STRATEGY

According to Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.* (2014) data collection usually starts off with a critical analysis of the existing body of knowledge, since it is the critical realist researcher's belief that existing knowledge should be questioned. The researcher chose to conduct a qualitative descriptive study in which content analysis was applied. She also chose to use open-ended interviews as the data collection instrument.

3.3.1.1. DATA COLLECTION METHOD

The current research, which focused on the experience of individual teachers from a selected sample of teachers going through the CPTD system, was a qualitative descriptive study in which content analysis was applied. Since participants were purposely selected through convenience sampling, they were willing to participate as a unit of teaching staff from the one school selected for this exploratory case study.

3.3.1.2. DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

The collection of relevant data or information was critical in this research study. According to Maree *et al.* (2012), tools used by critical realist researchers in case studies include surveys, interviews, documents, observation and artefact collection. Both primary and secondary data sources were used. Primary data, the data gathered by the researcher from the participants, was needed to obtain the perspective of the participants. Secondary data, from research previously conducted by other researchers, would also be valuable since it can be built on in this study.

As the participants were invited to take part in the study, it could prove to be a challenge to find enough participants. After all, this a case study was conducted in a specific school only.

Individual interviews were scheduled with each participant. Open-ended questions were formulated for each individual, depending on the evidence gathered from the participant's documentation. Open-ended questions allowed the participants to speak their mind in their own unique way. Permission was requested from the participants to record their responses. The objective was to gather their feelings about the process of familiarising themselves with the CPTD system, the process of registration to take part in the CPTD system, their earlier participation in the system, and lastly, how they intended to take part in the system and accumulate enough points within the given time frame.

3.4. SAMPLING STRATEGY AND PARTICIPANTS

The population in this study was the entire group of people with a stake in this research topic, in other words, those who were "affected" by the topic concerned. These types of people were the ones the researcher was interested in, since they had information based on their first-hand experience of the CPTD system (Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014). The population was the teachers at all the schools participating in the CPTD system since its inception. The population parameters were the shared characteristics and the number of social artefacts in the population (Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014) – in this case, staff members and teachers in public schools in South Africa currently participating in the CPTD system. The target population included every individual who fell within the population parameters of the research study, but the accessible population was the individuals within the target population who could actually be reached (Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014).

As warned above, the population could be so vast that it would be impossible to determine the entire population or determine which individuals could be accessed from the population. This problem called for non-probability sampling, which is used when a researcher selects the sample from the accessible population. Since it was an exploratory case study, the sample was also chosen based on convenience to the researcher. Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.* (2014) state that convenience sampling is made up of elements that the researcher knows and has easy access to.

The sample the researcher was interested in investigating was a primary school in the Pretoria area and the participants were the teaching staff of the school. The researcher chose this school based on convenience, since the school was located conveniently close to the researcher's residence. The researcher knew a member of the non-teaching staff at the school who was willing to distribute letters of invitation to potential participants on behalf of the researcher. The participants had to be Cohort 3 teachers at this school, as well as SACE members who had already registered for the CPTD system. The participants were eventually chosen based on their willingness to participate in the study and the fact that they met the requirements.

3.5. DATA ANALYSIS

The analysis of the data was the final and most interesting step of the research. The data held within itself the multiple opinions, perspectives and experiences of the participants and was what the researcher was most interested in examining. Maree *et al.* (2012) suggest that the qualitative content analysis method be used for a case study, as it includes the voice of participants as well as groups involved in the interaction associated with the phenomenon studied. The researcher consequently chose to use this method and analysed the interviews systematically to identify subjective themes and patterns from the texts.

The data analysis was based on the responses to the questions in the individual interviews conducted, which were systematically analysed to identify every individual response. The researcher identified similar responses and reported these similarities. She also identified variations in responses and reported these.

The purpose of this data analysis was to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the CPTD systems as perceived by the group of participants. Qualitative content analysis was chosen because of the advantages it held for the researcher. According to Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.* (2014), this method is used to explore and identify overt and covert themes and patterns embedded in certain data sources. This was the aim of the study, as the researcher wanted to investigate the experiences of Cohort 3 teachers regarding the CPTD system. The following steps were followed to identify the themes in this study:

Step 1: The data was prepared by organising it according to its relevance for the study. Each participant's responses to the interview questions were carefully read through and similar responses were grouped together to make it easier for the next step.

Step 2: Coding units were identified from the data to organise it into smaller groups and to make the data more manageable. The coding units or concepts were chosen based on recurring phrases used by the participants. These were then categorised by relevance according to the amount of times they occurred.

Step 3: Each category was checked to ensure it was exhaustive, mutually exclusive and specific. This enabled the researcher to prove the data had been investigated with proper care and accuracy.

Step 4: The information in each category was subsequently summarised as findings that became the major themes that were interpreted in the final report. The relationships and differences between the themes were also identified and explored in the final report.

3.6. TRUSTWORTHINESS AND CREDIBILITY

The researcher was determined to ensure that this study remained credible and trustworthy. Because it was a qualitative research study, trustworthiness was used as an overarching term to refer to validity and reliability. Trustworthiness may be further defined as the truthfulness, correctness and accuracy of the research data (Burton & Bartlett, 2009), and since the purpose of qualitative research is to understand the phenomenon, this was essential to the researcher. Trustworthiness is defined in terms of credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability (Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014).

To ensure credibility, Du Plooy-Cilliers and fellow authors suggest participant checking, which entails that the researcher returns the transcripts to the participants for confirmation and amendment. In the current study, participant checking was used to check the accuracy of the accounts given by the research participants. The researcher asked each of them to comment on the transcribed versions of their interviews and to verify whether the information matched what they had said during the interview. Credibility therefore refers to the accuracy with which the researcher interprets the research data provided by the participants (Du Plooy *et al.*, 2014). According to these authors, the same sampling methods, coding system and active listening on the part of the researcher should be used throughout. This was done in this specific study to ensure credibility.

This study findings were also transferable, because any other researcher would be able to pick up the study at any point and continue without issues. The data proved to

be dependable and conformable since the researcher ensured that the study was conducted in severe confidence and in controlled circumstances.

3.7. ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Ethics are a set of moral principles that are suggested by an individual or a group with widely accepted rules of behaviour and expectations about the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects, respondents, employers, sponsors and other researchers, assistants and students (De Vos, 1998).

Maree *et al.* (2012) emphasise that it is essential for the researcher to follow and abide by ethical guidelines throughout the research process. To guarantee that all stakeholders in the greater community could rely on the quality of the research done, the researcher chose to follow the guidelines suggested by Du Plooy *et al.* (2014). She therefore

- drew up her own personal code of ethics before she conducted the research (this acted as a reminder when dealing with sensitive information from the participants as well as when she reported on the results);
- consulted more experienced researchers and learnt from their mistakes;
- constantly educated herself on ethics in research;
- identified an accountability partner so that she constantly had someone who checked on her ethicality;
- reminded herself constantly of the aim of the research and that deception on her part would cause problems.

The researcher had to obtain clearance from the relevant ethics committee because the study involved human participants. Hence, the ethical considerations discussed in the next section were attended to.

3.7.1.1. INFORMED CONSENT AND VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Free choice participation was encouraged in this study as each participant was invited to participate on a purely voluntary basis. All the participants were informed of the

purpose of the study and based on that, they could decide if they wanted to participate in it.

When permission was granted by the participants and individual interviews were arranged, the researcher also asked for permission to record the interviews with her mobile phone. Letters of invitation were handed to the participants, confirming that the researcher sought their voluntary participation and that they should provide informed consent (copies included in Annexure A).

3.7.1.2.   CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY

No participant in this study could be identified on paper, because they were identified only by letters of the alphabet to ensure their anonymity. The participants were ensured that all their information would be treated as confidential. The researcher protected the personal information of the participants in the research setting and did not share any of the information gathered.

3.7.1.3.   DECEPTION, PRIVACY AND EMPOWERMENT

No participant was deceived during this study, either about the purpose of the study or in any other area. The study was not conducted to enforce any intervention on the participants and none of the information gathered was difficult to obtain because of its being sensitive or personal. The formulation of the questions also helped to ensure the participant's privacy, since none of the answers to any questions would have been useful to any other person in the research setting. The findings of the study were afterwards shared with the participants in electronic version.

3.8. SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

In this exploratory case study, qualitative content analysis was applied as research method. The intention was to gain an understanding of the perspectives of Cohort 3

teachers regarding the CPTD system. The voice of the teachers was of importance to the researcher and therefore individual interviews were scheduled with participants.

An open-ended interview was conducted with each participant and the questions were formulated with the primary research question in mind. However, the participant was the inspiration for the questions and as each participant started sharing his or her experiences and perceptions, more questions were formulated during the interview. A major advantage of these individual interviews was the authenticity of the voice of the participants.

The data obtained from the interviews was transcribed, coded and grouped into themes.

Ethical considerations were contemplated, and the necessary permission was obtained from the participants.

The next chapter presents the data and discusses the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF DATA AND FINDINGS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter offers a description of how the case study design was used and what the study found. First of all, the selection of the participants is explained, followed by some descriptive information about each participant. The structure of the interview sessions is explained next, along with the data collection and analysis methods. Finally, the data is interpreted for each participant, based on the major themes identified by the researcher.

4.2. SELECTION OF THE PARTICIPANTS

The researcher contacted Cohort 3 teachers at a primary school in Pretoria, based on pure convenience to the researcher. According to Maree *et al.* (2012), convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling method conducted by a process that does not give all individuals in the population an equal chance to be selected for the study. They add that when generalisation is not a main objective of the researcher, this type of sampling is acceptable since it does not fall under random sampling methods. The participants were purposefully chosen, and since all members of the population did not have a fair and equal chance to be selected, it would not be possible to generalise the study findings to the general population.

The school was close to the researcher's place of employment and some of the staff members at the school were professional acquaintances of the researcher. None of these acquaintances were interviewed for this study. The researcher asked her acquaintance to request the participation of Cohort 3 teachers at the school by distributing invitations for participation to all willing participants. Five volunteers agreed to participate and were qualified to take part in the study. The relevant details of each participant appear in Table 4.1:

Table 4.1: Participant information

Participant	Subject	Gender	Language used in interview
A/ Afrikaans teacher 1	Afrikaans	Female	English
B/ Mathematics teacher 1	Mathematics	Female	Afrikaans
C/ Mathematics teacher 2	Mathematics	Female	Afrikaans
D/ Afrikaans teacher 2	Afrikaans	Female	Englsih
E/ Mathematics teacher 3	Mathematics	Male	English

4.3. DATA COLLECTION AND STRUCTURE OF THE INTERVIEWS

Individual interviews were scheduled with each participant and the participant's relevant documentation or related information was gathered before the individual interviews. This information was used as evidence to support the status of the CPTD system and the perspective of the participants. Documents included the individual participant's proof of registration with SACE and the signed informed consent letter. This was needed before the individual interviews with the participants could start, to assist the researcher in structuring the interview questions. Some participants participated more actively in the CPTD system than others.

Once the documentation was collected, the participants were contacted to arrange a suitable time to conduct the interviews. Each participant was seen at a location and time of his or her choice. The researcher travelled to the venues that were indicated as suitable by the participants to make them feel at ease. She did however request that the interviews not be conducted at the participants' place of employment to avoid

any conflict of interest or interference with work responsibilities. The interviews started in September 2016 and were concluded in January 2017.

Open-ended questions were formulated for each individual, depending on the evidence gathered from the participant's documentation. Open-ended questions let participants have a chance to speak their mind in their own unique way. The researcher was interested in the participants' honest feelings about the process of familiarising themselves with the CPTD system, their process of registering to take part in the CPTD system, their previous participation in the system, and lastly, their intended participation in the system to accumulate enough points within the given time frame.

Data was collected by means of a personal interview. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed by the researcher. The data was kept confidential on the laptop of the researcher and, after completion of the study, it will be stored in a secure location to ensure its security and confidentiality.

4.4.   PRESENTATION OF DATA

The major themes identified from the data were taken from the most prominent questions asked in the interviews. These questions were synthesised into five major statements.

4.4.1. PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTION OF CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD)

A major theme that materialised from the data was the impact of the participants' perception of CPD. As the researcher conducted the sessions, each participant shared his or her own ideas and feelings about CPD, based on their previous experience with it. As mentioned in Section 2.2, CPD is the process of professional learning and development by an individual (Meggingson & Whitaker, 2004) and the individual takes control of this ongoing process by means of reflection and action.

From the responses of the participants to the **first question** (i.e. What do you think CPD means?), it appears that the definition of CPD among teachers differed, but similarities could be drawn between some of the responses. Some felt CPD was an individual attempt from a teacher to engage in the process of learning and development professionally. The study participants also commented on the process of CPD as an ongoing process of which the individual teacher had to take control. They felt it involved the identification of professional needs of teachers and the chance to develop those areas.

Evidence of this theme was Participant A's response, namely that she felt professional development was about always improving yourself, and Participant D's statement that professional development was the personal responsibility of each teacher and therefore unique to that individual.

Participant E also had a similar reply to this question:

> "Professional development to me is a combination of always improving what you are doing and looking for better ways how you can do your job."

Participant B and C felt CPD includes the identification and discussion of present and anticipated needs of individual staff about professional development. In Participant B's opinion, professional development must be specifically targeted at the individual's needs. She considered it useless to send a person for courses simply to accumulate points, as this would not contribute to his or her education.

Participant C suggested that CPD should be about more than just a mandatory or "forced" aspect of teaching:

> "*Dit gaan nie net oor kursusse en opleiding nie maar om iemand se tekortkominge te identifiseer en dit te verbeter.*" (It is not only about courses and training, but about identifying an individual's shortcomings in order to rectify them.)

4.4.2. PARTICIPANTS' EXPERIENCE WITH THEIR REGISTRATION ON THE CPTD SYSTEM

The next theme was the participants' experiences with the registration process of the CPTD system – in other words, their first personal experience with the system. As the participants explained what their own experience was with the registration process, the researcher allowed them to venture into different components of the system. These memories brought up their honest feelings and personal experience.

Participant A had a positive attitude towards her registration process with the CPTD system. During the interview, she used phrases like:

> "The registration is actually very good. I got excited to take part in the system when I registered. I felt like a professional. It is not only the doctors and lawyers that have a professional development system anymore."

Similarly, Participant B was pleased with the registration process and Participant C stated, "the registration process was easy".

Participant D did not feel positive about the registration process and found it to be "exhausting".

4.4.3. PARTICIPANTS' EXPERIENCE WITH THE CPTD SYSTEM POST-REGISTRATION

As mentioned above, the participants explained their feelings and experiences regarding the registration process of the CPTD system, and this logically brought about the next theme, namely the participants' experience with the CPTD system post-registration. This included everything – from the participant getting to know the system and entering previously completed activities, to the process of deciding what activities to partake in.

Participants A, B and C were not pleased with the CPTD system since they felt like they didn't understand the activities. Participant A shared her concern regarding the

accumulation of the required 180 points she was expected to collect during the 3-year cycle:

"I am still not sure how I will be able to get *all* the points because I need 100 more points and the activities, they have there is not enough points and some of the training workshops are expensive."

Participant B had similar feelings as participant A and blamed them on a lack of variety of available activities that were available post-registration:

"Ek voel nie dit help om punte te gee vir iets wat 'n persoon al gedoen het nie. So dit help nie ek gaan weer na die VAW breuke-kursus toe nie, want ek het dit klaar gedoen." (I don't feel it helps to award points for something that the person already completed. So, it won't help me to do the VAW fractions course again, because I already completed it.)

Participant C complained that very few activities awarded points on the system:

"Ek het dit nie verstaan nie. Ek het probeer om al die aktiwiteite wat ek al gedoen het op te laai, sodat ek die maksimum hoeveelheid punte kon kry, maar daar is so min goed wat die sisteem toelaat." (I didn't understand it. I tried to upload all the activities I have done onto the system, to get the maximum amount of points, but there are very few things that the system allows.)

Participant D, in contrast, was pleased with the system post-registration and said:

"It was easy to find and open the CPTD web page. The system is effective and works well."

She later added a warning:

"The system captures information easily, so you should make sure you select the correct choices and enter the correct data."

4.4.4. PARTICIPANTS' EXPERIENCE REGARDING ACTIVITY CHOICES AND SELECTION

The next theme also emerged from the previous one. The participants' experiences regarding activity choices and selection also linked to the first theme. The new theme showed the researcher how the participants attempted to take control of their own professional development.

This theme interested the researcher in the sense that the participants seemed unsure about how to respond when asked how they selected activities. The researcher expected this to be the pivotal theme, namely to hear the individual voice of the teacher. However, the participants were able to supply only limited reasons for their choosing a specific type of activity. Participant D admitted as follows:

"I simply entered the activities that the system allowed me to. Unknowingly I completed certain activities that counted, but the activities I thought would count, didn't."

The participants ventured into future planning for professional development but struggled to explain why they chose the activities they already completed. Participant A expressed her desire to be able to plan for the period during which she would have to accumulate the CPTD points:

"…so that you can actually plan for the 180 points over the 3 years."

Participant E set a goal for himself for his professional development for the year:

"I decided on a goal in the beginning of the year as well as what I would like to achieve in my classroom."

Most of the participants were told to attend a workshop or go to a specific activity. They did not raise any concern about being told which activities to attend. This might be due to teachers being sceptical to sign up for training activities for several reasons. One such reason was that, as Participant C admitted, she did not want to pay for training and would rather wait for the school to send her and pay for it. Participant A made a point that indirectly relates to the above-mentioned point. She argued that if the

training held clear incentives for the participants, they might be more willing to spend money on the training themselves.

Participant B only mentioned the activities she knew would award her CPTD points. She failed to answer how she chose to attend the activity:

> *"Daar was die VAW-Solidariteit wiskunde breuke-kursus wat ons bygewoon het en ek gaan ook nou na die kongres toe. Daar is 'n twee-dag Wiskunde kongres, ek gaan net na die een dag toe vir daardie opleiding as gevolg van die begroting. Dan die ander aktiwiteite is die vergaderings wat ons by die skool bywoon en daai tipe van aktiwiteite. Ek doen baie sportkursusse maar dit tel net dieselfde punte as 'n skoolvergadering. Al wat deur die Departement (SACE) geregistreer was, was maar net die VAW-Solidariteitkursus gewees."*

> (There was the VAW (Solidarity) mathematics fractions course we attended, and I will also be going to the congress. There is a two-day Mathematics congress; I am only attending the one day due to budget constraints. The other activities are meetings we attend at school and similar activities. I do a lot of sports courses but those count the same amount of points as a school meeting. So, the only thing that was really registered with the Department (SACE) was the VAW course.)

The participants demonstrated a clear lack of insight into their choice of activities. Later in the study, it will be discussed how teachers should take greater responsibility for their own professional development.

4.4.5. PARTICIPANTS' OPINIONS REGARDING THE CPTD SYSTEM IN GENERAL

The last theme that emerged concerned the participants' opinions regarding the CPTD system in general. These were general remarks and observations made during the interviews that showed the participants feelings about the CPTD system. It was the purpose of the study to gather information about the experiences and opinions of the participants.

Participant A called herself a "great supporter" of the CPTD system, but she felt some adjustments needed to be made in order for the system to work well for the teachers who had to use it.

Participant B admitted she was pleased with the standard of the CPTD system:

"Die kursusse het waardevolle inligting en die standaard is baie hoog. So ek het baie geleer…" (The courses have valuable information and the standard is very high. So, I learned a lot…).

She did however state that the information stays the same year after year, so the variety of activities in the system needs to be improved.

Similarly, Participant C felt that it was important for South Africa to have a system like the CPTD, but since no system was perfect, improvements had to be made.

Participant D and E were not equally positive about the CPTD system. They both raised concerns about the system not reaching the goals they felt it was set out to achieve. Participant E felt the time the system takes from teachers is too demanding on top of their busy schedules at school:

"I think a lot of teachers feel like me. Due to our demanding schedules, it is difficult to find time to ensure that we complete the types of activities they have on the system. I feel if the activities are more directed to what we have to do and achieve every day, then it won't feel like it is only one more thing to worry about. I don't think the CPTD system is a bad thing, but we as teachers must really feel it is helping us more."

What follows will be an interpretation by the researcher of the themes found in the data, according to the major interview questions.

The **first** question regarding the definition of CPD differed among teachers. Some small similarities could also be found between some of their comments. Evidence of similar perspectives could be found in the following comments from participants regarding their personal responsibility for improvement:

"As a teacher I feel it is very important to always develop yourself, just like you expect it from your students. So professional development is always improving what you are doing and how you do your job." (Participant A)

and

"Ek voel professionele ontwikkeling is 'n persoonlike, unieke konsep waarvoor elke individu self verantwoordelik is." (I feel professional development is a personal, unique concept for which every individual him- or herself is responsible.) (Participant D)

Participant E also had a similar reply to this question:

"Professional development to me is a combination of always improving what you are doing and looking for better ways how you can do your job."

Participant B and C added another element to the definition of CPD, namely the training needs of individual teachers. They felt CPD had to include the identification and discussion of present and anticipated needs of individual staff members with regard to professional development. In Participant B's opinion, professional development had to be targeted specifically at the individual's needs. She specifically addressed professional development in education in the interview:

"Dit help nie jy stuur hom op 'n klomp kursusse net om punte bymekaar te maak nie, dan dra dit nie by tot onderwys nie." (It is useless to send a person for courses simply to accumulate points. This won't contribute to education.)

She argued that the individual teacher should have the desire to develop and be allowed to identify his or her own areas for development. The training should then be focused on those areas and a mentor should be assigned to that person to support him or her. The individual can then apply what he or she learnt or was being developed in. The training should not focus on subject areas that the person did not even teach.

Participant C felt that CPD should be about more than just a mandatory or "forced" aspect of teaching:

"Dit gaan nie net oor kursusse en opleiding nie, maar om iemand se tekortkominge te identifiseer en dit te verbeter." (It is not only about courses

and training but about identifying an individual's shortcomings in order to rectify them).

The **second question** which was about the *participants' experiences with the registration process of the CPTD system* resulted in the following responses:

As was mentioned in Section 4.4.2, Participant A was positive about the CPTD registration process and during the interview she commented on it as follows:

> "The registration is actually very good. I got excited to take part in the system when I registered. I felt like a professional. It is not only the doctors and lawyers that have a professional development system anymore."

The HOD of the school's language department informed her about the registration and she was shown a PowerPoint presentation from SACE explaining what it is all about. She found the process to register easy. "All you need is your basic information". Some of the teachers registered together at school because not all of them had access to a computer at home. She stated that she enjoyed the registration process and shared it with her colleagues. She further expressed her feelings as follows:

> "I love what I do, and I work hard. I enjoy this small act of recognition given to us as teachers. It makes me feel like we are taken more seriously now. Registering for this system makes me excited for the future."

One instance where Participant A had some trouble with the registration process was when one of the teachers at her school whom she helped to register selected some of the information incorrectly. She said:

> "The teacher made a mistake by selecting the wrong option on a drop-down menu. We could not fix that ourselves. Maybe they can just make it easier to correct a mistake. Lots of teachers will pick a wrong selection from the drop-down menus and you can't always wait for the technical support to help you fix it."

Participant B was instructed by the HOD to register for the CPTD system. The HOD held a meeting at the school where she informed the teachers of the registration

process and showed them how to register. Participant B found the registration process easy:

> *"Hulle vra maklike vrae soos jou naam en van, SACE-nommer, skool waar jy werk en so aan."* (They ask easy questions such as your name and surname, SACE number, place of employment and so forth.)

The trickiest part for Participant B was to enter the activities she has already done, because one activity can fall into more than one category. This is what she experienced during the registration process:

> *"Ek het 'n netbalkursus gedoen en dit was nie deur die skool aangebied nie maar dit word gebruik vir my skool sportafrigting – so waar trek jy die lyn tussen skoolgebaseer of nie. Dit was verwarrend gewees en het my lank gevat om te verstaan en ek weet nog steeds nie of dit reg gedoen is nie."* (I did a netball course that wasn't presented by the school, but I use it during my school coaching time – so it is difficult to distinguish between school-based and non-school-based activities. It was confusing, and I am still not certain if I entered the information correctly.)

Participant C did not have any problems during the registration process:

> *"Die registrasie van die proses is maklik gewees."* (The registration process was easy.)

She decided to sign up because she was curious to see what the system was about; she had heard about it from some acquaintances. She completed the process at home and the only information she needed was her basic personal details and some of her work information.

According to Participant D it was easy to register on the CPTD system. She gave some context to the researcher:

> "It was easy to find and open the CPTD web page. The system is effective and works well. I accidently pressed enter at the first step which registered me as a Department Head instead of a teacher. I tried to contact the client support on the contact numbers provided but there was no answer. I fixed it myself later by

going to a section titled 'Further information'. It was easy to register my subject and qualification."

She also raised some issues relating to the registration process, and although these issues do not relate directly to the process, they are nonetheless noteworthy:

"It is too easy to delay the registration. There is no rush because according to the sources you have three years in which you can earn your 150 points. Lots of issues can cause teachers not to register, like lack of internet, lack of time and lack of motivation to do so."

Participant E's found the registration process easy, thanks to the help his HOD gave him:

"Our HOD held a meeting where we discussed the CPTD system. We were shown a PowerPoint presentation about how the system works and what is expected of us as teachers. We also received instructions and guidelines on how to register and how to log our points. After that I went to the SACE website and we had to sign up. You have to provide information such as name, surname, SACE number and identification number. This part of the process was fairly easy. Next, we had to provide our information as educator, such as where we obtained our degree, our teaching experience and body, etc. I was unsure at first, and if we didn't have guidelines for the process I would have struggled to register."

As can be seen, most of the participants had a good experience with the registration, with one or two issues that needed to be addressed.

In the **third question** the participants were asked: *What was your experience with the CPTD system post-registration?* Most of the responses from the participants indicated their disappointment, frustration and confusion with the CPTD system. Their experiences as gathered from their responses are discussed below.

Participant A was not as positive about the CPTD system post-registration as she was about the registration process. She said:

"The system is not easy to understand, and I don't understand the activities. In the registration process I was excited to see what types of activities would be available, because I love to learn new things and I always want to develop in my career. I was very disappointed by the lack of variety and the difficulty in uploading activities I am interested in."

She used the example of the completion of her Honours degree in 2016. Further studies are listed as an activity on the CPTD system, but if she wanted to use them for her PD points, she had to apply for permission and she was not aware of this. She planned to complete her degree regardless of the CPTD system, but she raised the following point:

"They didn't warn us about these things, and the system doesn't explain how it works. My HOD also didn't know, so she could not tell us to get this permission."

She felt that most of the activities counting points on the system were not interesting to her and she could not foresee how she would develop by completing these activities. She believed that more information was needed for teachers to be able to use the CPTD system more effectively and made the following remark:

"If the system gave us some guidance once we registered, it would be so much better so that you can actually plan for the 180 points over the three years. You can do amazing things, but if nothing is going to count in the end after you have put all the effort in, then it is a waste of time."

Participant A was also concerned about her own progress in the system, as well as about some of the other aspects concerning the system:

"I am still not sure how I will be able to get all the points because I need 100 more points and the activities, they have there is not enough points and some of the training workshops are expensive."

She was concerned that although there were so many teachers who had to complete the CPD activities, their principals told them that only some of the teachers could go for training. They also discouraged the teachers from attending training activities at certain times because of other responsibilities, or due to the fact that the training was too expensive. Because the teachers were expected to pay for the activities and

complete the activities and to apply for reimbursement afterwards, Participant A mentioned some issues she had with this arrangement:

> "I would like to hear from SACE how they want us to develop in the long run with these things happening on the system. Teachers cannot wait to be reimbursed; we know it always takes forever for the government to give you money if you claimed from them."

She believed it would be better if the activities were focused more on the teachers themselves. The CPTD system should be made worth it for the teachers to invest in it, both financially and in terms of time. She stated that if teachers could go for the training in their own time and spend the money because they know it will pay off in future, most of the problems could be eliminated. She made a number of suggestions on how teachers could be motivated to invest their time and money in the CPTD system:

> "If teachers could be given a raise if they take the training seriously or be rewarded with extra benefits like insurance or other incentives like traveling or something that teachers will like. This will make us feel good about the training and not like it is just another thing that is expected of us."

On more than one occasion Participant B made statements like:

> *"Ek voel nie dit help om 'n persoon vir aktiwiteite te stuur wat hy of sy nie nodig het nie."* (I feel it's useless to send a person for activities that he or she doesn't need.)

Participant B expressed her feelings about the CPTD process clearly and stated on several occasions that she did not want to waste her time with unnecessary activities. She had attended some workshops and courses prior to the registration process. The activities have meanwhile been accredited on the CPTD system, but she could not claim the points because she attended the courses before she registered on the CPTD system. Her HOD encouraged her to attend the course again, but she felt it was a waste of her time, since the content of the activity wouldn't have changed substantially. In her opinion, once an activity has been completed, no further points should be allocated to that specific activity if it is completed again. She used an example to illustrate her point:

"So dit help nie ek gaan weer na die VAW breuke-kursus toe nie, want ek het dit klaar gedoen. Ek is dan nie besig om verdere inligting te versamel oor breuke nie. (So, it won't help me to complete the VAW fractions course again, because I already completed it. I am not gathering new information about fractions.)

According to Participant B one shouldn't be able to attend activities to merely accumulate points. She emphasised the importance of professional development, but she could not justify simply attending activities to earn points. Her suggested solution was to have a larger variety of activities that are presented more frequently. Another point Participant B highlighted, was that not all the approved activities were focused on professional development:

"Ek voel nie ek benut die tyd deur in 'n vergadering te sit nie. Dit is nie professionele ontwikkeling nie. Die skoolvergadering of die distrikvergaderings sluit nie genoeg nuwe inligting en hulpbronne in om dit Professionele Ontwikkeling te noem nie. (I don't feel I am using my time productively when I sit in a meeting. That is not professional development. The school or the district meetings don't involve enough new information to be classified as a professional development activity.)

During the interview, Participant C voiced her frustration with signing up at all. As easy as the registration was, she found the rest of the system confusing:

"Ek het dit nie verstaan nie. Ek het probeer om al die aktiwiteite wat ek al gedoen het op te laai, sodat ek die maksimum hoeveelheid punte kon kry, maar daar is so min goed wat die sisteem toelaat. (I didn't understand it. I tried to load all the activities I have done onto the system, to get the maximum amount of points, but there are very few things the system allows.)

She was under the impression she would be able to upload activities she had done in the past, including her Honours degree that she completed in 2015. She found out that since she had not obtained permission to include her further studies as part of her CPD, and since she did not complete it after her registration, her studies were not seen as a CPD activity. Academic studies are a category on the system, but certain criteria and procedures have to be followed to get it included.

In Participant D's opinion, the CPTD system was not user-friendly and teachers were not using it optimally. This is because teachers were not aware of how to effectively plan and execute their own professional development. She spoke to her colleagues and they were not aware of the point weighting of the types of activities they were interested in.

> "The points for the activities are the issue. We didn't realise only certain activities will earn you points. None of the courses we attended counted. We don't know who was supposed to tell us about this or where we should have found this out. Of the six activities I have completed, I could only enter one. The system captures information easily, so you should make sure you select the correct choices and enter the correct data."

She was not implying that this information was not available somewhere but claimed that teachers did not consider it high on their priority list to obtain additional information about the CPTD system. Participant D thought that if the CPTD system interface was more informative, it would be easy to cross-reference facts about a certain level of activity in terms of points and costs.

The most difficult part of the CPTD system for Participant E was to understand what he needed to do after he had completed activities. He was under the impression that the service providers gave the necessary documentation in support of participation to the necessary authorities. He completed some activities and only realised he needed to log his participation when his HOD asked him about it. He explained his misunderstanding:

> "My HOD asked me about the Netball course I attended. I am an umpire. I told her about it and she mentioned the CPTD system and the points I earned, and she said I should enter it. I didn't understand her comment and asked her how I should enter the marks. She showed me on the system and that helped me to understand the system better and I now know what to do in the future. I just don't know why we can't be better informed about these things ahead of it."

From their responses it was clear that the participants felt confused and frustrated with elements of the CPTD system.

The **fourth question** aimed to find out how participants chose their activities. It was: *How did you choose the CPTD activities that you have already completed?*

These were the responses given by the five participants:

Participant A expressed her disappointment during the interview with the activities she could load onto the system. She said the system indicated the types of activities, or the levels. This led her to believe that the list of activities would help her to decide when to complete the activity, what it would cost and where she could attend it, but this was not the case. If she had had this type of information, it would have helped her plan her CPD for the three years. She said she went through the types of activities, trying to put in what she had already done. She experienced frustration with the fact that she didn't know how to add activities and even asked her HOD if she could phone SACE to come to the school, so they could offer some assistance.

To Participant A, CPD was supposed to be about more than just the mandatory accumulation of CPD points:

> "I don't want to attend activities just to earn points. I would rather understand the system better and then do the type of activities that will help me be a better teacher."

She did her own research and found that most of the activities were provided by service providers who applied to SACE to have their training or activity accredited. The specific activity was then added to the list of activities offered to teachers. She believed there was a lack of variety in activities that appealed to teachers because the system was not well-established yet. She would rather wait for a larger selection of activities that counted more points to become available than waste money on random activities.

Participant B felt limited in her choice of activities for CPD:

> *"Daar was die VAW-Solidariteit wiskunde breuke-kursus wat ons bygewoon het en ek gaan ook nou na die kongres toe."* (There was the VAW (Solidarity) Mathematics fractions course we attended, and I will also be going to the congress.)

The budget for activities was another factor that limited Participant B in her choice of activities:

> *"Daar is 'n twee-dag Wiskunde kongres; ek gaan net na die een dag toe vir daardie opleiding as gevolg van die begroting."* (There is a two-day Mathematics congress; I am only attending the one day due to budget constraints.)

Participant B stated that only the fraction course was recognised by SACE. The other activities she had participated in, such as meetings and sports coaching courses, weighed very few points on the CPTD system. Participant B would like to see more activities accredited by SACE on the CPTD system to give teachers a larger variety of development activities to choose from.

After the registration process and her disappointment with uploading her activities, Participant C was not sure how she felt about going to any CPTD activities or training. Her Head of Department scheduled a staff meeting and informed the teachers about the registration process and she asked the Mathematics department to consider a course that was being presented by one of the teachers' unions. The mathematics coordinator decided the course would be beneficial to the team and so they all attended it.

> *"Wel, ons hele Wiskundespan het na 'n kursus toe gegaan wat die SAOU (Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysersunie) aangebied het oor breuke. Ek het dit nie gekies nie; ons moes net gaan."* (Well, our whole Mathematics team went for a SATU (South African Teachers Union) presented about fractions. I didn't choose it; we just had to go.)

Participant C was thankful to find afterwards that the course counted CPD points on the CPTD system. She spoken to her colleagues about other activities they might attend and hoped to attend a 2-day workshop. She found it was easier to wait for the school to send them for training because the school then paid for the training. She could not afford to pay for training herself.

On more than one occasion during the interview, Participant C mentioned her concern about her lack of points. She was afraid that she could only upload her attendance at a course once; so if she went for similar courses, she might not be able to upload

them. The only other activities she had completed were things she did at school, including meetings.

As mentioned, Participant D was very enthusiastic about CPD and she shared her excitement to start her own professional development with the researcher. She had not really been able to attend any of the activities or start her own professional development plan. Fortunately, she had unknowingly completed certain activities that counted points on the system, and she has since entered them.

She has been provisionally investigating the system to get to know it better and indicated that she found some confusing activities on it:

"The system indicates that we should visit websites and read books. I couldn't see where to enter the information if we actually read these books."

Because Participant E was very active with sports coaching at his school, he has been attending numerous training courses. He explained what he had done so far and how he found it:

"Thus far I have completed a Netball rule exam and went for grading. I focused a lot on completing sports workshops this year. It was wonderful! I enjoyed completing it because it was applicable to my goal this year. All the activities I have participated in or activities that I have specifically chosen, were fairly easy to complete, even though it takes up a lot of extra time. I decided on a goal in the beginning at the year as well as what I would like to achieve in my classroom. I use this to decide what activities would be applicable to reach my goal."

Participant E would like to use the opportunity to identify some areas in which he could develop further. These areas would be his focus for the next activities he would choose:

"The area that I am most lacking in, is kick-starting or leading projects, as well as to be involved in projects in the community. I will need to participate in community projects and really make an effort to become part of the leadership of projects at school. I will need to do research and have outreaches to actually know which projects will need attention. These types of activities count lots of

points on the system and I am really going to try and complete them because I need more points. I just wish it didn't take such a long time to get something like that done."

The **fifth and final question** was a wrap-up of the interview. The researcher asked the participants: *What is your opinion about the CPTD system in general?*

Participant A had mixed emotions about the CPTD system:

"This is a very good system and I am a great supporter of it, but the system needs some adjustments to work better for teachers. There needs to be more choices when it comes to the activities that we can complete."

She welcomed the fact that when teachers got an opportunity to develop professionally, it gave their careers, and the passion and sacrifice that went along with it, the recognition it deserved. She felt it was great to be part of a noble profession and was adamant that all teachers need to keep on developing. She stated that teachers are life-long learners because students and education always change. Thus, the CPTD activities should help teachers to develop themselves and be able to address these changes successfully. Currently, Participant A reckoned that the system was not equipped to achieve this and its workings were not entirely clear to teachers. She discovered that there were some smaller activities that also counted, but one could only add activities a certain amount of times and then no more. That is that. She felt that teachers should be helped to understand why an activity would contribute to their CPD in terms of time, how many points the activity would weigh, and what it would mean for the future.

Participant A ended the interview off on a positive note:

"I mean it is not all bad. I have found some activities online that are not on the system. I am going to contact the service providers to hear if they are in the process of applying for accreditation for the CPTD system."

She was excited to see if these service providers would indeed become part of the CPTD system and would then opt to complete those activities later. She hoped that the more teachers asked for activities, the more activities would be added. In her

opinion it was also a case of miscommunication and lack of information that caused the variety of activities to be so limited. She made the following remark:

"I mean there is a massive demand, but service providers need to know what we want, to be able to give it to us."

Participant B attached great value to the CPTD system. She felt the course she attended had valuable information and the standard was very high. It gave her access to new, innovative information. However, she found through her own enquiries that the course content did not change from year to year. She would therefore not want to attend the course again, since she felt it would be a waste of her time and money. The problem she faced was to find another course to attend that would fall within her budget and weigh enough points. The areas she would like to develop have now been covered with the activity, but her choices for developing other areas were limited if the course content did not change. She would like to have more options, because she wanted to develop, rather than to repeat the same activities year after year.

Despite her earlier negativity towards the CPTD system, Participant C surprised the researcher by stating:

"Ek dink dit is baie belangrik vir Suid-Afrika om 'n sisteem soos hierdie te hê. Onderwysers kan nie jaar na jaar skoolgee sonder enige ontwikkeling nie. Dit is belangrik om te ontwikkel, nie net op 'n persoonlike vlak nie, maar veral op 'n professionele vlak." (I think it is very important for South Africa to have a system like this. Teachers can't keep teaching year after year without any development. It is necessary to keep on developing – not only on a personal level, but especially on a professional level.)

She further elaborated on her opinion and stated that the CPTD system did not offer activities that would develop the areas or skills required by teachers:

"Die sisteem soos wat dit nou is, is nie perfek nie. Die tipe aktiwiteite is nie regtig wat ons as onderwysers wil doen om te ontwikkel nie." (The system, the way it is now, is not perfect. The types of activities are not really what we as teachers would like to develop in.)

She nevertheless saw potential in the CPTD system. She mentioned a bigger variety of activities and the freedom of teachers to manage their own professional development as possible elements that could improve the system:

"'n Groter verskeidenheid en die vryheid om ons ontwikkeling self te kan bestuur, is nodig. Ek dink as die probleme uitgewerk is wanneer die sisteem 'n bietjie ouer is, sal dit 'n wonderlike sisteem wees. (A greater variety and the freedom to manage our own professional development is needed. I think if the problems are sorted out, when the system is a little older, it would be great.)

The enthusiasm Participant D had for the CPTD system was quite admirable. She was realistic about the system, but still very optimistic about its potential:

"I don't know the system well enough to really give facts about it. So, I am only giving my opinion. I am very glad this system is available to teachers. Teachers need to be kept accountable for what they are teaching and how they teach. What we do and say as teachers, inside and outside of the classroom, makes an impact on learners. I don't think the system will change teachers or education. I just believe if you keep a person accountable, they are more likely to think about what they do."

She was very excited to engage more with the system over the next three years. She was grateful for the opportunity to develop professionally and hoped to be an example for her co-workers and other teachers by taking this system seriously and giving it a chance to make her a better teacher, for the sake of her students.

Participant E had mixed emotions about the CPTD system. He explained what he understood about the need for the system:

"I understand why the Education Department wanted teachers to take part in this system, I know that it is to ensure that teachers develop professionally and 'keep up' with modern times."

However, in his opinion, the system put additional strain on teachers and this did not help them to become better teachers. He elaborated further on this statement:

"Due to my demanding extra-curriculars as well as subject preparation, I don't have time for extra paperwork. I don't have time to ensure that I go to 10 meetings and attend three workshops in a term. I feel pressured to attend workshops (sometimes it isn't even applicable to my subject or to me as a person). I don't think the CPTD system is a bad thing, but for someone who is already doing so much in the school, it is only one more thing to worry about."

4.5. FINDINGS

Based on the presentation of the data, the following findings could be deduced:

- Cohort 3 teachers were aware of the concept of CPD and align to some extent to the literature. There was some difference in their opinions, but for the most the teachers had similar responses. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.
- The registration process of the CPTD system was good, according to Cohort 3 teachers. A couple of issues were experienced with this sample of teachers, but for the most part their experience of registration was positive. More on this in Chapter 5.
- The responses of the participants indicated their disappointment, frustration and confusion with the running of the CPTD system. This will be discussed in Chapter 5.
- Only a few of the participants were able to say how they chose the activities they had already completed, which shows Cohort 3 teachers' lack of taking responsibility for their own professional development. This shortcoming will be discussed in more detail later in the study (see Chapter 5).
- The data shows both positive and negative elements in the participants' feelings about the CPTD system in general. See the discussion in Chapter 5

4.6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this chapter, the data was presented according to the major themes identified in the data. This was followed by a detailed account of what emerged from the data.

Chapter 5 provides the conclusion to the study and suggests a number of recommendations.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1. INTRODUCTION

This study aimed to investigate the experience of Cohort 3 teachers regarding the CPTD system. The primary research question was used in collaboration with the major themes identified from the data in Chapter 4. The primary research question from Chapter 1 was the focus, because this is what the study aimed to answer:

What is the experience of South African Cohort 3 teachers regarding the CPTD system?

5.2. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.2.1. PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTION OF CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD)

Although the participants' understanding of continuing professional development varied greatly, in general the participants' understanding of the concept included aspects like the definition of professional development given in the literature. As Day and Sachs (2004) state, CPD describes all the activities teachers engage in and the process of learning and development by an individual who does so of their own accord, during the entire course of their career. So, individual teachers should take control and responsibility of the CPD process themselves.

Another similarity between the responses of the participants and what was found in the literature, was the fact that CPD is an ongoing process that involves the identification and discussion of present and anticipated needs of individual staff members for enhancing their job satisfaction and furthering their career prospects (Billings, 1997).

These similarities in the responses of the participants during the interviews and what was found in the literature are summarised in Table 5.1 below:

Table 5.1: Participants' viewpoints regarding CPD

Views on Continuing Professional Development	Participants
Process of learning and development by an individual teacher	A, D and E
Identification and discussion of present and anticipated needs of individual staff in terms of professional development	B and C
The individual teacher takes control of the ongoing process of professional development	A, D and E

The participants identified concepts in their own definitions, such as always improving what you do, identifying your shortcomings, developing yourself and focusing on specific areas.

Some participants had similar responses but phrased it differently. For example, participants A and D both felt CPD involves improving what you do. They used statements like *"… professional development is always improving what you are doing and how you do your job"* and *"A teacher is a life-long learner…".*

Other participants, such as Participants B and C for example, felt CPD should focus on specific areas. The relevant comments were: *"Professional development must be specifically targeted at the individual's needs",* and *"…making the shortcomings of someone known so that can be improved."*

These similarities and differences in participants' responses might be due to their own limited experience with the concept of CPD, because these teachers were not very well informed about CPD in general. For them, the concept of CPD was more focused on what they thought about themselves in the classroom than on teaching in general. Most of the responses were related to how they taught and what they should do differently.

5.2.2. PARTICIPANTS' EXPERIENCE WITH THEIR REGISTRATION ON THE CPTD SYSTEM

The data revealed the participants had mostly good experiences with their process of registering on the CPTD system. The participants mentioned that they needed only basic information to complete the process. They simply visited the CPTD website and entered the information.

Some participants did mention some problems related to the registration process. The first issue was with the drop-down selections in choices the teachers had to make. If a teacher entered the incorrect information, and did not realise it, it was difficult to correct the mistake later in the process.

The second issue was with entering the activities they had already completed. The teachers tried to input as many activities as possible to get the maximum amount of points. They found it confusing to understand where to enter which activities, and why they could not enter some of the activities they assumed they would be able to (such as academic studies).

The last issue with the registration process was the fact that there was no urgency among teachers to register and most teachers did not realise they only had limited time to accumulate the 150 points. Some of the teachers did not have access to the internet or a computer and others stated that their demanding teaching and extra-curricular activities and other responsibilities made it difficult for them to focus on the CPTD system.

This last frustration is similar to what was found in the literature and speaks of the "context" with which South African teachers must deal in local schools. In the regional and national perspectives from the literature it was discussed that schools are expected to function within a complicated environment, characterised by enormous social and economic inequalities. These include persistent poverty, unemployment, huge income disparities and the effects of diseases such as HIV/Aids (Du Plessis, 2014).

5.2.3. PARTICIPANTS' EXPERIENCE WITH THE CPTD SYSTEM POST-REGISTRATION

The responses of the participants generally indicated their disappointment, frustration and confusion with the CPTD system. The main reasons for this included the lack of activity variety, types of activities, entering the activities onto the system and the mere accumulation of points as opposed to the actual professional development of teachers.

The participants indicated their frustration with the lack of variety of endorsed activities. The participants had specific areas they would like to develop, but the activities that were available were not conducive to professional development in those particular areas. The participants would like to have more choices to optimise their professional development experience.

The types of activities that could earn the participants points constituted another point of confusion and frustration for the participants. The endorsed activities were not easy to identify in terms of when and where they were presented and what the costs would be. In addition, there were activities available on the system that contributed very little to actual professional development.

The CPTD system was confusing with regard to how to upload activities onto the system once they were completed. Some activities could fall into more than one category and there was no clear distinction between the categories to help the participants understand where to register the activities. The participants indicated that they would like some training on how to use and better understand the system.

The last frustration dealt with the mere accumulation of points, rather than the professional development of the participants. The participants felt they were not using their time effectively if they attended workshops or completed activities merely to accumulate points. They wished to make the CPD experience worth their while and preferred not to repeat activities or complete useless activities that were not applicable to them.

According to the available literature there is currently a need in South Africa for professional development of teachers that entails more than the traditional 'one-shot' approach. Before the CPTD system was initiated by SACE, the old approach was

found to be inadequate and inappropriate in the context of current educational reform efforts, and it was considered out of step with current research about teacher learning. The need for a system such as the CPTD was quite clear (Kriek & Grayson, 2009).

The CPTD system should not become yet another "one-shot approach", and it should be developed into a system that meets the needs of South African teachers. As the participants stated, the system needs to offer them a variety of choices and the types of activities should be focused on the teachers' areas of development. Furthermore, entering the activities onto the system should be more user friendly and, according to the participants, the mere accumulation of points at the expense of the professional development of teachers should be avoided.

5.2.4. PARTICIPANTS' EXPERIENCE REGARDING ACTIVITY CHOICES AND SELECTION

None of the participants were able to clarify how they chose the activities they had already completed, since another person made their choices for them. Participants A and E indicated that they had hoped to plan in some way for their professional development. Participant A expressed her desire to plan for the period in which she would accumulate the CPTD points:

> *"…so that you can actually plan for the 180 points over the three years."*

Participant E set a goal for himself for professional development during the year:

> *"I decided on a goal in the beginning of the year, as well as what I would like to achieve in my classroom."*

Most of the participants were simply told to attend a workshop or go to a specific activity. Most of the participant did not raise concerns about being told which activities to attend. This might be due to teachers having a number of reasons to be sceptical of signing up for training activities. Once such reason, to which Participant C admitted, was t that she did not want to pay for training and would rather wait for the school to send them, because then the school would pay for it. Participant A also made a point that related indirectly to the above-mentioned point: She felt that if the training held incentives for the participants, they might be more willing to spend money on the training themselves.

The lack of insight the participants had into their choice of activities was evident. The way in which participants chose their activities for the CPTD system was mainly determined by an external party, such as the principals or Heads of Departments. The participants complained about a lack of funds to finance their own CPTD process and having to wait for reimbursement. A suggestion was made to incentivise the system and make it more worthwhile for the teachers to pay for their own professional development.

In the definition of the concept of CPD in the literature, it is suggested that the individual should take responsibility for the CPD process. CPD is the process of learning and development by individuals who do so of their own accord, during the entire course of their career (Day & Sachs, 2004). The individual should take control of this ongoing process by means of reflection and action (Meggingson & Whitaker, 2004). From what the data shows, the findings of the current study are at odds with the literature. The individual teachers should not wait for instructions to complete activities – they should rather take control, as the literature shows.

5.2.5. PARTICIPANTS' OPINIONS REGARDING THE CPTD SYSTEM IN GENERAL

The data shows that the participants had similar responses and feelings about the CPTD system in general. All of them had a predominantly negative perception of CPD, tempered by slightly positive aspects. The negative and positive perspectives of each participant are illustrated in Table 5.2:

Table 5.2: Participants' perspectives about CPTD system in general

Participant A	
Negative perspective	**Positive perspective**
"There needs to be more choices when it comes to the activities that we can complete."	*"…very good system and I am a great supporter for it."*
Participant B	
Negative perspective	**Positive perspective**

"…the only problem is the information stays the same year by year."	*"The courses have valuable information and the standard is very high."*
Participant C	
Negative perspective	**Positive perspective**
"The type of activities are not really what we as teachers would like to develop in."	*"I think it is very important for South Africa to have a system like this."*
Participant D:	
Negative perspective	**Positive perspective**
"I don't think the system will change teachers or education."	*"I am very glad this system is available to teachers."*
Participant E	
Negative perspective	**Positive perspective**
"Due to my demanding extra-curriculars as well as subject preparation I don't have time for extra paperwork."	*"I understand why the education department wanted teachers to take part in this system…"*

The data shows that these participants clearly had mixed feelings about the CPTD system. They were positive about the potential of the system if it were to improved with time, but they did not feel as if the system was having a beneficial effect on teachers, and on education in general, yet.

As the literature shows, the context within which South African teachers need to operate at school level is challenging (Du Plessis, 2014). This might explain the data that shows that participants had a variety of negative opinions regarding the system. However, this does not excuse teachers from their responsibilities as teachers, since they need to know what they are teaching and be able to teach it well (Slabbert *et al.*, 2009). They must be motivated to acquire refined knowledge. Although it is often difficult for schools and teachers to cope in the South African context and to fulfil their responsibilities, their impact on society at large cannot be stressed enough. As such, a spotlight is cast on the continuing professional development of the educators who provide education to individuals and societies (Billings, 1997).

The voices of the participants were heard on these points and their experiences with the CPTD system were documented, thus answering the primary research question. One of the similarities found within the literature studied, was the definition of CPD.

From the data and the literature, it is now clear that CPD is a process of learning and development by an individual teacher, of which the individual teacher should take control. Hence, the identification and discussion of the individual teacher's needs for development should be taken into consideration. Another similarity found in the literature involved the context within which the participants found themselves when teaching in South African schools. In the literature, these same challenges were mentioned, and they often caused teachers to neglect their own professional development because of the many other issues they had to deal with. The last noteworthy similarity between the study and the literature concerned the data regarding the needs of the Cohort 3 teachers. The old "one-shot" approach was no longer conducive to the professional development of these teachers. They needed specific activities to help them improve in their areas of concern. A variety of activities should therefore be available in the CPTD system to meet more of their needs. The mere accumulation of points was not productive and were found to waste these teachers' time.

The biggest contrast between the data and the literature was the finding that it was the responsibility of the teacher to take control of his or her own professional development. In the study, the participants could not substantiate how they chose the activities they had completed up to that point, and some participants actually admitted they had been told to complete activities by members of the school management team. According to the literature, the individual teacher should take control over his or her own professional development. The teacher should identify and discuss areas or needs for development and complete the relevant types of activities. This was not the case among the study participants, which is a cause for concern. The teacher is the one who knows his or her strengths and weaknesses, and appropriate professional development can help them improve and rectify these points to reach the ultimate aim of education.

The unique finding of this study that presented itself from the data studied, was the fact that South African Cohort 3 teachers are not trained or made sufficiently aware of

the fact that they are part of a profession that needs continuing professional development. The fact that most teachers had difficulty with the basic operations of the system, while at the same time not knowing which activities they should choose, makes it obvious that professional development is not part of the teachers' inherent identity.

The five participating teachers were not equipped with the necessary skills to plan their own career path; a path of which professional development is a vital part. They were not trained to help themselves improve in areas of concern. These teachers did not fully understand the importance of taking their professional development seriously and making it work for their own benefit and career enhancement.

What will be discussed in more detail in the recommendations of this study, is the simple fact that teachers need to understand the responsibility they have towards their own professional development, and they should only expect support – not instruction to act – from their school support teams. Other stakeholders in the CPTD system need to provide the necessary framework that can equip teachers to fully achieve their own professional potential.

The next section deals with the significance of the study with regard to the secondary research question: *How do South African Cohort 3 teachers perceive the implementation and management of the CPTD system of SACE?*

5.3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The perception of the participants, who were all Cohort 3 teachers, gave the researcher the opportunity to formulate more applicable questions, such as:
- Is the electronic CPTD system implemented and managed effectively?
- Is the system user friendly?
- What would teachers like to change about the system?

These questions are not directly related to the research question or secondary question, yet they still highlight good points for further deliberation and any future attempts to improve CPTD systems.

By gathering the five teachers' experiences, it was possible to broaden our insight into this system on behalf of teachers, principals and SACE (as the body responsible for the management of the system). Cohort 3 teachers are the staff members who stand to gain most from the CPTD system, and it is vital to the success of the system that these teachers get to have a say in what the system should be provide for them. This will become very important once the first cycle for Cohort 3 ends in 2018 and the system's performance can be evaluated.

The way in which the individual teacher's choice and management of CPTD activities can be improved needs to be revisited. The system encourages teacher participation in terms of activity selection, but most teachers need guidance on how to self-regulate and manage their own professional development. Teachers should move away from the perspective of professional development being another duty to fulfil, and rather lean towards the idea that professional development is crucial for and beneficial to their future careers.

5.4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Generalisation of the findings was not an objective of this study, since the number of participants was small. Thus, the suggestions offered below are merely cautious recommendations.

Three different categories of recommendations can be made: Firstly, to Cohort 3 teachers; secondly to members of school management teams; and lastly to other stakeholders in the CPTD system.

5.4.1. RECOMMENDATIONS TO COHORT 3 TEACHERS

5.4.1.1. COHORT 3 TEACHERS' RESPONSIBILITY WITH REGARD TO THEIR OWN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

This study found that Cohort 3 teachers are being told by an external party, such as a principal or Head of Department, which activities to complete in the CPTD system. The

researcher recommends that teachers should take greater responsibility for their own professional development. The fact that a small research study like this could uncover the fact that teachers are told which activities to complete for professional development purposes, shows a need for teachers to take a step back and plan ahead for their own professional development. Teachers should also do some research about the availability of activities that could be conducive to their own professional development by identifying the areas in which they want to develop.

The researcher makes this recommendation based on the socio-cultural theoretical framework of Vygotsky (1978), which was the theoretical foundation of this study. Vygotsky shows how important the individual voice can be in society, with regard to aspects such as education. In every activity that aids to formulate human experience, such as education, the individual voice must be heard. According to the researcher it is pivotal for teachers – as instructors and educators – to voice their own needs for professional development. Merely waiting for an external party to decide and prescribe which activities to complete, is unacceptable.

5.4.1.2. TRAINING FOR ADEQUATE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Another finding of this study was that Cohort 3 teachers were not certain which activities would aid them in earning the most CPTD points. Some participants completed activities, but because of the criteria that applied, they did not count towards any points in the system. It is the researcher's understanding that instances like these lead to the teachers being wary of selecting activities based on their own needs for professional development, because they would prefer to avoid completing unnecessary activities. Some form of training might help to give Cohort 3 teachers the confidence and ability to plan for their own professional development. Such training could be provided for trainee teachers as part of the teacher qualification. It might be repeated by the end of every cycle to keep Cohort 3 teachers from reverting to old habits such as waiting for someone to suggest and pay for their professional development needs.

5.4.2. RECOMMENDATIONS TO SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS

5.4.2.1. ROLE OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS

One of the first recommendations was to Cohort 3 teachers to make their own decisions when it comes to professional development activities. This is a two-pronged recommendation. It was found that Cohort 3 teachers wait for their management teams to recommend specific activities. School management teams should however change their role in the professional development of Cohort 3 teachers. (School management teams in this case imply principals, vice-principals, heads of departments and any other individuals who act as consultant when it comes to matters concerning an individual teacher's professional development.)

The researcher would recommend that the school management team be more involved in assisting the individual teacher with information, but that it should take a backseat when it comes to the choice of activities that teachers make regarding their professional development. Currently, Cohort 3 teachers seem to be waiting to hear from school management teams about which activities they should attend. This should change, because teachers need to take responsibility for their own professional development.

5.4.2.2. TYPES OF SUPPORT FROM SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS

Based on the above recommendations and findings, the researcher suggests that school management teams should equip themselves with the information necessary to support or assist Cohort 3 teachers in the process of choosing CPD activities. Support or assistance could include the advertising of new activities and publishing the details pertaining to these activities on the school's internal messaging system. The school could also assign a Professional Development Mentor to the Cohort 3 teachers in a school, as this would provide someone who could liaise between the school and SACE. This person could make enquiries from SACE and report back to the school about specific topics and questions the teachers might have regarding professional development.

Different schools have access to different resources with which they can offer support, and every school should utilise what it has at its disposal to support its teachers as best it can.

5.4.3. RECOMMENDATIONS TO OTHER STAKEHOLDERS IN THE CPTD SYSTEM

5.4.3.1. KEEP THE INDIVIDUAL TEACHER IN MIND

Based on the findings of the study in hand, the researcher's recommendation to the stakeholders of the CPTD system (which includes government organisations with stakes in the system) would be to take the individual teachers' needs into consideration when the system is managed. The study found that Cohort 3 teachers are currently confused and frustrated by the (limited) variety of activities, the types of activities, how to enter the activities onto the system, and the mere accumulation of points (at the expense of proper professional development of teachers that is inherent to the system).

The researcher recommends that, as the system is maintained during the three-year cycle, stakeholders take teachers' needs into serious consideration. They should take the time and effort to collect the opinions of participating Cohort 3 teachers and employ these teachers to help with improvements, as the need arises. Most of the teachers would embrace the opportunity to earn a substantial number of CPTD points for an activity that will not cost them too much money. Also, Cohort 3 teachers would gladly invest their time in activities that do not take up their free time, outside of regular working hours.

5.4.3.2. GREATER VARIETY OF ACTIVITIES

The study furthermore found that Cohort 3 teacher experience frustration with the lack of variety in activities on offer. There exists a need for a greater variety of activities and for the accreditation of more activities by successful service providers. The researcher recommends an increase in activities that meet the standards and requirements of SACE, as well as those of the individual teacher. The more service providers who meet these standards and requirements and who can obtain

accreditation from SACE, the better the activities will be for the teachers, because there will be a greater supply of activities to choose from.

Time and cost are two crucial factors to keep in mind when these activities are accredited and allowed to be on the system. The service providers cannot provide all these activities at high costs and during teachers' holidays. Teachers want the freedom to choose when to complete activities and available courses should be offered at a reasonable price, since most teachers have limited personal budgets.

The above recommendations could be investigated and might have beneficial impacts on the CPTD system.

5.5. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

Two suggestions for further studies can be made.

- Firstly, an investigation can be conducted into CPTD activities that would not cost Cohort 3 teachers money out of their personal budgets and that would be available within reasonable timeframes.
- Secondly, a much larger study – with similar objectives – should be conducted once the first cycle of the CPTD system has finished in 2018.

The first study could examine the creation, accreditation and implementation of affordable CPTD activities, as well as the creation of a "mentor-mentee" programme. Mentor teachers could act as mentors to mentees who would be trainee teachers, or young and unexperienced Cohort 3 teachers. The mentor teacher would earn CPTD points for completing certain activities and for following strict procedures to meet outcomes. This programme could be monitored and documented by the mentee teacher and by a school management team member. The activity would be cost effective and would occur during the normal teaching hours of a Cohort 3 teacher.

This type of activity could also be piloted and investigated in a larger quantitative study to gather numerical data and give scientific proof of success or failure.

The second study would be a similar study to this one, but on a larger scale to determine the experience of Cohort 3 teachers once the first year of the three-year CPTD cycle has ended. This type of investigation could be used to generalise the

findings, it could help determine the success and failure areas of the system, and it could assist in its improvement.

The findings of such a large-scale study would assist the Cohort 3 teachers to have their opinions matter in something that has a substantial effect on their professional development. It would assist government stakeholders to improve the system continuously by knowing how to identify strengths and weaknesses, as well as to look for opportunities and threats to the system.

5.6. OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The overview of the study provides a review of everything the researcher attempted to produce – the background, the problem, the aim of the study, the research questions, the methodology and sampling, the findings and the recommendations.

This study investigated the experience and perceptions of Cohort 3 teachers with regard to the CPTD system. The researcher decided to investigate this because of her own feelings of frustration with professional development when she was an educator. Cohort 3 teachers were chosen as study population since they were the last implemented into CPTD system, in 2016, and it gave the researcher time to conduct the study.

The researcher studied literature that discussed CPD from a global, regional and national perspective. The literature revealed to the researcher the spectrum of professional development – from developed countries (from the global perspective) to developing countries, including in South Africa where the study was conducted. The researcher conducted her own research with five volunteer Cohort 3 teachers. She conducted her research in an ethical way and collected interesting data by following a clear structure. The data was analysed in order to come to a finding that could be compared with the literature.

Many findings were made, and the study had deep meaning to the researcher in terms of her own beliefs and assumptions regarding the CPTD system. The most profound finding was that these Cohort 3 teachers had a good understanding of what continuing professional development means to teachers, which is good because the teachers first

had to understand the concept before they could engage in any activities to develop themselves. This understanding shown by the participants correlated with the literature that served as background to the study, while other factors were unique to the participants. The Cohort 3 teachers had difficulties with the system and they needed help from the school support team and government entities involved in SACE's CPTD system to better understand and utilise the system.

Another noteworthy finding was the fact that these teachers had both negative and positive perceptions regarding the CPTD system. This indicates that the system has strengths but also weaknesses that need to be addressed in future. It was found that these opinions correlated with the unique context within which South African schools exist and where these teachers had to operate. However, regardless of the context, the teachers had to take responsibility for their own professional development so as to fulfil the aim of education.

The individual Cohort 3 teacher has a unique voice and the researcher believes this study showed that the voice of this individual teacher should matter in the CPTD system. Cohort 3 teachers are privileged in this era of South African education to be included in the CPTD system. To be able to develop professionally is a great privilege, but also a great responsibility. Education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world (Mandela, 2003), and all teachers should consider it crucial to develop continuously on a professional level. Every Cohort 3 teacher should take his or her professional development seriously and should help to improve the CPTD system by engaging in the activities offered. Teachers should strive for excellence in the type of activities that they choose and in which they participate to develop themselves.

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Annexures

Annexure A: Participation Letter

Annexure B: Informed Consent Letter

Annexure A: Participation Letter

13 June 2016

RE: Request to participate in the research study and information on the study

To whom it may concern

This letter serves as an invitation and information pertaining to the study, to you as a Cohort 3 teacher to take part in a short-term research project. We are specifically interested in registered teachers of the CPTD system who will participate in the CPTD activities in 2016. We have permission from the principal of your school, Mr van der Poel, to conduct this research study at your school, but your participation in the study is voluntarily.

The research focuses on the experience of each individual teacher within a selected sample of teachers, i.e. Cohort 3, concerning the CPTD system. The researcher would like to gain insight into these teachers' experience regarding the CPTD system to be able to understand in detail the system's inner workings. The aim of the study is to follow the process of these teachers during their participation in the system and collect data regarding their experiences. The data will be collected by the researcher by conducting interviews with the willing participants.

The activities you will be expected to perform – should you agree to form part of this study – are as follows:

- Firstly, give your permission for your opinion and experiences to be used in this study by signing an Indemnity form.
- Secondly, agree to be interviewed by the researcher.

The interview will be scheduled with you at a convenient time and the school office will be used as a venue. Each interview will take approximately 45 minutes. The selection of the participants will be done on a first come, first serve basis. If you give your permission to the researcher to use the information you share in the interview, it means that you are aware that what you say in the interview will be used as data for the

research study. Your participation is voluntarily and can be terminated at any time; thus you may leave the study at any time .

The questions that will be asked during the interview include:

1.   Are you a registered member of SACE?
2.   Are you registered for the CPTD system and will you participate in the CPTD activities in 2016?
3.   Tell me what you know about the CPTD system.
4.   In what area do you feel you need most development?
5.   What type of activities do you feel will help you to develop that area most?
6.   Have you attended any CPTD activities? Tell me about your experience if you have.

Once the interviews have been conducted, the discussions will be transcribed and analysed by the researcher. The analysed data will be made available to you after it has been published. The researcher will adhere to all research standards and ethics and maintain a professional position regarding the protection of your identity and personal information. None of the information collected will be shared with any of the other participants or with external parties. This means confidentiality will be maintained and your identity will be protected – your name and contact details will not be used in the study unless you decide to make your identity available.

After reading this, please sign the Consent Form to confirm your willingness to participate. By signing it, you give the researcher permission to use the information shared in the interview as data in this research study.

Kind regards

Rejane Roux   Dr Sonja Coetzee

(Researcher)   (Supervisor)

rejaneroux@gmail.com   sonja.coetzee@up.ac.za

Annexure B: Informed Consent Letter

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

I, _____ (name and surname) hereby declare that I give Rejane Roux (researcher) permission to use the information I share in the interview as data in this research study.

I understand that

• my participation is voluntarily;

• as a willing participant I can decide to stop participating at any time if I wish to do so;

• it is my responsibility to help the researcher negotiate a time convenient to me at which the interview can take place;

• I need to answer the questions truthfully and in detail to the best of my ability.

By signing this form, I declare that I understand and have read the information given to me in the Invitation Letter and above. I am willing to participate in this study and fulfil my responsibilities.

_____   _____

Signature   Date