

**Transitioning from university to workplace: Experiences of novice teachers
in township schools
by**

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

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at the

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AUGUST 2021

Declaration

I declare that the dissertation, which I hereby submit for the degree Magister Educationis in Management, Law and Policy at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution."

.....

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31 August 2021



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Dedication

I dedicate this research to several people who have supported me and without whom this dissertation might not have been written.

In memory of Robert Beckmann and Theuns Goosen, for being my role models in life. Although they are unable to see my final dissertation, their lives were an inspiration to me and my studies.

To my loving partner, Johan, who believed in me and motivated me to achieve my goals. I am thankful for all the sacrifices made during the two years. I am very thankful for all the ways you have supported me throughout my studies.

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Abstract

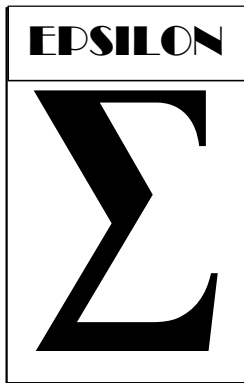
Prior research shows that internationally schools struggle to retain teachers with less than five year's work experience. This may be because novice teachers encounter various challenges when transitioning from university to the teaching profession. These challenges cause high levels of stress which can lead to novice teachers leaving the profession prematurely. Very little research has been conducted on how novice teachers working in township schools experienced this transition. Therefore, this study aims to explore how novice teachers in township schools experienced their transitional phase during their first five years of employment and to determine what resources were made available to them to overcome the challenges they encountered. The 4S-system (self, situation, support and strategies) contained in Schlossberg's transition theory was the lens through which the study was conducted.

This study employed a qualitative research approach with a multiple case study design. Fifteen novice teachers with less than five years teaching experience in township schools were purposively sampled. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews. Six participants were chosen to participate in a follow-up focus group discussion. Both the interviews and focus group discussion were audio recorded and transcribed for data analysis purposes. The 4S-system was used to organise the data and findings into four themes. These themes are the individual's self, situation, support and strategies. In each theme the challenges which confronted the participants and the different types of support the participants experienced during their first five years were identified.

Key Terms:

Novice teacher; teacher retention; challenges; student teachers; transitioning; support; induction; mentoring; Schlossberg.

Letter from language editor



Kommunikasie/Communication
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Certificate of Editing

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to confirm that I have completed the language editing of the dissertation **Transitioning from university to workplace: Experiences of novice teachers in township schools** by Kristell Beckmann submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree **Magister Educationis** in the Faculty of Education (Education Management and Policy Studies) at the University of Pretoria.

Yours faithfully

Isobet Oberholzer

27 August 2021

List of abbreviations

CPTD	Continuing Professional Teacher Development
ELRC	Education Labour Relationship Council
GDE	Gauteng Department of Education
HOD	Head of Department
HOG	Head of Grade
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
NPFTED	National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development
PAM	Personnel Administrative Measures
PD	Professional Development
QMS	Quality Management System
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SAPS	South African Standard for Principalship

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 BACKGROUND

Internationally and in South Africa many teachers feel that school leaders and managers expect novice teachers to deal with the challenges in the classroom and to teach with the same knowledge and practical skills of veteran teachers (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009: 814). These high expectations, together with the emotional stress placed on novice teachers, contribute to the high dropout rate among novice teachers world-wide (Meristo & Eisenschmidt, 2014: 1, Çakmak, Gündüz, & Emstad, 2019: 156). According to Fantilli and McDougall (2009: 814) “Northern American school districts have established that an approximate 40-50% of teachers exit the profession within their first five years” This statement is an indication of the harsh reality for American teachers and schools and according to Meristo and Eisenschmidt (2014: 1) high teacher dropout rates are problematic all over the world.

In South Africa the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development (NPFTED) has identified that many teachers are not able to meet the demands of a 21st century classroom (RSA, 2007: 4). This may be caused by student teachers not being equipped with the right knowledge and skills to guide them during their first years of teaching. This raises the question: Who should be responsible for supporting novice teachers during their transition from student teacher to novice teacher?

According to the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) published in terms of the Employment of Educators Act, 76 of 1996, there should be multiple role players involved in leading and supporting novice teachers. These role players include senior teachers, heads of department (HODs) and principals. In the PAM document the duties of these role players are clearly assigned. One of the main duties of the senior teachers is to guide “less experienced” staff as mentors (RSA, 2016: 32). Among others, a department head’s responsibility is to ensure optimal functioning of his/her department (RSA, 1998: 37). Department heads should therefore not ignore a novice teacher’s inexperience in the classroom. They should work alongside the senior teachers and act as mentors to novice teachers.

There are many duties assigned to a principal by the PAM document but one of the key duties is to guide the performances of all the staff (RSA, 1998: 40). This guidance includes supervising, providing support and offering professional advice to teachers in

need, including novice teachers (RSA, 1998: 41). This can be achieved through establishing support systems such as the induction and mentoring of beginner teachers. Inductions are programs that provide support to novice teachers during their transitional period (Warsame & Valles 2018: 17). Mentoring has been known as a strategy to support novice teachers in their first years of teaching (Mann & Tang, 2012: 488).

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

I observed in the literature that novice teachers are experiencing little or no support from their employers (Senom, Razak Zakaria & Sharatol Ahmad Shah, 2013: 119, Warsame & Valles, 2018: 18). Lack of support is also the leading factor to why novice teachers wish to leave the profession in Northern American schools (Warsame & Valles 2018: 17). In South Africa some scholars have questioned what South African universities and schools are doing to help teachers deal with the stress of being a novice teacher (Botha & Rens, 2018: 1). Unnecessary stress and anxiety among novice teachers may lead to burnout or teachers leaving the profession early (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009: 814). Between 18 000 and 22 000 teachers leave the profession each year which leads to South Africa having a shortage of teachers (Maphalala & Mpofu, 2019: 1).

Many South African teachers feel that the multicultural and multiracial backgrounds of the students also contribute to high stress levels in the classroom (Botha & Rens, 2018: 5). This stress can be more prominent in township schools because of the political history surrounding township schools that creates a wider variety of challenges for teachers today. During the apartheid era teachers from township schools have been known to be poorly trained, the classrooms were characterised by over-crowding, classroom resources were lacking and there were little to no administrative procedures (Motseke, 2005: 113). These previous disadvantages in township schools still have a negative impact on the way the curriculum is implemented (Motseke, 2005: 113).

Another problem is that schools and pre-service training did not properly prepare novice teachers for their first years of teaching (Senom et al., 2013: 119, Altayli & Dagli, 2018: 368). In a study by Botha and Rens (2018: 5) many South African teachers expressed that they felt that knowledge and skills learned at tertiary levels did not translate in practice. Because of this novice teachers search for help from colleagues in the school or from the administration (Çakmak, Gündüz, & Emstad, 2019: 154).

In literature we see some connections between the implementation of support systems such as induction programmes and traditional mentoring and novice teachers

developing more efficiently in their professions (Warsame & Valles, 2018:17). Based on the negative way induction programmes have been implemented, teachers in the United States of America have ultimately branded inductions as inflexible, time consuming and not catering to teachers' needs. Mentoring has also been criticised for being without a focus and not fulfilling teachers' needs (Stewart, Coombs, Fecho, & Hawley, 2019: 291). However, Çakmak (2013: 59) argues that if teachers are not effectively trained to transform their theoretical knowledge into practice, schools will not be able to ensure optimal learning for their students.

Although teachers receive undergraduate training Altayli and Dagli (2018: 368) found that it was not sufficient to guide teachers in their first years of teaching. These authors suggested that new teachers must make use of observing and examining more experienced teachers to gain skills and or knowledge during their first years in the profession. Without proper guidance from the school, teachers are being put into new environments and are expected to perform duties like a veteran teacher (Senom et al., 2013: 119).

The gap I have identified through observing literature is that there is a lack of knowledge pertaining to the transitioning of novice teachers from university to the workplace, particularly in township schools. Therefore, the main reason for conducting this study was to investigate what is happening in township schools regarding the transition process of the novice teachers. Furthermore, I was curious to explore if the experiences found in literature reflect the multiple reality of novice teachers in South African township schools.

1.3 RATIONALE

Fantilli and McDougall (2009: 814) define a teacher's first years of teaching as a very hectic time in his or her career and indicate that during this time, many teachers struggle to keep their heads above water. One of the biggest reasons for teachers leaving their careers as teachers is that schools do not invest in support systems for teachers to cope during these hectic times (Warsame & Valles, 2018: 17). I believe that there are many schools that are unaware of the positive impact of support systems for example, induction and mentoring on novice teachers.

Teachers throughout the world feel that they are not receiving enough support to cope in the classroom and many novice teachers feel like failures because they cannot adapt to a new and unknown setting on their own (Warsame & Valles, 2018: 17, Fantilli &

McDougall, 2009: 814). There are many others, but this is the main reason why teachers leave their profession and why schools cannot hold on to new teachers (Warsame & Valles, 2018: 17).

1.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study was to uncover how novice teacher experience their transition from university to township schools.

The objectives of this study were to determine:

- How novice teacher's context influences their transitioning experience.
- How novice teachers influenced their own experience.
- The type of support that schools provided to novice teachers.
- What strategies did novice teachers use to cope in township schools?

1.5 THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Considering the unique context of township schools in the Ekurhuleni District in the Gauteng Province, the purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of novice teachers who just transitioned from their tertiary institutions to their workplaces. This study focused on the support or the lack of support that the fifteen participants had during their first years of teaching. It explored the individual support provided by the principals, the responsibilities of department heads and senior teachers towards novice teachers, as well as the kind of resources the participants had to help them overcome the challenges they experienced.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.6.1 Main research question

How do novice teachers in township schools experience their transition from university to the workplace?

1.6.2 Sub-questions

- What role does situational context play in a novice teacher's transition from university to the workplace?
- What role does individual context play in a novice teacher's transition from university to the workplace?

- How are novice teachers supported in their transition from the university to the workplace?
- What strategies do novice teachers employ to cope with the challenges they experience when transitioning from the university to the workplace?

1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Schlossberg (2011: 159) designed a transition theory framework to better understand the effect transitioning between jobs has on certain individuals. In the context of my study, I used Schlossberg's transition theory to get a glimpse of novice teachers' realities. In the first section I presented some reports of international and local challenges that novice teachers face. There is evidence to support the notion that many novice teachers encounter challenges when transitioning into the classroom, when teaching and when seeking help from others. These challenges have been known to have an effect on a school's ability to retain novice teachers during their first five years of teaching (Stewart et al., 2019: 290). Even in South Africa we can observe a scarcity of well-educated and experienced teachers (Kok, Swarts, Van der Walt, Rabe, & Van der Vyver, 2010: 343).

We find that world-wide schools try to provide resources to novice teachers that meet the standards of Schlossberg's 4S-system (2011: 161). The aim of the 4S-system is to identify possible barriers or resources that can challenge or help a novice teacher when transitioning into the workplace (Anderson, Goodman & Schlossberg, 2011: 38). The four categories of the 4S-system are situation, self, strategy and support (Schlossberg, 2011: 161). If one category is restricted, another category must be strengthened (Schlossberg, 2011:162).

The first category of the 4S-system is situation. School climate is an example of a situational resource. If a school creates a positive and supportive school climate for novice teachers, it can provide them with the opportunity to improve their self-efficacy (Meristo & Eisenschmidt, 2014: 8). The second category that the 4S-system identifies, is self. This refers to a person's inner strength and ability to cope (Schlossberg, 2011: 161). The third category is support. This category allowed us to investigate what support is available to novice teachers during their transition into the workplace (Schlossberg, 2011: 161). Support can take on the form of exposing a novice teacher to coaches, experts, colleagues, senior teachers, family and internet support (Bates & Morgan, 2018: 624, Khalid & Husnin, 2019: 199). The last category in the 4S-system is

strategies. This includes all strategies teachers use to improve their situation (Schlossberg, 2011: 161). These strategies can help a novice teacher to update their teaching skills and knowledge in a modern era (Mohan, 2016: 167). Working collaboratively with peers or observing real lessons by veteran teachers allow novice teachers to develop new teaching strategies that address challenges in the classroom (Steyn, 2014: 162, Bates & Morgan, 2018: 624).

The following image is an illustration of Schlossberg's transitional theory. In this illustration the phases of transitioning into a new work environment is depicted as a three step flowchart. In the first phase the individual can encounter three types of transitions; an anticipated, an unexpected and a non-event transition (Schlossberg, 2011: 159). In the second phase the individual can encounter four types of resources or barriers that can impact their transition (Schlossberg, 2011: 160). The last phase indicates that the individual refines and reuses resources from phase two to take on new challenges during their transition (Schlossberg, 2011: 161).

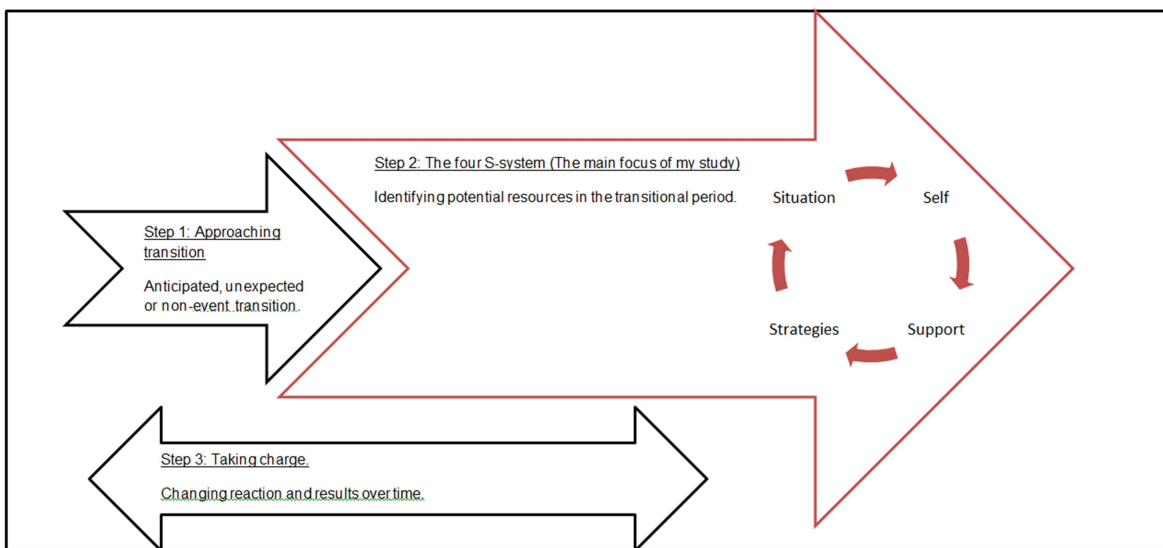


Figure 1.1: The 4S-system illustrated (Anderson et al., 2011: 37).

1.8 RESEARCH SCOPE

This study focused on the experiences of novice teachers in two independent schools in the Ekurhuleni District in the Gauteng Province. The study focused on fifteen novice teachers with less than five years' experience in the teaching profession. Both independent schools are located in a township area, less than ten kilometres from each another.

1.9 RESEARCH APPROACH

This study employed an interpretivist qualitative approach which was designed to study individuals and their complex history (Bertram & Christiansen, 2016: 25). The behaviour of the participants was important and needed to be explored (Maree, 2016: 23). I wanted to understand the complex backgrounds and mindsets of the novice teachers who were transitioning from students to teachers.

1.9.1 Research design

In this qualitative study a multiple case study was used to uncover the different realities of the participants in this study. Because of the nature of a multiple case study design, multiple participants were able to share their experiences about their transition into the teaching profession. This gave me a deeper insight and a wider glimpse into the realities of the participants.

The case in case studies refers to a phenomenon which has multiple observers (Sprinz & Wolinsky-Nahmias, 2004: 20). Each case does not have one reality but presents multiple views that are influenced by intervening variables which create multiple realities of one phenomenon (Sprinz & Wolinsky-Nahmias, 2004: 20). A case study should be able to bring the researcher as close as possible to the reality that the participant is experiencing (Harland, 2014: 1118). Case studies should therefore be used as a way to collect detailed data about one certain phenomenon and allowed me to see the world through the participant's eyes (Hofstee, 2018: 123 ; Bertram & Christiansen, 2016: 42).

1.10 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

Purposive sampling was used to select the right participants for this study (Bertram & Christiansen, 2016: 61). The motive behind purposive sampling was to select specific cases that would provide the most useful information in respect of the research topic (Emmel, 2014: 2). In this study the focus was on fifteen teachers with less than five years' teaching experience, who were currently teaching in a township school.

After the participants were identified, semi-structured interviews were used as the first data collection strategy. Semi-structured interviews are described as a meeting where strangers are motivated to discuss one topic which is chosen by the researcher (Haahr, Norlyk, & Hall, 2014: 7). During the interview I posed certain questions to gain personal knowledge about the experiences of the participants when they transitioned from

university to the workplace (Haahr, Norlyk, & Hall, 2014: 7). The semi-structured interviews took place over a period of one month.

After I conducted the fifteen semi-structured interviews, I gathered six out of the fifteen participants to participate in a focus group discussion. These participants were chosen based on their availability and their willingness to participate. A focus group discussion can be described as a type of in-depth interview between a group of participants (Mishra, 2016: 1). During the focus group discussion I asked open-ended questions to the participants to gather more information (Winke, 2017: 74).

1.11 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This study was guided by thematic analysis as my model of data analysis. The first step I took was to transcribe the audio recordings of the interviews. I used coding to organise and highlight important findings in my data which helped me to guide the focus group discussion. After three weeks of transcribing, I conducted my focus group discussion. When I had transcribed all my semi-structured interviews and my focus group discussion, I organised important findings according to Schlossberg's 4S-system which helped me to draw a conclusion regarding my findings.

1.12 OUTLINE OF STUDY

The structure of the dissertation is briefly outlined as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction

The first chapter contains the background and introduction of the study as well as the problem statement, aims and objectives, purpose of the study, research questions, theoretical framework, research scope, research approach and design, methods of data collection and the data analysis model.

Chapter 2: Literature review

In Chapter 2 I presented a review of literature pertaining to the challenges that novice teachers face world-wide. Possible solutions to help novice teachers overcome the challenges in their first five years of teaching are included.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

Chapter 3 describes the study's research methodology and research design. Furthermore, it explains the steps I took to collect and analysed my data.

Chapter 4: Presentation of data

The participants are described in Chapter 4 and the data is presented. I presented my data by grouping them in relevant sections to help me answer my research questions/

Chapter 5: Discussion of findings

Chapter 5 includes discussions of the findings with regards the participants' self, their situation, the support they had been given at their school and the types of strategies that they used to cope during their transitioning experience.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

In Chapter 6 I answer the research questions that guided this study and make recommendations pertaining to novice teachers and offer suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This literature review contains major themes that explore the experiences of novice teachers when transitioning into the workplace. The first theme focuses on the challenges novice teachers are confronted with when they commence their teaching career. In the second theme I explore the notion of professional development and how it can help a teacher during the early years of their teaching careers. Next, I present an analysis of the different shareholders involved in the professional development of novice teachers and in the last theme I explore what strategies are used to enhance professional development.

2.2 CHALLENGES NOVICE TEACHERS NEED TO OVERCOME

In this theme I explore the various challenges that novice teachers face when transitioning into the classroom, and how novice teachers can overcome these challenges.

The first years of teaching are the most crucial years of a teacher's career, since this is the time when novice teachers will face the widest variety of challenges and difficulties in the development of effective teaching skills (Çakmak, Gündüz & Emstad, 2019: 147). By understanding the challenges and hardships of a novice teachers' transition, it might inspire school leaders to offer more support to novice teachers during their initial years of teaching (Çakmak, Gündüz & Emstad, 2019: 148).

2.2.1 Transitioning from university into the workplace

A novice teacher can be described as somebody with less than five years teaching experience (Kim & Roth, 2011: 4). It has been noted that there is a disturbing dropout rate of novice teachers world-wide (Meristo & Eisenschmidt, 2014: 1) and public schools in the United States of America are currently experiencing a dilemma when trying to retain novice teachers (Warsame & Valles, 2018: 17). Furthermore, there are some studies that indicate that between one third to one half of novice teachers leave the profession within the first five years of teaching (Stewart, Coombs, Fecho & Hawley, 2019: 290). This is a worrisome trend as South Africa too is currently experiencing a shortage of well-educated and qualified teachers (Kok, Rabe, Swarts, Van der Vyver & Van der Walt, 2010: 343).

The transition from university into the teaching profession has been documented as being a reality shock for most novice teachers (Çakmak et al., 2019: 148). A gap between pre-service training and in-service development has been identified and that has an influence on the retention rate of novice teachers (Karataş & Karaman, 2013: 12). Many studies hold tertiary institutions accountable for not doing more to help novice teachers' transition into the workplace (Warsame & Valles, 2018: 17, Altayli & Dagli, 2018: 375, Botha & Rens, 2018: 5). After graduating, novice teachers have restricted contact with or support from their former teachers, lecturers and mentors (Karataş & Karaman, 2013: 12). Botha and Rens (2018: 5) criticise South African universities by arguing that tertiary institutions might be the root cause of the reality shock experienced by newly qualified teachers. They elaborate by stating that some participants in their study felt that they were only taught the theoretical aspect of teaching and were not prepared to work with learners (Botha & Rens, 2018: 5). Not only are novice teachers experiencing limited support, but they struggle to apply what they have learnt into practice (Çakmak, 2013: 59). Insufficient preparation and a lack of support for novice teachers are of the main reasons that novice teachers choose to leave the profession prematurely (Warsame & Valles, 2018:17).

Another issue that Botha and Rens (2018: 5) identified about tertiary training is that the knowledge and skills that are being taught to student teachers seldom can be transferred to different contexts. This creates even more challenges for a novice teacher in the multicultural South African educational landscape (Botha & Rens, 2018: 5). Novice teachers often find themselves lacking appropriate skills to address the needs of a multicultural classroom with diverse needs (Botha & Rens, 2018: 5). Studies indicate that internationally tertiary institutions are not providing sufficient knowledge to help novice teachers to meet the high demands of the classroom (Altayli & Dagli, 2018: 368). A study by Altayli and Dagli (2018: 375) revealed that many teachers feel that their studies were not enough to help them cope with their needs in their first year of teaching. Although international institutions provide a good insight into an ideal working environment, the environment experienced by many novice teachers is often far from ideal (Altayli & Dagli, 2018: 375). When teachers enter the teaching profession with unrealistic expectations about the working environment, it often leads to novice teachers experiencing negative feelings towards the education sector (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017: 265).

Tertiary institutions are not the sole reason why novice teachers experience high volumes of stress when entering the field of education. The knowledge we have about education becomes more complex each year with new developments and mega-trends such as globalisation and digital communications, which affects schools (Karataş & Karaman, 2013: 10-11). Because of these developments, the job requirements have become more advanced and complex, for instance a language teacher is now expected to be a critical thinker, to reflect on the changes in the world and to implement these changes into their teaching practice (Karataş & Karaman, 2013: 10-11).

There are some tertiary institutions that try to aid learner teachers by providing opportunities to become involved with teaching and schools early on. Many scholars feel that being involved in teaching practice before entering the profession hold multiple advantages for the novice teacher. In a study by Miles and Knipe (2018: 110) many teachers suggested that they learnt much more about classroom management from experiences in non-teacher roles, such as volunteering or being a teachers' aide, than from their formal education programmes. Miles and Knipe (2018: 110) found that some participants had more advantages and were better prepared to become teachers simply because they had the opportunity to engage in the practice of teaching before entering the profession. Internationally many institutions regard early teaching practice as beneficial to the development of teaching skills competencies of aspiring teachers (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017: 266, Miles & Knipe, 2018: 110). To promote practical teaching programmes these institutions have implemented a set amount of hours a student teacher must volunteer at a school throughout their studies (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017: 266). These programmes allow the student teacher to experience the classroom first hand (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017: 266). However, despite these programme there are still some students and novice teachers who claim they did not receive sufficient training in aspects such as learner discipline and curriculum design (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017: 266).

All transitions into the workplace can entail a certain level of stress, but it seems that nationally and internationally novice teachers are struggling to cope during their transition into the workplace. Although tertiary institutions provide teaching practice programmes, many novice teachers are still overwhelmed when entering the profession. Not only do novice teachers have to deal with the challenges of transitioning into a new environment, but novice teachers experience many challenges in the classroom.

2.2.2 Challenges novice teachers experience in the classroom

Teaching is a complex endeavour and there is no teaching strategy that can be applied early (Kennedy, 2019: 80). In their first years novice teachers will encounter unfamiliar circumstances and should receive the appropriate support in order to gain the needed skills and competencies that will help them throughout their teaching careers (Çakmak, 2013: 55).

There have been many challenges documented about a teacher's transition into the classroom, but it seems that teachers often find classroom management the most challenging. Regardless of the number of practical teaching hours a student teacher has, classroom management remains the most common issue for novice teachers (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017: 269). In a study by Çakmak, Gündüz & Emstad (2019: 153) they divided classroom management into three categories, namely classroom order, learner discipline and instructional management.

An orderly classroom leads to a peaceful environment which is ideal for teaching and learning (Çakmak, Gündüz & Emstad, 2019: 153). However, novice teachers often fail to provide this peaceful environment when learners start talking or debating with their peers. Uncontrolled chatter often become louder and louder and disturbs teaching and learning (Çakmak, Gündüz & Emstad, 2019: 153). Many novice teachers try not to involve other teachers in managing classroom order, so they close their door and isolate themselves from other teachers (Kim & Roth, 2011: 15). Reasons for this behavior might be because of the schools' sizes and an isolated climate within the school (Kim & Roth, 2011: 15). There are also some novice teachers who feel independent and prefer to work independently (Kim & Roth, 2011: 15). This may cause a barrier when exchanging or gaining valuable information which can improve their teaching and classroom management skills (Karataş & Karaman, 2013: 20).

The second type of classroom challenges novice teachers struggle with is learner discipline or preventing learners misbehaving (Çakmak, Gündüz & Emstad, 2019: 153). Novice teachers especially find situations difficult when learners misbehave towards peers in or outside the classroom situation (Çakmak, Gündüz & Emstad, 2019: 153)

In addition, novice teachers struggle with the instructional part of classroom management (Çakmak, Gündüz & Emstad, 2019: 153). Situations where the learners are not motivated to learn and protest against a teacher's instructions make novice teachers feel as if they are failing as teachers (Çakmak, Gündüz & Emstad, 2019: 153).

Novice teachers have reported that they feel helpless when learners refuse to read books or do not understand what is being said (Çakmak, Gündüz & Emstad, 2019: 153). Some novice teachers also indicated that they struggle with the pace of the teaching programme which can lead to high stress and anxiety levels (Karataş & Karaman, 2013: 19). When there is nothing left to do in a period or when there are long breaks between class periods some teachers feel uncertain and inadequate. The only way to combat these feelings of inadequacy is to be fully prepared for each lesson (Karataş & Karaman, 2013: 19). Novice teachers feel unsure about their skills when given instructions by their seniors. Although they do not have the same skill set as a veteran teacher, they are still expected to produce the same results as veteran teachers (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009: 814). Other factors that can lead to novice teachers experiencing emotional distress are a lack of administrative support, lack of teaching resources and limited professional development (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017: 265).

In a study by Çakmak (2013: 58) twelve out of the fifteen participants described being a novice teacher as tiring, difficult, compelling, demanding and disappointing. There are a number of studies who agree with Çakmak (Kim & Roth, 2011: 6, Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017: 268, Kennedy, 2019: 80) and reveal even more challenges such as novice teachers becoming overwhelmed, inadequate classroom management skills, having limited knowledge about classroom practices and novice teachers feeling isolated. There are limited studies that showcase all of a novice teacher's problems and that suggest strategies to combat these problems (Çakmak, Gündüz & Emstad, 2019: 153). Few novice teachers resort to finding solutions for their challenges in literature (Çakmak, Gündüz & Emstad, 2019: 154). However, if novice teachers are left to their own devices, they tend to feel ineffective and may regard themselves as not suitable for the teaching profession (Karataş & Karaman, 2013: 12). Internationally newly appointed teachers are generally not given the support they need and they are expected to fulfil the same duties as a veteran teacher (Senom et al., 2013: 119). These high demands can cause extra stress if a teacher has limited or no training in these areas (Mohan, 2016: 171). These feelings of inadequacy may lead to novice teachers leaving the profession.

Another challenge that can influence the transitioning experience of a novice teacher is the context and socio-economic status of the school. In this study I chose to focus on township schools. Townships are residential areas ,within South Africa, which originated due to racial segregation during the Apartheid era (Mampane & Bouwer, 2011:114).

Many view the quality of township schools as very poor or non-existent (MacGregor, 1998:50, Msila, 2005: 173). Some speculate that the reason for the poor quality within township schools is that the learners do not have access to constructive or supportive figures in their home environment (Mampane & Bouwer, 2011:115). MacGregor (1998:51) agrees that the influence of the outside environment has a huge impact on the learners. Other outside challenges that can have an impact on a township learner include: domestic problems, economic status, difficult living conditions and an absence of a culturing of learning at home (MacGregor, 1998:50). Currently township life is aligned with poverty, crime and violence (Mampane & Bouwer, 2011:114).

These barriers lead to learners that do not have a culture of learning and teachers who cannot maintain discipline in the classroom (Msila, 2005: 175). Teachers are also challenged as township schools do not have resources and struggle with administrative problems (Msila, 2005: 175). On top of all these challenges teachers are also expect to provide learners with a great deal of protection and resilience to learners to overcome their situation (Mampane & Bouwer, 2011:115).

2.2.3 Challenges novice teacher experience when searching for help

When novice teachers experience challenges in the classroom, they try to formulate a solution by reflecting on previous practices and solutions (Çakmak, Gündüz & Emstad, 2019: 148). Unfortunately, novice teachers have limited knowledge and prior teaching experience and that can lead to novice teachers making the wrong choices (Çakmak, Gündüz & Emstad, 2019: 148). Therefore, novice teachers tend to search for solutions by looking at the experiences of more knowledgeable sources or teachers (Çakmak Gündüz & Emstad, 2019: 154). The most common places teachers look for support are from colleagues, family members, technology and from being self-aware when teaching (Khalid & Husnin, 2019: 197).

Dias-Lacy and Guirguis (2017: 266) indicate that when a school provides a formal system where novice teachers can learn from veteran teachers, the novice teacher better understands his or her role in the school and the school culture. This formal system also reduces a novice teacher's risk to become frustrated and leave the profession prematurely (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017: 266). When mentorship is used by schools it can have a positive influence on teacher retention (Whalen, Majocha & Van Nuland, 2019: 592). However, many novice teachers unfortunately feel that their formal mentorship experience was not sufficient (Whalen, Majocha, & Van Nuland, 2019: 592).

That is why novice teachers reach out on their own to colleagues and superiors to help them overcome their challenges (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017: 269, Çakmak, Gündüz & Emstad, 2019: 148). It is not always possible to access the needed support from school leadership and management structures. For example, a participant in a study by Çakmak, Gündüz and Emstad (2019: 154-155) explained that she was receiving limited support from her main source of support namely her colleagues and that she felt ignored by her department. In another study done by Karataş and Karaman (2013: 20) a participant claimed that her biggest supporter was her husband. He would provide informal therapy sessions which allowed her to air her grievances and feel better prepared for the next day (Karataş & Karaman, 2013: 20).

Although novice teachers can find emotional support in any form, they still seek professional help from their colleagues, school leaders and parents (Çakmak, Gündüz & Emstad, 2019: 154). The challenges that novice teachers experience often require the attention of all stakeholders in the school including the parents, other teachers and policy makers. Therefore the school should create a collaborative environment to help novice teachers experience a teaching environment which is safe, welcoming and improves self-esteem (Karataş & Karaman, 2013: 21). One of the ways schools can improve collaboration between stakeholders is by providing opportunities where novice teachers can observe and critically reflect on what they have observed (Karataş & Karaman, 2013: 20). Some novice teachers feel that observing other teachers helps them during the induction period because it allows them to compare their practices to another teacher's practices (Karataş & Karaman, 2013: 20). By implementing reflective observation novice teachers can learn from experienced teachers in the field and distinguish between good and bad teaching strategies (Karataş & Karaman, 2013: 20). This contributes to a novice teacher's professional growth and development (Karataş & Karaman, 2013: 20). This is supported by Mupa and Chinooneka (2015: 125) who contend that reflective practice is the cornerstone of any successful teaching. Novice teachers should however not be limited to observing and learning from experienced teachers. Often novice teachers experience the same or similar challenges in the classroom and they can share experiences to help each other find better strategies or to be better prepared for challenges (Karataş & Karaman, 2013: 21).

Performance evaluations can also be done to measure a novice teacher's competence in the class and to provide appropriate feedback to help novice teachers improve their teaching practice (Wong, Yusuf & Goh, 2017: 22). Typically school inspectors,

department heads and principals carry out these evaluations by using a standard evaluation protocol (Wong, Yusuf & Goh, 2017: 22). In the South African context these formal procedures form part of the Quality Management System (QMS) that is replacing the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS). According to the Education Labour Relationships Council's (ELRC) Collective Agreement 2 of 2020, QMS is being implemented to help teachers design and evaluate performance to ensure high levels of academic performance (ELRC, 2020: 7). QMS can help school leaders and managers to identify educators' competencies and efficiencies so that the appropriate guidance can be put into place (ELRC, 2020: 8). School leaders are responsible for school-based training according to the needs that the QMS has pointed out (ELRC, 2020: 9). Karataş and Karaman (2013: 20) urge all education stakeholders to do more than what they are currently doing. They are urged to consider the needs of novice teachers when constructing a new curriculum. The quality of teaching and the achievement of learners are determined by the abilities of the teacher (Wong, Yusuf & Goh, 2017: 22). Similarly Mupa and Chinooneka (2015: 126) argue that if schools do not provide a decent physical and social environment to novice teachers, effective teaching will be compromised. However, in Zimbabwe the school sector tried to improve teaching by moving the focus to improving teaching resources, infrastructure, finances and the hiring of qualified staff, but still many grade seven learners failed because no attention was given to the physical and psycho-social emotional environment (Mupa & Chinooneka, 2015: 126).

A study by Jin, Li, Meirink, Van der Want and Admiraal (2019: 11) found that novice teachers also struggle with general pedagogical comprehension. A modern teacher needs to have a vast knowledge of pedagogy to meet the needs of a postmodernist classroom where each learner has unique needs (Mumthaz & Kgomotso, 2016: 95). Teaching competencies can be linked to pedagogical knowledge and a lack of teaching competence combined with insufficient experience can make teaching difficult for a novice teacher (Khalid & Husnin, 2019: 199). Even if the structure of the curriculum is poor, how the teachers apply the curriculum to the classroom results in its success (Altayli & Dagli, 2018: 368). In South Africa we find that the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development (NPFTED) states that many South African teachers are not capable to satisfy the needs of a modern and globalised classroom (RSA 2007, 4). To improve the shortcomings, teachers will have to improve their

teaching practice in the classroom and effective leadership strategies should be applied to the whole education sector (Mupa & Chinooneka, 2015: 130).

It seems that novice teachers are experiencing many challenges when transitioning into the teaching profession and that there are limited resources to assist them during this transitioning process. If we consider Schlossberg's 4S-system, there is a clear lack of resources in terms of the support and situational stress a novice teacher experiences when entering the profession (Schlossberg, 2011: 161). Furthermore, challenges regarding a novice teacher's context and the support they receive may lead to a novice teacher being impaired (Schlossberg, 2011: 161). However, according to Dias-Lacy and Guirguis (2017: 269) there are some studies that show that novice teachers reach out to school leaders to provide support. As a result, schools have started to implement professional development strategies to help the transition of novice teachers into the workplace.

2.3 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF NOVICE TEACHERS

Professional development is known as an on-going, more teacher-directed approach that removes a teacher from an isolated context to ensure quality teaching and learning (Steyn, 2014: 162). In this section I am going to examine the different aspects of professional development that can aid novice teachers when confronting the variety of challenges they encounter while transitioning into the workplace.

2.3.1 Why is professional development important for novice teachers?

As indicated in the previous section novice teachers need help with various challenges when they start their teaching career. To constantly develop and sharpen teaching skills and knowledge for a modern classroom, a teacher is encouraged to undergo different professional development programmes (Mohan, 2016: 167). Professional development should be an on-going process whereby novice teachers can strengthen their professional identity (Khalid & Husnin, 2019: 199).

According to Mohan (2016: 170) there are indications that novice teachers who want to become better teachers have benefitted from effective professional development programmes and that such programmes helped them to gain new skills and knowledge where tertiary institutions could not. These teachers felt that they improved their teaching practice and classroom management by learning from the course facilitators and experienced teachers who supported them in the professional development

programmes (Mohan, 2016: 171). Some studies suggest that in the future schools will become the main arenas for preparing teachers for the classroom (Ezer, Gilat & Sagee, 2010: 400). Professional development should equip teachers with universal values, knowledge about acceptable behaviour and skills to develop a learner to his or her full potential (Ezer, Gilat & Sagee, 2010: 401).

Because of the demand to improve teacher education and teaching qualities, South African policy makers have given more attention to continuous professional development throughout the years (Steyn, 2014: 161). A well-known South African policy for teacher development is the Continuing Professional Teacher Development or CPTD (SACE, 2012: 4). This policy was created by the South African Council for Teachers (SACE) as a mechanism to identify and improve schoolteachers' professional development (SACE, 2012: 4). The aim of this policy is that all teachers should collect a total of 150 professional development points within three years by completing different types of professional development activities (SACE 2012, 10). CPTD is compulsory for all South African teachers and school leaders (SACE, 2012: 7)

Mohan (2016: 172) also contends that professional development of novice teachers should focus on areas such as teaching strategies, school culture, classroom management, exam paper preparation and marking, whereas professional development of veteran teachers should focus on school policies, contributing to the community and the use of technology in the classroom. The aim of professional development programmes should be to maintain excellent standards in schools by developing competent teachers that are able to reflect critically on their teachings (Mumthaz & Kgomotso, 2016: 97).

To ensure successful professional development experiences for novice teachers, a teacher's experience and school context should be the starting point of teacher professional development (Du Plessis & Eberlein, 2018: 11). Mohan (2016: 172) agrees that for a professional development plan to be successful, a bottom-up approach is necessary. Novice teachers should be consulted in the planning of professional development activities to ensure that the most suitable topics are chosen and by involving novice teachers, they will be more likely to take ownership of their own learning (Mohan, 2016: 172). Areas where a novice teacher might struggle, for example time management and decision making, should be taken into consideration when creating continuous professional development opportunities that benefit both the

teacher and the school (Van Niekerk & Muller, 2017: 214). In the South African situation, school leaders and managers should use the newly introduced Quality Management System (QMS) to plan school initiated professional development activities (ELRC, 2020: 8).

Novice teachers need to learn vital knowledge and develop skills and competencies that cannot be taught in a once off in-service workshop (Mohan, 2016: 172). Therefore, professional development must be on-going and continuous to fully develop a novice teacher's pedagogy and competence (Mohan, 2016: 172). Usually professional development programmes are continuous throughout a teacher's career and should include initial training such as induction, in-service training and a support programme for the teacher undergoing these programmes (Yuen, 2012: 397). Van Niekerk and Muller (2017: 214) agree that to assist novice teachers in overcoming their challenges, the training provided by educational leaders and managers should focus on in-service training for all staff and should prepare a well thought out induction or initiation programme for novice teachers.

Teacher professional development has also been influenced by modern technology. Instead of undergoing professional development through the traditional manner, for example in-person workshops, many novice teachers have benefitted from online professional development programmes (Burkman, 2012: 30). Some benefits of online professional development programmes include that novice teachers can work at their own pace and individual teachers can choose topics that interest them without influencing the needs of others (Burkman, 2012: 30).

A formal professional development plan and training are needed to help novice teachers overcome challenges (Khalid & Husnin, 2019: 199). As mentioned earlier in this chapter, studies found that colleagues, senior teachers, family and internet sources are the main supporting factors in a formal professional development plan (Khalid & Husnin, 2019: 199). An effective professional development programme allows for collaboration and learning between these different factors (Caspersen & Raaen, 2014: 206). Novice teachers should have a positive mind set when collaborating with experienced teachers to ensure productive exchanges of new ideas and skills so that they can become better teachers (Mohan, 2016: 172). To ensure that novice teachers are supported and developed adequately, initiatives must be put into place to ensure effective professional development.

2.3.2 Ensuring successful professional development for novice teachers

Bates and Morgan (2018: 623) listed seven elements that can help school leaders to provide a successful professional development experience to teachers. They argue that professional development should positively influence a teacher's pedagogy and learner achievement. However, many cases have been reported where professional development did not meet these goals (Bates & Morgan, 2018: 623). There must be a focus on content, active learning, support for collaboration, modelling of effective teaching practice, coaching and expert advice, feedback and sustainable duration when planning professional development programmes.

The first element suggests that the professional development programmes should focus on the content that teachers teach (Bates & Morgan, 2018: 623). Although they acknowledge that focusing on content alone cannot bring improvements to teaching and learner performance, when the content is combined with effective strategies it could lead the teacher to experience effective professional development (Bates & Morgan, 2018: 623). Therefore, it is advised that trainers should lead teachers into a deeper understanding of their content knowledge. This include reading about educational practice and seeing teaching in action, in person or via videos (Bates & Morgan, 2018: 623). An earlier study by Lutrick and Szabo (2012: 9) also emphasised the value of a data-driven design. For example, the developmental topics that are being chosen for teachers could stem from data such as marks achieved by learners (Lutrick & Szabo, 2012: 9).

The second element to ensure effective professional development is active learning. Instead of following a traditional lecture approach to professional development, programmes need to be more interactive (Bates & Morgan, 2018: 623). Teachers should also take the responsibility for learning during their professional development activities instead of receiving knowledge passively (Bates & Morgan, 2018: 623). The best way for a teacher to be proactive in their own learning is by examining learner artefacts, using specific resources such as technology and literature in class and participating in model lessons (Bates & Morgan, 2018: 623). Being active in their own learning process allows a teacher to truly understand, question and reflect on possible challenges (Bates & Morgan, 2018: 623). This element can also be linked to the interest-driven design category as used in Lutrick and Szabo's (2012: 9) study, where principals and assistant principals explored various ways to get teachers involved in

their own learning so that they might internalise the information. By focusing on active learning, a link is established to something they are interested in and something that concerns them (Lutrick & Szabo, 2012: 9).

The third element suggested by Denise, Morgan, Celeste and Bates (2018: 624) is that schools need to consider support for collaboration. Teacher collaboration is often viewed as an on-going, dynamic and collaborative approach to learning where a team of professionals, usually the principals and experienced teachers - in the South African situation it would be senior and master teachers - work together to create a school culture that enhances teacher education and teaching quality to ensure that learners perform to the best of their abilities (Steyn, 2014: 161). In these interactions, the principals and other teachers can establish learning goals to take all the learners needs into consideration to improve learner performance overall (Steyn, 2014: 161). But these activities should not be once off programmes.

Steyn (2014: 162) suggests that teachers and collaborative teams should partake in an on-going cycle of identifying learner needs, identifying methods to address learner needs, addressing learner needs and reflecting on outcomes. When there is collaborative support, novice teachers' knowledge can extend beyond a once off, isolated classroom experience (Bates & Morgan, 2018: 624). Some studies have found that collaborative relationships between teachers have a positive impact on their learner achievement in the classroom (Steyn, 2014: 160). There are four main types of collaborative activities, namely involving teachers in constant dialogue about their teachings, observing teachers to give appropriate feedback about their teaching strategies, researching together with planning and evaluating teaching materials and teachers sharing their teaching practices with other teachers (Steyn, 2014: 162).

To ensure that collaboration is implemented to its fullest potential it is important to establish a trusting relationship between teachers (Bates & Morgan, 2018: 624). These relations are usually time consuming because time must be set aside for teachers to talk to one another, to understand each other's teaching background and context and time is needed for collecting data of teacher interaction (Bates & Morgan, 2018: 624). But if collaboration is done correctly, it can become the key element to support groups who solve practical challenges together (Bates & Morgan, 2018: 624). In such an environment novice teachers can articulate their challenges which then can lead to a conversation and an action plan (Bates & Morgan, 2018: 624). Smaller changes can be

made later to ensure that the teachers meet all of their learners' needs (Bates & Morgan, 2018: 624). Many studies agree that the best way for teachers to learn is through collaborative interactions with their peers (Steyn, 2014: 161). Learning can occur more effectively because the school context is taken into consideration when professional learning activities take place (Steyn, 2014: 161).

In a study by Van As (2018: 428), participants described their collaboration experiences or involvement in communities of practice as enjoyable, good, enlightening and rewarding. The teachers indicated that the reason why their collaborations were successful was because they focused on the value of teaching, interesting and relatable topics were covered and it was hosted by experts in the profession (Van As, 2018: 428). Therefore, the knowledge and skills gap not filled by tertiary institutions and traditional professional development can be filled with a well-structured instructional collaborative programme (Steyn, 2014: 161). Collaboration can fill the knowledge and skill gaps because it has been noted to have a clear impact on the way teachers teach (Steyn, 2014: 161). Van As (2018: 428) also suggests that professional development activities should not take place in isolation, but that it should happen in an interactive manner. Van As (2018: 427) argues that because participating teachers had such a pleasant experience with their collaboration, their understanding of their subject, Civil Technology, was enhanced.

Other studies also viewed professional learning communities where the teachers are involved, as the key to a successful professional development plan (Roberta, Post & Calabrese, 2012: 13). One of the most prominent professional development themes therefore seems to be collaboration (Lutrick & Szabo, 2012: 8). There are some principals who truly believe that professional development would not be effective without collaboration between teachers (Lutrick & Szabo, 2012: 8). Collaborative interactions can range from what is working in the classroom to what is not working, or to learning problems experienced by learners to lesson plan development (Lutrick & Szabo, 2012: 8).

The fourth element, namely teachers sharing their teaching practices with other teachers, strengthens the idea that novice teachers should not be inactive when participating in their own professional development. This element involves modelling effective practice (Bates & Morgan, 2018: 624). Collaborative interactions normally include intensive interactions where the group partakes in activities to help facilitate a

teacher's learning by providing opportunities to observe, debate and share ideas that can enhance teaching and learning (Steyn, 2014: 161). By working collaboratively and thinking critically about challenges experienced in their classrooms, teachers share the responsibility for learner improvement (Steyn, 2014: 162). Teachers can benefit from observing other teachers in action via video, a demonstration lesson, in-class observations, using curricular based resources and by doing case studies (Bates & Morgan, 2018: 624). Interactive modelling of effective practices demonstrates a real learning environment and the interaction between the content and learners (Lutrick & Szabo, 2012: 9). By exploring curricular resources and materials, a teacher can picture how a lesson can unfold while using the resources. This will allow teachers to set appropriate goals for their lessons (Bates & Morgan, 2018: 624).

By observing other teachers in practice a novice teacher discovers what effective teaching looks like in their unique context (Bates & Morgan, 2018: 624). The novice teacher would also be exposed to different types of teaching styles and models which can help learners who have different learning styles (Bates & Morgan, 2018: 624). Lutrick and Szabo (2012: 9) agree that being interactive is a very important aspect of novice teacher learning.

The fifth element is coaching and expert support (Bates & Morgan, 2018: 624). Instructional leaders, university staff and literacy coaches can all take on the role of providing expert support (Bates & Morgan, 2018: 624). Coaching can also occur when another teacher focuses on an instructional approach when helping a novice teacher with implementing new resources or knowledge (Bates & Morgan, 2018: 625). A coach or expert's duty is to help novice teachers develop professionally and therefore it cannot be a one-size-fits-all approach (Bates & Morgan, 2018: 625). When a coach or expert tailors or contextualises a solution, they can be assured that the challenge will be addressed (Bates & Morgan, 2018: 625). When schools implement expert support and coaching, novice teachers can experience a rich learning environment by taking part in discussions, active learning strategies and the sharing of helpful content (Bates & Morgan, 2018: 624). These experts can also provide a novice teacher with personal feedback via one-on-one sessions or online (Bates & Morgan, 2018: 625).

The participants in the Van As (2018: 425) study aired the need for more frequent workshops presented by experts. They indicated that they acquired more conceptual knowledge about topics they were interested in from experts in the field (Van As, 2018:

425). Some indicated that the knowledge gained through expert interaction was even more valuable than the knowledge novice teachers start with (Jin et al., 2019: 15). Because of the benefits associated with these teacher-expert interactions, it is important that schools set expectations for such interactions to happen and to increase the time allowed for such (Jin et al., 2019: 15). Schools should organise informal and formal meetings between the teacher and the expert by arranging sessions, select a suitable time and location and create an additional online learning community (Jin et al., 2019: 15). All the skills and knowledge gained through these interactions should be practiced, improved and integrated to fit the teacher's own experiences (Jin et al., 2019: 15).

The sixth element is concerned with novice teacher's reflections and feedback on classroom practice (Bates & Morgan, 2018: 625). Although these are two different concepts, they can be used together to enhance a novice teacher's professional development (Bates & Morgan, 2018: 625). Reflective practices can be viewed as the ability to reflect on one's action and to engage in practice-based professional development learning (Mumthaz & Kgomotso, 2016: 93). It can also be described as a way that can help a novice teacher to develop a greater sense of self-awareness of their teaching and the impact they can have on learner achievement that allows room for professional growth (Mumthaz & Kgomotso, 2016: 95). Some basic advantages linked to critical reflection include building knowledge, expertise and professional confidence (Mumthaz & Kgomotso, 2016: 93).

There are already many teachers and department heads who view themselves as being critical reflective practitioners (Mumthaz & Kgomotso, 2016: 100). These staff members consider reflecting on their lessons as a means to improve their teaching methods by reflecting on the strengths and weaknesses of each lesson (Mumthaz & Kgomotso, 2016: 101). Teachers and department heads indicated that their reflective processes typically included making changes to their teaching and assessments by researching through reading and consulting their colleagues (Mumthaz & Kgomotso, 2016: 102). Another way teachers felt they develop their reflective practice is by upgrading their qualifications and by being a lifelong learner (Mumthaz & Kgomotso, 2016: 103). This allowed them to develop an awareness of their strengths and weaknesses.

Ineffective traditional development programmes often do not allow sufficient time for any reflection to take place (Bates & Morgan, 2018: 625). Without an opportunity to reflect upon one's own teaching, a teacher cannot receive relevant inputs and make the

necessary changes (Bates & Morgan, 2018: 625). In an earlier study by Burkman (2012: 30) it was found that less than 50% of the teachers believed that reflective practices enhanced their teaching ability. Since this study was conducted more information has become known about the effective use of reflection and feedback. A more modern approach to reflective practices involves the whole school community as a space where novice teachers could reflect upon their teaching together with experienced colleagues (Mumthaz & Kgomotso, 2016: 100).

Because of their lack of experience, novice teachers should utilise professional engagement because not only should a novice teacher be able to reflect on a lesson, but think critically to create a solution for any given problem (Mumthaz & Kgomotso, 2016: 96). To establish these interactive spaces, it is important for all shareholders to build a trusting relationship by giving constructive and not negative criticism (Bates & Morgan, 2018: 625). All stakeholders should become co-learners of each other (Bates & Morgan, 2018: 625). When a novice teacher receive feedback from the reflective group, it is that individual teacher's responsibility to think critically about the feedback and apply it to his or her real life practice (Bates & Morgan, 2018: 625). Feedback without critical reflection is useless. Bates and Morgan(2018: 625) argue that if a teacher does not take time to think about their feedback and what impact it will have, there will be a lesser chance for change to occur.

The last element Bates and Morgan (2018: 625) suggest is that schools must improve the implementation of their professional development programme so that it is sustained over time. When the previously mentioned elements are sustained in the school environment, a teacher truly has an opportunity to identify a problem and apply changes to better their teaching (Bates & Morgan, 2018: 626). Although workshops can address minor challenges teachers might face, only professional development that is "job-embedded" and which allows teachers to become active in a cycle of continuous learning will truly be effective (Bates & Morgan, 2018: 625). One-shot programmes like workshops can provide a certain level of problem solving or solutions, but teachers need time to apply these solutions which often requires reflection and follow-up support sessions (Bates & Morgan, 2018: 626). In an earlier study by Lutrick and Szabo(2012: 8), participating principals indicated that the provision of quality professional development opportunities should constantly take place rather than in isolation. They indicated that professional development should include regular meetings between

trusting staff and a follow-up meeting must take place when teachers have implemented new ideas and strategies (Lutrick & Szabo, 2012: 8).

2.3.3 How can professional development help novice teachers overcome challenges?

Some advantages linked to professional development range from intrinsic rewards to improved teaching and learner achievement (Ezer, Gilat & Sagee, 2010: 400). The act of teaching involves a self-realisation that can provide a teacher with a sense of purpose that leads to the teacher becoming a lifelong learner (Ezer, Gilat & Sagee, 2010: 400). An important intrinsic benefit of professional development for novice teachers is the improvement in their coping ability through support from their superiors (Caspersen & Raaen, 2014: 201). In the first theme of this chapter it was indicated that novice teachers often chose to leave the profession because they struggled to cope when transitioning from the university into the workplace (Warsame & Valles, 2018: 17). If teachers feel adequate about their own coping skills in their first years of teaching, it can create a positive attitude towards life time learning and professional self-assurance (Poom-Valickis, 2014: 773).

Professional development programmes like induction are extremely important to increase a teacher's coping skills and reduce teacher attrition (Jin, et al., 2019: 1). Not only can professional development programmes lead to better coping abilities, but some studies have seen novice teachers, who have attended professional development sessions that are aligned with their personal growth plans, developing higher levels of confidence in their teaching skills (Kindall, Crowe & Elsass, 2018: 308). Ezer, Gilat and Sagee's (2010: 400) participants indicated that their sense of self-efficacy was one of the biggest improvements through professional development training. When teachers have a positive self-efficacy, they will develop a better opinion of their own skills which can lead to teachers being better prepared and better able to cope in the classroom (Poom-Valickis, 2014: 773). When teachers receive positive feedback and start to develop coping abilities in the classroom, it has a very positive effect on their self-efficacy and their willingness to apply their knowledge and skills to improve their teaching practice even further (Poom-Valickis, 2014: 765). Although there are studies that imply a strong correlation between professional support and a stronger self-efficacy among teachers, more research must be done on the correlation between a teacher's self-efficacy and the school environment (Poom-Valickis, 2014: 773).

In the first theme of this chapter it was also established that the training provided by tertiary institutions was not sufficient for novice teachers to succeed during their first years of teaching (Mohan, 2016: 168). By undergoing professional development, a teacher often develops their instructional approaches, strategies and skills beyond what they have learnt at tertiary institutions (Van As, 2018: 425). This ownership of their own learning makes a teacher feel empowered in the classroom (Van As, 2018: 425). According to Mohan (2016: 168), a good professional development programme should allow a teacher to assume his or her own responsibility for learning, planning, implementation and evaluation. The goal of teacher professional development is not always to teach or master new skills, but to uncover and implement skills and knowledge previously learned in the classroom context (Mohan, 2016: 168).

Teaching competencies are also important skills a teacher can improve on with the help of professional developmental training (Poom-Valickis, 2014: 765). Teacher competencies are often seen as an integration of skills, knowledge and attitudes (Poom-Valickis, 2014: 765). In order to help a novice teacher cope during the first years of teaching, the novice teacher needs the relevant content knowledge, skills and general principles of teaching and learning (Poom-Valickis, 2014: 765). By partaking in professional development, novice teachers have a stronger chance to realise their true potential in the classroom (Poom-Valickis, 2014: 765). Typically a teacher's professional skills start to improve during their induction year of teaching, after which a teacher's competencies also start to increase (Poom-Valickis, 2014: 773).

Not only do professional development programmes aim to improve the teachers themselves, but the quality of teaching and learning as well. In the first theme we saw that not only do teachers struggle with transitioning into the classroom, but they also struggle with certain aspects of teaching, for instance classroom management (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017: 269). When professional development takes place in an ongoing manner, community-teacher engagement can be improved which will allow a teacher to integrate new and previous knowledge to improve their quality of teaching (Lutrick & Szabo, 2012: 8). A teacher also gains a sense of autonomy because of their decision making responsibilities in the group (Roberta et al., 2012: 18). This ownership of their learning allows the teacher to personalise their own professional development journey that helps target areas that they struggle with (Roberta et al., 2012: 18). These communities allow novice teachers to gain more discipline knowledge and instructional skills which in turn can enhance a learner's achievement (Van As, 2018: 428). New

pedagogy gained through professional development programmes will create a broader and versatile teaching and learning environment which can enhance a learner's experience and achievement (Mohan, 2016: 168). For example, when novice teachers are offered the opportunity to observe another teacher's teaching strategies, they are exposed to new strategies which may improve learner understanding of the content (Mohan, 2016: 169).

Mohan (2016: 169) argues that professional development programmes can help novice teachers with topics such as school culture, classroom management, teaching pedagogy and examination preparations. On the other hand Van Niekerk and Muller (2017: 209) argue that professional development should prepare staff members psychologically by focusing on debating skills, time management, working under pressure, working in groups, conflict resolving skills, taking ownership, decision making skills and the ability to work independently.

2.3.4 Challenges schools experience when implementing professional development programs.

Although there have been many improvements and successes linked to novice teachers' professional development programmes, there are recent studies that indicate that novice teachers find flaws in their professional development experiences (Ezer et al., 2010: 402, Caspersen & Raaen, 2014: 201). One of the most prominent challenges that novice teachers experience regarding their professional development is that schools utilise out-dated, stereotypical professional developmental activities that leave little space for teachers to truly develop in their field (Van Niekerk & Muller, 2017: 208). More traditional approaches to professional development include off-site passive workshops that may or may not inspire novice teachers to better their teaching strategies (Roberta et al., 2012: 13).

Many teachers also reported experiencing a one-size-fits-all approach that only focuses on general school goals (Kindall, Crowe, & Elsass, 2018: 308). Although they are given on-site support, many novice teachers feel that there were no opportunities to interact in their specific grade or subject group about the content they were given (Kindall, Crowe & Elsass, 2018: 308). If professional development training is not followed-up, novice teachers lose the ability to voice their concerns and to interact with their peers to guarantee an improvement in the classroom (Caspersen & Raaen, 2014: 206). Novice teachers desire an on-going support group that can help them implement and reflect on

strategies post training (Kindall, Crowe & Elsass, 2018: 308). Many novice teachers feel that an one time “sit-and-get” session with an expert is not enough to help them implement new strategies and improve their teachings (Kindall, Crowe & Elsass, 2018: 308).

Novice teachers feel that the training they receive from experts outside the school setting focused mainly on curriculum delivery rather than the development of teaching and learning abilities (Du Plessis & Eberlein, 2018: 11). Studies show a rise in conflict between policy shapers and teachers as policies regarding professional development prioritise high academic achievement above anything else (Ezer et al., 2010: 401). After school workshops are not viewed as an effective manner to improve a teacher professionally, because they tend to focus on content rather than delivery (Du Plessis & Eberlein, 2018: 11). It seems that some experts tend to focus more on the learner’s understanding than learning goals (Jin et al., 2019: 11). Although teachers understand what is being said in the training sessions, they may struggle to convey the strategies into the classroom and to achieve the results (Jin et al., 2019: 11). Even the school visits teachers normally expect from district officials have become an administrative check-up session rather than an opportunity to give teacher valuable feedback about what is happening in the class (Du Plessis & Eberlein, 2018: 11). To transform teacher education at school level, change must occur at curriculum, conceptual and practical level (Mumthaz & Kgomotso, 2016: 94).

Another major challenge schools and novice teachers face when implementing professional development is the lack of resources and time. Mohan's (2016: 170) participants agreed that their professional development is severely impacted by their lack of time. The participants indicated that their professional development sessions will be enhanced by the use of multimedia and other resources (Mohan, 2016: 170). In so doing, they will get the most out of their time (Mohan, 2016: 170). Unfortunately there are studies that indicate that there is not enough time set aside for professional development activities (Du Plessis & Eberlein, 2018: 13). Teachers are often overloaded with school work and extra-mural activities which leaves very little time to partake in professional development activities (Du Plessis & Eberlein, 2018: 13).

To involve novice teachers even more in professional development activities, principals and other professional development managers should take the needs of the novice teachers into consideration when preparing professional development sessions (Mohan,

2016: 170). This can be a difficult task as many school leaders do not have the opportunity to participate in professional development co-ordination and planning (Du Plessis & Eberlein, 2018: 11) . School leaders have to rely on their own framework and experience to build a professional development programme (Du Plessis & Eberlein, 2018: 11). Lack of training and support from senior managers in the school may lead to the executors of the programmes and the teachers who partake in these programmes to lose motivation (Du Plessis & Eberlein, 2018: 13). This can have a negative impact on the professional growth of the novice teachers.

It seems that the success of a professional development plan does not solely rely on the capabilities and the willingness of the leaders and managers in a school, but it also depends on the willingness of the novice teachers to participate. In addition, it was found by Caspersen and Raaen (2014: 201) that compared to their experienced colleagues, novice teachers do not readily participate in professional development activities. The reason why novice teachers feel they do not get enough support is because they tend to participate to a lesser degree during professional development sessions (Caspersen & Raaen, 2014: 203). Experienced teachers were also more able to identify their needs and take advantage of the support that was offered to them (Caspersen & Raaen, 2014: 201). Novice teachers often try to become in-demand teachers who want to solve all challenges without consulting different forms of support such as collaboration with other colleagues (Caspersen & Raaen, 2014: 206). Although many teachers are experiencing the positive effects of professional development, for instance growing as a teacher and improving their teaching strategies, many novice teachers feel that the intrinsic rewards is enough to make them want to stay in the profession (Ezer et al., 2010: 400 -401).

In concluding this section, professional development programmes were classified under the support and strategies section of Schlossberg's 4S-system (Schlossberg, 2011: 161). By implementing a more modern approach to professional development programmes, novice teachers will have better support in the form of collaboration groups with other teachers and principals (Bates & Morgan, 2018: 624). We also find evidence that novice teachers have opportunities to learn new teaching and coping strategies by observing other teachers' lessons, interacting with experts and implementing new knowledge in the classroom (Bates & Morgan, 2018: 624). We also find that if professional development programmes are implemented correctly, they can have a positive effect on the novice teacher's attitude and the self-category in

Schlossberg's 4S-system (Schlossberg, 2011: 161). Ezer, Gilat and Sagee (2010: 400) explained that professional development can provide teachers with intrinsic rewards and a sense of purpose that can influence a teacher to become a lifelong learner. Implementing professional development correctly can provide resources for almost all the categories in Schlossberg's 4S-system. However, not all schools implement these programmes correctly which can lead to possible resources turning into challenges for schools and the novice teachers (Roberta et al., 2012: 13).

2.4 WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES?

In this literature review there have been multiple suggestions regarding who should take on the duties of designing and implementing professional development programmes for novice teachers. In this section I focus mainly on who should take the responsibility for support to novice teachers according to South African policies and investigate the role of the principal, department heads and senior personnel.

2.4.1 Principals as professional development leaders

As the need for professional development programmes increases, teachers are looking to instructional leaders in the form of principals and deputy principals to plan and execute the professional development plans (Lutrick & Szabo, 2012: 6). School principals are expected to take charge of learner performance and achievement (Graczewski, Knudson & Holtzman, 2009: 72). Principals play the part of visionary leaders and are crucial to a teacher's professional development (Steyn, 2014: 163). There are studies that indicate that when teachers view their principals as being an expert in their field, it has a positive impact on their training, classroom strategies and overall professional development (Kindall, Crowe & Elsass, 2018: 308).

The principal's leadership style plays a big part in professional relationships, professional development and the school's development (Steyn, 2014: 163). The environment the principal creates determines the effectiveness of the professional development programme. The National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa (NPFTED) supports the notion that the appraisal systems designed to improve professional development cannot work without an effective working environment (RSA, 2007: 45). Meristo and Eisenschmidt (2014: 1) state that if the principal can create an environment that supports teacher development, it will have a positive impact on the development of a teacher. The principal should ideally create an

environment that encourages collaboration between teachers (Steyn, 2014: 163). Not only do teachers expect principals to support and develop professional development programmes, but policies also indicate that principals should play a role in the development of teachers. The Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) document published in terms of the Employment of Teachers Act, 76 of 1996 describes the duties and roles of a South African public school principal.

The first important duty a principal has is to ensure that all policies and legislations are implemented in the school (RSA, 1998: 41). These policies include the Quality Measurement System (QMS) - formerly the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) - and the Continuous Professional Teacher Development programme (CPTD) that focuses on the professional development and improvement of teachers. The principals should use these policies to help teachers to promote the learning experiences of their learners (RSA, 1998: 41). Van Niekerk and Muller's (2017: 208) participants agreed that their principals played an important role in their professional development by implementing QMS and QMS activities. Principals have the responsibility to ensure that QMS and QMS activities are implemented as prescribed by the Collective Agreement No 2. of 2020 (ELRC, 2020: 9). These activities include ensuring that professional development takes place, organising workshops, making QMS resources accessible to teachers and integrating professional development activities into daily school activities (ELRC, 2020: 9). According to Van Niekerk and Muller, (2017: 208) principals should involve themselves more by doing class visits, encouraging staff to participate in workshops, providing specific reading materials such as circulars and flyers, organising school workshops and motivating and encouraging teachers to enrol for further education.

In the Policy for the South African Standard for Principalship (the Standard) the roles and responsibilities, regarding professionalism and competencies of the principal are described (RSA, 2016a: 8). Some values emphasised in the Standard include commitment to developing, empowering and supporting teachers and teamwork and self-reflection to ensure a principal experiences on-going professional growth (RSA, 2016a: 13). The duties of the principal include monitoring and evaluation of teachers, encouraging debate among teachers regarding their professional development and school improvement, ensuring opportunities for professional growth, identifying possible areas of improvement and giving appropriate advice and guidance to teachers (RSA, 2016a: 17). The key areas, according to the Standard, are leading teaching activities in

the school, shaping the development of the school, improving the quality of teaching and empowering and managing teachers (RSA, 2016a: 13).

Not only do principals have duties regarding the management of their school, but they are also prescribed many duties to manage and support their teaching staff (RSA, 1998: 41). It is therefore important for the principal to provide professional leadership in the whole school (RSA, 2016b: 41). The principal can grow or maintain their professional leadership by guiding and supervising staff, offering professional feedback on teacher performance, discussing reports about teacher performance and offering support to teachers and non-teaching staff (RSA, 2016b: 41). In the PAM document the principals are urged to take responsibility for the development and implementation of staff training programmes, especially focusing on new and inexperienced teachers (RSA, 2016b: 41). These programmes should help the novice teacher to develop teaching skills and help to achieve the learning goals set by the school (RSA, 2016b: 41). Principals should encourage others to partake in teacher appraisal programmes that can improve teaching strategies, better teaching experiences and enhance learner achievement (RSA, 2016b: 41). Not only should principals encourage teachers to participate in lifelong learning, but the principals themselves should constantly update their knowledge and skills by attending professional development opportunities together with their teachers (Kindall, Crowe & Elsass, 2018: 308). This will allow them to make meaningful observations through their knowledge (Kindall, Crowe & Elsass, 2018: 308). Altayli and Dagli (2018: 369) agree that principals should be well informed when it comes to teacher professional development. They should know about new pedagogical methods, academic content and use their leadership skills to combine these different elements to help teachers improve the quality of their teachings (Altayli & Dagli, 2018: 369).

The deputy-principal is also assigned duties to help and support novice teachers. Generally, the duty of the deputy principal is to help the principal in the management of school activities to promote teaching and learning (RSA, 2016b: 40). Just like the principal, the deputy-principal also has the responsibility to lead teachers by guiding and supervising their performance and to give feedback to teachers (RSA, 2016b: 40).

2.4.2 Department heads as professional development leaders

School obligations have become more demanding for principals in modern times and therefore the responsibility of leading and managing is increasingly being distributed

among multiple shareholders within the school, including department heads (Du Plessis & Eberlein, 2018: 3). In a distributive leadership role, the principal moves from a traditional autocratic leader to the role of facilitator, mediator and supporter of staff leaders (Naicker & Mestry, 2011: 105). A less complicated description of distributed leadership is that principals become the leader of leaders to promote sustainable leadership in the school (Naicker & Mestry, 2011: 105). Other studies classify distributed leadership as a range of interactions or activities spread across a wide network of people to establish a pattern of network control (Timperley, 2005: 395). Distributed leadership is not the same as dividing the responsibilities of principals between different shareholders in the school, but it is rather a dynamic approach to interact between different leaders in the school (Timperley, 2005: 396).

Du Plessis and Eberlein's (2018: 14) findings suggest that schools that make use of distributed leadership have a higher chance of professional development taking place. Through distributed leadership the department heads are supported by their principal to take on the leadership role in their departments (Du Plessis & Eberlein, 2018: 14). The model of distributed leadership that involves multiple shareholders in a school has been a useful tool to help understand the true climate and reality of a school in order to improve schools (Timperley, 2005: 395).

If a school incorporates distributed leadership it will extend the limitations of leadership in the school by giving leadership responsibilities to teachers (Naicker & Mestry, 2011: 101). However, a distributed leadership approach cannot succeed without the proper oversight and support from the principal. Du Plessis and Eberlein (2018: 14) argue that when department heads are being supported in their leadership roles, professional development is more likely to take place and have a greater impact on teachers' teaching practices (Du Plessis & Eberlein, 2018: 14). It is important for principals to provide coaching, support and mentoring to ensure a successful distributed leadership programme (Naicker & Mestry, 2011: 104).

Department heads are seen as the best candidates to take on distributive leadership roles, because their interactions with peers are much closer than the interaction between the principal and teachers (Du Plessis & Eberlein, 2018: 3). Because of this close relationship between department heads and teachers, professional development can prosper and have a positive impact on teaching and learning (Du Plessis & Eberlein, 2018: 3). Although self-efficacy has been identified as one of the most

important elements in a successful professional development programme, studies have indicated that the support from superior colleagues has become even more important for teachers (Caspersen & Raaen, 2014: 202).

Not only are principals distributing leadership roles to HODs; if we look at policies in South Africa it seems that they are being assigned multiple leadership responsibilities in the school context. The PAM document for example describes the role of the department heads as one of ensuring a well-functioning department (RSA, 2016b: 36). To achieve this aim, they must be responsible for the co-ordination and guidance of other teachers in respect of content, teaching strategies, resources and assessment (RSA, 2016b: 36). Extra-curricular activities can also be scheduled to enhance a teacher's understanding of subject content that can improve teaching quality and learner learning (RSA, 2016b: 36). Department heads are urged to guide all staff particularly the most inexperienced staff members (RSA, 1998: 36).

2.4.3 Senior and master teachers as professional development leaders.

According to the PAM document all senior and master teachers have the responsibility to act as a mentor or a coach to teachers with less experience (RSA, 2016b: 32). If we explore the tasks of senior and master teachers further, we see that a certain level of leadership is also bestowed upon a senior and master teacher regarding the upkeep of subject content and the co-ordination of a learning area or phase (RSA, 2016b: 32). These senior and master teachers are expected to assist principals and department heads by identifying areas that need to be addressed, organising and implementing extra-curricular activities and act as a mentor for teachers with less experience (RSA, 2016b: 32). In this regards Burkman (2012: 31) argues that mentoring combined with administrative help can provide the best opportunities to improve teaching and learner success. The National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa (NPFTED) states a few duties that all teachers should take on when teaching. One of the most prominent duties of a teacher is to take on the responsibility of enhancing their own individual professional development and competencies (RSA, 2007: 1). If all teachers are dedicated to enhancing their own teaching competencies, the quality of teaching and learning can improve (RSA, 2007: 1).

If we were to categorise resources or challenges in this section according to Schlossberg's 4-S system, we would find that policies and modern school leadership styles all lead to more resources in the form of support (Schlossberg, 2011: 161).

According to South African policies, novice teachers should enjoy the support of principals, department heads and senior and master teachers. Such support will be helpful when distributed and other collaborative leadership practices are given to department heads and other senior teaching staff.

2.5 SUPPORT STRATEGIES THAT CAN ACCELERATE THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF NOVICE TEACHERS

In this section I discuss two of the most common support strategies that South African schools can implement to ensure the professional development of novice teachers, namely induction and mentoring. The goal of these teacher training programmes should be to establish new teaching strategies which will allow teachers to draw upon their subject knowledge and curriculum knowledge to improve their teaching skills and classroom practice (Çakmak, 2013: 59).

2.5.1 Induction

As mentioned before, it seems that pre-service training is not sufficiently helping novice teachers to cope when transitioning into the classroom. Therefore, some novice teachers have indicated that school-based support, for example induction and mentoring, are more valuable to them when transitioning into the workplace (Warsame & Valles, 2018: 37). Schools have tried to aid novice teachers in their transition by implementing induction programmes to help them cope in the classroom and to adjust to a new working environment (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004: 706). Mohan (2016: 168) describes induction as a critical part of a teacher's professional development because of the role it plays in establishing a novice teacher in a new environment, building strong relationships in the school and enhancing the novice teacher's teaching practices. Some view induction as distinctly different from pre-service training and in-service training (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004: 282).

Induction is a system that allows for professional growth and support, guidance and orientation in the beginning phases of a novice teacher's career (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004: 281). Induction can involve many elements from once off orientation meetings at the beginning of the school year to formal meetings that include interactive activities throughout the year (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004: 283). The most common induction elements include workshops, collaboration between teachers, orientation programmes, support systems and mentoring (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004: 282).

Because of the huge impact induction can have, many countries have made induction programmes mandatory in their schools (Mohan, 2016: 168). For example, in Estonia novice teachers are required to partake in induction programmes the moment they enter the teaching profession (Tammets, Pata & Eisenschmidt, 2019: 39). The Estonian teachers describe the extended support they receive from their schools as the most prominent feature of their induction programme (Tammets et al., 2019: 39). Because of the way in which their inductions have been implemented, the teachers' professional development was addressed (Tammets et al., 2019: 39). It is worth noting that simply implementing an induction programme does not guarantee success (Kearney, 2016: 1).

Kearney (2011: 5) identified seven qualities that any induction programme should have for it to be successful. These qualities include: providing professional support, setting aside structured time for the program to take place, ensuring that collaboration takes place between staff, organising extra-curricular activities like seminars, allowing for teachers to participate in beginner teacher conferences and providing a mentor to give guidance to the novice teacher (Kearney, 2011: 5). Tammets, Pata and Eisenschmidt (2019: 44) also identified components that an induction programme should have. Tammets, et al (2019: 44) agree that quality of collaboration is important and state that learning should occur through interaction with colleagues in a social environment. These interactions should include feedback about their lessons and the classroom resources they have created, sharing knowledge and describing challenges experienced in the classroom (Tammets et al., 2019: 44).

Another important component of successful induction is to give novice teachers the opportunity to apply what they have learned about new teaching strategies or content knowledge in the classroom (Tammets et al., 2019: 44). This corresponds with Bates and Morgan's (2018: 624) element of teacher participation to ensure a successful professional development experience. They believe that a teacher should implement what they have learnt and provide feedback instead of passively being provided with new information at meetings or training sessions (Bates & Morgan, 2018: 624). Another important component is self-reflection by novice teachers to develop their competency skills (Tammets et al., 2019: 44). Tammets et al. (2019:44) suggest that novice teachers should write reflectively about important instances where they have developed their competencies. Many teachers have indicated that reflecting on their strengths and weaknesses after each lesson had a positive impact on their own teaching strategies (Mumthaz & Kgomotso, 2016: 101).

It is, however, also important to note that without a novice teacher's willingness to learn, professional development would be harder to achieve. If a novice teacher has a positive attitude towards learning professional development, goals can be achieved (Çam Aktaş, 2018: 2106). Despite the prerequisite, Smith and Ingersoll (2004: 285) argue that if a well devised induction programme is given to novice teachers, it can lead to an increased retention rate of novice teachers, which can aid schools' staff shortages which in turn will lead to an overall positive impact on school performance (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004: 285).

2.5.2 Mentoring

Mentoring is generally regarded as a prominent strategy for schools to develop novice teachers professionally. An earlier description of mentoring is the personal guidance that veteran teachers provide to new teachers in schools (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004: 282). A more recent definition agrees that a mentor is somebody that leads a new teacher (Çam Aktaş, 2018: 2102). The implementation of mentoring should provide care, direction and support to the newest members of the school (Stewart et al., 2019: 295). World-wide schools have responded to their national policy recommendations by implementing mentor programmes to fight attrition by offering more support to novice teachers (Spooner-lane, 2017: 254). Unlike pre-service training, mentorship programmes are designed with the school context in mind. This include the skills of the learners, the classroom conditions, assessment of learners and curriculum standards (Spooner-lane, 2017: 254).

A mentor should be a teacher who has more experience and has undergone the proper preparatory programmes that teach them how to observe and analyse lessons (Tammets et al., 2019: 39). Some duties Altayli and Dagli (2018: 383) have observed mentors performing are monitoring, mentoring of peers and inspecting lessons with or without giving prior notice. The role of the mentor should be to induct the novice teacher at school and to guide their professional learning, and to allow novice teachers to discuss their learning experience with others in order to learn new teaching styles and to create new knowledge (Tammets et al., 2019: 39). Novice teachers can also create their own interaction groups online or locally, but there are more benefits involved if novice teachers allow veteran teachers to guide and give insight to these groups (Stewart et al., 2019: 295).

Some researchers contend that mentoring relationships are more successful if the novice teacher and veteran teacher collaborate to research school activities (Nottingham, Mazerolle & Barrett, 2017: 253). This collaboration should be focused on building relationships, completing set goals and promoting communication between them (Nottingham et al., 2017 253). Many novice teachers place emphasis on clear expectations or goals and communication as being vital in a successful mentoring relationship (Nottingham et al., 2017 253). Another very important factor of mentoring is the type of relationship that exists between teachers. A positive relationship between novice teachers and veteran teachers is needed to create a cohesive atmosphere in the school (Meristo & Eisenschmidt, 2014: 8). To further promote cohesion in mentorship programmes, schools can for example section off their staffroom to ensure a safe space for teacher meetings to take place, thus creating a supportive school climate (Meristo & Eisenschmidt, 2014: 8). Supportive school climates are important because they provide novice teachers with the opportunity to improve their self-efficacy beliefs (Meristo & Eisenschmidt, 2014: 8).

Self-efficacy beliefs have been known to improve through support such as mentoring programmes. Some studies indicate that mentoring benefits novice teachers by giving them more experience, helping them become familiar with the new school environment and constantly helping them prepare for inspections without a prior warning (Altayli & Dagli, 2018: 385). An induction programme combined with a mentor is vital in helping novice teachers to transition into effective teachers in the classroom (Spooner-lane, 2017: 253). Spooner-lane (2017: 253) argues that effective mentoring programmes promote quality in a novice teacher by increasing professionalism, job satisfaction and reducing teacher attrition. Without proper mentor support, many novice teachers stumble and fall when trying to teach effectively (Spooner-lane, 2017: 254).

In order to implement a successful mentoring programme Gholam (2018: 10) suggests a few key components a school must consider. The first aspect is to allocate and design a specific supportive environment for the novice teacher. There should be an opportunity for a one-on-one mentor relationship which displays trust, acceptance and transparency. Novice teachers should have opportunities to interact in hands-on practical workshops that teach new strategies which may lead to the novice teacher feeling empowered and becoming more productive (Gholam, 2018: 10). Stewart et al., (2019: 296) also suggest steps to ensure that optimal mentoring takes place. The first step is for the mentor to identify the areas in which novice teachers struggle and

possibilities how they can address these challenges. The next step requires novice teachers to record their struggling moment. This can take place in a private journal or a blog and can include questions that they have. The third step requires the novice teacher to identify helpful colleagues and ask them for feedback on the areas in which the novice teacher struggles. The last step requires a repetition of the previous steps. The novice teacher should continuously record the moments that they struggle and seek the help of others to find answers, support and ideas (Stewart et al., 2019: 296).

2.5.3 Flaws of mentoring and induction programmes.

There are many suggestions about how schools can improve the implementation of induction and mentoring programmes, but unfortunately there are novice teachers who find several flaws in their induction and mentoring programmes (Çam Aktaş, 2018: 2107). Mentor teachers have no time to initiate a proper induction to help novice teachers in the classroom (Çam Aktaş, 2018: 2105). For example, in Norway it seems that most schools do not have a formal mentoring system in place and that teachers do not have the time to participate freely in a mentorship programme (Çakmak, Gündüz & Emstad, 2019: 157). This lack of time can result in the unequal treatment of novice teachers. Altayli and Dagli (2018: 383) reported that some of the novice teachers have not received any classroom visits in a period of two years, while others have. Mentors indicated that they cannot leave their learners by themselves or with an intern teacher to conduct classroom visits (Çam Aktaş, 2018: 2105). Even if novice teachers are inspected and feedback is provided, it seems that some mentoring practices do not concentrate on the novice teacher's real life challenges, but rather on general challenges (Stewart, Coombs, Fecho & Hawley, 2019: 295). More studies have indicated that there is a lack of quality when it comes to the mentoring provided to novice teachers (Spooner-lane, 2017: 254). In Spooner-lane's (2017: 254) study very few schools had any type of accountability mechanism to ensure that quality mentoring takes place (Spooner-lane, 2017: 254).

Another problem arises when the personalities of a mentor teacher and a novice teacher clash (Çam Aktaş, 2018: 2106). If there is an incompatible relationship between mentor and mentee, it can lead to the novice teacher not receiving the right kind of feedback, ineffective guidance from the mentor and seeing bad examples of teaching styles and strategies (Çam Aktaş, 2018: 2106). Novice teacher also have to deal with issues such as a feeling of being disconnected from their school and peers and they do

not want to bother their mentors (Çam Aktaş, 2018: 2106). Novice teachers have also indicated that they had issues with their school system or administration (Çam Aktaş, 2018: 2107). Some issues that have been talked about are constantly filling in forms, not being the only teacher in the class, no planning of school trips or outdoor activities, providing no mission or goals, teacher evaluations are not done objectively, too many formal examinations, the length of administrative procedures, teaching resources not being right for the target audience and having little to no off days (Çam Aktaş, 2018: 2107).

In this section we find two very important approaches to professionally developing novice teachers and we can categorize them according to the strategies section of Schlossberg's (2011: 161) 4S-system. Not only do induction and mentoring provide strategies to help improve a novice teacher's teaching practice, but they also provide support in the form of mentors. For induction and mentoring to be seen as an effective support strategy, schools should look at literature to find suggestions for the successful implementation of inductions and mentoring.

2.6 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Although this literature includes international and local perspectives, most studies on novice teachers are international studies. There are limited studies about the experiences of South African novice teachers, and even less in the context of South African township schools. This limited knowledge about South African novice teachers in township schools is the gap I hope this study will fill.

In chapter 3 I present the methodology and research design I employed in this study. The chapter includes discussions on the sampling, data collection and data analysis techniques. I also present a section on the ethical aspects that are to be considered in this study.

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 3 outlines the methodological framework of this study. In addition, the research design, as well as the methods used to collect, record and analyse the data, are described. The relevant ethical guidelines that were applied throughout the study are presented and the trustworthiness and credibility of the study will be discussed.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

According to Abdul and Alharthi (2016: 51) a research paradigm is a belief system a researcher may have in respect of the ontology, epistemology and methodology used in research. Currently the most popular paradigms in educational research are positivism, interpretivism and critical theory (Abdul & Alharthi, 2016: 52). This study was conducted from an interpretivist approach which was developed in the 1950s to study people and their complex history (Bertram & Christiansen, 2016: 25). Interpretivism has also been referred to as the anti-positivist paradigm because whilst positivist researchers sought to explain social phenomena, an interpretivist researcher sought to understand the social phenomena (Mack, 2010: 7, Ryan, 2018: 9). The interpretivist researcher aims to understand the world subjectively from the participants' experiences (Antwi & Hamza, 2009: 219). They argue that truth and knowledge are subjective as well as historically and culturally inspired (Ryan, 2018: 7). Therefore, the truth is based on the people's experiences and understanding thereof (Ryan, 2018: 7). The researcher wants to try and understand the meaning behind social actions rather than being able to generate a new theory (Antwi & Hamza, 2009: 219). Interpretivism is sometimes also referred to as the constructivist paradigm because it is rooted in the belief that reality is something that is socially constructed (Riyami, 2015: 413).

Some of the ontological assumptions linked to the interpretivist paradigm include the assumption that people interpret their own meaning of events, reality is constructed based on the interpretations and is subjective to each person which result in different individuals having different perspectives about one reality (Ryan, 2018: 8). Some of the epistemological assumptions tied to the interpretivist paradigm include the believe that knowledge should be collected in a process that respects the differences between people and that knowledge is created through personal experiences (Ryan, 2018: 8).

The interpretivist paradigm has been criticized in the past for the fact that the researcher cannot entirely separate from their own belief and values system which will influence the way the researcher collect, analyse and present the data (Ryan, 2018: 7). Another criticism that a research typically abandons the scientific verification procedures when collecting and analysing data resulting in data that cannot be generalised to the rest of the population (Ryan, 2018: 8).

3.3 METHODOLOGY

Two of the more popular methodologies that are grounded in the interpretivist paradigm are quantitative and qualitative methodologies (Antwi & Hamza, 2009: 223). In this study I deployed a qualitative methodology to collect and analyse my data. Whereas quantitative research attempts to quantify things, qualitative research allowed me to seek the meaning of my participants' experiences rather than quantifying my data (Halcomb, 2018: 6). Qualitative researchers are generally not concerned with the objective and measurable facts, but how people construct and give meaning to their experiences (Becker et al., 2012: 2). The data collected from qualitative studies also differ from the data collected from quantitative studies; for instance quantitative studies focus on the collection of numeral data whereas the qualitative researcher wants to collect non-numerical data such as words and pictures or observations (Antwi & Hamza, 2009: 220). In qualitative research the researcher recognises that the truth is subjective and might differ depending on the person's viewpoint and experience (Halcomb, 2018: 6). A qualitative researcher also knows and uses the advantages of subjectivity (Jelsma & Clow, 2005: 4).

Qualitative research is essential to discovering new knowledge about the world because it allows the researcher to understand the phenomenon, explore the surrounding issues and then answer questions about the phenomenon (Jelsma & Clow, 2005: 5, Mishra, 2016: 1). When collecting data, qualitative research allows for a direct encounter with the participant's world (Becker et al., 2012: 2). There is much emphasis placed on the interactions between different variables in their natural setting (Mishra, 2016: 1). Researchers encounter their participant's world to immerse themselves in the day-to-day life of participants (Antwi & Hamza, 2009: 220). Their encounters can occur in the form of interactions, partaking in real life activities, interviewing participants, studying real history, conducting case studies and analysing cultural artefacts (Antwi & Hamza, 2009: 220). Generally, in qualitative research a theme or theory is identified and

applicable references, opinions and statements from participants are used to justify it (Jelsma & Clow, 2005: 4).

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

In this study I used a collective case study design where I choose more than one case to observe the same phenomenon (Cousin, 2005: 422). A collective case design enabled me to investigate multiple novice teachers' beliefs and feelings regarding their transitioning from university to their workplaces. A collective case study design also allowed me to compare and explore the differences between the experiences and beliefs of the participants (Maree et al., 2016: 53, 82).

To achieve optimal data collection, Maree et al. (2016: 53, 82) suggest that there should be a close bond between the researcher and the participant. The close bond or trust with the participants allows them to feel free to share more personal stories which can lead to a more holistic portrayal of the participant's world (Maree et al., 2016: 53, 82, Cousin, 2005: 422). To establish a bond with my participants, it was important for me to be trustworthy. To gain my participants' trust, I was honest about the purpose and possible outcomes of my study, I was transparent when conducting the interviews and I allowed the participants to give feedback on the transcripts.

One of the main advantages of doing a case study is that it allows for an in-depth investigation into the participant's world (Harland, 2014: 1118). The gap I had identified in the literature review was that there was a lack of knowledge pertaining to the transitioning from university to the workplace, particularly to township schools. A multiple case study design allowed me to thoroughly investigate the participants' experiences in their first five years of teaching in township schools. Another advantage of a multiple case study design was that it allowed me to study more than one case at a time (Cousin, 2005: 422). When studying two or more cases simultaneously, it was easy for me to compare experiences from multiple participants (Maree, 2016: 53, 82). This exercise allowed me to uncover current trends regarding teachers transitioning into the workplace in different contexts.

However, over the years there have been many critics of case studies. One of the criticisms is that the boundaries between the case and the conditions may be blurred, resulting in the researcher going too broadly when collecting data and losing focus of the important elements (Maree et al., 2016: 53, 81). To avoid this, I set parameters to ensure that I stay focused while I collect data. One of the biggest concerns regarding

case studies is the uniqueness of each case. Because of each case's own views and circumstances, it is not generalisable to the rest of the field and there is limited data to contribute to the field of knowledge (Harland, 2014: 1115).

3.5 DATA COLLECTION

For data collection this study deployed semi-structured interviews and a focus group discussion as the main data collection methods. The interviews and focus group discussions provided qualitative data which can be observed, recorded, transcribed, analysed and categorised into themes (Breen, 2006: 466).

3.5.1 Sampling of participants

Non-probability sampling was adopted for sampling participants for the semi-structured interviews. The sample is not chosen at random as with quantitative research, but according to specific criteria, because the participants have experiences and knowledge about the topic the researcher is interested in (Jelsma & Clow, 2005: 4). This is also the reason that common conclusions cannot be drawn about the whole population (Maree et al., 2016). Homogeneous sampling is interested in individuals with similarities regarding the topic for example age, job, backgrounds and culture (Etikan, 2016: 3). I sampled teachers who taught in township schools in Gauteng and who had less than five years' experience in the profession.

The word purposive in purposive sampling alludes to the idea that the sampling is being done with a specific purpose in mind (Bertram & Christiansen, 2016: 61). Some also refer to this kind of sampling as judgement sampling as it allows the researcher to choose specific participants (Etikan, 2016: 2). The motive behind purposive sampling is to choose a particular part of the population that shares a specific trait that will help the researcher answer the main research question (Etikan, 2016: 2). The reason I chose to use purposive sampling is to select fifteen specific cases that provided the most useful information regarding the topic I am researching (Emmel, 2014: 2). Fifteen participants enabled me to gather rich data that enabled me to answer my research question fully and to make valid conclusions.

3.5.2 Gaining access to participants

I chose candidates with less than five years' teaching experience. All the participants were teachers at selected township primary schools in the Ekurhuleni District of the Gauteng Department of Education – Addendum A. The selection of the schools where

the participants were teaching was determined by the availability of novice teachers at the schools. I found these schools through my current principal, who suggested them. The principals of these schools were approached to provide the names of teachers on their staff who had less than five years' teaching experience – Addendum B and C.

After I had collected and analysed the data and based on the semi-structured interviews, I organised focus group interviews with six of the fifteen participants. I limited the number of participants in the focus group discussions to six participants to have a manageable number of participants and because of my inexperience in conducting focus group discussions. I aimed to include participants from each school to be part of the focus group discussion. The richness of the data obtained from the semi-structured interviews as well as the availability of the selected participants, were used as criteria to determine the six participants in the focus group discussion.

3.5.3 Interviews

One of the most popular interactive data collection methods is interviews, because it allows the interviewer to investigate and prompt things that they could not have observed (Riyami, 2015: 414). In this study I conducted fifteen semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews are described as a meeting where strangers are motivated to discuss one topic which was chosen by the researcher (Haahr, Norlyk & Hall, 2014: 7). Semi-structured interviews is meant to be intimate meetings where open, direct and verbal questions are asked to generate detailed narratives and opinions (Aleandri & Russo, 2015: 519). In an interview the researcher poses certain questions to gain personal knowledge about a certain event witnessed or experienced by the participant (Haahr, Norlyk & Hall, 2014: 7). Questions that researchers use in semi-structured interviews are aimed to help participants to access previous memories and tell stories without judgement (Aleandri & Russo, 2015: 519). These questions give the participants the freedom to express themselves and to open a deeper conversation about the chosen topic (Aleandri & Russo, 2015: 519). During this process the researcher should try to obtain as rich and descriptive data as possible as the interview should provide information that helps the researcher to answer very specific questions (Maree et al., 2016: 93, Haahr, Norlyk & Hall, 2014: 7). The role of the researcher should be to ask questions and to probe the participants for further information (Breen, 2006: 465). An example of the interview protocol I used to conduct my semi-structured interviews is included in Addendum D.

The researcher is the main data collection instrument when using this method and thus my relationship with the participants played an important role in obtaining information during the interview (Haahr, Norlyk & Hall, 2014: 7). Qualitative researchers rely highly on the subjective relationship between the researcher and their participants (Antwi & Hamza, 2009: 219). A good relationship between the participant and researcher is needed when collecting data (Aleandri & Russo, 2015: 519). The better the relationship and the more the participant trust the interviewer, the more likely they are to disclose true and deep feelings and memories (Aleandri & Russo, 2015: 519). The interaction between the participants and the researcher allows the researcher to identify and understand more facets of the participant's context (Aleandri & Russo, 2015: 519). Therefore it is important for the researcher to develop the appropriate listening skills in order to know how to listen to a person's emotions (Aleandri & Russo, 2015: 519).

3.5.4 Advantages of semi-structured interviews

When semi-structured interviews are used in qualitative research the researcher can develop a deeper insight and understanding of a phenomenon (Aleandri & Russo, 2015: 519). During the data collection process I could provide clarity if the participant did not understand some of the questions (Bertram & Christiansen, 2016: 83). I was also able to illicit more valuable information by asking more detailed questions to clarify or to expand on a participant's response (Bertram & Christiansen, 2016: 83)..

3.5.5 Challenges regarding semi-structured interviews

There were several challenges that I anticipated during the data collection process for this study. The first challenge is related to my potential influence on a participant. Bertram and Christiansen (2016: 83) state that interviews are not simply data collection sessions but rather a social interaction. My position and personality may have influenced participants to withhold information during the interviews or focus group discussion. In addition, the findings may have been affected by my personal biases (Riyami, 2015: 414).

I tried to build a healthy and trusting relationship with each participant. To ensure a healthy and trusting relationship with my participants it was important to ensure the participants that I protected their personal details in my study and used pseudo names throughout the study and in the research report. The participants were also made aware of the fact that they are allowed to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. The next challenge was data overload. A single interview can produce a

lot of written data and it was time consuming to transcribe multiple interviews (Bertram & Christiansen, 2016: 83). When organising and transcribing qualitative data a researcher can easily become overwhelmed by the amount of data (Riyami, 2015: 414).

There were also a few challenges brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic. I aimed to conduct most of my interviews on online platforms such as Skype, Zoom or Google Meet. When working with these online platforms there were certain challenges that arose such as data costs, lack of knowledge about these online platforms or technology or a bad connect that influenced the quality of the interviews.

3.5.6 Focus group discussion

Focus group discussions can be described as a type of in-depth interview between a group of participants (Mishra, 2016: 1). Focus groups can be seen as a tool to uncover the opinions, attitudes, thought processes and motivation of participants about a certain phenomenon (Winke, 2017: 73). Focus groups can be used alone or with other data collection methods in qualitative research to get in-depth information about the participants (Mishra, 2016: 4).

The interviewer gathers participants with similar backgrounds to discuss topics that the interviewer is interested in (Mishra, 2016: 2). The focus group is typically a small group of people led by the interviewer in a loosely organised discussion (Mishra, 2016: 2). The group participates by having a lively and natural discussion amongst themselves (Mishra, 2016: 2). However, focus groups should not be mistaken for group interviews, but rather as a debate between participants (Maree et al., 2016: 95). The key differences between focus groups and one-on-one interviews is that focus group discussions facilitate new ideas generated within a social context (Breen, 2006: 466). My role was therefore to generate new ideas and to moderate the discussion (Breen, 2006: 465). During the focus group I asked open ended questions to the participants to gather more information (Winke, 2017: 74). The focus group discussion protocol is included as Addendum E.

3.5.7 Advantages of focus group discussions

Mishra (2016: 2) states that focus groups are good data collection methods to use because they provided more clarity and depth and challenge previous data that has been collected. Opinions and ideas of participants are formed in a social context (Breen, 2006: 467). Focus group discussions are generally easy to host (Mishra, 2016: 4). According to Mishra (2016: 4) such discussions increase the face validity of my

qualitative research. Focus groups also gave the participants an opportunity to give feedback on what has already been said in previous interviews (Mishra, 2016: 2). The focus group discussion also allowed me to triangulate data by combining the views of the participants in the semi-structured interviews with the researcher's perspective of the participants' views and the confirmation of the focus groups.

3.5.8 Challenges regarding focus group discussions

There are also some challenges linked to focus group discussion. One main challenge I could have encountered was group dynamics. Riyami (2015: 414) believes that a researcher influences the participants and therefore they cannot get a true glimpse of the participants' reality. Participants also might have withheld some information because they felt uncomfortable sharing detailed information with other participants they did not trust (Mishra, 2016: 2). The participants could have withheld information because they were no longer interested in the subject and some might have felt that they had nothing left to say (Mishra, 2016: 2). Data generated from focus group discussions is very context specific and cannot be generalised to the rest of the population (Breen, 2006: 467).

I experienced that I had less control over the data that was being generated in the discussion (Mishra, 2016: 4). In addition, the interaction between participants did not take place in its natural environment (Mishra, 2016: 4). It was also time consuming and difficult to get all the participants in one place (Breen, 2006: 467). The data analysis was more complex and at times I felt overwhelmed (Mishra, 2016: 4).

There were also a few challenges brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic. I conducted my focus group discussion while implementing standard Covid-19 protocols, for example social distancing took place throughout the discussion, all participants and the researcher wore masks and sanitised their hands before entering.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

According to Breen (2006: 466) data collected from focus groups and interviews is categorised as qualitative data and should be recorded, transcribed, analysed and categorised in appropriate themes. In this study I relied on thematic analysis as model of data analysis. The model of data analysis refers to a process of identifying themes within qualitative data (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017: 3352). Maguire and Delahunt (2017: 3355) suggest six steps to successfully utilize thematic analysis. The first step suggests that the researcher should become familiar with their transcripts by rereading them

multiple times (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017: 3355). The first step I took in the data analysis process was to transcribe the audio recordings (digital data) of the interviews and the focus group discussion. As mentioned earlier, it is important to not only consider what is being said, but to add the non-verbal clues as well (Maree et al., 2016: 115). Therefore, I also referred to my field notes during the analysis process.

The second step according to Maguire and Delahunt (2017: 3355) is to initiate coding. Coding typically involves identifying important and relevant chunks of data within the transcripts (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018: 809). The code categorises data with similarities across the whole dataset (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018: 809). After I had transcribed my data, I started coding my transcripts. When I coded my transcripts, I read through the data thoroughly and searched for relevant and valuable segments in data. The third and fourth theme focuses on searching and reviewing the themes identified when coding (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017: 3356-3358). In this section one must modify and review all theme founded throughout the dataset. Does the theme coincide with the research questions and objectives of the dissertation (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017: 3358)? Guided by my theoretical framework, I organised these segments into themes (Maree et al., 2016: 116). Each theme had its own descriptive word or symbol that made that text stand out (Maree et al., 2016: 116). I followed a deductive reasoning approach. This meant that I started with general ideas and moved to more specific data (Bertram & Christiansen, 2016: 117). My starting point was Schlossberg's transition theory. This theory guided my analysis and aided me to identify key themes after I had coded my data (Bertram & Christiansen, 2016: 117).

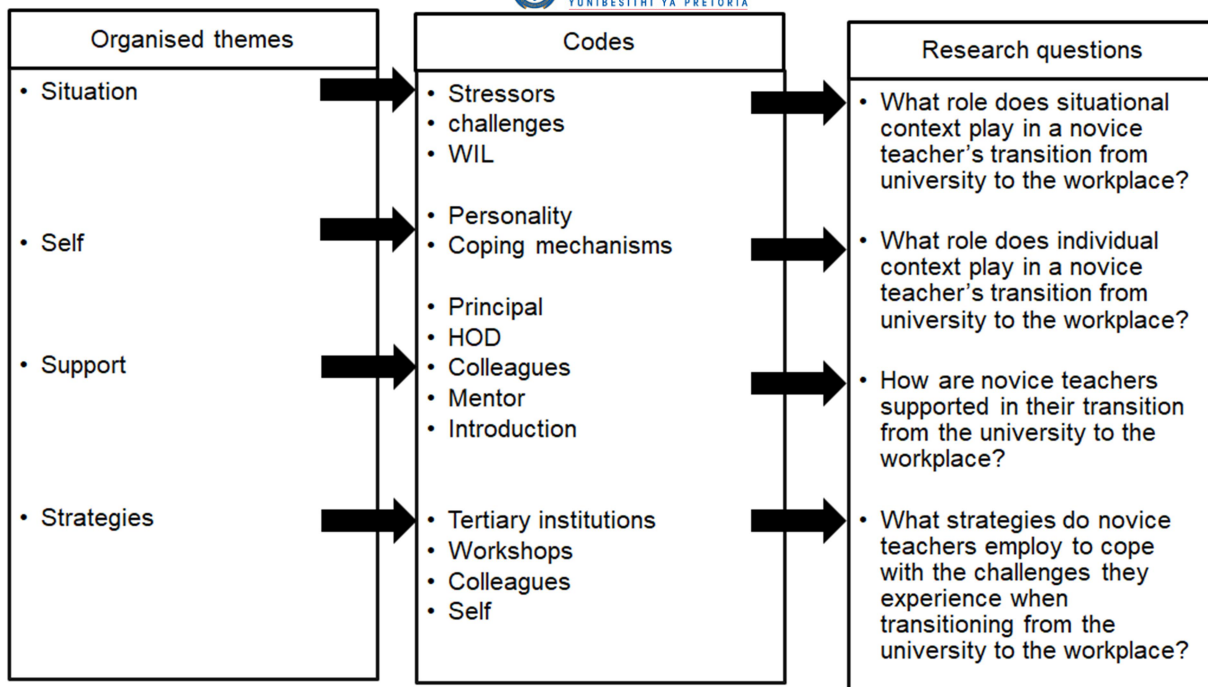


Figure 3.1 Model of data analyses illustrated.

3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

At the core of qualitative research lies the relationship between the researcher and the participants which can produce many ethical problems (Jelsma & Clow, 2005: 4). In conducting this study, I implemented appropriate measures to ensure that sound moral principles are applied in my study.

Before commencing with data collection, it was important for me to obtain ethical clearance from the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria. In addition, I obtained consent from the Gauteng Department of Education, school principals and chairpersons of the school governing bodies (SGB) of participating township independent primary schools. Principals were approached first to provide the names of teachers on their staff who had less than five years teaching experience and who may potentially be willing to participate in the study.

It was important for me to protect my participants against any potential harm during the data collection phase (Maree et al., 2016: 44). The richness of the data obtained from the semi-structured interviews and the availability of the participants were used as criteria that I used to choose the six participants for my focus group discussion. I was able to ensure the anonymity of the participants by replacing their names – and the names of their schools – by using of pseudonyms in the research report. In addition, individual contributions of each participant were kept strictly confidential (Jelsma & Clow, 2005: 4). I also prevented physical harm in the context of the current Covid-19

pandemic. The best way to combat this disease is to be isolated (Benvenuto et al., 2020: 455). Therefore, where possible I conducted my interviews through Skype, Zoom or Google Meet. If the participant did not have the resources to participate in a digital interview, I insisted on the wearing of facemasks throughout the interview, sitting or standing more than 1,5 meters away from the other participants and I provided hand sanitizer. If the participant did not have a facemask, I was able to provide the participant with a disposable facemask.

Another ethical consideration was to provide information to the participants regarding their rights and responsibilities when participating in the research to obtain their consent (Hammersley, 2018: 10). Often when data is being collected in qualitative research the participant is unsure about what they are agreeing to (Hammersley, 2018: 11). Giving potential participants a written explanation or pamphlet about the current research aim is not enough (Hammersley, 2018: 10). As the researcher it was my responsibility to make sure that the participants fully understood the aim of my research (Hammersley, 2018: 11). It was also important for participants to know that the study is completely voluntary and that they are allowed to withdraw at any time during the data collection process without a penalisation. After I had explained the reasons for and the procedures of the interview, I gave each participant a consent form. The consent allowed me to legally use the participants' answers as data in my research (Maree et al., 2016: 44). To ensure that everybody understood and had the same expectations of the study, I sent a short explanation to each participant in the focus group discussion via WhatsApp (Breen, 2006: 466).

3.8 TRUSTWORTHINESS AND CREDIBILITY

Although some scholars argue that reliability and validity are irrelevant to qualitative research, some have proclaimed that being trustworthy throughout the study is a key factor in advancing reliability (Maxwell, 2003: 301). Therefore, it was important for me to be trustworthy as a researcher, not only to my participants but also to the reader. To ensure trustworthiness of my research I explained the end goal to the participants for them to provide more applicable answers (Hafeez-Baig, Gururajan & Chakraborty, 2016: 3). Trustworthiness in qualitative research can be enhanced by incorporating credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability in my study.

Credibility starts with using the well-established research methods and designs that will help answer the research questions and is concerned with how comparable the findings

are to reality (Maree et al., 2016: 123). With the help of my supervisor, I have chosen to do a qualitative study to obtain my data. My supervisor regularly monitored my work and gave me appropriate feedback so that I could choose an appropriate theoretical framework, research design and data collection techniques. Credibility must also be established while collecting data. Throughout the data collecting process I used an audio recorder to record my interviews with permission. Making audio recordings during the interviews and focus group discussion was a more reliable option than just taking written notes (Bertram & Christiansen, 2016: 188). After the data was collected, I used member checking. Member checking required me to present all notes and transcripts to the participants so that they can look for potential mistakes or elaborate on unclear statements (Maree et al., 2016: 123). After I had transcribed my data, I e-mailed or showed the transcripts to the participants, encouraged them to provide feedback and made the necessary changes to the data. Triangulation of data collection can be used to ensure that the data is relevant (Maree et al., 2016: 123). Triangulation means a researcher uses more than one data collecting technique to explore a phenomenon (Maree et al., 2016: 122). In this study I utilised interviews and focus group discussions to obtain as rich data as possible.

Dependability is closely tied with credibility as a way to ensure reliability in qualitative studies (Maree et al., 2016: 124). One of the most common methods of insuring dependability is by implementing the correct research design. In this study I worked closely with my supervisor to ensure that I implemented a multiple case study design correctly. Documenting the data analysis process, observations and themes are means to ensure dependability (Maree et al., 2016: 124).

Transferability can be loosely connected to generalisation in quantitative studies, the main difference being that transferability is not concerned with generalising all results, but allows the reader to make connections between some elements of the study and real life (Maree et al., 2016: 124). I used two distinct methods to ensure transferability in my study. The first method was by obtaining thick descriptive data (Maree et al., 2016: 124). Not only did I use probing to elicit more detail about the participants' answers but I member checked to ensure that all events were described in full detail. The second method I used is purposeful sampling. To help me choose the best possible participants, I had specific criteria that helped me choose the correct participants to help me answer my research questions. Thirdly, after I had concluded my interviews, I used a small group of the same participants for a focus group discussion. The trends I had

discovered in my thematical analysis of the semi-structured interviews helped me lead the focus group discussion to verify my findings and to stimulate even more information.

Confirmability is concerned with how neutral the researcher is during the data collection process (Maree et al., 2016: 125). I was made aware of my positionality and how it might have an influence on the participants' answers and willingness to share. My bias may also distort my study's confirmability. To avoid possible misrepresentation, I left an "audit trail" that the reader can follow to retrace all steps in the data collection and analysis process (Maree et al., 2016: 124). Member checking was once again a valuable tool to ensure that my transcripts remained true to the participants' narratives.

3.9 ADVANTAGES OF THE RESEARCH APPROACH USED

The aim of this study was to investigate how novice teachers in township schools experienced their own transition from the university into the workplace. The interpretivist research paradigm believes that there is no one reality and the knowledge about that reality is constructed by the person's context (Abdul & Alharthi, 2016: 55). This allowed me to view each participant's experience as a unique event rather than an universal truth.

Qualitative research allowed me access to the participant's social context and to explore the topic of my study better (Becker et al., 2012: 2). Multiple case studies allowed me to reach and understand multiple participants simultaneously (Cousin, 2005: 422). This meant that I could observe multiple novice teachers' beliefs and experiences about their experiences transitioning into the classroom (Maree et al., 2016: 53, 82).

Because I used both semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, I could triangulate my data to ensure that my data is relevant (Maree et al., 2016: 123). By using a focus group discussion after my semi-structured interviews it allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of my topic while checking on what has already been said (Mishra, 2016: 4). Triangulation allowed me to gain more descriptive data that increased my study's trustworthiness.

3.10 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This chapter described the rationale for this study's research design and approach to data collection to answer my main research question. The chapter also aimed to summarise the ethical considerations as well as the trustworthiness and credibility of

this study. In Chapter 4 I present the data, followed by a discussion of my findings in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF DATA

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the raw data from the semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion is presented. A brief description of the participating schools is given followed by a brief description of the participants' biographical information. The semi-structured interviews with the fifteen novice teacher participants were guided by twelve questions (included as Addendum A), whilst the focus group discussion was guided by eight questions (included as Addendum B). The data was organised based on the four themes indicated by Schlossberg's 4S-system and the four secondary research questions, namely situation, self, support and strategies (Schlossberg, 2011: 159). Each of these four main themes were then organised into sub-themes as indicated in Table 4.1 below.

Theme	Sub-themes
Theme 1: Situational context	4.3.1 Unexpected stressors
	4.3.2 Challenges experienced by novice teachers.
	4.3.3 The benefits of work integrated learning (WIL).
Theme 2: Self (individual context)	4.4.1 Novice teachers' personalities.
	4.4.2 Individual coping mechanisms.
Theme 3: Support	4.5.1 Support provided by principals.
	4.5.2 Support provided by departmental heads.
	4.5.3 Support provided by colleagues.
	4.5.4 Support provided by mentors.
	4.5.5 Inductions.
Theme 4: Strategies	4.6.1 Strategies learnt from initial teacher training.
	4.6.2 Strategies learnt from workshops.
	4.6.3 Strategies learnt from colleagues.
	4.6.4 Self developed strategies.

Table 4.1: Themes and sub-themes in the data.

4.2 DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS

School A is the larger of the two participating schools. Before the Covid-19 pandemic School A accommodated up to 1 000 primary school learners. School A has an average of four to six classes per grade with up to 30 learners per class. School B is substantially smaller than school A with capacity for an estimated 600 primary school learners. School B has approximately three classes per grade in the Foundation Phase and four classes per grade in the Intermediate Phase. Each class has roughly 24 learners. Until recently School B did not have departmental heads or grade heads because of the school's small size. Both School A and School B are independent schools.

Both schools have a diverse teaching team. School A employs some foreign teachers, but most of the learners are from the surrounding areas. Many of School B's learners must travel a long distance to get to school. Because of the diversity in the learners' culture and backgrounds, the home languages of many learners are often not the same as the language of teaching and learning. Due to this language barrier, teaching and learning are more challenging in both the participating schools. The participants' biographical profiles are presented in Table 4.2.

Eleven of the participants are teachers in the foundation phase. The remaining four participants were intermediate phase teachers. Only one participant had a degree other than a B.Ed. Three of the participants have five years of teaching experience, another three have four years teaching experience. Five have taught for three years and four has less than two years teaching experience. The least experienced participant has been teaching for nine months at the time of being interviewed, while the most experienced participant has taught for five years.

School	Participant	Degree	Grades taught	of Years teaching experience	Age	Number of schools participant taught at
School A	1	B.Ed. Foundation Phase	Grade 2	Four years	27	3
School A	2	B.Ed. Foundation Phase	Grade 2	Five years	29	1
School A	3	B.Ed. Foundation Phase	Grade 1	Two years		2
School A	4	B.Ed. Foundation Phase	Grade 3	Four years	27	2
School A	5	M.Sc. Sports Science	Grade 4, 5, 6	Nine Months		2
School A	6	B.Ed. Foundation Phase	Grade 1	Two years		1
School A	7	B.Ed. Foundation Phase	Grade 1	Three years		1
School A	8	B.Ed. Foundation Phase	Grade 1	Five years		2
School A	9	B.Ed. Foundation Phase	Grade 2	Five years	30	2
School B	10	B.Ed. Foundation Phase	Grade 1	Two years	26	1
School B	11	B.Ed. Foundation Phase	Grade 2	Three years		2
School B	12	B.Ed. Senior Phase	Grade 6, 7	Four years		2
School B	13	B.Ed. Intermediate Phase	Grade 4, 5, 6	Three years		2
School B	14	B.Ed. Foundation Phase	Grade 3	Three years		2
School B	15	B.Ed. Intermediate Phase	Grade 5	Three years		2

Table 4.2: Biographical profiles of the participants.

4.3 THEME 1: SITUATIONAL CONTEXT

This theme broadcasts all the stressors the participants had to confront while transitioning into the work environment (Schlossberg, 2011: 161). Some of the stressors that novice teachers worldwide experience included limited teaching aids, classroom management and lack of administrative support (Karataş & Karaman, 2013: 19, Çakmak, Gündüz & Emstad, 2019: 153, Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017: 265) These stress factors can be anticipated or unexpected (Killam & Degges-White, 2017: 26). The three sub-themes identified under this theme are the unexpected stressors experienced by novice teachers, the challenges which confront novice during their transition and the advantages of having prior practical experience.

4.3.1 Unexpected stressors

In this section the unexpected stressors of the participants were presented. These were all the aspects that had a negative impact on the participants' transitioning experiences.

Some of the stress Participant 9 experienced during her transition into the workplace was because of a lack of guidance she received when she first entered the school. She explained as follows:

“...they kind of gave me a file and said go with it, so I had to figure it out as I went and hoped and prayed that I actually got it right, especially the way they did their reading assessments. It's very confusing and I didn't know what they wanted so I did what they said. But I still felt like it wasn't fair for the children, because I couldn't figure out if I was doing it properly and you can't really go and ask them the whole time, because they feel like they've explained it to you once...”

Participant 1 described her first years as extremely exhausting. She did not expect that her learners would require so much one-on-one time. She was constantly on her feet with resulted in her feeling extremely tired and overwhelmed. She explained her first years as follows:

“It was very difficult in the beginning. I was extremely tired. You would just be gobsmacked. I didn't expect to be on my feet so much. I didn't expect the children to need so much help. You get a shock and you just kind of learn that you've got to move. You don't stop moving, you just go and that's how you do it.”

Other factors which made Participant 9's experience more stressful were the school's diverse cultures and not knowing how to interact with other teachers who typically kept to themselves. Participant 9 also experienced a great deal of stress because of the difference in context between her previous school and her current school. She had taught at another private school that approached teaching in a different way than her current independent school. Participant 9 had to adapt from one approach of teaching to a completely different approach. Even Participant 9's discipline strategy had to change when she started teaching at her current school. She also experienced high volumes of administrative tasks which led to Participant 9 spending less time in the class. She explained her experience as follows:

"Well, my first year, I was at Montessori which was a lot different from what we do here, so it was a lot more challenging, because I had to go from one style of teaching to a completely different style. I had to adapt and change. There, for instance, you are not allowed to even look at a kid like you are angry then you would get in trouble and stuff like that. So, it was the culture more than the actual school and because it was mixed classes, it was difficult. But here the challenges that I've gotten used to is more the drama between the teachers and the extremely huge amount of admin that we have. So that's the challenges because you don't just get time to teach, you actually have a lot more to do than just teach."

Participant 6 also had to change the way she taught when she transitioned into her current school. Participant 6 volunteered at after-care centres during her studies. She worked with 9-year-old learners, but she transitioned to a Grade 1 post. This gap between the learners' ages shocked Participant 6. She had to readjust her teaching strategies and her approach to discipline. She explained as follows:

I would say probably adjusting. When I was volunteering it was older kids and now it was younger kids, so you need to be a bit more gentle. You need to listen more, you have to have more patience. Getting into the career, I thought maybe I'll be teaching grade 3 and here I am with the smallest, littlest kids who are emotional, and you know you must have patience with them. So, I suppose that was my challenge, but I am getting used to it. You see, every year you gain a bit more experience and you get used to how you handle situations differently as well."

Participant 8 felt that the lack of resources made teaching more stressful as she teaches younger grades and therefore need more teaching aids/resources, for example counters. Although the school allocated some funds to purchase additional teaching aids, Participant 8 felt that it was not enough. She described her experience as follows:

“Not having resources, that is a bit difficult... Things like counters to help the children in Maths or even just posters. I know later they started helping us, telling us you’ve got R100 or whatever and you can buy posters or whatever for your class, but I didn’t have posters, and what else can help you? I didn’t have an abacus.”

Participant 10 indicated that the administrative part of teaching was exhausting for her. She said that:

“All I know the admin stuff in our school is a lot, there’s so much stuff to fill in and to do and to remember...”

Participant 11 did not aspire to be a teacher but would have preferred to become a lawyer. Unfortunately, she could not afford to study full-time. She decided to become a teaching assistant in a local pre-primary school. Although she was familiar with the children in her street, she did not have enough experience to deal with learners from different cultures and languages. Just like Participant 9 at School A, the difference in cultures and backgrounds of the learners caused a great deal of stress for Participant 11. She described her experience as follows:

“I wanted to be a lawyer, but because of finances it didn’t happen. And another thing, I love kids, ever since I was young. When I heard that they were looking for assistant teachers I was like OK Now it’s time for me to actually be with kids of different cultures and different languages, not just the kids in my street.”

Participant 14 is the only participant at School B that mentioned that her challenges originated because of the lack of support and resources provided to her.

“Challenges I had to face because there was not really a lot of help. I had to figure out how to help the children by myself. I had to deal with parents that were difficult. I was thrown in the deep end, so that was my challenges, not having a lot of resources. But the parents expect that, the teachers expect that, and I couldn’t get through that. That was the beginning, that was my problem.”

- **Focus group**

During the focus group discussion Participant 9 stated that she believes that her employers gave more responsibilities than they gave support. She was put into a position where she had to teach multiple grades without receiving the proper support. She argued that if a school provides a novice teacher with a certain level of responsibility, they should also match that with the same level of support. She explained as follows:

“I feel like a lot of the times the schools expect more from you than they are actually willing to assist you with. At my previous school they expected me to do a lot more than you should ever expect from someone who is new to teaching or even someone who has been into teaching for a very long time. So, they dropped me with a whole grade, well Grade 2’s, 3’s and Grade 1’s. One teacher fell pregnant, so she wasn’t working. The other one was an old lady. So, I had to do all three grades all by myself, planning, concerts, everything where you don’t find the support for it. I think a lot of the times schools also need to know how to support you and how to make your life easy and not expect the world from you.”

Participant 13 argued that her whole transition into the classroom was stressful, because she had unrealistic expectations of what it feels like to be a full-time teacher. She explained:

“I think the reality of what to expect in the classroom, because things are different on paper than they are in real life.”

4.3.2 Challenges experienced by the participants

In this section the participants describe all the barriers and challenges they have encountered during their first five years of teaching.

One of the most common concerns the participants of School A had was encounters with parents. Participant 1 was afraid of the possible conflict that would arise from dealing with parents who do not accept that their child has a learning difficulty. She stated the following:

“I must be honest, parents. You are always scared of conflict. It is not easy for a parent to accept there might be a learning barrier. The main concern is always addressing that situation and if they are going to accept what you

are saying. You don't want to have a fight or conflict and go to the principal's office trying to sort the situation out. Your concern is always how can you handle the situation without it getting bigger and make the parents understand that it is for the child's benefit."

Similarly, Participant 7 explained that English is not the home language of many people in the townships, so miscommunication and language barriers between the teacher and parent can easily occur.

"I will say parents are big challenges and then language barriers with the children, because it's a township school. English is not their home language that is a big, big challenge."

According to Participant 8, her initial teacher training did not properly prepare her to deal with parents who start screaming and often ask difficult questions. When she must deal with difficult parents, she closes up and starts to panic.

"Parents! I can't do parents, or if someone starts yelling or asking questions. Then I close up and I start panicking. So, parents and how to help a child that's struggling because we don't study about that. Ja, they don't help you with that..."

Participant 4 agreed with Participant 8 that universities did not prepare them adequately to deal with parents. Because of this lack of skills to deal with parents Participant 4 regarded this aspect as one of her biggest stressors.

"...and just dealing with the parents as well. I think that is something we lacked in university as well. We were not taught how to act when parents act a certain way. So, the parents are also a very big stress for me..."

Most participants in school B also struggle to communicate with parents. Participant 10 was of the opinion that the university did not properly train them to communicate or respond to parental demands. That is why she fears dealing with parents. She explained:

"Well, the thing that scared me the most was communicating with the parents. The universities never teach you how to communicate with the parents. When they have an issue or a problem, you don't really know how to respond, you don't know how to talk to them."

In a similar vein Participant 11 indicated that she was also very scared when she started communicating with parents. She felt that she was not trained how to deal with parents in an appropriate manner. She has however, grown more confident in her dealings with parents.

“... the first thing that I feared was communicating with parents. It was the worst because that is not something I’ve done, I was not trained for that, I was not shown anything. It was just the worst; it was the biggest challenge.”

Participant 15 found convincing parents that their children had disciplinary issues or learning difficulties very challenging, because parents always found a way to blame teachers for their children’s shortcomings.

“They won’t realise that their kids were actually the problem, and they try to blame it on us. No, we not teaching properly No we are not giving enough work, or our work is too hard and that’s why their kids are doing badly...”

Lack of classroom management was another concern common amongst the participants. This was articulated by Participant 2 and Participant 4 respectively as follows:

“My biggest concern just when I started was actually knowing what to do in the classroom, because in the last year of my tertiary training you do different kinds of things in the classroom. You don’t really have a whole class the whole day to yourself, and you must do it, and you must do it from the start to the end. So, for me that was a big uncertainty, how do you start the day, how do you end the day and just focusing on all the problems that the children have. So, that for me that was a concern...” (Participant 2)

“My main concerns were how am I going to actually teach, because all the kids are different and how do you adapt that and how do you adapt your lesson to fit each child...” (Participant 4)

The participants from School B also struggled with classroom management. Participant 12 felt unsure about how she would be able to teach 30 learners in a class. She wanted to ensure that each learner really understood the work, but she was unsure about how she could achieve it. Learners’ backgrounds and differences in culture played an important role in how the learners understood things. However, although Participant

12's culture and background differ from the learners, she felt that she managed well during her first years of teaching.

“I was mostly afraid of would I be able to do it... would I be able to control a class of 30 children? Would I be able to teach them something in a way that they can understand, will I be able to control the discipline? Especially with children from different cultures, it's difficult, it's really difficult, because you don't have the same culture...”

Participant 9 indicated that she lacked confidence in her teaching ability. She did not know how to convey her message to young learners. Teaching reading skills was especially difficult, because she felt that it was an impossible task.

“Well, my concern was that I wasn't going to be able to give them the knowledge that I want to. I wanted them to learn something, but I was scared that I wouldn't be able to teach that to them in a way that they would understand.”

Participant 5 explained that the first thing she was worried about when she was interviewed for the position, was the number of learners per class and whether she would be able to manage discipline. She explained that discipline is a make-or-break factor in teaching. She explained as follows:

“You know being a teacher is challenging. I mean when I was interviewed to join this school, I was told of the class number, but I told myself: ‘Hang on, this is a bit big’. But then you know, it also comes down to discipline... if you can manage your class and have a discipline strategy, you will be fine.”

A similar sentiment was expressed by Participant 6. Participant 6 is older than the average of the participants in the study. She was brought up during the times when it was acceptable to apply corporal punishment as a means of discipline. Her biggest fear is that she might accidentally raise her hand against a learner. Participant 6 argued that this would not have been a concern if the universities had provided them with proper and effective disciplinary strategies.

“Ja, you know, coming from a time when corporal punishment was still permitted, you kind of fear that you might be raising your hand against a child because you are used to that. You have to take yourself out of that mind-set. You can discipline a child without raising your hand.”

Interpersonal relations were a concern to Participant 9 who indicated that she was easily affected by the dynamics among her colleagues. She fears that experiencing or witnessing conflict among colleagues would make her unhappy and that it would negatively affect her teaching.

“Working as a group basically, because you are going to be working with a bunch of teachers, and women working together is a lot of drama. So, I was scared of that. And that you would be unhappy somewhere and that you wouldn’t make a difference, because I mean that’s why we do this: to make a difference in their lives.”

According to Participant 13 how learners are raised has a big impact on how one should approach them in class. If the learners are brought up with different values than the teacher, they will not understand or follow rules that are based on those values. Participant 13 felt that her biggest challenge is dealing with learners who do not care about rules and whose parents are not involved in teaching values to their children. In her experience township parents are much less involved in raising their children. She explained:

“The children are not raised as we were raised. They do not have rules and boundaries and to help them understand that a rule is there for a reason and must be followed, was one of the challenges for me, because the children do not care. They do not accept rules. They do not care about rules, and even if you inform the parents, they do not really do anything, because they do not have the time, or the children are growing up in the township with other children and other children’s parents.”

According to Participant 14, the unequal distribution of resources makes teaching more challenging. She mentioned that previously the Department of Basic Education (DBE) provided only five of a particular teaching aid and expected that 40 learners must share these teaching aids. Participant 14 realises that not all schools can afford to acquire teaching aids, but she feels that the school management has unrealistic expectations and are not providing sufficient resources. This forces teachers to use their own salary to supplement that which is needed in class. She expressed her opinions as follows:

“Resources. Don’t give the educators things if they don’t have enough resources. Not all schools are equally equipped. I was at a poor school and now I’m at a better off school, I won’t say rich school, but schools don’t

have the same resources. How can you get five items from the department and expect 40 to 60 children to share something like that? I feel it's the school's responsibility to give [to] those people so that the teacher doesn't have to take it from her own salary. When you are a mom, you don't take all of those new stuff to your workplace, but a teacher has to and I feel that is not fair."

- **Focus group**

When Participant 9 transitioned to her school she really struggled, because her colleagues did not work as a team. This lack of support from her group made Participant 9's transition even more difficult and she was afraid to ask questions. She recalled her experience as follows:

"I felt that the fact that all the teachers did not work as a group and the fact that I was here with the Grade 1's ... that definitely wasn't a cohesive and teamwork environment. That made it a lot more difficult, and you don't want to ask too many questions because you are not allowed."

Although Participant 1 had the support of her mentor during her first years of teaching she felt that she struggled with the extra-curricular activities.

"I was very lucky with my mentor because the stuff in class was not that difficult, but all the extra-curricular activities was difficult..."

Participant 1 explained that she initially managed to overcome her challenges but as time progressed, she was presented with new and more stressful challenges. Her biggest challenge now is adapting her teachings according to the Covid-19 protocols. She described her challenge as follows:

"No, I would say I'm not struggling with the same problem I did in the first year. Every year we face new challenges, things are changing due to Covid."

4.3.3 The benefits of work integrated learning (WIL)

To combat the stressors and challenges the participants encountered most of the participants relied on the knowledge the gain during their work integrated learning. In this section the participants explained how their work integrated learning has benefitted them.

Participant 6 indicated that before she became a teacher, she worked at a corporate company while studying part time. She struggled with her transition into the teaching profession because teaching is much different from her previous corporate job. Participant 6 was worried that she would not be able to remember all the things she has learned or whether she was going to fit in with her colleagues. She felt that if she had been teaching while studying, her studies would have been easier. Participant 6 is of the opinion that by being exposed to work integrated learning (WIL), one can better prepare to face challenges of the teaching profession and gain experience working with learners.

“I was working in corporate and studied at the same time. Sometimes when you are in that career [it] just makes things much easier from when you are busy with something totally different. It prepares you for it and makes your studies a bit easier as well.”

For Participant 3 work integrated learning was the most enjoyable aspect of studying. She claimed that her mentor teachers shared a lot of their experiences with her. Her mentor teachers would demonstrate useful skills and she could practise them in the class. She also helped learners who struggled with reading, and she taught Physical Education. When Participant 3 was appointed as a full-time teacher she had little concerns because she had learned so many things from her previous mentor teachers. She explained as follows:

“That’s the part that I liked the most. The teachers shared with me lots of experience because I would get to share whatever the teacher does in the class. I would also get a turn to do exactly what the teacher does. I would get to mark books, I would get to help kids who are struggling with reading... so I’ve learnt a lot.”

Participant 10 still remembers the advice her mentor teachers gave her when she was a student teacher. They told her to make her lessons interesting and not to be overly controlling about every aspect of her teaching. She must make school fun, or the learners might start to hate school.

“I remember the teachers that I was with. Most of them said that I must just try to make the class fun [and] not try to control everything that the learners do because they cannot just sit still and write the whole time. It must be fun for them, or they are going to hate school for the rest of their lives.

Participant 11 had just graduated high school when she applied to become an assistant teacher at a local pre-primary school. Not only was she an assistant, but also a cleaner and a cook. Although she had a lot of work, she felt that she developed a “backbone” for teaching. Prior to her appointment as an assistant Participant 11 did not know anything about teaching. This experience taught her how to work with young learners, how to be strong and how to present herself in the classroom. Her mentor teacher presented her with many challenges. She could not just sit and observe, because her mentor teacher was also the principal and she expected Participant 11 to take over when she was required elsewhere. Participant 11 was also allocated her own periods during which she taught and helped learners to read. These opportunities made Participant 11 feel more confident in the class which motivated her to study education.

“Yes, I was at a local school in Thembisa. When I started there, I was fresh from high school, and I didn’t have money to go to varsity. I was taking my nephew’s birth certificate [to the pre-primary school] and I heard them talking that they need assistant teachers. So, when I went in, I just told the lady ‘I heard that you are looking for assistant teachers. That’s where it all began and when I left there, I had a backbone. Remember I said I was fresh from high school, so I did not know anything about the work environment. I did not know anything about how to handle kids of different cultures. So, that school taught me how to handle kids and how to be strong and present myself.

That school actually gave me a lot of challenges. When I started the principal was teaching and she was busy. If she had a meeting, then she would just say, ‘I have a meeting, I will be back in 20 minutes. You are left with the class for 20 minutes. You can’t just sit and do nothing. She expected you to do something because she’s also testing you. So that is how I grew even more stronger and then I started my studies.”

Participant 4 indicated that when she started studying, she was introduced to a lot of theory, and she was only exposed to work integrated learning during the final year of her degree. She felt that her work integrated learning experience taught her more than three years of theory did. When doing work integrated learning she could not find a link between the theory she has learned and how teachers should teach in the classroom.

She explained that if it were not for her practical experience, she would have not been prepared to be a teacher.

Not only can work integrated learning prepare aspiring teachers in terms of their teaching experience, but it can also spark a passion for teaching. Participant 6 explained that after she left high school, she did not know what she wanted to do, so she volunteered at after school programmes. It was here where Participant 6 fell in love with teaching, and she decided to study education to become a full-time teacher.

“I didn’t know what I’m going to study after school. I volunteered like for here and it was after school programmes as well. So, I kind of got into the thing and gained the love for teaching as well. So, I decided after that to get into it in studying teaching...”

Participant 15 stated that she realised where her heart lied when she did her internship. She recommends that all students should do some form of practical work before they finish their degree. With the guidance of a mentor teacher Participant 15 found her passion and learnt how to handle many situations in the classroom. Participant 15 feels that student teachers should do more work integrated learning, but she recommends that schools should give the student teachers more opportunities to work in the classroom situation.

“I would really recommend it. Instead of just studying the subject that they teaching to go and intern. It’s really important to put yourself in that work environment to realise if it’s for you or not for you. So many people study something and [when] they start doing that work, they realise that’s not where their passion lies. In my opinion it’s very important to actually go to that work environment and see how it is not just for a day or two. I would really recommend a month of interning in the field that you are studying, and I would also not just sit and observe but you must be thrown in the deep end and do the work that you are studying. For you to sit in the classroom and just observe, that won’t help you, you actually have to do the work that you will be doing when you have that job...”

Not only did Participant 15 discover her passion when doing work integrated learning, she learnt many ‘tricks of the trade’ that she still uses in the classroom. For instance, she learnt how to deal with problematic learners. She explained as follows:

“I’ve learned how to deal with problematic children. I’ve dealt with different teachers how they teach differently. So, some teachers are very strict, and they just keep the work that’s in the CAPS document, whereas other teachers actually go the extra mile. So, I’ve learned from the different teachers how to deal with students [learners] and how to go the extra mile and show more videos, because some of the grades are more visual learners than when we just stand and read from the textbooks and teach them.”

However, not all the participants experienced their work integrated learning as positive. Participant 4 is of the opinion that the university could have supported student teachers better during the work integrated learning phase of their studies. She explained as follows:

“I feel the university could have done more because the first day that I walked into the school during my practicals, it was like somebody punched me in the face. We were taught certain things and you walk into the class you see that that’s not how it works. So, I feel if the university can just go and see what’s really happening. They do prepare us to be teachers but it’s shocking to see what they think it should be like and what it actually is...”

Participant 6 felt that there was a gap in her initial teacher training. She was studying part-time.

“I was studying part-time, so I wasn’t in a classroom which I can say, I missed out and I do sometimes feel it now that I’m gaining experience and actually teaching. I feel there is a little bit of a gap - especially in teaching. There is a difference between sitting in a classroom and doing it part-time. I feel that it is needed for you to actually have a lecture, especially when it comes to handwriting and so on. You can’t really be taught that when you are doing it part-time...”

Participant 9 also do not have pleasant memories of her work integrated learning experience. She remembers that many of her mentor teachers only screamed and shouted to maintain discipline. Participant 9 did not experience other types of discipline strategies and when she started teaching, she also yelled at her learners. This is something she does not do anymore.

“I don’t feel like they really taught us. They were mostly shouting and stuff and that’s we started off that way as well. But they had fun ways of doing things and ways to entertain the children and to get them to concentrate which I still use today.”

Participants 14 and 15 agree that schools should provide student teachers with more responsibilities in a classroom setting. If student teachers can have a true glimpse of what it is like in the classroom, they can discover whether they truly have a passion for teaching. Participant 14 explained that one cannot learn everything from a book. If student teachers do not get opportunities to teach in the class, they might not know how to cope when they start teaching.

“Keep them involved with the children, a book cannot learn you everything. Yes, you can be very book smart but to sit with a child in that classroom, if you can cope one day not just half an hour, one full day with 40 learners, not less not more, 40 learners in a class and you can go home and say ‘I can do this’, that passion is definitely for you. They must push their students to be alone in the class and not with the teachers so that they can feel what it’s about. Throw them in the deep end because that is how I knew this was my passion.”

Participant 11 would have liked to teach in a class for a full day to experience what it is like to be a teacher for a full day. She feels that if she was given more time to practise her teaching, she would have mastered many aspects of teaching which would have made her transition into a full-time teacher much easier.

“No when we started because we didn’t have any experience. We were required to help the teachers with the tidying up after the kids have left in the afternoon, watching the kids in the foyer where they played, we had to help the kids with colouring aids and cutting, so we were never really given an opportunity to present formal lessons.”

Participant 15 agreed that student teachers are not just there to do photocopying work, making coffee, marking books or to look after a class if the teacher goes to the bathroom. Student teachers should know what it feels like to be a teacher and must present lessons. This will provide a student teacher with some experience before they start their careers.

If they are an intern teacher or student teacher, don't just give them the photocopying to do or if the teachers must run out to the bathroom, just to look after the class. Make them work in different lessons depending on what type of teacher they going to be. Make them work make them practise not just for marks, make them teach those lessons at least three hours a day. They need to do the works, mark the work, maybe try and set up the tests and let the teacher see it, if they set it up too hard or too easy, because building up that experience will help you one day when you have your own class."

According to Participant 14, the responsibility should not only rest on the school to provide student teachers with development opportunities, but the student teacher should also make the most of their time during their work integrated learning experience. They must not be passive in the class but should find ways to help their mentor teacher. Student teachers are there to learn and to apply what they have learned. Even if a student teacher teaches one-on-one with a learner it is an opportunity to better one's teaching skills.

"Don't be lazy, don't think you stepping in there and just observing, help that teacher. You are there to make that teacher's life better. I started there and I made a best friend out of it. If you see your teacher is under pressure, do something, even if it's just bringing her coffee. Don't have an expectation that life's going to give you everything, learn it and earn it."

- **Focus group**

Partaking in work integrated learning and having a mentor teacher can really help a student teacher. Whilst she was partaking in her work integrated learning, Participant 13 could see how a teacher manages the class. This gave her many ideas as to what she can do in her own class. She recalled the following:

"To get to see how someone else teaches and how they run their class and how they teach children on their chairs, it gives you ideas what to do in your own class."

Participant 2 did not learn teaching skills, but rather how to conduct herself in a class. She had a mentor teacher during her work integrated learning who modelled how to stay calm during stressful times. Participant 2 still tries to apply this calm approach to teaching.

“I would say that the teacher I had for my second half of the year for practicals she really had a calm aura, and she really knew how to handle stressful situations with the children running around or whatever or what’s going on. So, she was just so calm and collected and I really took that from her, maybe not a specific lesson but I did take that from her and tried to apply it in my own class.”

Unfortunately, not all participants enjoyed a positive work integrated learning experience. Participant 10 was not allocated a mentor. She could not remember much of the theory she was taught at university.

“No not really. I didn’t have a mentor teacher to help me, and I don’t remember a lot about what was taught at university.”

Participant 9 believes that she should have received more work integrated learning experiences. She argued that her tertiary institution should have monitored students’ work integrated learning more thoroughly. She believes that often students take short cuts, and the schools just signs off assessment documents.

“The fact that we didn’t do enough practicals before we came into school. And they should monitor it more, because you can go and do whatever you want, and the school can just sign you off without you having done anything.”

Participant 13 believes that work integrated learning experiences should have been more frequent and should have presented different types of contexts. She explained as follows:

“In different ways not just one way every year, different ways throughout a year.”

Participant 2 argued that student teachers should take more initiative to become involved with schools’ extra-curricular activities. This can help student teachers develop a better understanding of what it is like to be a teacher.

“Getting more involved with the school where you at, so maybe with sport or other things in the class, so just getting more involved.”

In conclusion, we find that this section exposes some of the challenges and stressors that novice teachers in township schools have to deal with when transitioning. The majority of the participants found that relying on the knowledge

and skills obtained through work integrated learning helped them overcome some of these challenges.

4.4 THEME 2: INDIVIDUAL CONTEXT (SELF)

Schlossberg's 4S-system refers to one's own inner strength to cope with transition (Schlossberg, 2011: 161). A person's thoughts, age, health, ideas, gender, coping strategies and culture all play a role in a person's self (Killam & Degges-White, 2017: 27). In this section I present data related to the effect the participants' self had on their own transition and what coping mechanisms they developed to deal with their transition.

4.4.1 The effect of the participants' personality on their transition

In this section we explore the different traits of the novice teachers and the impact they had on their transitioning experience.

Participant 1 indicated that one's personality can make or break a transition. She also explained that the principal should take different personality types into consideration when interviewing potential teachers. Principals should not hire a teacher with the best qualification if their personality clashes with the staff members. She believes that colleagues with compatible personalities should be placed together to ensure a good working environment and to minimise conflict. She also believed that teachers should adapt their classrooms to fit their personalities.

"I think it is all about personality. I feel someone in charge should be able to read personalities because you are a leader. I think the main thing to do is always pair up your teachers that you can see [who are] working well together in a group. It doesn't really help, sometimes you throw someone into the mix that just does not work in that grade."

Participant 3 agreed as she prefers to work on her own. She believes that it is not even necessarily for her to ask other teachers for help because she is her own source of information. She explained as follows:

"I prefer doing it on my own. I believe that asking another teacher for help, is not necessarily important, because I'm the one who's supposed to sit and mentor the child. So, if I'm going to go to the next teacher and ask for help, I just feel that I went to school for nothing."

Participant 3 also argued that although she worries about the size of her class and how she would apply disciplinary measures, she does not bother her colleagues. If you go to a colleague's class during school times it disturbs that teacher's class.

"I never wished for someone to help me, I wanted to do things for myself. I was telling myself that I wanted to impress my principal... I'm now used to the big workload. A heavy workload is not a problem to me".

Participant 3's feeling of independence stems from her role as an assistant at a previous school. She did most things independently and she wanted to do her duties without support, because she wanted to impress her principal. Her experience also led to her to become more comfortable with bigger workloads. She explained as follows:

"No, there was never a time where I thought someone could help me. We used to do things on our own and the workload was too much. So, you will tell yourself that when I knock off, I want to be done by then. So, whenever we start doing the morning rings and the potty training you make sure that everything is done, and all the stuff are put in order. So, I'm used to too much workload."

Participant 4 was of opinion that the key to her success was being prepared and organised. She never acquired these skills at her university or from her mentor teacher during her work integrated learning. Her preparedness stems from her personality. Some people might be quick on their feet, but Participant 4 feels she copes better when she writes down important information and plans thoroughly before she teaches.

"I think being a student you have so many subjects and your personal life and everything. So being organised, that came from being a student at university. I don't think it was something that the university itself taught me and I think it differs from person to person. It's my personality to be prepared and write everything down. Whereas other people can think on their feet the whole time and it's fine with them. So, I think it's part of your personality and part of being a student. It's not something that the university taught us."

Another personality trait Participant 5 thinks is important is confidence. There are many things that can make a new teacher anxious, for example not knowing where all the classes are. When Participant 5 accidentally walked into the wrong class she laughed at

herself and confidently asked that teacher for guidance. She feels that her colleagues are willing to help her if she just asked them.

“Don’t be shy you know everybody is family. Being a new teacher, you are nervous: you don’t know where you are, you don’t know where the classes are. I would suggest, what advice I have is to be confident, don’t be shy to ask. You know anybody and everybody is willing to help you. If you are not sure how to discipline a class, try different strategies. You know every class is different.”

Participant 9 agreed that a novice teachers should not be afraid to ask questions. They should be willing to learn and be adaptable. She believes that she was put in a difficult situation during her first years of teaching, because she had to teach multiple grades in the same class for a long time. She felt that she had to work harder than any of her colleagues and she learnt that it was acceptable to ask for support. She explained as follows:

“I studied a lot and I worked harder than anyone else and I had to ask a lot of questions and I think you just adapt because you don’t really have a choice. They threw me into the deep end, because the one teacher was very old and she couldn’t do all the stuff that she was supposed to, so I got her workload as well. The other teacher fell pregnant, so I literally had to teach grade 1, 2 and 3 all by myself.”

Participant 5 is visually impaired which makes teaching more difficult for her. She was initially concerned how the learners would respond to her, because she knew eye contact was an important element of teaching and respect. But she quickly formulated plans to compensate for her disability. For example, she would introduce herself to her learners and explain her imparity to them confidently. She would also involve the learners more in her teaching, for instance she relied on other learners to tell her if somebody is misbehaving in the class. The learners would also set up the Physical Education course on the netball field and some learners had the responsibility to complete the attendance register in class. Because Participant 5 was so open about her disability the learners understood and they were eager to assist her in the class. She explained as follows:

“Let’s start with the vision problems. You know I don’t always make eye contact, so it’s not a sign of disrespect, it’s just the eye problem. So, I

always had a concern with how the learners are going to respond, what are they going to think. Because they are used to the teachers making eye contact, I thought to myself: I'm just going to stand there and I'm just going to introduce myself and I'm going to explain to them that I have a vision problem. I'm short sighted, I don't see very far. But that doesn't mean that I am not going to know when you are causing trouble in the class. I might have limited vision, but my ears are perfectly fine. Even if I don't see you, I will hear you. But if I don't see someone causing trouble in my class, I would appreciate it if somebody else gives trouble that you tell me. And I mean I did it, I introduced it, they were like: Cool mam, we will do it. And they do it, I mean it's not like it's a big thing..."

Participant 5 did not only rely on her students, but she made many plans to help her especially when it came to reading. She would take the ATPs and textbooks home where she would scan it into her computer and enlarge the image so that she could read together with the learners. If she had forms that she had to complete, she would ask colleagues to help complete them. Even though Participant 5 has more challenges than the other participants she never gave up. She put several measures in place to help her overcome these challenges and experience a smooth transition into the classroom. She explained as follows:

"Other things that come into play is when I teach and I need material like the textbook, I take the textbook home, I scan it, I get it in electronic format. I put it on my tablet or leave it on my laptop on my stick. Then I've got a backup electronically instead of having it like right up to my face to check my notes, the lesson plans or the ATPs. I also asked other teachers if they could please give me the stuff electronically because then it's easier for me to teach and obviously with the electronic version I can enlarge it if I need to and that seems to have helped me a lot."

Although Participant 11 initially was an assistant at the school she currently teaches at, she felt very overwhelmed when she started teaching full-time. Previously she had only 20 minutes a day to present a lesson, but now she had to teach the whole day. This sent Participant 11 into a panic because she over-thought a lot about what she should be doing. This continued until her Head of Grade (HOG) stepped in and told her to relax

because one cannot solve problems under extreme stress, which can cause a teacher to fail in her duties. She explained the following:

“When I was an assistant, I was only given 20 minutes to teach, so now it was no longer it felt like 37 hours. I was always racking my brain thinking, what am I going to do now, what am I going to do now, what is next, what is next? Until my HOG called me, and she said: ‘You need to relax, because if you are panicking then there’s nothing you can solve, there’s nothing you can do. You will panic and then you will panic and panic and then you will end up failing. So, don’t panic. Just calm down and think positive and you can do it.’”

Participant 10 also had to change her approach to teaching. She always felt frustrated and angry when her learners could not grasp concepts. Now she knows that she just needs to take a deep breath and be more patient when working with her learners. She explained:

“I think I can be a little more relaxed, not get so angry so fast, be more patience. If a kid doesn’t understand the work by the third or the fourth time, I get really frustrated and then I just need to breathe a little bit. I think I need a little bit more patience.”

Participant 15 is of the opinion that her positive outlook assisted her. She describes herself as a very bubbly and happy person which makes her learners feel more at ease. Each day her learners know that she will come to school happy, unlike many of her colleagues. She believes that some of her colleagues walk into a class without even greeting the learners and start to shout at them. She does not agree with this approach.

“I’m a very bubbly and happy person. The kids will ask me: ‘Why are you always so happy?’ I respond by saying that I just really have a very good life, so there’s no reason for me not to be happy.” And they replied: ‘Whenever you come to our class, we always know that you are going to be in a very good mood and that helps to ease us.’”

- **Focus group**

During the focus group discussion many participants explained how their personalities had influenced their transition into becoming a full-time teacher. For instance, Participant 9 admitted that she has a strong personality which makes her feel more

comfortable asking questions. But she also admitted to being more involved with conflicts because of her personality. She explained as follows:

“I have a strong personality and I don’t mind asking questions. I do get into conflicts easier than other people. Where other people will shy away from certain aspects of the job, I worry and I’ll be the one standing up for other people. So, I think that leaves me in the line of fire a lot of the times which is not the easiest, but at least I’ve got a strong enough personality to deal with it.”

Participant 10 would also consider herself to have a strong personality, but she also views herself as being very independent. She would not rely so much on asking questions to her colleagues. She prefers to work alone.

“I would also say that I have a strong personality, but also an independent one. So, I would rather just do the work on my own and not ask anyone for help. It can also create some conflict.”

Participant 2 declared that she has a completely different personality than Participants 9 and 10, which makes her feel as if she struggles more with aspects such as discipline and asking colleagues questions when she is unsure. She described her personality as follows:

“I’m on the opposite end of that, I am the weakest personality. For instance, when it comes to discipline, that was the real struggle for me because I am soft and I would like to be a kind teacher and loving and all of that, but discipline was really my weakness as well as asking questions. I do shy away from that, and I think that’s a bad thing.”

Participant 4 believes that she also possesses a softer personality which also makes teaching more difficult. She feels too shy to say no to other teachers. She believes that because of this they take advantage of her.

“I think I also have a soft personality and I think my struggle was that some of the teachers take advantage of that and the kids too. So, I have struggles with teachers taking advantage, I can’t say no, I won’t be able to say no.”

4.4.2 Individual coping mechanisms

In this section we look at the different coping mechanism used during the transitioning period. We also discover how effect certain coping mechanisms are to the novice teachers in township schools.

Participants from School A used various coping mechanisms during their first years of teaching. One of the most common coping mechanisms they used was to seek support from their close colleagues and friends. Participant 1 depended heavily on her HOG when she struggled. She explained the following:

“Well, one would be to lean on my HOG, your head of grade. You just go to her if something is difficult and ask her advice. So, it definitely helps you cope, getting that advice.”

Participant 7 knew that she needed to make friends to help her cope, so she quickly introduced herself to all her colleagues and tried to include herself in the group. She did not seek a personal friendship but rather sought to develop sound professional relationships with colleagues.

“I introduced myself, I would not say to make friends. I want to be part, I didn’t exclude myself from them and just hide away in my classroom, I made myself part of them.”

Participant 9 knows that when she is faced with a problem, she can go to two or three specific people in her school for guidance. Her support at the school can help her with anything from academic to behavioural problems.

“When I’m faced with challenges, I kind of know that I can go to two or three specific teachers with any type of problem. If I have a behavioural problem that I don’t know how to handle, I’ll go to one teacher, for academic knowledge I’ll go to another teacher.”

Participant 4 believes it is much easier to talk about her problems to her friend at school. She feels that talking about her problems instead of keeping them inside helped her a lot. She talks to her colleagues, and she talks to people in her personal life, but she prefers talking to her work friends. Participant 4 feels that people in her personal life may not always know what is going on in a classroom whereas a colleague might experience the same problems as she. She clarified as follows:

“It’s easier to talk to a friend at school about these things and who actually knows what is going on. Because you can talk to a family member, but they don’t know what is actually going on in the classroom. They don’t really understand our struggles. They try to, but they don’t. They just see that we have four holidays. So, definitely someone you can trust at school and a friend who makes the whole thing comfortable for you so that you don’t have to stress.”

Participants from School B also relied on their friends and colleagues as stress relievers. Participant 10 felt that one of her colleagues not only provided her with advice in the classroom, but she was also one she could discuss work related problems with.

“I have this one friend at my work, at school. She is the one that I go for advice and stuff like that and she’s also the one that I visit to vent.”

Participant 10 agreed with Participants 4 and 7 from School A that it is the responsibility of a novice teacher to seek assistance from colleagues. If your colleagues are not friendly or helpful, you can still consult support materials such as books that can help you with challenges in the classroom.

“Do not just sit and do nothing. If you don’t know anything you go and you ask, even if the other educators or person you ask is not very friendly or helpful. Even if they don’t want to help you, try to figure it out or you go back to the things that you learned like your books and stuff like that and you try to find it out. You don’t just leave it because you don’t know.”

Participant 12 claimed that she coped with the help of internet resources, and she received a lot of moral support from her colleagues.

“I Google often and then pray a lot too.”

Participant 15 was of the opinion that each novice teacher should have a go-to colleague, somebody that a teacher can complain to about problems and who makes you feel that you are not alone.

“I would say find that one person at school that’s going to be your friend, it’s very important to have that person at school. Having that one best friend at school or that one colleague you know that will always be there to support you, makes you feel that you are part of something and that you not alone in the deep end.”

Participant 2 feels that she relies mostly on the support of people in her personal life such as her partner, parents and other family members.

“Yes, I would say my boyfriend is definitely there to support me, parents, your family they are always there...”

Participant 8 also felt that talking to her mother and husband was a way that she could relax at home. She explained their support as follows:

“I think I would moan, or I would just go and relax at home and tell my husband about this or about that. Or I would even phone my mom directly after the kids left and tell her: ‘Oh! I just had this day.’ And then I would already feel better. Ja, I can’t really say that, so if I talk about it then I feel better.”

Many participants also adopted both healthy and unhealthy habits to cope in their first years of teaching. For example: Participant 4 strongly believes that it is important not to take work home over the weekends. She indicated that teachers should switch off during the weekends because working constantly is not very healthy.

“... and make sure that [for] example on weekends you don’t take work home. In the beginning I took a lot of work home and I just could not cope. So, make sure that you have your off time as well. That is also very important, because otherwise it’s 24/7 work, work, work, and I don’t think that is very healthy.”

Participant 6 agreed that it is important to do things that make you forget about teaching such as reading a book, going on vacation, and taking breaks over the weekend. She expressed her beliefs as follows:

“Read a book. Go on a vacation and you know to get a bit away from teaching, you take a break on weekends. Do something that’s not teaching related or when you go away you don’t talk about teaching. Forget about teaching so that you just get that breakaway.”

According to Participant 1 it is important to still do the things you love. She sees many teachers around her taking books to mark at home and not spending time on themselves. Things she still enjoys are watching movies and being active after school. School A has after school gym classes where Participant 1 can dance and bond with her colleagues and she feels it helps her to cope and lifts her spirits.

“Sometimes it is difficult to remember you also have to have some fun. Most teachers I think will say they take books home and sit and mark till late at night to make sure that they can help the children the next day and they forget to just spend time on themselves.”

Participant 9 enjoys taking a nap in the afternoons and cooking for her family to relax at home. She also enjoys listening to music on her way home. She described her methods of unwinding as follows:

“Well, when I get home, I take a [nice] nap and usually I like to cook, because I like to make different things for my family at home. I can express myself without having to talk and stuff like that. I’m also very into music...”

Some participants do not only find ways to cope after school, but they find things to do in the class that help them cope, for instance Participant 7 really enjoys burning a scented candle in the class and to play music in the background. If she or her learners feel overwhelmed, she would leave the formal work and sing songs or play with clay to relax. She described her strategies as follows:

“Well, I will burn a candle, a nice scented one, and then I will also play a bit of worship kids’ songs, just background music. I see it really works for them all the time. If I feel overwhelmed and I see the kids are overwhelmed, I will just go back to basics and let us sing a song or just play clay for 20 minutes. It allows them to relax... So, they also have that mental break before we go on again.”

Participant 3 found that being organised was an important coping mechanism. She explained as follows:

“Before I go home in the afternoon I would prepare. I would look at my planning and I would write whatever on the board that I’m going to teach for the next lesson in the morning. I would prepare myself for tomorrow morning. I would start taking out books and I would put my planning there. If I need to draw lines, I will draw lines so that when I start teaching it will be easier for me.”

Participant 4 agreed that planning is a critical aspect. She indicated that when teachers walk into the class, they should know what to do and what to expect that day. She recalled her experience as follows:

“I took the planning and every single day I wrote down what I wanted to do and then I saw what I can combine maybe to make it a bit less. Make sure you know that if you walk into a class, you know what your day is going to look like. We are teachers and unpredictable things does happen, but I feel if you know what you must do that day that helps you a lot. It is very important for me to write things down, because if I see it, I know I won't forget about it, or I visualise what I have to do that day. So, definitely being prepared.”

Although Participant 4 strongly agreed with planning as a coping mechanism, but she cautioned not to over plan. A teacher can easily become overwhelmed if they want to plan too far in advance. She suggested that teachers should only focus on short term goals and to learn from mistakes.

“To take it day by day, not think too far ahead because then you are going to go crazy. And not to be too hard on yourself: if you make a mistake learn from that mistake and don't be afraid to ask for help or advice. That is the three most important things for a new teacher.”

Participant 7 agreed that teachers should focus on one day at a time.

“Well, I taught myself one day at a time. Don't think about the whole picture, don't think about the whole year, just take one day at a time, one week at a time, make sure the learners know about the things you do the day or for the week and that they can do it and build on it from there.

Participant 1 argued that if you are unsure and do not know, all you should do is ask. She explained that teaching is a stressful profession, and teachers only add to that stress if they do not ask about the things they are unsure of.

“Just be patient, you'll get there and don't be afraid to ask. Just ask, even if you feel embarrassed, rather go ask and you know how to do it than keeping quiet and stressing about it on your own. It's already such a stressful environment and you have all these little people counting on you. Just make sure that you go and ask and if the person doesn't help you, go and ask another person.”

Participant 4 agreed that if a novice teacher tries to work too independently without seeking help, they are more likely to experience burnout, which can lead to the teacher hating the job.

“... definitely do not be afraid to ask questions and for help. Do not be afraid to admit that you did something wrong because you did not know. Be comfortable with being able to say: ‘Oh, I did not know this, but now I do’.”

There are many resources available to teachers, for example teacher guides and the internet. Participant 8 explained as follows:

“See what you have in the class. I walked into a class that had some things from the previous teacher, stupid things, like books from previous years. I know there are teachers posting videos on Facebook or just some ideas on how to teach this and how to teach that...”

Participant 2 also consulted social media platforms such as YouTube.

“I would refer to YouTube videos specifically if feel I did something wrong or I was self-reflecting on how I could improve. I definitely use YouTube videos to guide me.”

Participant 11 did not rely so much on her colleagues but rather on her friends who taught at other schools whom she meets at district workshops.

“I went to workshops, and I have a lot of friends or a lot of colleagues from other schools I communicated with and they would actually tell me how they do things.”

Participant 12 remembers that she struggled with classroom discipline at first. She did not know how to effectively manage learner discipline and she relied mostly on yelling and screaming. Now she believes that she has learned to respect her learners and really listen to them. Her stance is that if you respect your learners, they will respect you back.

“I’ve learned over the last two years that if I have a problem with any learner, the best thing is to take them outside of the classroom and to discuss the problem. I found that a lot of the time it is something at home that’s bothering them and it’s not something at school. It’s not that they want to treat you badly or they want to disrupt the class, it’s something at

home that's bothering them and if you get to the bottom of it then you see this is the problem and then you can take it further.”

Participant 13 try to not show any emotion during class time. She clarified that when working with older children, the learners will take advantage of the situation.

“I learned never to show them any kind of emotion, meaning if they do something funny, do not laugh, because eventually they think you are very soft, and they try to take chances with you.”

However, Participant 15 uses the opposite approach as she tries to build relationships with her learners. She believes that it is more important to be open and honest with learners so that they are more open with her if they are not feeling well or having a bad day. She tries to focus on positive reinforcement rather than yelling or shouting.

Some days you can see that they [are] too tired. Just like we have bad days, they have bad days... I told them: ‘If you are having a bad day, then maybe I won't shout at you when I see that you are not working’ So, we have a very open relationship. They tell when they are not feeling well, they tell me they are sick. You need to listen to their conversations, because when you build that relationship and friendship with them, they appreciate you more as a teacher. Spoil them now and then.”

Participant 15 is of the opinion that it is important to try new teaching techniques in the classroom. Finding the most suitable teaching techniques can provide more support to the learners. She also is of the opinion that it is important to do proper planning. A teacher should never leave things until the last minute because learners can detect when teachers do not know what they are doing in the classroom.

“I'll always try a new technique and if that technique doesn't work, I'll go on to the next one. I've learnt by trying all these different teaching methods, what works with the kids and what doesn't work. I've also learned that you can't just tell the kids to work, work, work, work. You must support them in some way, so even if it's just rewarding them once a month or rewarding them with maybe one Friday having half a lesson and going for free time on the field where you play games.”

There are also many things a teacher can do at home to help her cope with her transition into the classroom. For instance, Participant 12 relies a lot on her religion. She

would go to church and pray to her God. She also believes that it is important to get away from schoolwork to spend time with her husband. She exercises and enjoys the outdoors.

“... go to church of course, to pray a lot and my husband and I love to go on holiday. We try to get away as often as possible and I started to jog lately, and I see that helps as well.”

Participant 15 relied on exercise to cope with her transition.

“Sport and being active keep me grounded...”

She also relies on her very supporting partner that supports her by doing chores like cooking when she feels tired and overwhelmed.

“I have a very supporting and helpful partner at home, and I think that also helps me to survive. When I come home, I don’t have to stress, if I don’t want to cook then he will and he encourages me to sit on the couch and relax.”

- **Focus group**

Participants 9 and 10 agreed that seeking advice and not being afraid to make mistakes, is the key to a smooth transition into the teaching profession.

“I think you should always ask questions as many as you can, communicate openly. Do not be afraid to make mistakes and if you do make mistakes, don’t put too much pressure on yourself”. (Participant 9)

“I just say to new teachers: don’t be afraid to ask any questions, even if you think it’s a stupid question. Trust me, just go and ask. We are here to help each other, go ask the question and if there’s someone doesn’t want to help you, go ask someone else. Someone in the school will help you.” (Participant 10).

Not only can you get useful information from your colleagues, but you can also vent about challenges you experience in the class. Participant 10 goes to her colleagues for the following reasons:

“They were just there for me so that I could vent if I needed to or if there’s something challenging, they would give me advice and things like that”.

The most important coping mechanism Participants 4 and 10 learnt was not to give up. They urged all novice teachers to persevere until they have adapted to their school's climate. Participant 4 explained as follows:

“A few years have passed so things are not that difficult anymore. You eventually find your feet. So, you learn the ins and outs of how it works at each school, and you just learn to adapt...”

Participant 10 agreed that even when one feels overwhelmed, there comes a day when you understand what the school expects of you. Things she struggled with in her first year are not a challenge to her now. She has learned how to overcome some these challenges. She explained:

“There are no more old problems, because you get used to what the school wants from you. The things that I struggled with in my first year I don't really struggle with anymore. Because you get used to it, you get to know what the school wants from you, what you supposed to do, but the new struggles are just basically the circumstances of what's happening now.”

In conclusion it seems that novice teachers also have responsibilities towards the success of their own transition. Their personalities and the types of coping strategies they choose to use have an effect on how they experience their own transition from university into the work place.

4.5 TRANSITIONAL SUPPORT

Schlossberg defines support as people and assets persons have in their lives that can provide support for the period of their transition (Killam & Degges-White, 2017: 26). Participant 1 is of the opinion that it is necessary for novice teachers to have support, because she compared her first year to being hit with a bomb. She indicated that no amount of preparation can fully prepare a teacher for their first class.

“I think for a new teacher it is absolutely necessary. When you start your first year, it does kind of hit you like a bomb. You are not prepared for the number of kids you have in the class, the amount of work that must be completed by a Friday. So, anyone who could help make you manage your time, make you feel emotionally okay, because it can be so draining to get used to such a busy and hectic environment. You can't do it without support. I think it could break your spirit a bit without support. You need

someone to show you the ropes and be there, not just for academics, but for emotional support for the teacher.”

Considering the above, this theme focuses on the type of support provided to novice teachers by principals, HODs, colleagues as well as the induction and mentoring experiences of the participating novice teachers.

4.5.1 Support provided by the principal

In this section we look at the different types of support that the principals from School A and School B provided to their novice teachers. The participants also indicate how helpful the support from their principals was.

Most participants from School A felt that they received sufficient support from their principal. For instance, Participant 1 compared her previous principal to her current principal by saying she feels more free to make an appointment with her current principal than with her previous principal:

“I must say at my previous school you would never really see the principal; you only saw him if there was trouble. You couldn’t just have a conversation with him. Whereas at the school where I am now, if I get my principal in the hall or whatever, I can just have a chat with her and find out, is this okay? Is this not okay? So, you have much more freedom to just go up and talk, where in the other school it was more restricted.”

Participant 4 had a similar opinion. Their previous principals were not as involved as their current principal. Participant 4 believes gender played a big role in her previous principal’s lack of involvement. Her previous male principal was not as involved in the foundation phase as her current female principal. She also believes that because her principal is a woman she cares more about the feelings of her staff, and she is more understanding. She described her experiences with her principals as follows:

In my previous school not at all. I think because he was a male principal, and we were foundation phase. The responsibility went to my HOD, so he was not very involved. If there was a problem, you could go to him, and he was there but he was not very involved. At my current school the principal is a female and I think that helps because in the foundation phase we are all females, and you feel more comfortable talking to her and she also understands.”

Participant 9 explained that her previous principal always closed her door, and nobody was allowed to go in and to talk. If she wanted to speak with her principal, she had to make a formal appointment. The principal also treated Participant 9 as if she did not matter and this led to her having a bad relationship with her previous principal. Participant 9 recalled her experience as follows:

I had none. It was terrible, she always had a closed door you were not allowed to just walk in. You must make appointment. When she does speak to you, she speaks to you like you don't matter, like she's on top of the world and you're not. And asking questions was basically out of the question. If you had problems, she would deduct your money... So, there was literally no personal involvement, not any kind of compassion from her side. She is a businesswoman she doesn't care about you, you're just there for her."

At her current school her relationship with her principal is completely different. She feels that they have similar personalities and that they can be very direct with each other. She feels free to walk into the principal's office whenever she has a problem, and she knows that her principal will support her.

"Well, my relationship with our principal is a lot different than most of the other teachers because I feel we are very much the same, so we are very direct. I can actually just walk into her office, and I can say if something is bothering me, I can ask her for help, she will always stand behind us and she's always got your back. I feel like a lot of people wouldn't be so comfortable because she's a woman as the principal and that she does get very personally involved in your life as well."

However, Participant 8 had an opposite view. She claimed that she has no relationship with her current principal. They would seldom talk to one another. She thinks the principal is even not aware of her. She explained as follows:

"I can't really tell you that we have a relationship. We barely talk to each other. I feel that sometimes I don't even know if she knows we are here."

Participant 8 however believes that her principal has good intentions by motivating the staff. The principal often buys treats like lunch or appreciation to thank teachers for their hard work.

We had whacky Wednesdays. That was a treat, and it also would motivate you a little bit and just to end on a good note. I think little things like that or like now with Valentine's Day we got little gifts of appreciation or whatever, even if you just tell us how are you doing, are you doing fine, thank you for your hard work."

Participant 2 remembers that when she started teaching her principal was much more involved. She would constantly check on Participant 2 to make sure that she is fine and to keep up to date. But she felt that she could not be honest with her principal about her problems and when she tried to reach out to her principal, there were no solutions provided for her problems. She felt that her colleagues' support was much more effective than the support she received from her principal.

"There were times a long time ago that she would have called you just to make sure that you are fine. She came to our classes more often in the beginning to come and check on us to make sure we are fine and to know what's going on. But I don't think anybody could really be honest towards the principal, because I think it feels like the times that I did reach out, there weren't many solutions to the problems."

Participant 7 believes that she was thrown into the deep end because she was called in the day before the school started. The principal only handed her the keys to her class and showed her to her new classroom. She feels that the principal could have done more.

"I will say they could've done a bit more. I was only called in a day before the new term started just to hand me the keys for my class and there were very few resources to help me start the new day with the kids. So, I was literally thrown into the deep waters."

Participant 3 is also of the opinion that her principal did not support her, but she claimed that it was because she did her work integrated learning at the school and that the principal had confidence in her.

"She didn't really worry about me. She knew that this one I don't have to worry about because she knows the story backwards and forwards".

There were also some suggestions made by the participants on how principals can support novice teachers. Participant 2 believes that it is the responsibility of the principal

to make novice teachers feel welcome. The principal can accomplish this by introducing them to one another and initiating a group discussion among them.

I think it's the principal's responsibility to make teachers feel welcome and feel that they are at their correct school and only a principal can do that. I feel like he/she is the head of the school and employers should go to the principal regarding anything that they are concerned about. So, I feel like they must introduce them, maybe have group discussions or meetings with the new teachers."

Participant 6 suggested that principals should be good role models to novice teachers, guiding them until they know the school's layout, introduce them to their colleagues and to have an open-door policy.

"Be a good guidance, be a good role model to the new teachers. Give them a bit of a tour around the school so that they can get to know the school better. Duties are also to introduce current teachers to the new teacher and always to have an open-door policy so that they have somewhere to go if they have questions and if they need guidance."

Participant 7 held a similar view.

"She must keep herself positive and if you promise them something give it to them. Don't let them work for it and then don't give it to them. Practice what you preach..."

Another aspect that principals should help novice teachers with is ensuring a proper classroom with adequate stationery and resources. Participant 5 explained as follows:

"They should provide stationery. For example, when I got here last year I was in another class and there was nothing, no books, no pens and neither the basic stapler and goodies and stuff like there was nothing. I had to provide everything myself."

Participant 9 believed principals have very little responsibility towards a novice teacher's happiness, but they should provide them with the basic needs to teach.

"There's not really a lot that they can do except give you all the stuff that you need, like give you a proper classroom, make sure that there is all the equipment and stuff that you need."

There were also some participants who felt that it should not be the duty of the principal to provide support to new teachers. For example, Participant 3 felt that the responsibilities of a principal are already too much. Her principal can hardly take time to make coffee. That is why she believes it is the responsibility of the Head of Grade to check up on new teachers.

“I disagree. It’s not the principal’s responsibility. A principal has a lot to do. She doesn’t even have time to get up and get coffee for herself, so it’s highly impossible to come and check on the new teacher. What is the job of the HOG? It’s not to say the HOG must do the teachers work, but just to highlight what needs to be done in the class.”

Participant 4 mentioned the fact that some teachers might be afraid of their principals and might feel anxious if principals constantly check up on them. HODs may have a more relaxed and comfortable relationship with novice teachers.

“I think that they [principals] should be present in the beginning. But again, a lot of new teachers fear the principal. I’m still scared of the principal. I think it also differs from person to person, because if the principal was looking over my shoulders the whole time, I would feel very anxious whereas with my HOD I will feel more comfortable. But I do think in the beginning the principal should be present.”

Participant 8 believed that although it is not the responsibility of the principal, they should make sure that a novice teacher is in capable hands.

“The principal’s responsibility is to tell the HOD or the HOG to make sure that I know what to do. The principal had to introduce me to my HOD or HOG and then she had to provide us with resources, with lesson plans, well I think that’s more the HOGs...”

Most of the participants from School B did not experience much of support from their principal. Only Participants 12 and 15 had positive responses about the support they received from their principal, particularly regarding conflicts with parents. Their principal will always listen to their view and support them when allegations are made against them.

“With parents she has your back in a kind of a way. She doesn’t just throw you under the bus and it’s all your fault. She listens to you... she will stand up for [you]” (Participant 12)

The principal and your mentor teacher normally take your side and try to defend you. The parents always see that they are right.” (Participant 15)

Participant 14 agreed.

“I have my grade leader, I have my colleagues that’s also with me at the grade 3s. And then I have my HOD. If that doesn’t work, I have my deputy principal, and I also have my principal. So, I can also go to any of them, and they will all help me. Last year, I went to the principal and said: ‘I don’t know, I’m out of options.’ She went there and said, ‘No, no, you come first, my staff comes first.’

Contrary to the experiences of the previous participants Participant 10 indicated that she did not receive sufficient support from her principal. She was taken to her classroom and was left to fend for herself.

“She would like tell us remember you must do this and do that. You cannot just stand and teach and think that the kids will know what to do. If you go to her and you ask her, she rushes the answer and she wants to get you out of her office, or she just tells you go ask the HOD or go do this or ask that person. No, I just pitched up the day and then they took me to my class and then I had to think for myself.”

Participant 10 believed that novice teachers deserve more support from their principals. Even if a principal has a lot of responsibilities, they must be assessable to novice teachers.

“I think she must be there to help you, especially if you are new there, if you are insecure about all the things. I know she’s busy, like there’s a lot of responsibly for a principal, but I don’t feel she must just rush you out of her office just to get you out. I mean she became a principal for a reason.”

Participants 12 and 13 agreed.

“She [the principal] said like the basics, not even the basics, she just said follow the CAPS. I understand CAPS, but I understand it in the Hospitality sense I don’t understand it in Afrikaans and at that time I gave EMS and

PSW for Grade 6, Afrikaans Grade 6 and LO for Grade 7 so it was a lot.”
(Participant 12)

“You don’t really see the principal or talk to her that much as she, how can I say this without sounding ugly, she has her responsibilities and duties in her office and she’s busy there all the time. She will manage issues that are very bad but when it comes to small problems or things... We got the HODs now, so if you have something difficult or do not understand something, you go to the HODs and 99% of the time they can assist you or help you. If they cannot then they will go to the principal and they will give you feedback afterwards.” (Participant 13)

Allowing the HODs to solve many problems has created an environment where the principal is no longer in control of the school. Participant 13 argued that her principal relies heavily on the HODs so that she can focus on administrative work, and this results in the HODs gaining control of the school. Although Participant 13 viewed her principal as being distant, it is not uncommon for principals to practise distributed or shared leadership in schools.

“I would say the principal should be more in control at our school as she’s allowing the HODs to take charge more than she is and she’s not really involved because she got too busy with administration work.”

Participant 12 argued that the reason for her principal’s lack of support is because she is not qualified for her position. She strongly believes that her principal should undergo more training in areas such as organisation, problem solving, conflict management and leadership.

“Well, honestly, she’s in a position she shouldn’t be. She needs some training in my opinion. She doesn’t always know how to deal with conflict, and that’s a big problem especially if you are in a position like a principal. I love her to bits, she’s an awesome person as a human being, but she’s more like a deputy-principal but not a principal. She can’t take control of a situation, she’s *‘baie deurmekaar’*. She’s unorganised. She can’t sort out conflict and she hasn’t taught me anything.”

4.5.2 What support do heads of department offer to novice teachers?

In this section the participants explain the major impact that their heads of department had on their transition into the workplace.

Most of the participants from School A felt that they received the most support from their HODs or HOGs. Participant 4 justified this statement by explaining that her school is big, and her principal has a lot of other responsibilities. Therefore, it should be the responsibility of the HODs or the head of grades to assist all the teachers who are struggling. Unlike Participant 13, Participant 4 had more realistic understanding of HODs' roles in the school. She explained as follows:

“The school is big and the HOG or the HOD see the teachers more. I mean the foundation phase is big so for [the] principal to be there for every single person and every single grade and every single phase, it's a lot to ask. If you give that responsibility to your HOG, you know she/he can assist the teacher better. The principal does have lots of other duties, so he/she gives or shares that responsibility with the HODs. I think that teachers will feel that they are only there to work. There is no communication so I think that it should be a shared responsibility.”

Participant 4 had an HOD at her previous school and now she has an HOG who supports her. In both cases it was somebody who had a lot of experience and wisdom to share. Participant 4 fully trusts her HOG's advice because it was already tested through many years of teaching experience. She also felt that a good relationship is vital when working with an HOD or HOG.

“I feel that because they are both older women, they have a lot of wisdom to give. This person has been teaching for over 20 years, so you know that the advice they give are tried and tested. So it actually worked and it was a good relationship. I think if it wasn't a good relationship, it would have caused problems, because that is the person that helps you and that is the person that helps you in the group and with conflict as well. If you don't feel comfortable going to your HOD or HOG it just adds extra stress, and you don't want that.”

According to Participant 1 her HOG supports her. She feels free to go to her HOG and ask for help because she knows that her HOG will assist her with her problems.

“We have our HOG which is your head of grade who handles everything from academics to your parent conflicts. You usually just go to them, explain your situation and they will give you guidance on which way to go. Or they will for example sit in with you in a meeting if there is a difficult parent...”

Participant 2 held a similar view.

“Let’s say there’s parents coming, and you are not sure how to welcome them and talk to them and discuss any concerns you have about the children, I go to my HOG especially because this is a formal meeting. Then I would ask her questions on how to stay calm, what things I should say and shouldn’t say, and she would give me a lot of advice.

“We have weekly planning meetings... where all the teachers discuss what we going to do, and the HOGs are usually in charge of that. They give us planning and we go through it together and ask questions at the same time. So, we just help each other out. They also attend other meetings with the principal that we don’t attend, so they do actually a lot for us.”

Participant 5 compared her HOG to a caring family member by saying she was her only support system when transitioning into the profession.

“What was nice is when I started, I had teacher Jenny [pseudonym] who’s the HOG and she was my support system. I didn’t know how procedures worked and how they do lesson plans, but she helped me with the planning and she helped with organising things. If I had problems in the class, she would come and sort them out. She also made sure that I had a support system where I had all my work, and I had enough copies for the learners and that I had my register sheet for all the kids...”

Participant 6 felt like there was a gap in her tertiary education, so her main source of knowledge is her HOG.

“It was my first year so I can say that I’ve gained experience and learned a lot throughout the year. Even after two years I still have small gaps, so now I’m learning from the HOGs that is teaching me things, so they assist.”

Participant 8 described her relationship with her HOG as good and that she feels free to ask her HOG for assistance.

“We work together, and we talk to each other a lot, we ask questions. I would say the HOD helped a lot so I would go and ask her how to handle a situation and then she would prepare me or tell me just say this or just do this.”

Participant 9 has been under her HOG’s wing for a long time and feels comfortable to ask her HOG anything.

“From the start I could just ask questions, throw my opinions around, she doesn’t just shut you down. She is much more in the older way of teaching; she doesn’t always agree with the stuff that we do. She always wants to give you examples, but she doesn’t shut you down if you don’t do something the same way as hers. She’s also very open and honest and you know you can go to her with anything, and she always got your back.”

School B is much smaller than School A and they only recently appointed HODs. It does, however, seem that their HODs have been a great source of support. Participant 10 argued that it is the head of grade’s duty to assist novice teachers because they should oversee the whole grade.

Definitely the HODs. They are there to help you, especially if you are new. They are there to help you if there’s something that you don’t know or even to introduce you to the other educators and teach you new things that you don’t know. They are there if you have a problem or if you need something or if you need to ask them something. They help, they don’t just send you away.”

Participant 11 even formed a very close relationship with her HOD.

“She was like a sister. She took me by the hand and showed me everything. She made it seem very easy. She actually cried when I cried, and she would show me small things. I think her patience made it very easy for me, she understood what I was going through...”

Participant 11’s HOD would support by providing resources such as the simplified Annual Teaching Plans (ATPs), old learners’ books and other types of resources.

“I remember there was a very nice *tannie* [Aunty], she gave me half of the things that she had in her class which actually made it easy. She was an

HOD, but she gave me her old books and then just show me how to do stuff.”

Participants 10 and 11 share an HOD in the Foundation Phase, but Participants 12 and 13 work in the Intermediate Phase which means they work alongside many subject HODs. Participant 12 has experienced support from the languages HOD, who provides guidance and support, whereas her other HODs do not.

“The Afrikaans and English HOD is brilliant. She helps us, she guides us, she’s so good. But there’s two other HODs, we’re a small school, so we only have three HODs from Grade 4-7, the other two HODs in my phase need a little bit more ‘oomph’, because they are still like normal teachers. They don’t help the educators as they should.”

Participant 12’s HOD supported her by having an open-door policy.

“She’s never irritated even if you come to her 100 times a day, because she knows if she helps you now then you will be fine for the rest of the year. So [she] puts a lot of effort and she guides us, she shows us. She also says she has an open-door policy: ‘Come inside if you don’t understand I will help you’.”

Participant 13 remembers the days before there were HODs. She felt that the school was very unstructured, and everybody was confused about what they should do. Now that the school has HODs there are more structure and rules.

“They gave us a lot of structure and rules to follow as nobody really know when to say what or how to do things. We have structure now. If an assignment has to be pre-moderated before writing then you give it to your HOD for the specific grade, for the specific subject where there wasn’t always that.”

4.5.3 How can colleagues assist novice teachers?

In this section we explore the ways in which colleagues provided assistance to novice teachers during their transitioning.

Not only do participants from School A receive support from their HOGs, but it seems that they can rely on their colleagues too. For example, although Participant 1 did not have a mentor she knew she could rely on the support from her fellow teachers. She explained:

“No, we didn’t receive a mentor, but they just confirmed that you could go ask your neighbour if you were unsure of anything. So, you could literally just go and ask anyone to find out what was going on.”

Participant 1 also received emotional support from her colleagues. This made Participant 1 much more relaxed as she always had somebody she could approach when feeling overwhelmed.

“For emotional support just kind-hearted words, someone who will help without getting agitated. You should feel welcome to go and ask if you feel overwhelmed that someone can help.”

Participant 1 was of the opinion that it is easier to receive help from colleagues, because they understand the type of environment you work in, and they can give valuable support.

“Sometimes it is better learning it from someone who is in the same environment as you, someone you work with and a colleague. They know the environment, they know what everyone is going through, so it’s easier to give support.”

Participant 2 mentioned that education is not the easiest career and that it is filled with many challenges, and it is necessary to have support from colleagues. Participant 2 received support from older teachers who reached out to her. She would go to these veteran teachers for advice.

“Teaching is not an easy career path as people think. We have many challenges in the classroom and not only in the classroom, but outside of the classroom as well with parents and colleagues. We really need to have a support system to help each other out. The older teachers could reach out more. One of the older teachers said please come to me if there’s anything that you are struggling with.”

Although Participant 4 claimed that the well-being of a new teacher should not be the responsibility of colleagues, she feels all teachers should have a caring attitude towards colleagues. She is of the opinion that colleagues should help new teachers who are struggling to cope, because mentor teachers cannot always assist as they have their own classes to attend to. Participant 4 also stated that working together created a sense of community which can make the new teacher feel more welcome.

“I think colleagues [do] not [have] a responsibility, but because we are all teachers, we should care for each other. I mean we know what we are going through, we all have many of the same struggles. I think they should help a new teacher. I think if the colleagues help as well, there’s a formal community that’s created and I think that’s also important [at] a school to feel like it’s a community.”

Participant 6 agreed that it should not be the responsibility of colleagues to provide guidance to new teachers, but she believes that relationships are important. If a new teacher is more at ease with a colleague than their HOG, they should feel free to go to their colleague for advice. She argued as follows:

“It’s not your responsibility, the responsibility mostly falls on the HOG, and because it’s their job to assist and to guide you as a new teacher. But your co-worker is maybe someone who you feel comfortable with, that you build a relationship with. You have spoken to this person and feel instead of going to the HOG maybe if the person is comfortable, she would be able to assist you, but it’s not her responsibility.”

Participant 7 has a very close co-worker group. She feels supported because they all shared ideas and advise on personal matters. She often goes to her colleagues for advice on how to present subjects such as Mathematics to the learners. She described her experience as follows:

“We are a very close group. We are working very well together; we share in each other’s classrooms and a bit of our personal lives. We support each other very well.”

Participant 8 believes that the bulk of the support she gets come from her colleagues and not her principal or HOG.

“I would say my colleagues. I still pop into their classes many times so that they can help me especially the older teachers that’s been teaching for many years. I feel comfortable going to my colleagues and asking them for assistance.”

Similar views were expressed by Participant 9.

“We all help each other, so if there’s something I don’t know, I can go and ask. If they don’t know, they can come and ask me. We all work as a group very nicely. It’s never uncomfortable and if it is, we sort it out.”

Contradicting her colleagues, Participant 5 felt that her colleagues could have done a bit more to support her.

“Ordinary staff members should also be a bit more supportive. They should also come and check up on new teachers. Just go and talk to the new teacher to see if he or she is ok and if there are things that the staff may assist with or can assist with.”

On her first day as a full-time teacher Participant 10 was placed in a class and had no idea what to do with the learners. She went to her colleagues for help because she did not know what to do. As time passed, she learnt which colleagues she could lean on and which colleagues to avoid. She recalled the following:

“I just tried to keep the kids busy. I didn’t even know what to do with them, I just tried to keep them busy, and I would ask around among my neighbours- the other educators- and they would help me and tell me what I must do and things like that. I started getting to know some of the teachers who actually want to help you and who are always friendly and those who just want to get you out of their class...”

Participant 10 now rely more on a colleague than on her HOD because she is more open and willing to help and her HOD has a lot of work to do.

“I just feel like the person that I go to is more open, she’s more willing to help. Not that the HODs don’t help but that’s how I personally feel. The HODs have so much work to do, it’s easier to just go and ask a friend.”

In the case of Participant 11 colleagues not only provided advice but assisted her with different types of teaching resources as well. She recalled her experience:

“I remember I didn’t have charts, I didn’t have chalk, I didn’t have stationery for myself, so they were actually checking on me. ‘I’ve [have] got two of these, would you like one?’. ‘Oh, thank you yes!’ So, they were actually helping me, by giving me stuff for the class.”

When Participant 12 started at her current school there were no HODs or even HOGs to support the teachers. From the start she had to rely on her colleagues for any kind of

support. She compared her first years of teaching to being thrown into deep waters. Without the help of the teacher in the classroom next door she would not have been able to cope.

“We have HODs now at the school I’m currently at, but the year that I started it was the principal and the teachers. There were no HODs, nothing. It was like being thrown into the sea and being told to swim. It was hectic, it was really, really hectic. [If] it wasn’t for the people that I worked with before or my neighbours I wouldn’t have made it. They would mentor me and show me - they helped me so much.”

Participant 13 is the youngest of the teachers at her school, so she feels that she needs the most guidance. Not only did her HOD provide her with the proper guidance but her colleagues too. She feels comfortable going to any of her colleagues for assistance.

“Not only does the HODs help you but a lot of other teachers as well. I’m the youngest one at the school at this moment, so everybody is older than me. Many times I just look confused, and I could go to anybody and say: ‘Please help me, I’m lost.’ They would just say: ‘Okay, don’t worry’. There’s always somebody that will help you.”

Participant 14 strongly believed that colleagues should support each other.

“Support each other because we on the same level. Especially on the education level you can talk, you can pack off by a friend. I think we are more important because they know they can depend on us to become a mentor one day.”

Participant 15 is very happy at her current school because she does not feel isolated. She can rely on any of her colleagues for help.

“I really got lucky with the school I’m at. Most teachers always come to check to see if you are okay or if they can help you.”

- **Focus group**

During the focus group discussion some participants claimed that their main source of support came from their colleagues. Participant 1 claimed that advice from colleagues is important because a teacher cannot improve on their flaws if they do not know what they are doing wrong. Luckily, she has supportive colleagues who give her constructive criticism without being offensive. She is of the opinion that a teacher’s transitional

experience is dependent on sound relationships with colleagues. The healthier the group dynamics, the more likely a novice teacher will be prepared.

“There are things especially in your first year that you don’t know, that you only find out later when someone comes and checks. You won’t know certain things until someone shows you. My support system has grown a lot. Here you have the freedom to figure it out and be more creative, you have an input in how things can be and there’s just more communication.”

Participant 9 agreed that the group dynamic is very important. Currently Participant 9’s colleagues work together which made her feel more at ease. She indicated that these strong relationships help her cope even during difficult days. She recalled the following:

“You’ve got your colleagues that work nicely together and the fact that we are kind of a very strong group together makes it much more bearable and you can survive, because everyone’s still got your back.”

Participant 2 relied more on a specific individual rather than a group of colleagues. She recalled a specific colleague from whom she learnt a lot.

“[During] my first year I was more independent. I had one teacher that specifically matched with my personality, and she was luckily older and experienced, so I had a lot to learn from her and her door was always open for me.”

Participant 4 received support from colleagues at her previous school but not at her current school. She explained that her previous school was a more pleasant environment whereas now she does not feel the same. Although some colleagues are willing to help her, they do not always know what to do. This has created situations where Participant 4 had to redo work that a colleague helped her with.

“In my first school I had a teacher I could always go to, and we were in the same grade so it made things a lot easier. Here at the second school, I have somebody that always wanted to give help, but she did know what to do. So, then I did things wrong then I had to do it all over again, it was not that great. The first school was a much better experience with mentorship and a helping hand than the second school.”

Participant 10 was the only participant who did not view her colleagues as being her main source of support. She proclaimed that at her school they prefer to work

independently from each other. Because of this school climate that promoted independence, she never felt that she was supported by her colleagues. Now that she has been teaching for a few years she tries to provide support to novice teachers. She wants to offer the support that she never had because she remembers what it is like to be unsupported.

“Well, at my school we work independently. Sometimes someone will come and help or ask for help, but most of the time you do your own thing. We don’t work as a group everyone does their own thing. I didn’t really receive any support from the school in the beginning. I try to support the other teachers, especially the new ones. I always tell them: ‘If there’s something that you want or something that you need, please come and ask. Don’t be afraid’.”

4.5.4 How do novice teachers experience their mentors?

In this section we look at the participant’s experiences pertaining to their mentors. How resourceful were the mentor teachers to the participants.

Most participants from School A were supported by HOGs or colleagues. However, very few of the participants were assigned a formal mentor. Participant 1 recalled having a mentor teacher when doing integrated learning while studying.

“Yes, I’ve had a mentor before when I was studying. But you don’t see them regularly, but you can pop them an e-mail if you are unsure about something and just ask and they get back to you. Well, I guess the first thing is obviously going to your mentor to find out how to address or handle situations and then from experience. The more you’re placed in a situation, the more you learn how to control it and how to handle it.”

At her previous school Participant 4 was assigned a mentor who helped her, whereas currently she does not have a mentor. This can possibly be ascribed to the fact that she was not a beginner teacher when she was appointed at School A. She would have preferred to receive a mentor at her current school as well because she did not know her colleagues and she did not feel comfortable going to them for help.

“[At the] first school I had one mentor who helped me and prepared me, whereas the school that I’m currently working at I don’t have a mentor. You must ask here and there and learn from different teachers. So, there it was

go ask your mentor, where here it is everybody is your mentor. I prefer the formal one especially when you are a new teacher.”

Participant 4 feels it is important for a novice teacher to receive a mentor, especially if they do not get support from other staff members. This person should provide advice to the novice teacher if they are unsure. If it were not for her mentor at her previous school, she would have experienced a much more difficult transition into the profession.

“I think if I did not have my mentor, I would have felt more uneasy in the classroom and in the whole school situation. No, we should always have a mentor and I think if we start at a new school as well.”

Participant 7 was one of the few participants who received a mentor at School A. She thinks she was very lucky to have had her mentor because her mentor has been teaching a long time and has much experience and knowledge. She explained as follows:

“I was lucky enough to have a mentor teacher. She was here since the school started 28 years ago so I learned a lot from her, all the things that the university didn’t teach you, all the small things that you learn through experience.”

Participant 9 relied mostly on her HOG and her principal, but she was also assigned a mentor teacher. Her HOG and principal could help her with learner disciplinary issues, but she could go to her mentor to help her with specific classroom issues. She recalled the following:

Especially like behavioural stuff I would go to the HOG or the principal. For the academic stuff like reading and reading problems and emotional problems I would always go to teacher Anna [pseudonym] and ask her for her opinion and what she would do in this situation.”

Participant 9 was also one of the few participants who would for example, observe a lesson by a mentor teacher and then apply what she had learnt in her classroom. This practical learning time helped Participant 9 to understand what she was going to teach better.

“I kind of watched what the other teachers were doing while they were showing the children what to do. They would always show me how to use

the equipment. At least I had someone to show me how to use the equipment, because it was very confusing.”

Most of the participants from School B also did not have opportunities to work with mentors. Of the six participants interviewed from School B only two had an opportunity to work with a mentor at their current school, namely Participant 11 and Participant 15. Participant 11 still recalls the things her mentor taught her.

“Forming of letters, the way she was writing on the board. I still do it like that. The way she was sounding and reading. I still do it like that. The way she marked making sure that her ticks are clear her crosses are clear, even though my handwriting is bad, but at least I try to make it look proper. But I still do that.”

Participant 15’s mentor would check up on her weekly to see if she was coping. Her mentor explained to her how to implement the CAPS curriculum. When she had a problematic learner, her mentor would advise her on what to do. Although she was only assigned a mentor for her first year, she still feels free to ask her for advice and support.

“I was given a mentor teacher and my mentor teacher checked with me every single week to see if I’m coping and if she needs to explain the CAPS document. She even said if I ever needed work to be checked with spelling or grammar or if the question was too hard that she’s always willing to check my work and she never complained about helping me. My mentor teacher supported me whenever I had a problem.”

When Participant 12 left her tertiary institution, she was allocated to a brilliant mentor at her previous school. She felt that her mentor taught her how to work with young learners and how to have sympathy with them. Her mentor taught her how to teach without just reading from the textbooks and how to make her lessons interesting for the learners.

“I was in the Hospitality department, so I had a really brilliant mentor. She was a fantastic teacher and she taught me everything and I got most of my experience from her, working with children and having sympathy with them and not getting so irritated with them. She taught me to not just read out of a textbook, but to actually teach.”

Unfortunately, Participant 12 did not have the same experience when she started teaching at her current school. Without a mentor she felt like she was thrown into the deep end. She recalled her experience as follows:

“There are so many things that I’ve learned, but the most I’ve learned was when I started as a teacher at my current job. It was like throwing me into the sea and I just had to swim.”

- **Focus group**

Participant 1 had a male mentor at her previous school that provided much support during her first year of teaching. He guided her with the presentation, helped her plan her lessons and provided her with feedback on what she could improve. She described her former mentor as follows:

“He gave me an opportunity to present some lessons and then guided me through my planning before the lessons start, preparing me and afterwards giving me feedback on what can improve. That was good.”

However, when she transitioned into a new school she struggled because her current school was much different to what she was used to. Without a mentor she was unsure who she could go to at the beginning of her transition. Once again this can be attributed to the fact that she was not a beginner teacher.

“Everything was quite different because the new school was private, so things are a bit different here and I did not have a mentor who I could go ask questions. So, I had to figure it out because I did not want to bother them.”

Participant 2’s mentor taught at their school since the school opened many years ago. This meant that she had lots of experience and knowledge to give. Because of Participant 2’s close bond with her mentor she could often go to her mentor for advice.

“I had a mentor, and she was here when the school started for the first time, the first year the school opened. She was very kind and friendly, asked me to go into her class and sit in with lessons that I didn’t yet know how to do.”

Participant 9 also indicated that her mentor taught her many things over the years. She taught Participant 9 how to work with young learners effectively and how to work with different personalities. She also feels that her mentor was the reason for the positive group dynamic at her school.

“Mine was very good in the way that she handled children and the way that she also adapted to new personalities and stuff, and the way she kept everyone together as a team. She also was open to teaching you how to be your own teacher and how to be part of the group, voicing yourself and your opinions.”

Although Participant 13 was assigned a mentor, her mentor never supported her. She did not have a bad transition into the profession, but she feels that the school could have provided a better mentor. She felt that mentors did not want to help novice teachers because they argued that they had received four years training to become a teacher. The negative attitude of her mentor made Participant 13’s transitional experience more difficult.

“I had a mentor but it’s not that they specifically mentored you. They had the title [but] they weren’t necessarily helping you. It wasn’t too bad, it was good, but there is a lack of mentorship sometimes. They expect you to walk in and just know everything because you studied for four years. But that comes back to the practical again, you don’t have that experience when you walk in here. Everything is new. They expect you to just know, you studied so you should know...”

4.5.5 How do novice teachers experience their inductions?

In this section we look at the different types of inductions that the participants underwent and how effective these induction programs were in preparing the participants for the workplace.

It seems as if most of the participants from School A were inducted when they joined the school. Participant 1’s induction included showing her the school’s layout, taking her to her class and sharing the rules and duties of a teacher at the school. She indicated that this really helped her to feel more at ease on the first day of school because she was already familiar with the school’s layout. At her previous school she did not receive any type of induction which resulted in Participant 1 having to rely heavily on other teachers on the first day of school. She recalled her experience:

“The first day I came they showed me around to the place, they showed me the classes, where my classroom would be, where I would work, what the school rules are, what are the times we work and just the basic

responsibilities that you will have here. The introduction helps because at the previous school you get there the first day and you are not sure where to go, who to see and you must wait for someone to help you. If they show you everything before you come, it's much easier because you know exactly who to look for, who to go and ask, and you can start setting up your class. With the previous school it was difficult. You didn't even have a class key so you couldn't go in on your first day.”

Participant 6's induction provided valuable information such as school rules, the code of conduct and information about the class she was going to teach. She felt that inductions are very necessary as a new teacher cannot walk into school without knowing where their class is or what the rules are.

“Everything they gave us, school rules and what are we going to do, how you supposed to dress, so basically a code of conduct, where you are going, which class are you going to teach, how many learners... So, it's just to tell you basically more about the school and what your job requires of you.”

Participant 2 did not receive the same sort of induction. A while after she has started at the school, they invited her to participate in a group discussion. This group discussion gave new teachers who struggled a platform to talk about their challenges and receive advice. She felt that it was a useful discussion, but she would have preferred more than just one discussion.

“They did ask the teachers who were struggling, if they would like to attend a group discussion to discuss all the problems that you are facing and how they can assist you. Just things that you are struggling with at that time. If you were struggling with let's say discipline in the classroom, then the teachers would come together and give advice on how they would handle a situation like that. At that point yes [useful – own insertion], but I would have liked it to be more regular and not just that one discussion.”

At Participant 9's previous school they sent her on an induction course before she started to teach. She also attended an introductory week which included an assistant that helped her during the first two days. She received much support during her transition into the profession which made her feel more comfortable. Her induction at her current school was not so thorough. She was introduced to her colleagues and was

given some advice on what to do and what to expect. She feels that none of the advice she received would be useful today. This could be ascribed to the fact that this was not her first school.

“At the other school they sent me for a course in Montessori as well when I got to school. I had an introductory week so that they can show you what’s going on, I got an assistant to help me the first two days and during the interview and stuff I knew exactly what was going to be expected of me. And then I also had an HOG which I could have gone to anytime to ask and I asked a lot of questions. They just introduced you to your fellow teachers, the new ones, they told you what was going to be expected of you, they gave you tips and showed you where your cup was and stuff like that...”

Participant 1 felt that an induction should be more personal and should not be done in a group. She felt very intimidated in the group setting and she could not take in all that was being said. She also felt that she was introduced to too many colleagues at once; she could not take it all in.

Personally, I wouldn’t have so many people attending the introduction. It is very intimidating and sometimes you can’t be yourself because you feel intimidated. So, you are nervous, you say the wrong thing, you can’t think properly. So, having an interview or an introduction or coming to the place first, I think have a smaller group. Don’t meet everyone at the same time. It’s too intimidating. A little bit by little bit gives you a chance to calm down and get your thoughts together.”

Although Participant 7 did receive an induction she felt that it was very rushed. Her principal and HOD quickly went through rules and the dress code of the school. This only gave Participant 7 a small glimpse of the realities of being a teacher at her school.

“The principal was also here with the HOD, just to quickly go through the rules, what I must wear, not wear, how late I must be here, just the common rules. To just give me more hints of what to expect or what to bring...”

Participant 4 did not receive any type of induction. She felt the reason for this was because she was the only new teacher that year. Her principal and HOD were too preoccupied to provide an induction when commencing with her duties at the school. It could also be ascribed to the fact that this was not her first school.

“If there was maybe more than one new teacher, they would have an introduction or something like that. But because it was one new teacher and because they are also busy with their own stuff, I did not receive any formal induction. I think that an introduction would have helped a bit; to have the rules of the school and the times so that you feel comfortable that you know what is going on.”

Unlike the participants from School A only a few participants received some sort of induction when they started teaching at School B. Participant 10 was not even introduced to her colleagues; she had nowhere to go if she had questions. They were not concerned about her struggles on her first day of school. She recalled her experience:

“When I came to the school the first day, they never told me who was the HODs, they didn’t tell me who I must go to if I had any questions. They were just like: ‘If you have any questions go, ask someone’.”

Participant 12 also did not recall receiving any type of induction...

“I came to this school, and it was literally from the office to my classroom, that’s it. They called me later to say: ‘Okay, you can come and sign your contract now.’ But no induction no introduction, nothing.”

Participant 14 received no formal induction prior to the school reopening. Participant 14 received an informal induction from her colleagues. At this induction they explained school procedures and the layout of the school. She explained the following:

“I didn’t have induction at School 1. At School 2 yes, they showed me. They said: ‘Come in for a day.’ They went through the whole school before I started, they showed me all the work, the places on the playground where I have to do duty, where I have to stand everyday...”

- **Focus group**

The focus group discussion confirmed the data obtained from the semi-structured interviews. Of the 6 participants in the focus group discussion only Participant 1 and Participant 9 mentioned their inductions. Participant 1 mentioned that she had received an induction at her current school from her principal. Before she started, she was shown the school’s layout and her colleagues. She recalled the following:

“[They] would take you around to view the whole school and show you around, for instance the Lego-class and where your class would be and who more or less would be the people working around you, who to go and ask if you need something.”

Participant 9 had a similar experience where she was inducted two days before the school began. She described her experience as a social event where all the new teachers got together and built up each other’s confidence.

“We did have an introduction where you were here two days before school started. You kind of got used to the other newbies and stuff like that, but you didn’t really do much. Like it was more building your confidence to be in the school than anything else.”

In conclusion we find that the success of one’s transition can be heavily influenced by the individuals around the participant. The principal, heads of department, colleagues, mentors and inductions have the opportunity to improve one’s transitioning experience by providing help and support to novice teachers.

4.6 STRATEGIES

Schlossberg categorises strategies as a transitioning individual’s actions to better his or her current situation (Schlossberg, 2011: 161). She suggests that individuals should simultaneously invest in multiple strategies to ensure that they cope during their transition (Schlossberg, 2011: 161). A transitioning individual should identify possible resources during the time of their transition and develop coping strategies based on these (Killam & Degges-White, 2017: 28).

Participant 1 is of the opinion that it is necessary to develop strategies in the classroom because nothing can really fully prepare a student teacher when they become a full-time teacher. Each teacher should evaluate their situation and work from there. She explains as follows:

“I think there is nothing that can prepare you (laughter). When you are a teacher, you just walk in, and you assess the situation, and you plan from there. It’s impossible to be completely prepared for what’s going to happen. Each child is so different and that’s what you go on. So, you just wait to see what you get and then you go from there.”

In this theme I identify different strategies that the participants used to cope during their transition from university to the workplace.

4.6.1 What coping strategies did novice teachers gain from their tertiary institutions?

In the section we look at all the strategies that the participants gained from their tertiary institutions and how effective they were when the participants faced challenges.

Most participants acquired some strategies from their tertiary institutions, but there were some who felt that their tertiary institutions should have provided them with better practical preparation in respect of time management, dealing with parents and learners with special needs. Participant 1 explained as follows:

“I think it prepared us in respect of academics very well. I think you know how to handle your worksheets and how to prepare a lesson but there are things lacking, for instance how to communicate with parents and how to address the situation if you have a child with a barrier in your class. But it does prepare you for academics, how to plan lessons, how to incorporate with your CAPS and time management.”

Participant 3 felt that her tertiary institution adequately prepared her for the teaching profession. She explains as follows:

“Yes, it did prepare me a lot. We were taught how to communicate with little ones, and how to write on the board, and how you get different kids from different families...”

When Participant 3 did her work integrated learning she also learnt strategies that she still uses today. She was forced to be creative.

“What I’ve learnt while I was doing my course and while I was doing my practicals, if you are working with small kids you have to be creative. You must come up with ways to teach them, ways to discipline them. So, if you are working with small kids, you obviously will have to be creative.”

Participant 5 has a master’s degree in Sport Sciences. From that experience she learned how to use technology and how to acquire new information about her field and committed to be a life-long learner.

“Being a teacher, you are working a lot on computers, and you have to do research and you also have to deal with a lot of different people, or shall I say staff and learners, because everyone is not the same. My masters at university also helped me, because being a teacher you’ve got to stay up to date with education and different learning methods and those kinds of things.”

When Participant 5 did her Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) she also learned to improve her teaching through research.

“When I did my PGCE we had a lot of courses that touched on research and how you would go about teaching learners how to behave and class discipline and those kinds of things.”

Participant 7 is learning about how to work with learners with special needs in a course she is currently completing. She believes that her tertiary institution provided her with a lot of theoretical knowledge, but it did not prepare her for the real classroom situation.

“Theoretically I will say very good. But nothing can prepare you enough for the real life out there being in class. Well, all types of theories especially also how to work with special needs children and then with all the subjects I’m doing now.”

Participant 9 also got a lot of theoretical knowledge from her tertiary institution but was never taught any practical skills such as disciplining a learner, controlling emotions and managing a classroom.

“I feel that we got a lot of knowledge from university but not necessarily any practical advice that you can use in the classroom. We never really experienced how to discipline children and how to control your emotions as well as theirs and how to run your classroom. So, I feel that’s something that they should improve on a lot at universities.”

There were three courses that Participant 9 really benefitted from at her tertiary institution. These were how to write neatly on a board, speaking proper English and working with learners who had disabilities.

“Handwriting and then the learning disability classes, and I also enjoyed English. Then the one subject that I do think helped us a lot is the one

where they treated us like children because then you got to see how you would interact with them.”

According to Participant 2 and 8, they did not gain any type of strategies during their tertiary training. Participant 8 particularly had no kind words about her tertiary institution as she felt that they did not prepare her at all for the real classroom situation.

“They don’t teach you how to teach children. They don’t help you with reports, giving out reports or how to even give a mark or assess children. They don’t help you with assisting children with learning disabilities or other struggles.”

Participant 2 believed that her tertiary institution tried its best to train her, but nothing could prepare her for the teaching profession.

“I would personally say that it doesn’t really prepare you, your tertiary training because I feel that nothing can really prepare you for the real world. We do courses and get background, but nothing is like the real life.”

Participant 2 also argued that her university could have focused more on practical work and less on formal assessments to better prepare them for the profession. This resulted in Participant 2 feeling uneasy and uncertain during her first years of teaching. She did not gain enough knowledge about coping strategies and not enough practical experience to teach and support her learners.

“I really wish that my degree had more practical work, not assessments but involvement or practical experience, because you are studying for three years, and you think it’s only one year left of practicals and then you finished. But at that point if you go to a school when you do a practical and you are not enjoying it at all and you are not ready for this type of career, it’s too late. I feel you know you’ve wasted four years of studying and it’s not really what you would like to do. So, I wish my degree could have prepared me more, because for the first few years of teaching I felt like I was uncertain what to do. The practicals were not long enough or designed that you yourself have a whole day of teaching. You are only a substitute teacher in someone else’s class, and you only sit there and observe and now and again you have lessons to teach but it is not the same at all.”

Just like School A, there was also a mixed responses from School B's participants about the coping mechanisms provided by their tertiary institutions. Participant 10 thinks that some of her courses were useful, for instance how to write on a board, how to incorporate clay learning and how to deal with learners with disabilities. But she also felt that she would have benefitted from more practical experiences.

“There were some classes that were good. They taught you about writing on the board and how to incorporate clay learning and stuff like that. I really enjoyed the Barriers to Learning, I found it very interesting. I think that made a huge contribution to [my] teaching. Yes, you can always identify if there's something wrong or not wrong, but if they have ADHD or something like that, that subject really helps. But I feel they could have given us more practical experience because we only did three practical times. So, I didn't have a lot of that.”

Participant 11 learned two valuable skills while attending her tertiary institution. The first skill she learned was how to conduct herself during lessons. She had never stood in front of a class before, so she observed how her lecturers acted in front of their classes. They were not very strict, so she felt comfortable asking questions.

“The way the lecturers were presenting themselves is what I'm doing now. So, I did learn something because when they were in front of the class they acted like high school teachers so you could learn and understand and ask questions. It was not like a university where you are not even allowed to ask anything, you are on your own. I did learn there that it is okay to ask.”

Participant 11 agreed that her tertiary institution should have provided more practical courses. Participant 11 felt that she could have benefitted much more from practical work than formal courses.

“They could have more practicals at the universities, because if you have a student teacher coming to your class who doesn't know anything, you have to teach 30 kids while you show the students what to do. So, the universities can make it easier and just show them something at the university so that when they go to school at least they have an idea of what is happening.”

A psychology course helped Participant 13. But she also felt that her tertiary institution could have done more to support her. She did distance learning and she felt that she

was mostly on her own when it came to learning and developing coping strategies for her transition into the workplace.

“I must say, there’s one subject, Psychology of Children Care, that has made a big impact on me, because it identifies exactly how a child’s brain works at the different stages of their lives, at what time is the most effective for them to do certain activities and what activities promote learning and help them grow physically and educationally. But to be quite honest, they don’t really give assistance. I am studying so everything is distance learning and most of the time you are on your own.”

Participant 14 studied at the same distance tertiary institution as Participant 13, but she had a more pleasant experience. She felt that she learned a lot because she did not have to go to formal classes. Her tertiary institution also forced her to observe at many schools which taught her different teaching strategies. Just like Participant 13, she also benefitted a lot from her psychology courses. It taught her to truly understand her learners.

“I was at university and each year I had a grade that I had to observe and teach for two to three weeks, so I must say in that area it taught me a lot. We did psychology for instance and there were so many aspects that I could learn about the children and wider aspects so I must say there was some that was useless but more that actually helped me.”

Participant 14 believes that her tertiary institution only taught her background knowledge about her subjects. She had to develop her own strategies to work with the CAPS document and difficult learners and how to prepare mentally and emotionally for a classroom.

“It only prepared me to be a teacher with the knowledge that I’ve learnt about the subjects, but it hasn’t taught me how to work with the CAPS documents, how to work with problematic children, to be mentally and emotionally prepared for every child’s background. Because as a teacher you can’t have a bad day. You need to put your personal feelings and your personal life aside and focus on every individual at school and they don’t prepare you how to deal with children that’s going through a divorce or whose family member has passed away. They just teach you the contents of school, but they don’t teach you how to work with the CAPS documents,

how to resolve problems with the parents. They don't prepare you for when parents blame the teacher..."

Participant 12 also believes that her tertiary institution failed her. She believes that everything she knows now is because of her own experiences and not because of the books she read. She believes that her tertiary institution should revise their courses and make sure that it is helpful in preparing student teachers to become full-time teachers.

4.6.2 What coping strategies do novice teachers gain by attending workshops?

In this section we look at the different types of workshops that the participants attend and the strategies gained. We also explore these strategies effectiveness.

Participant 1 attended many workshops at her previous school. The workshops she attended discussed topics such as the left and right brain and how to handle conflict in a school environment. She felt that she had to attend multiple workshops because she had to reach her Continuous Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) point goals. However, she is not so concerned with attending workshops anymore. Most of the participants from School A have only been to one or two workshops throughout their careers. Participant 1 explained as follows:

"Yes, my previous school did. We were sent for a lot of training, and we had a lot of workshops in the afternoon that they would fully pay for, where you would learn [about] the left and right side of the brain, how to handle conflict in the working environment. So, my previous school was very active with workshops because you also had to work for points for your SACE."

Although Participant 2 attended a limited number of workshops, those that she did attend benefitted her in the classroom. For instance, at a subject workshop for English she learnt about teaching sounds using fun new strategies. She also recalled being able to purchase new resources for her class at some workshops. Although she learned a lot, she also believes that she could not always remember and apply what she had learned in her classroom. She recalled the following:

"Some of them, yes. We have had discussions or workshops about how we can implement specific things to teach sound, English sounds, what sounds come together and just like rhymes and things just to make it fun for the children, because they don't really enjoy all these boring repetitive things so

that workshop I really enjoyed. And then other workshops have also been informative.”

The most effective workshop Participant 3 can remember was a Life Skills workshop hosted at another school. They taught the teachers how to present indigenous games by demonstrating them. It was even fun for the teachers.

“... one workshop for Life Skills. It was at this private school in Kempton and were taught how to set up games for the little ones and were taught how to play with them how to explain to them. We were taught indigenous games and another most interesting part was that they would illustrate for us of how to set a game, how to play with the kids, how to talk to the kids. That was awesome.”

A workshop that Participant 6 found very useful was on discipline in the classroom, she learnt how to apply positive discipline.

“She made an example of stickers and stars. Rather reward the child than punish the child when the child is being difficult. Or when you are implementing discipline in your classroom so that the kids know if I’m good, I’m going to receive a sticker. That’s what we do in class.”

Participant 6 believes that workshops are useful because they allow experienced individuals to share their experiences with novice teachers. By listening to the experienced presenters, inexperienced teachers can apply different strategies and discover different strategies they can apply in their classroom.

“Experienced individuals that has been in the field for many years can teach us new teachers what to do in different situations. What you have read will not always assist you in a way that talking to somebody that had experience will.”

Participant 7 claims that her principal is very concerned about discipline which resulted in the school hosting two or three workshops on learner discipline. She felt that these workshops did benefit her in the classroom, but the workshops were inconvenient as it always took place on her off days. She also recalled having informal workshops where they were taught how to fill in administrative forms.

“She organised two or three disciplinary workshops for us. That was very helpful. The only thing that made me a bit negative is it was on Saturday,

but you can work around that. A teacher's job is actually 24/7. We also had informal sessions in the staff room, for example how to fill in a staff form and stuff like that. It was helpful.”

However, some participants also have negative experiences about the workshops they attended. Participant 1 is of the opinion that she never learned anything new because she felt that all the workshops she attended were similar. She argued that the speakers were very out of touch with reality.

“Everyone keeps saying the same sort of stuff. You are not always learning something new. You will never know until you are in that conflict situation because it is easy to read a manual to say talk to the person, keep calm but when it happens in that moment, it is not always like that. So, I think maybe if a person, it sounds silly, but acts it out in a workshop.”

Although Participant 3 enjoyed the Life Skills workshop she attended, she believes that workshops generally do not benefit her. Because they are not very flexible with a teacher's time. Participant 3 does not want to work a full day and then attend a workshop when she has duties at home to fulfil. She explained as follows:

“No workshop will work for me because even if you do attend the workshop, for me it won't work. Sometimes they come at the time when you are not ready for them and then they jump on you. When do you get time to fill in those things that you learnt at the workshop? No, it doesn't work like that. Sometimes you find out that they organise workshops for four o'clock and by that time I must be home, I have to do stuff at home.”

Participant 5 urged her school to extend workshops to all staff members. She would like to attend workshops but now it seems that just HODs are allowed to attend workshops.

“If the school provided courses to go on not just for HODs or head of grades, but it was for everybody else, then yes, I would benefit by learning new teaching strategies and how to deal with discipline, to be aware of things that we are not aware of now. I think it would be nice if the school would provide it for the ordinary staff as well.”

Participant 8 does not believe that she can benefit from workshops. She believes that most presenters are not educators and they do not know what is really going on in classrooms.

“I don’t think so. It feels sometimes that they are not in the class environment, so they don’t know how it really is. So, the things that they tell us doesn’t make sense.”

Prior to attending a workshop Participant 6 often feels it will be a waste of time, but then she changes her mind because when she listens to the workshop presenter, she realises there is still much she must learn.

“Sometimes we think it is a waste of time, because we think sometimes we know everything because you went to school. But sometimes it’s not about books, because we are so fixated on the knowledge that we get from books, but experienced people could actually teach you a thing or two. That’s what I’ve learned in teaching here.”

Participant 13 strongly believes that professional development, such as workshops, are always needed. She is of the opinion that a teacher can never hold all the knowledge about education. She also has been to a few workshops throughout her career. At the workshops she attended, she felt that she always received solutions to some of her challenges. She explained as follows:

“You can never say I’ve studied enough, especially in education. I can say that the educational programmes that I’ve been to, for example the disciplinary one helped a lot, it really helped a lot.”

The different types of workshops taught Participant 12 how to interpret the CAPS document, how to assess, planning her lessons and what the DBE expected of her.

“Lot of things: how to use the CAPS and the assessments, what to do with the assessments and how they want the daily planning. It’s not just working out of the textbook like you would think, there’s so much planning. They gave you details about your files, how it should be and everything. We had, great facilitators.”

Participant 13 always attended workshops, but because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the workshops are harder to come by. In her experience what worked effectively was her school sent a less experienced teacher with a veteran teacher to attend workshops.

“Before Covid there were a lot of workshops and then they always sent the new teachers with an old teacher so that if the new teacher does not understand something, the older teacher will assist you.”

Some of the workshops that Participant 13 could recall was about a new school administrative management system, how to mark essays, how to work with the ATPs and a Mathematics workshop. Participant 13 is a Mathematics teacher; she found the workshop very useful.

“A workshop can entail just a new system, or how we should mark or ATPs. There was a Maths workshop where they helped you and gave you little tricks on how to teach time.”

Participant 14 also attended a Mathematics workshop which she enjoyed. She later attended a workshop for Life Skills that she said stood out for her because the presenters could really demonstrate the importance of Life Skills in the Foundation Phase. She described her workshops as the following:

“The SAOU [South African Teachers Union] and the district organised a Mathematics course that was wonderful. It really helped us, so they are getting on the right track. I also went to a Life Skills workshop where they helped us a lot.”

Participant 10 is of the opinion that the workshops that she attended were useless, because she felt that she already knew a lot of things that they taught during the workshop. A more recent workshop presented information about problem solving and reading for young learners, but Participant 10 felt she did not benefit from it. She explained as follows:

“It was a little bit useless because it’s stuff that you already know. The recent one was about word solving, problem solving, and they tell you that you must read it with the kids, and they must make circles and numbers that they are going to use and what they must do... That’s stuff that you already know. So, it was kind of useless.”

Participant 14 also believed that some of the workshops she had attended were not providing her with new knowledge, while other workshops were more applicable to other grades and not to the grades she is teaching. She also argued that not all the schools have the resources that the workshop presenters expect them to have.

“Mostly no, because there are the things that I already know and I have been taught, but it’s nothing new really. When they talked about a tactic like let’s say how to handle the mood in the morning or greeting that’s the only thing that was interesting. The rest was more for grades 4 and up, not for the foundation phase, and it’s not going to help a lot if you need all the resources. Not all the schools can provide the resources.”

Although Participant 15 found some of what she had learned at workshops useful, she does not apply it in her class every day.

“They were useful because they taught us about the curriculum and how to apply certain methods and what is actually important in language and what’s not really important. It’s like they teach you accounting but they never teach you how to do your tax, if that makes sense. The workshop was helpful, but it wasn’t helpful to the extent that you can use it every single day.”

4.6.3 What coping strategies do novice teachers learn from their colleagues?

In this section we look at the different strategies that the participants gained from previous and current colleagues that help the participants with daily challenges.

Generally, School A’s participants admit that their colleagues have taught them many useful teaching and coping strategies. Participant 6 believes that it is vital that novice teachers learn from their colleagues. Even though they might not have studied the same courses, they have the experience of a teacher. Although qualified, all novice teachers lack experience. This makes it important to learn from teachers with experience. Participant 6 explained as follows:

“Remember you are just starting. All you have is your tertiary education. You do not have any experience whatsoever, yet you are being thrown into a classroom. You will find that they [colleagues] know more than you that went to study for years, because they’ve been doing what you are currently doing.”

The strategies that Participant 1 learned from her colleagues helped to connect theory with practice. She explained as follows:

“It just shows you how to handle the situation better. You look at your mentor, you see how they handle it. You observe other classes, other teachers and it just changes you and helps you to connect all the dots.”

Participant 2 believes that by sharing experiences with other teachers about difficult learners can help a novice teacher cope. She argued that teachers should listen to each other when it comes to finding new strategies.

“Well, talking with other teachers and discussing difficult children, because it feels that there are difficult children in every single class. So, we can all relate with each other and yes just help each other out. You are lending an ear to someone else and they are lending one to you and that definitely helped me.”

Participant 5 relies heavily on a disciplinary strategy that her principal taught her. Every time she implements it, she feels that it is very effective.

“In the previous school the principal gave me a discipline method and I’ve actually implemented it and if I need to implement it I will implement it because it works like a charm.”

Participant 8 has recently moved grades. This move came with many challenges. She struggled with things such as reading strategies for the younger learners. She asked all her colleagues for advice. She also received many strategies on working with learners who struggle and difficult parents. She argued that the advice they gave was even more valuable than information that she would have gotten at a workshop. She explained:

“We had to start helping the Grade 1s to read. So, they must point with their finger under each word. And then I went to one teacher, and I asked her: ‘How do you teach them that they must put their finger under one word not the letter because they get confused or they just move their finger?’ So, then she said: ‘It’s just practice, you have to walk around, if you see this one is struggling, you must take their hand and show them how they must show at the word.’ Helping a child that struggles, helping a child to spell words or to pack it out is something that I didn’t learn during my studies.”

Participant 4 remembers her HOD sharing a lot of advice with her. Her HOD would not just give her papers and let her work through it but communicate more detail about the contents of the papers she received. She always made notes about the advice she got from her HOD.

“My HOD or my mentor at the previous school they talked to me and sometimes it was written down, but mostly it was communication through talking and I wrote down what they told me.”

Participant 10 mentioned receiving class visits from her HODs. In the beginning. Participant 10 was not very strict in her class. During a class visit her HOD told her to be stricter with her learners and to have more control over what they do in their books.

“When I just started teaching, I wasn’t very hard on the learners. If they didn’t draw a line I would leave it alone, I would just mark and would keep stickers all over the place. One of the HODs told me after she looked at my books: ‘You need to be more on the kids. You cannot just let them do whatever they want in their books. You need to be stern about it, show them what they must do. Draw a line, write the date like this and stuff like that.’”

But unfortunately, this was the only time Participant 10 got any type of feedback after a class visit. Although the school conducts bi-annual class visits they generally do not provide feedback to the teachers they observe.

“I think it’s twice a year. So, two times we do file and book control, in term 1 and term 3 and in term 2 and term 4 we do class visits. I think it would work if they actually gave you feedback. I didn’t receive any feedback about how I teach. The teacher comes, the HOD, she sits in my class, she observes me teaching but I never get feedback about how the lesson was, nothing. She fills something in, and it gets put in a file, I never see it.”

Participant 11 remembers her HOD helping her with presenting reading lessons. Her HOD showed her how to use the big book as a different strategy for the learners to teach reading.

“My HOD actually helped me with reading. When I started, I was doing flashcards so I couldn’t hold a big book so that the kids can see, and I can read. I was only doing flashcards, so a big book was something different and then I had the big book and that’s something like: ‘I can’t read upside down or backwards or what now?’ So, she showed me: ‘No, you just move forward. Hold the book backward so that you can see the book and the kids. So, you are looking like this. Just put the big book on the table then you just lean forward, read while you are looking at the kids then it actually

makes it easier.’ She also taught me how to read from the top. I can master that now.”

One of Participant 14’s colleagues is currently completing her master’s degree and is really passionate about learners who struggle. Her colleague’s passion really helped her discover new and different ways of teaching, assessment and handling parents.

“Skills how I can teach something in another way, in many new ways. Because she’s also doing her master’s degree, she wants to concentrate on kids that are struggling, she wants to be a principal one day at a special school, so she has so many wide aspects, for teaching children with assessments, how to handle a difficult child, how to present for a parent... every day I learn new things.”

- **Focus group**

It seems that the participants relied a lot on their colleagues for support and advice. During the focus group most participants mentioned what they have learnt from their colleagues. For instance, a colleague advised Participant 13 to give learners who have high energy levels tasks in the class to do. Participant 13 still uses the practise in her class. She explained as follows:

“If you have a busy child that pushes the limit on discipline, sometimes you must make him the leader so in that you use him often.”

Other advice Participant 2 was given was to avoid making crosses. She feels that if you mark something wrong it might lower the self-esteem of a learner. She explained as follows:

“One thing I specifically remember was a teacher said you should not make a cross with a red pen when a child has [made] a mistake. You should instead just make a little dot to indicate there’s a mistake, because otherwise it lowers the learner’s self-esteem and confidence.”

Another useful piece of advice that Participant 1 received was to use break time as a time to relax. Many teachers might overwork themselves by marking or working during break time. That is why it is important to also take a break when learners are taking their break. She explained as follows:

“Someone once told me to take your break. I know there’s a lot of work and you want to finish it but working through your break, is not always the best option. You must take your break even if it’s just drinking coffee.”

Participant 10 recalls a colleague telling her how to deal with a difficult class. She was told that when she felt overwhelmed, she should leave the classroom and calm down outside of her classroom.

“Don’t take everything so seriously. If the class is making you crazy, just walk for a few minutes. Walk outside your class, just take a break.

4.6.4 What strategies do novice teachers develop on their own?

In this section we learn about the types of strategies that the participants developed or modified on their own to help with their unique challenges.

There are also some participants from school A who have developed their own strategies to make their jobs a little bit easier. Participant 1 believes that the more you are exposed to different types of challenges, the easier those challenges become. These newly developed strategies stay with her until the next challenge she encounters. She explained as follows:

The more years go on, the more children are coming through your class, and it gets easier to identify things where they might struggle or what works better. You learn methods that you didn’t know before that works much better.

Participant 1 believed that she had to come up with her own strategies because many of her colleagues were also new to teaching and could not help her. She also does not want to use strategies that she is not comfortable with when dealing with challenges. She would rather find solutions on her own.

“Some of the teachers were also new or new in the grade. Some of them were busy or haven’t adapted to the new techniques, worksheets might have been different to what another teacher is using, but the more you are in the situation the more you learn about adapting to how you want your things and what works and what does not.”

Participant 3 relied more on her own strategies than copying her colleagues’ strategies. She believes that a teacher should be creative enough to find suitable solutions for challenges.

“I can say most of them I figured out by myself... So, you will have to be creative.”

Participant 2 mentioned self-reflection as a method she uses to better her teaching and find problem areas. After a day of teaching, she looks back on what she could improve and what different strategies she could have used in the classroom. She feels that this is a useful tool and teachers should utilise self-reflection more often.

“I would ask myself if something went wrong that day. Let’s say I didn’t come through to a child, let’s say we were discussing something in class and the child just keeps struggling and I’ve tried many different methods and I’m still not getting through to child. I would have to self-reflect and ask myself what I did wrong that this child is not actually understanding. I would have to go back and ask myself: ‘How can I make this better?’ I think we all wonder what we can do better at some point, but I think we should do it more often.”

One strategy that Participant 6 has developed was to think like the learners do. To effectively teach children, one must not think and communicate like an adult. It is important for teachers to come down to a learner’s level of thinking. She explained as follows:

“Sometimes you must think childlike to understand the child. Think like a child for you to enjoy what you are doing or to understand what the child is going through as well. But when you are communicating to a child like you would have to an adult, it’s different. You need to get down to the child’s level as well.”

Participant 11 believes that most of the knowledge and strategies that she had acquired came from actual experience in the class. She got the basics from her tertiary institution, but she developed into a better teacher as she gained practical experience.

“I think I learned it on the job through experience. That’s where you learn more because in all honesty, at the university there was no time to be taught how to be a proper teacher who can handle everything. So, I got stronger along the way.”

Participant 12 looks back on her first years of teaching and remembers that she really struggled with managing discipline but that she learned new discipline strategies as she gained experience. She explained as follows:

“The discipline was bad and for me my first year was mostly screaming. It was difficult but I can honestly say now I can’t remember the last time I’ve yelled in the classroom. I’ve learned to respect the learners for who they are and to listen to them.”

Participant 14 she had no choice but to develop her own coping and teaching strategies. Now she feels confident in dealing with difficult parents and learners. One of the best strategies she learnt was to observe before she acts in a situation.

“Because I was thrown in the deep end, I had to sound independent, I can do this for myself. Now I know through experience how to handle a difficult parent, how to handle a difficult child, to see that every child is different and every child needs that attention, I must say I have grown in observing before just acting.”

After Participant 14 joined her current school, she relied a little bit more on her colleagues and friends for ideas. When she discovers an idea, she always adapts it to fit with her type of teaching and personality. Social media platforms such as Facebook have also contributed to developing Participant 14’s strategies, as well as school visits by the district office.

“Because most of my friends are teachers, I ask them what they do in their classrooms and then I adjust it and then I put my little thing on it and I call it the Michelle [pseudonym] move and that is me. So, if they have a nice idea, I will combine it, I will put a theme on it... I would just look on Facebook and I’ll say this is very nice because we live in a world of technology and everything is online, that’s where you usually get the ideas from. Usually, when the department comes and visits you, they also give you feedback as well. You take that and combine everything, so communication is the biggest thing. I can say it helps a lot.”

Participant 12 believes that teachers should always try to improve themselves, even if they have been teaching for a long time. Participant 2 argued that self-reflection is the key to improving existing classroom strategies.

“You should definitely try and improve yourself because nobody is perfect especially a teacher. Just do your best as well. I’ve listened to myself sometimes when I teach and then I am like: ‘Oh, my soul.’ Evaluate yourself honestly.”

- **Focus group**

Many participants claimed that they have grown since joining the teaching profession. This growth taught them many lessons which made them feel more confident in their teaching abilities. For instance, Participant 1 grew more confident as she gained more experience. She was initially filled with anxiety when she transitioned into the teaching profession, but she developed as a teacher.

“I am growing to be more confident in myself. Because I struggle with anxiety, I will get very anxious before starting at a new school or starting anything new, but my confidence has been growing as I go and I’m getting calmer.”

Participant 9 struggled with classroom discipline at the start of her teaching career. Now she believes that she has found strategies to help her with her classroom discipline. She feels more empowered and in control of her classes.

“I used to struggle with discipline when I was not being strict all the time. So, I grew in that aspect that my children now know there’s play time, some fun time and serious time so I think I’ve grown in that way...”

Participant 10 also struggled to maintain good discipline in her class at the beginning of her teaching career. She was very unsure of how to manage discipline and how to create lesson plans. Now that she has gained more experience, she feels more in control in her classroom.

“I feel I have more control over my class. In the beginning there was no discipline, and I didn’t know how to handle discipline in class, and I always had to check the lesson plans. Now I feel more in control.”

Participant 4 argued that a teacher should be tough and adaptable enough to handle criticism from other teachers to improve their own teachings. Participant 4 strived to achieve these two characteristics. She explained as follows:

“To be tougher and not to take everything so personal. If somebody helps you and say you doing this wrong then just take it and take their advice and use it if you want to or don’t.”

In conclusion we find that there are different ways to obtain strategies through a teacher’s career. Teachers should always try to learn new coping strategies and adapt them to their situation or challenge.

4.7 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this chapter I presented and categorised the data obtained from the fifteen participants and the focus group discussion in a condensed form using Schlossberg’s 4S-system. In Chapter 5 I present and discuss the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Following the data presentation in the previous chapter, this chapter provides a discussion of the main findings after the data was analysed through the lens of Schlossberg's 4S-system. Where applicable, the data was linked to the literature. I coded the data by categorising my data and labelling each section with different symbols to make the text stand out (Maree, 2016: 116). My data was divided into four large themes with sub-themes as indicated in Table 4.1 on page 54.

5.2 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.2.1 The situational context of novice teachers

5.2.1.1 Challenges experienced

It is evident that most of the participants encountered various challenges when transitioning from their tertiary institutions to the teaching profession. Many participants experienced little guidance from their employers during their first years of teaching. If we look at the literature we find that novice teachers often struggle to apply what they have learnt into practise (Çakmak, 2013: 59). Combined with a lack of support it can lead to possible attrition of novice teachers (Warsame & Valles, 2018: 17). Participant 9's situation was not very different from what we found in the literature. When she entered the profession she experienced insufficient guidance, which led to her experiencing a great deal of stress. Participant 9 also claimed that she was given more duties than what she could do during her first year of teaching. She was expected to teach multiple grades without receiving support from her principal or colleagues. Senom (2013: 119) observed a similar situation in his study, where internationally newly appointed teachers are often given the same duties as veteran teachers without the necessary support from their school. Mohan (2016: 171) argues that when schools place too high demands on novice teachers without proper support, they are more likely to experience stress.

Another challenge that created stress for the participants was that they were not fully prepared for their transition into the teaching profession. Participant 11 indicated that, for her, one of the most terrifying aspects of teaching was dealing with parents. Although she gradually gained more confidence, at the start she felt very inadequate to confront parents. Participant 4 also mentioned that she felt that her university did not

fully prepare her to deal with parents and that this is currently still of her biggest stressors. This is not unusual as many novice teachers around the world feel that their tertiary training was not enough to help them cope during their first years of teaching (Altayli & Dagli, 2018: 375). Botha and Rens (2018: 5) also claimed that universities in South African provided student teachers with theoretical knowledge but not with practical knowledge. This leads to novice teachers experiencing practical problems such as not knowing how to work with learners and parents when they first join the profession (Botha & Rens, 2018: 5).

Many participants also mentioned that lack of resources was a big contributor to their stress during their transition into the profession. Participant 8 is of the opinion that she should have access to resources as she works with young learners. At that time the lack of resources was a big challenge for participant 8 and 14. Dias-Lacy and Guirguis (2017: 265) noted that a lack of resources can lead to novice teachers experiencing emotional distress during their first years of teaching. Using and examining learning and teaching resources can increase a teacher's learning (Bates & Morgan, 2018: 623).

Lack of resources, support and being unprepared for teaching practice can have a huge impact on a novice teacher's well-being. Some teachers felt physically exhausted during their first years of teaching. For instance, Participant 1 felt that she had to spend a lot of one-on-one time with learners who needed help. This resulted in her feeling very overwhelmed and tired when she first joined the profession. Participant 1 also mentioned that extra-curricular activities contributed to her feeling drained. Participant 10 felt that the administrative duties made her feel worn out. Du Plessis and Eberlein (2018: 13) claim that teachers generally are overloaded with schoolwork and extra-curricular activities. This leads to teachers not having enough time to partake in professional development activities which could help them cope with their transition into the workplace (Du Plessis & Eberlein, 2018: 13).

5.2.1.2 Work integrated learning

Although many participants encountered challenges in their first years of teaching there were also instances where participants could combat challenges with the skills and knowledge they gained through their work integrated learning. Participant 6 is of the opinion that by being exposed to work integrated learning (WIL), she was better prepared when facing the challenges of the teaching profession. International studies also indicate that teaching practice or work integrated learning can benefit student

teachers as they are provided with the necessary teaching skills and competencies early on in their careers (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017: 266, Miles & Knipe, 2018: 110).

Participant 3 added that not only did she learn much more from her work integrated learning experience, but it was also the most enjoyable aspect of her tertiary training. She remembered how her mentor teacher would demonstrate fun and useful tips and tricks that she still uses today. Now that she has her own classroom Participant 3 feels more confident because of the knowledge she has gained from her work integrated learning. Participant 4 agreed that her work integrated learning was much more valuable than her three years of theoretical classes at her university. She claimed that her work integrated learning experience was the reason that she was somewhat prepared for the teaching profession. Participant 14 agreed with Participant 4's notion that one cannot learn to be a teacher from a book. Participant 14 felt that student teachers must get the opportunity to partake in work integrated learning to experience what it is like to be a teacher. Miles and Knipe (2018: 110) agree that student teachers also gain valuable knowledge about things such as classroom management from experiences in non-teacher roles such as being a teacher aide or by volunteering.

Not only can a student teacher gain knowledge and skills while partaking in work integrated learning. But Participant 2 learnt how to conduct herself in class and she mimics her former mentor's ways in her own class. Participant 13 also observed her previous mentor's classroom management strategies while completing her work integrated learning. This gave Participant 13 many strategies to improve her own classroom management. Miles and Knipe (2018: 110) found many advantages to partaking in work integrated learning. One of the most prominent being that student teachers can engage in the practice of teaching before entering the profession full-time (Miles & Knipe, 2018: 110). This leads to novice teacher entering the teaching profession better prepared than novice teachers who did not partake in work integrated learning.

5.2.2 How does a novice teacher's self influence their transition?

5.2.2.1 Important traits to have

Participant 1 felt that a novice teacher's personality and values can be key factors in how they experience their transition. Participant 1 believed novice teachers struggle more if their personalities and values do not match their colleagues' personalities.

Participant 1 urged all principals to consider the different personalities of the staff when interviewing possible teachers for a position at the school.

According to Participant 5, confidence is one of the most important traits a teacher should have when they start in the teaching profession. Confidence leads to Participant 5 feeling more free and open to ask for guidance. Partaking in professional development programmes can often lead to novice teachers building their confidence and developing better coping abilities (Kindall, Crowe & Elsass, 2018: 308). Together with confidence, Participant 5 demonstrated traits such as innovation, creativity and persistency. Participant 5 is visually impaired which leads to daily challenges in her life. Participant had to be innovative and creative to combat these daily challenges. For instance, she has put structures in place to help her complete the daily register, deal with classroom management and to set up physical education equipment. Participant 5 was honest with her learners about her disability and because of her honesty, her learners are honest and eager to help her. It is important for novice teachers to combat poor classroom management, as it can lead to them becoming more exhausted and powerless in the class (Çakmak, Gündüz & Emstad, 2019: 153).

Participant 5 not only relied on the co-operation of her learners, but she persistently made plans to overcome challenges she encountered. For example, she would take her Annual Teaching Plans (ATPs) and textbooks home to enlarge the pages on her screen. This resulted in her being prepared and being able to read together with her class. If she must complete a form with small text, she will ask permission to take it home or ask a colleague to help her complete the form. Participant 5's tenacity helped her experience a smooth transition into the classroom.

Participant 9 is also of the opinion that novice teachers should not shy away from asking questions. She learnt that novice teachers cannot be supported if they do not ask for help from their colleagues. Not only should novice teachers ask questions, but they should be willing to learn and be adaptable. Novice teachers should take the advice of veteran teachers and apply to their own classes. Mumthaz and Kgomotso (2016: 96) agree that novice teachers lack the experience of veteran teachers and should therefore utilise the experience of their professional community. Participant 10 agreed that being proactive in one's own professional development and being unafraid to seek support are important traits to have. Even if one does not find the necessary support from their

colleagues, novice teachers can consult other resources such as textbooks and websites.

Participant 4 has learnt from her past mistakes when it comes to planning and being prepared. She strongly feels that planning is important to a novice teacher. She warns that over planning led to her feeling overwhelmed. Participant 11 was also very overwhelmed when she started teaching full-time. She remembered that she would panic when she thought about all the work that she had to do with the learners. Her head of grade (HOD) had to advise her on stress management. Participant 11's inability to cope with the stress of teaching led to more stress and poor work quality. Participant 10 also had to learn from her past mistakes. She admitted that when she first started teaching, she would become frustrated and angry with the learners when they struggled in class. Since then, she has worked on being more patient with her learners. She feels that patience is necessary when working with younger learners. Participant 12 also experienced a lot of stress with regards to the way she managed learner discipline at the beginning of her teaching career. Out of frustration she would yell at the learners. Now Participant 12 values dignity and respects her learners just as they respect her.

Participant 15 is convinced that having a positive mind set is an essential trait that a novice teacher should have. She is a very happy and bubbly person, and her friendly disposition affects her learners in a positive way. A reason for Participant 15's positivity might be because she is comfortable with her coping mechanisms. Poom-Valickis (2014: 773) describes novice teachers who are more comfortable with their coping skills, as being more positive in life and more self-assured. Mohan (2016: 172) argues that more people should behave like Participant 15, as he states that all teachers should have a positive mind set, especially when collaborating with other teachers to exchange ideas and better their teaching.

5.2.2.2 Importance of sound professional relationships

One of the most prominent coping strategies that the participants used was to consult with colleagues when facing challenges. Participant 1 mentioned that when she faced hard times she would turn to her HOG. Steyn (2015: 160) reports that when there is a collaborative relationship between colleagues, learner achievement can improve. Not long after Participant 7 was employed she set goals to develop sound professional relationships with her colleagues. She did not seek friendships but rather colleagues to whom she could turn to help her cope. To ensure that professional relationships are

fruitful, Bates and Morgan (2018: 624) suggest that a trusting relationship must first be established between colleagues. To develop these professional relationships, she went to all of her colleagues to introduce herself. She also involved herself as much as she could so that she did not become isolated.

Participant 4 also distinguished between friendships and sound professional relationship among colleagues. She preferred consulting her colleagues rather than personal friends when discussing work related incidences. Participant 4 believed personal friends do not know what it is like to be a full-time teacher and cannot give sound advice on school related problems. Colleagues, on the other hand, know the context of the school and might have dealt with similar challenges. When professional and positive relationships are formed within a school, they create a sense of cohesion within the school (Karataş and Karaman, 2013: 20). However, Participant 2 had the opposite opinion as she relied more on the support of her family members and her partner than the support of her colleagues. This is not uncommon because in their study, Karataş and Karaman (2013: 20) also had a participant who preferred the support of her husband. Her husband could provide informal therapy sessions and allow her to air her grievances to feel better (Karataş & Karaman, 2013: 20).

5.2.2.3 Work ethic

Although there are some participants who relied on assistance from colleagues as a coping mechanism, there are some participants who simply relied on hard work. For example, Participant 3 claimed that she had to learn how to work independently during her work integrated learning experience. She tried to complete her duties independently so that she could gain the trust of her principal. This led to Participant 3 feeling more confident and taking on more responsibilities early on in her career. In their study, Kim and Roth (2011: 15) also identified several novice teachers who preferred working independently. They do, however, warn novice teachers to be wary of working too independently and missing opportunities to learn from the experience of others to improve their own teaching (Karataş & Karaman, 2013: 20).

Not only did Participant 3 rely on working independently but she believed being organised was a very important skill a novice teacher should have. Each afternoon she would prepare her lessons for the next day. She feels that these habits helped her cope during her first years of teaching. Participant 4 agreed that being prepared and organised was one of the most important factors that helped her cope. She feels that

her need to be prepared and organised stems from her personality and was not obtained through her university training. This corresponds with Karataş and Karaman's (2013: 19) suggestion that an effective way novice teachers could combat feelings of anxiety and uncertainty was to be thoroughly prepared for each lesson.

5.2.3 What support is being offered to novice teachers during their transition?

5.2.3.1 Support from principals

Kindall, Crowe and Elsass (2018: 308) found that teacher's training, classroom strategies and overall professional practice improved when novice teachers experienced their principals as being helpful experts in their field. Similarly, Steyn (2014: 163) argues that principals take the role of being the visionary leaders of the school and are therefore crucial to teachers' professional development. I find that most of the participants from School A viewed their principal as a vital supporter in their transition into the teaching profession. Unfortunately, not many participants from School B felt the same.

Participants from School A have noted that their principal is very assessable. For instance, Participant 1 stated that she feels free and confident to make an appointment to go and see her principal about issues. Participant 9 also developed a more personal relationship with her principal. She feels that she can be open and honest about her problems with her principal. And just like Participant 1, she feels confident enough to walk into the principal's office whenever she has a problem, and she knows that her principal will support her.

Gender and personality can also play a role in the teachers' relationships with their principals. For instance, Participant 4's previous principal was a male and he was not as involved with the Foundation Phase, as her current principal is. Participant 4 also felt that her female principal is more understanding and caring towards her staff members. To motivate staff, the principal from School A would typically buy staff members treats, to express her appreciation for their hard work. Principals' leadership styles can have a significant effect on the school's general development and the professional relationships in the school (Steyn, 2014: 163).

Participants from School B did not experience the same level of support from their principal. For example, according to Participant 10 they are rushed out of the principal's office when approaching the principal with their problems. Participant 10 felt that the principal had offered no support to her since she started working at the school.

Participant 13 felt the same; she described her principal as being a very distant person, who does not deal with problems personally. Participant 13 mentioned that the principal focused on administrative work and relied on HODs to guide novice teachers. It seems that School B relies on distributive leadership, whereas School A's principal wants to be more hands-on with staff issues. That might be the reason why participants from School A view their principal as being more supportive than the participants from School B. When a school utilises distributive leadership, there is multiple leaders who have a input in the school's organisation (Hammershaimb, 2018: 2). Typically, individuals are set in place that lead key initiatives in the school (Hammershaimb, 2018: 2). Some of the advantages of distributive leadership include better management of human resources, better development of leadership and overall improvement of educational experiences (Hammershaimb, 2018: 5).

5.2.3.2 Support from HODs or HOGs

Most of the participants from School A experienced a positive relationship with their HOG. Participant 4 stated that because principals have a heavy work load, the bulk of the support provided to the novice teacher came from their HODs or HOGs, as they work more closely with the teachers. Du Plessis and Eberlein (2018:3) agree that the duties of a modern principal have increased dramatically and therefore some of the responsibilities should be distributed among different individuals in a school, including department heads. Department heads are urged to guide all staff particularly the most inexperienced (RSA, 1998: 36).

The participants from School A mentioned that their biggest supporter during their transition was their HOG. For instance, Participant 1 and Participant 2 mentioned that their HOG is a great source of support to them. Because they have formed close bonds with their HOG, they are confident to ask for advice when they struggle. Participant 6 mentioned that she did not gain enough skills and knowledge from her tertiary institution to cope in a modern classroom and she relies on her HOG to fill this gap by providing her with knowledge and experience. Participant 8 felt that she has a good relationship with her HOG and that she can go to her with any type of problem. Participant 5 even goes so far as comparing her relationship to her HOG to a relationship with a family member. Participant 5 mentioned that it felt like her HOG was her only supporter during her transition into the teaching profession. Participant 4 declared that it is important for a novice teacher to have a close bond with the HOG, as they should feel comfortable

enough to go to the HOG when they struggle. Close relationships between department heads and teachers can lead to increased professional development and a positive impact on teaching and learning (Du Plessis & Eberlein, 2018: 3).

Participants from School B might not have received much support from their principal, but many of them indicated that their HODs do provide support and structure to their school. Participant 13 recalled a time where the school did not have HODs. During this time the school was very unstructured, and this led to a lot of confusion. Now that there are HODs the school is much more organised. The PAM document prescribes the duties of the HOD. A HOD should ensure a well-functioning department (RSA, 2016b: 36). To achieve this goal, it is important for HODs to guide other teachers with regards to content, teaching strategies, resources and assessment (RSA, 2016b: 36). Participant 11's HOD supported her by providing resources, simplified ATPs and examples of learners' work. Participant 11 even formed a very close relationship with her HOD. Participant 12 felt that her HOD supports her by having an open-door policy and that she can go to her HOD for assistance whenever she is unsure.

5.2.3.3 Strong professional learning community

It is evident throughout that the participants received the most support from their colleagues. In literature we read that teacher collaboration is an on-going, dynamic and collaborative approach to learning where professionals such as senior and master teachers work together to ensure improved teaching quality and learner performance (Steyn, 2014: 161). According to the participants, the reason why colleagues can provide so much support to novice teachers is because they work in the same work environment and might have faced the same challenges as the novice teachers. According to Khalid and Husnin (2019: 197), this is not uncommon as most novice teachers turn to colleagues, family members or technology for support.

It is also evident that School A's participants had a much closer bond than the participants from School B. For instance, Participant 1 mentioned that she also got emotional support from her colleagues which made her feel more relaxed. Participant 1 feels that her colleagues are very supportive; they give her helpful criticisms without offending her. She feels that she cannot improve on her own and therefore she relies on the advice of her colleagues. Participant 7 did not care to have personal relationship with her colleagues, but her group grew very fond of each other. She feels free enough to not only seek advice for work related issues, but also on personal matters. For

successful collaboration to take place between colleagues Bates and Morgan (2018: 624) suggest that there should be a trusting relationship between colleagues.

Participant 1 believed that the group dynamic can influence a novice teacher's experience. For a novice teacher to experience a healthy working environment it is important to develop sound and healthy relationships with colleagues. Participant 9 agreed that the group dynamic can have a significant influence on how novice teachers view their transition into the teaching profession. When colleagues work together the novice teacher might feel more at ease and confident to consult colleagues about problems. If novice teachers do not consult colleagues it might lead to missed opportunities to gain valuable information that could improve their teaching and classroom management skills (Karataş & Karaman, 2013: 20).

Participant 10 mentioned that from the beginning of her transition into the classroom she relied more on her colleagues than any other forms of support. She started at her school on the same day that the learners returned after the December holidays. She had not received any induction prior to this. She had to rely on her colleagues for advice on what she must do with the learners on the first day of school. Now that she has gained more experience Participant 10 feels more comfortable to rely on her colleagues than going to her HODs or her principal. She feels that her HODs are often overworked and do not have time to help her with smaller issues. This is not uncommon as we read that there are many teachers who do not feel sufficiently supported by their formal mentors (Whalen, Majoche, & Van Nuland, 2019: 592). These novice teachers would then often turn to colleagues to help them overcome their challenges (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017: 269, Çakmak, Gündüz & Emstad, 2019: 148).

5.2.3.4 Mentor support

Most participants in this study have taught at more than one school in their first five years of teaching. Most of these participants did not receive a mentor at their current school, because they have had some type of mentorship at their previous school. Tammets (2019: 39) states that the role of a mentor should be to induct novice teachers at a school and provide them with guidance to increase professional learning. Participant 4 mentioned that her previous school provided her with a mentor that worked closely with her, but currently she does not have a mentor. Although she had received a mentor previously, Participant 4 wished that her current school could also provide her with a mentor. Each school operates differently and in the beginning Participant 4 did

not feel comfortable enough to ask her colleagues for help. This was the same scenario for Participant 1. She recalled having a mentor teacher at her previous school that supported her through presentations, lesson planning and giving feedback. When she transitioned into an independent school, she was very lost, as there was a big difference between the schools. She was unsure of who she could consult in the beginning of her transition to her current school. Dias-Lacy and Guirguis (2017: 266) claimed that when a school provides a formal system of support, novice teacher will have a higher understanding of the school's culture and their role in the school. This support reduces the risk of novice teachers becoming frustrated and leaving the profession (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017: 266).

Participant 7's first school was School A, so she was one of the few participants who actually received a mentor when she transitioned into the profession. Participant 7 felt that she had a very good mentor as she had much experience and knowledge to share with her. Participant 2 also received a mentor from School A, as this was also her first school. Participant 2 also mentioned that her mentor had much knowledge and experience about the learners in the township. She also grew a close bond with her mentor as time passed. This led to Participant 2 feeling more confident and self-assured to go and ask her mentor for help. Both Participant 7 and Participant 2 had a good relationship with their mentor. Having a positive relationship with one's mentor is very important for a successful mentorship and creating of a cohesive atmosphere in the school (Meristo & Eisenschmidt, 2014: 8).

School B had similar procedures as School A. School B would allocate mentors to novice teachers, but not to teachers who had some teaching experience. Participant 12 was one of the teachers who had a mentor at her previous school who helped her develop sympathy towards her learners, taught her how to make lessons interesting and how to teach without reading from a textbook. She described her mentor as being a brilliant mentor and teacher. But when she transitioned to School B, she did not have the same experience. Without a mentor she felt that she was thrown into the deep end without support.

Participant 11 was one of the only participants from School B to mention that she had received a mentor. She was an assistant at School B before she started teaching full-time. Her mentor helped her with things such as letter forming, handwriting, sounding for younger learners and marking of learner books. Participant 15 teaches older grades and

her mentor helped her with things such as implementing the CAPS curriculum and dealing with problematic learners. Even though she no longer requires a mentor, she still feels free to go and ask for support from her previous mentor. If we look at Participant 11 and Participant 15's experience, we find that the mentors from School B do not use a one-size-fits-all approach to supporting new teachers. Each mentor was dedicated to uncovering and addressing challenges that the new teachers encountered. It is evident throughout the study that the participants really valued their interactions with their mentors. This contrasts with what Whalen, Majocha and Van Nuland (2019: 592) found in their study. They claim that many novice teachers found that their formal mentors did not provide them with enough support.

5.2.3.5 Induction

Mohan (2016: 168) describes induction as a critical part of a teacher's professional development, because of the role it plays in establishing a novice teacher in a new environment, building strong relationships within the school, and enhancing the novice teacher's teaching practices. Unfortunately, however, many novice teachers experience that no or limited time was set aside for proper inductions to take place (Çam Aktaş, 2018: 2105). This was the same scenerio for participants from School A, as many of the participants felt that their inductions were not sufficient. For instance, Participant 7 mentioned that her induction was very rushed. She recalled her principal and HOG briefly mentioning school rules and dress codes. She felt that this did not prepare her for the reality of being a teacher. Participant 9 also recalled her introduction as a quick meeting that introduced her to her colleagues and told her what to expect. She felt that the information was not valuable, and she did not use it currently. Participant 2's induction happened at a later stage of her career. According to her, it was not a normal induction. All the new teachers were invited to partake in a group discussion, where they could voice their challenges and more experienced teachers would find solutions to help the new teachers. Participant 2 felt that this was very useful, but it was a once off meeting. Smith and Ingersoll (2004: 683) state that induction can take many different forms and include different elements such as orientation meetings, formals meetings or interactive activities throughout the school year.

Participant 1 felt that her induction was very valuable. At her previous school she did not receive an induction and it led to her relying a lot on her colleagues to cope on her first day. School A's induction showed her the school's layout, shared school rules and

duties and introduced her to fellow novice teachers. Because she had this information, she felt more at ease on the first day of school. Participant 6 also valued the information she got at her induction. She received the same information as Participant 1. Participant 6 agreed that inductions are necessary as a teacher cannot walk into a school without know what the rules are.

Participants from School B did not receive any type of induction when they started at the school. For instance, Participant 10 had to introduce herself to her colleagues as she had no idea what to do and what was expected of her. Participant 12 also did not recall receiving any type of induction when she started to work at School B. Participant 14's colleagues held an informal induction, as she never got a formal induction. Her colleagues showed her the school's layout and informed her about the school's procedures. Currently there is no induction programme at School B. It is important for schools to have programmes such as induction, as it can increase a teacher's coping skill and reduce teacher attritions (Jin, et al., 2019: 1).

5.2.4 What strategies do novice teachers use to cope during their transition?

5.2.4.1 Strategies acquired at tertiary institution

Not many participants could recall any valuable coping strategies that their tertiary institutions taught them. For example, Participant 10 declared that her transition into the workplace was tough as she had no mentor, and she could not remember much of the things that she had been taught at university. Novice teachers often struggle to adapt to new environments as they lose contact with their former teachers, lectures and mentors at their tertiary institution (Karataş & Karaman, 2013: 12).

Participant 11 did not remember any valuable knowledge, but she learnt an important skill from her lecturers. She did not know how to conduct herself in front of a class. By observing her lecturers during lessons, they taught her how a teacher should conduct herself. This is a skill that Participant 11 still uses today. The reason why many participants did not gain any valuable strategies from their tertiary institution might be because the information they got does not apply to a township context. Botha and Rens (2018: 5) declare that the knowledge and skills that are being taught to student teachers seldom can be transferred to different contexts.

5.2.4.2 How workshops can teach novice teachers new strategies

One of the most popular ways that the participants gained new strategies was by attending different workshops. Most of the participants gave positive feedback about the workshops they attended throughout the years. Participant 2 attended workshops where she was taught different teaching styles to make learning more fun for the learners. After the workshop she was able to purchase resources for her class. Although she found the workshop very entertaining and unique, she could not remember some of the strategies and could not employ them in her class. Participant 6 attended a workshop that promoted different discipline strategies in the class. She now uses positive reinforcement in her class, which she had learnt at this workshop. She believes that workshops are a necessary tool for novice teachers to develop their own teaching skills. When Participant 6 participated in a workshop she realised that there is still much information that she has yet to discover. According to her she can also learn from experienced individuals who share their experiences and solutions with teachers who do not have as much experience. In Van As's (2018: 425) study the participants were also very eager in workshops. The topics were of interest and the participants felt that they could gain more conceptual knowledge from experts in the field (Van As, 2018: 425). Participant 13 agreed that workshops are needed to develop teachers professionally. She is of the opinion that no teacher can ever hold all the answers. Some of the workshops that she had attended have addressed some of her issues surrounding teaching. Participant 12 also explained that workshops have helped her dramatically with challenges such as interpreting the CAPS document, doing assessments and planning.

Participant 3 was invited to a workshop that focused on life skills. She really enjoyed how interactive the workshop was. This fun experience made her remember the different types of strategies better. Literature suggests that if novice teachers have the opportunity to interact with more practical workshops, new strategies can be acquired that lead the novice teacher to become more empowered and productive (Gholam, 2018: 10). The only disadvantages to workshops are that they are not flexible. Participant 3 does not feel motivated to go to workshops at the end of a school day when she has other responsibilities towards her family. Participant 8 is not fond of workshops as she does not view the presenters as being experts in their field. She stated that the presenters she has come across do not know what it is like to teach in a modern classroom. Bates and Morgan (2018: 626) agree that workshops can only

provide a certain basic level of problem solving or solutions to teachers. For workshops to be truly effective, the content of the workshop should be implemented and teachers should have a follow-up session where they can reflect on the effectiveness (Bates & Morgan, 2018: 626).

5.2.4.3 What strategies do novice teachers use?

According to the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa it is the primary duty of a teacher to take responsibility for their own learning and enhancing their own professional development and competencies (RSA, 2007: 1). Most of the participants from School A had developed their own strategies to improve their teaching and coping abilities. Participant 1's colleagues do not have a lot of experience. Although she acknowledges the support of her colleagues, Participant 1 feels more comfortable developing her own strategies than going to colleagues. Participant 3 agreed that as an educator, one should be creative and innovative enough to find new strategies without consulting colleagues. Participant 4 added that a novice teacher should be tough and adaptable in their first years of teaching. They should be tough enough to accept criticism and flexible enough to apply the necessary changes to their class.

A coping strategy that Participant 2 developed was to self-reflect after each lesson. This allowed her to find problem areas in her teaching and to see what solutions work best. Participant 12 from School B also develop self-reflection as a strategy to improve her teaching. She claimed that as a teacher one should always seek to better oneself. Through self-reflection she can better her classroom. Through self-reflection a teacher can develop a greater sense of self-awareness which can improve professional growth and learner achievement (Mumthaz & Kgomotso, 2016: 95). Some basic advantages linked to critical reflection include building knowledge, expertise and professional confidence (Mumthaz & Kgomotso, 2016: 93).

Participant 1 also mentioned in the focus group that time was her greatest teacher. As she taught, she went through challenges. When she overcame those challenges, she learnt more and improved herself. Participant 11 also agreed that you learn the most when you teach. You can get basic information from your university, but her knowledge and skills came from her actual experience in the class. As time went on Participant 1 and Participant 11 became more confident in their positions.

5.3 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this chapter the main findings were presented and discussed. The findings were presented through the theoretical framework of Schlossberg's 4S-system. It is evident that novice teachers in South African township suffer the same type of challenges as novice teachers in many other countries. The participants felt that the theoretical knowledge gained at their tertiary institution did not prepare them enough for the teaching profession. The participants who participated in work integrated learning had a much smoother transition into the workplace. Participants who had traits such as confidence, persistence, innovation and adaptability were generally satisfied with their transition. Depending on their personalities, many participants felt the needed to consult colleagues on issues whilst others preferred working alone. The schools that participated in the study also provided the participants with ample support. Most of the novice teachers' support came from the HODs, HOGs and colleagues. Participants also used strategies that they discovered on their own or at a workshop to help them cope and improve their teaching during their first years in the teaching profession. Although the participants did encounter multiple obstacles in their transition from university to the workplace, they had a variety of support strategies in all four categories of Schlossberg's 4S-system.

In Chapter 6 I focus on the conclusions and recommendations of this study. I also include suggestions for further research and a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of this study.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This study aimed to answer the question of how novice teachers in township schools experience their transition from university to the workplace. I explored the effect of a novice teacher's situational context on their transition. The situational context includes challenges the novice teachers faced and how they prepared for the teaching profession. Furthermore, I considered the individual context of novice teachers, for instance their personality traits and how it influenced their experience. I also investigated the type of support the schools offered to novice teachers. This includes support received from colleagues, mentors and induction. I also uncovered the types of strategies, for example self-reflection, novice teachers use to cope during their first five years of teaching. Using these main ideas, this chapter draws a conclusion on how novice teachers experienced their transition into a township school.

In addition to the above, the chapter presents recommendations for practice and suggestions for future research. I also discuss the limitations of this study.

6.2 ANSWERS TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

6.2.1 How do novice teachers in township schools experience their transition from university to the workplace?

Some scholars claim that the transitioning period from university to the teaching profession is a reality shock for many novice teachers (Çakmak et al., 2019: 148). Many of the participants in this study experienced the same reality. For instance, Participant 1 experienced extreme exhaustion as she was unaware of how much one-on-one time her learners would require. Participant 9 claimed that she was unsure of how she would successfully communicate with younger learners. Participant 4 mentioned that it felt like a punch to her face when she first entered the classroom, because her perceived ideas of being a teacher were not the same as the realities she experienced after she entered the teaching profession.

Although the participants experienced it was a reality shock when they joined the profession, most claimed that they had access to a variety of resources that helped them to cope during their first years of teaching. These resources included work integrated learning which better prepared them for the classroom, personality traits that

helped them persevere during challenges, colleagues and HODs who supported them and personal strategies they used to overcome the challenges they experienced. Each challenge the participants overcame, enabled them to grow more competent and confident in their teaching. Participant 1 mentioned that she does not teach like she did at the beginning and has improved in many different aspects. Although the participants have encountered hardships, they have gained multiple resources that could benefit them for the rest of their teaching careers. Çakmak (2013: 55) also mentions that in the first years of a novice teacher's career, they will encounter unfamiliar circumstances and should receive the appropriate support to gain the necessary skills and competencies that will help them throughout their teaching careers

6.2.2 What role does a situational context play in a novice teacher's transition from university to the workplace?

A novice teacher's situational context can determine how prepared and confident he/she feels when transitioning into the profession. International studies found that there is an increasingly problematic dropout rate of novice teachers (Meristo & Eisenschmidt, 2014: 1). A reason for this can be attributed to the fact that novice teachers are being sent into the teaching profession without proper preparation and a lack of guidance (Warsame & Valles, 2018: 17). This was also the case with many participants in this study. Some participants indicated that they were not prepared for certain aspects of the teaching profession while other participants claimed that they were offered little guidance during their transition into the classroom. Many novice teachers around the world feel that their tertiary training was also not enough to help them cope during their first years of teaching (Altayli & Dagli, 2018: 375). This created stress for the participants at the beginning of their teaching career. For instance, Participant 11 felt that one of her biggest stressors was dealing with learners' parents. She admitted that she wished that her university had better prepare her for this. Participant 4 agreed that during her university days she was never taught how to handle difficult parents. This aspect of teaching was the most stressful to her. Participant 6 studied part-time and because of this, she feels that she has missed out on important theoretical knowledge and indicated that she had a gap in her initial teacher training. She wished she was taught things such as handwriting, which is particularly relevant in the Foundation Phase.

Classroom management is also an aspect that caused great stress for the participants. South African universities often provide student teachers with theoretical knowledge but not with enough practical skills (Botha & Rens, 2018: 5) This can lead to novice

teachers experiencing practical problems such as not knowing how to work with learners when they first join the profession (Botha & Rens, 2018: 5). Participant 9 mentioned that her university focused a lot on theoretical knowledge, where she also needed practical skills, such as managing learner discipline, controlling emotions and managing a classroom. Participants 2 and 4 were very unsure when they first entered the profession. Although they had four years of theoretical knowledge, they did not know how to teach the content. Participant 2 claimed that this was her biggest concern while transitioning into the classroom. She did not know what to do, or where to start. She never had to teach a whole class by herself for a whole day. Participant 4 also mentioned that one of her main concerns was how to present lessons. She was afraid that her learners might not understand the work, and she was unsure about how to adapt her teachings so that all the learners would understand. Participant 11 claimed that she did not cope when she first started teaching full-time and struggled with time management. She would become overwhelmed with all the work that she had to finish, causing her to panic. She was unsure of how she would teach a whole class. Regardless of the amount of practical teaching experience a student teacher has, classroom management seems to remain the most common issue for novice teachers (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017: 269).

Not only did some of the novice teacher feel that they were not fully prepared in some aspects of teaching, but some participants felt that they had very little guidance from their superiors. Internationally newly appointed teachers are generally not given the necessary support and are expected to do the same duties as a veteran teacher (Senom et al., 2013: 119). These high demands can cause extra stress if a teacher has limited or no training in these areas (Mohan, 2016: 171). Shortly after Participant 9 entered the teaching profession she was asked to teach grades 1s, 2s and 3s simultaneously. She was not prepared, and she claimed to have received no support from her colleagues and the principal. This led to Participant 9 experiencing an enormous amount of stress. Participant 12 had a similar experience as she was expected to teach multiple subjects to multiple classes, but she was never taught how to implement the CAPS curriculum. She struggled a lot in the beginning because she did not have experience in all the subjects. Participant 4 claimed that she felt like she was thrown into the deep end and indicated that she struggled in the beginning of her transition, as she did not know her colleagues and she did not have a mentor to guide her.

Although participants viewed their theoretical knowledge as being insufficient, many participants indicated that they were better prepared for the teaching profession because of the experience they gained during the work integrated learning phase in their initial teacher training. Participant 4 stated that her work integrated learning taught her more than all her theoretical classes. Without her work integrated learning experience, she would not have been as prepared as she was. Participant 14 continued by saying that a person cannot learn to be a teacher from a textbook. They should get opportunities to experience what it is like to be a teacher in a classroom. International studies also claim that work integrated learning can benefit student teachers as they are provided with the required teaching skills and competencies early on (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017: 266, Miles & Knipe, 2018: 110). Participant 6 believed that partaking in work integrated learning helped her to be better prepared for the teaching profession. Knowledge that was conveyed to participants during their work integrated learning is still used by some participants. For instance, Participant 3 claimed that during her work integrated learning experience her mentor teacher taught her things that she still uses in her classroom today.

It is evident that novice teachers from township schools also encountered multiple challenges such as dealing with parents, classroom management and limited guidance when they first enter the profession, but most participants agreed that if it were not for their work integrated learning experience, they would have been more stressed. Work integrated learning can help novice teachers experience a better transition into the workplace.

6.2.3 What role does individual context play in a novice teacher's transition from university to the workplace?

Three key aspects from the participants' 'self' emerged from the data, which had a positive influence on their transition into the teaching profession. These key aspects were the type of personality traits and values the participants had, their eagerness to develop sound professional relationships and their individual work ethic.

Although one of the most prevalent traits that the participants mentioned was being confident, novice teachers also had to acknowledge that they needed assistance. Participant 5 stated that having confidence is important as novice teachers are then more likely to go and ask for help when they struggle. Novice teachers lack the experience of a veteran teacher, and should try to gain the experience of their

colleagues to enhance their own teachings (Mumthaz and Kgomotso, 2016: 96). Participant 9 agreed with this as she learnt that it is important to ask for help when one is struggling. She continued by saying that novice teachers cannot expect to be supported without asking for help from colleagues. Participant 10 stated that a novice teacher must not be passive in their own professional development, but rather proactive. She claimed that it is the duty of the teacher to seek support. Participant 1 claimed that it was important for one's own professional development to ask for advice and criticism from colleagues. She stated that novice teachers cannot improve on their own.

Other personality traits that lead to a smooth transition are innovation, persistency and resilience. Participant 5 displayed these traits as she is visually impaired. She consistently had to make new and creative plans to overcome challenges that were not challenges to the other participants. For instance, she had to ask learners to help her to fill in the attendance register; she had to digitally enlarge textbooks at home and relied on colleagues to fill in forms. She never gave up when she encountered a challenge. Despite being confronted with all these challenges she described her transition into the teaching profession as being smooth.

Preparedness was also a personality trait that helped certain participants to cope during their first years of teaching. Participant 11 mentioned that she was very overwhelmed when she started teaching. She did not know what to do which led her to experience an excessive amount of stress. Participant 4 mentioned that being prepared is important, but she warned not to be overprepared as this can also lead to feeling overwhelmed. Participant 3 provided the same advice. To help her cope she always prepares for the next day by going through the planning and taking out everything she will need for the next day. By doing this she does not stress about what needs to be done in the mornings.

Not only does a teacher's personality influence their experience of their transition into the teaching profession, but it also predicts what type of support they need from their school. In this study I found that there were two types of novice teachers, those who prefer and rely on the support of their colleagues and those who feel that they accomplish more by working alone. Each of these approaches had advantages and disadvantages. Participant 1 was one of the participants who mentioned that she turns to her colleagues and HOGs during difficult times. Participant 7 knew from the start that she needed the help of her colleagues. That is why she introduced herself to all her

colleagues as soon as possible. She did not seek personal friendships, but rather to develop sound professional relationships with her colleagues. Participant 4 explained that she also prefers airing her grievances to her colleagues, as personal friends do not always understand what it is like in the teaching environment, whereas colleagues might have a better understanding and can provide more suitable advice. Steyn (2014: 160) suggests a collaborative community, because when there is a collaborative relationship between colleagues, learner achievement can improve.

Participant 3 feels that she does not rely too much on the support of her colleagues. She depends on herself. This independent mindset came from her working independently during her work integrated learning to impress her principal. Participant 3 is confident in her teaching strategies and is often given extra responsibilities at her school. Participant 10's personality is very similar to Participant 3's, as she also prefers to keep to herself. She claimed that she is a very independent person, even in her personal life. At school she prefers following her own head, rather than asking for help from colleagues. It is also important to note that Participant 10 was not given much support during her transition and that might be a reason why she feels she must rely on herself to cope. Kim and Roth (2011: 15) also identified several novice teachers who preferred working independently. But they do warn that novice teachers should be wary of working too independently and missing opportunities to learn from the experience of others. Being open to the experiences of others can improve their own teaching (Karataş & Karaman, 2013: 20).

It is evident that the participants in this study did not have a very negative experience in their transitioning from their university to their workplace. A reason for this is due to their personalities and their values. Although each participant had her own values and beliefs, they experienced a relative smooth transition. Some of the most common traits that the participants shared were confidence, persistency and organisation. There were also participants who preferred working in a group while other chose to work independently.

6.2.4 How are novice teachers supported in their transition from university to the workplace?

The data suggests that the participating schools go to great lengths to support their novice teachers. There is evidence that support is being provided by principals, HODs,

colleagues, mentors and induction programmes. It is also important to note that each school provided different level of support to their novice teachers.

It seems that where schools implement distributive leadership, the teachers believe that the principals do not provide direct support. That is the case with school B. The participants generally displayed a negative view of their principal. Participant 10 mentioned that when she would go to her principal, her principal would rush her out of her office. From the beginning of her teaching career, she felt that her principal has not done enough to support her. Participant 13 mentioned that her principal is a very distant person who does not personally deal with problems. It seems that the principal relies on the HODs to deal with issues, while she focuses more on administrative work. Hence, a reliance on distributed leadership practices.

School B's HODs do fulfil their supportive duties, because the participants from School B do receive ample support. According to Participant 13 their HODs give the school structure and rules. Before they had HODs the school was unorganised, and the teachers were very unsure of themselves. Unlike the principal, their HODs have an open-door policy, and the participants feel more at ease to go and ask for help when they struggle. Participant 11 is very fond of her HOD, as they have formed a close bond. Participant 11 mentioned that her HOD provided her with several resources for her classes, such as ATPs, teaching aids and examples of work.

Participants from School A claimed that they were supported by both their principal and the HOGs. Participant 1 indicated that she always feels free to go to her principal and ask for advice. Participant 9 claimed that she has built a personal relationship with her principal and could therefore go to her with any problems. Participant 4 compared her current principal to her former principal, indicating that she is a lot more involved and caring towards the Foundation Phase staff members. The principal from School A tries to be as involved as possible in staff related issues. According to Participant 8, she tries to motivate her staff regularly by, for example, buying meals or treats to thank the staff for their hard work.

There is also sufficient evidence to conclude that School A's HOGs also provide the necessary support to their novice teachers. For instance, Participant 6 views her HOG as her main source of information. Participant 8 also relies heavily on the advice and strategies that she gained from her HOG. The bond between HOGs and teachers is very close in School A. Participant 2 felt that she had grown very fond of her HOG, and

because of their close relationship she felt comfortable to ask for help. She recalled that her HOG is always eager to assist her. Participant 5 mentioned that her HOD is like a family member, in the sense that she is Participant 5's biggest supporter thus far.

Participants from both schools also valued the support from their colleagues. Some participants feel like they can trust the advice of colleagues because they are working in the same context, and they might have experienced similar challenges. According to Participant 9, the group dynamic is very important between colleagues as it can make a novice teacher feel more at ease and comfortable to ask for support. It was found that in both schools there are close bonds between the participants and their colleagues. For instance, Participant 1 claimed that she not only received academic support, but also emotional support from her colleagues. Although Participant 7 did not seek personal friendships with her colleagues, she grew fond of them. She claimed that her colleagues even provide her with support for personal problems. It is suggested in the literature that for teacher collaborations to be successful, a deeper connection and trusting relationship should be formed between teachers (Bates & Morgan, 2018: 624).

Participant 10 also mentioned that she feels more supported by her colleagues than her HOD or principal. Since the beginning of her teaching career she would rather rely on her colleagues because she knows her HODs have a lot of other responsibilities. Participant 12 also believes that her colleagues are her best supporters. When she started at School B, she felt like she had been thrown into the deep end. She claimed that the support provided by her colleagues in the classrooms next to hers was the reason why she was able to cope. Participant 15 said she was very happy with the support from her colleagues as she can rely on them for help.

Although both schools provided mentors to first time teachers, some participants were not happy that they were not assigned a mentor at their school. Some participants felt that even though they have taught at a previous school, they were unfamiliar with the new school's rules and procedures. For instance, Participant 1 relocated from a public school to an independent school, and she felt lost without a mentor. She did not know her colleagues well enough and did not want to bother them. Participant 12 also mentioned that a lack of mentorship when she started at School B, was one of the reasons why she felt overwhelmed and lost. This reiterates the importance of support to all new teachers at a school, not only those who are new to the profession. Although

they had some teaching experience at previous school, these participants were still novice teachers.

Participants 1, 4 and 11 all valued and benefitted greatly from their mentors at their previous schools. But these were not the only participants who had received support from mentors. Participant 7 was granted a mentor teacher, because School A was her first school. She really valued and benefitted from the knowledge and advice that her mentor shared with her. Participant 2 also claimed that her mentor taught at School A for a very long time, and she had valuable information that pertains to the school in particular and the teaching profession in general. Participant 2 really valued everything that her mentor has taught her. Participant 11 and Participant 15 were of the few participants who received a mentor at School B. Participant 11 claimed that her mentor supported her by teaching her skills such as writing neatly on a black board, sounding and marking legibly. Participant 15 also recalled the support her mentor gave her in her first year of teaching. Her mentor taught her things like implementing the CAPS curriculum and how to successfully deal with problematic learners. Even though her mentor is no longer required to assist Participant 15, she still goes to her for help and advice.

Literature emphasises that inductions are a vital part of a teacher's professional development because of the role it plays in establishing a novice teacher in a new environment (Mohan, 2016: 168). Building strong relationships in the school and enhancing the novice teacher's teaching practices are paramount, yet only School A provided some sort of induction programme to novice teachers. It is important for schools to have programmes such as inductions as they can increase a teacher's coping skills and reduce teacher attrition (Jin, et al., 2019: 1). Although School A provided induction, many participants felt that the induction measures were not sufficient. For instance, Participant 7 claimed that her induction was rushed. Her induction consisted of a quick meeting where her principal and HOG went through the school rules and procedures. Participant 9 also claimed that her induction was rushed as she was invited to a short meeting during which she was introduced to her colleagues, and she was briefly informed about the school rules. Internationally many teachers also claim that their inductions were very short and not sufficient (Çam Aktaş, 2018: 2105).

But this is not the case for all the participants. School A provides various induction initiatives throughout the initial years of a teacher's career. Participant 2's induction occurred later in the year and was in the form of a group discussion. Novice teachers were invited to air their grievances in a group, and veteran teachers then tried to give advice to the novice teachers. Although Participant 2 viewed her induction as valuable, it was a once off event. Participant 1 and Participant 6 experienced more conventional inductions. Before school started, they were called to an induction meeting. At this meeting they were given the school's code of conduct, rules and they were shown the layout of the school. Participant 1 claimed that this induction made her feel more at ease on the first day of school, because she already knew the basic information. Participant 6 felt that this kind of induction is valuable as new teachers cannot come to the school without knowing things such as the code of conduct or where their class is.

6.2.5 What strategies do novice teachers employ to cope with the challenges they experience when transitioning from the university to the workplace?

It seems that the participants seldom relied on developing new coping strategies to help them during their first years of teaching. Some participants mentioned that they developed some strategies from workshops they attended while others developed strategies on their own. These strategies helped them cope, by improving their teaching skills and confidence.

Just like other participants, Participant 10 could not recall any coping strategies learnt during her initial teacher training. In this regard Botha and Rens (2018: 5) argue that the knowledge and skills that are being taught to student teachers seldom can be transferred to different contexts. Therefore, many participants utilised strategies that they gained through on-site learning, such as workshops. Participant 2 mentioned a workshop where she was taught how to present English Home Language in a fun and interesting way. Participant 6 claimed that she developed her own classroom discipline strategy based on a discipline workshop she attended. She also mentioned that novice teachers lack experience and knowledge in the education profession. Attending workshops is a great way for novice teachers to learn from experts in the profession. Participant 13 agreed that attending workshops is the best way for a teacher to undergo professional development. In the past she has participated in workshops that helped her overcome challenges in the classroom. For instance, she was taught administrative and management skills, how to mark essays, how to teach Mathematics and how to

implement the ATPs. Participant 12 claimed that workshops helped her to cope better by teaching her how to interpret the CAPS document, how to assess the learners and plan lessons.

The participants also developed strategies on their own to help them cope during their first years of teaching. According to the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa it is the primary duty of a teacher to take responsibility for their own learning and enhancing their own professional development and competencies (RSA, 2007: 1). Some of these strategies included being more creative to solve problems, being adaptable and tough and self-reflection. Participant 2 was one of the only participants from School A to practice self-reflection to better her teaching practice. After each lesson she would revise what she has done on that day and look for problem areas that she can improve on. Participant 12 also relied on self-reflection to improve as a teacher. She believes that self-reflection is a great strategy to better her classroom practice. The literature suggests that self-reflection often leads to a greater self-awareness, which can lead to professional growth and an increase in learner achievement (Mumthaz & Kgomotso, 2016: 95).

Participant 1 also mentioned that she acquired strategies and improved her teaching by overcoming challenges. As she overcame each challenge, she learnt more and improved her teaching. Participant 11 agreed that teachers learn best by teaching in a class. A student teacher can get the basic information from their university, but to improve their teaching practice, teachers must face and overcome challenges. Both Participant 1 and Participant 11 currently feel more comfortable in their teaching role than when they started to teach.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS.

For this study two independent schools in the Ekurhuleni District were selected to participate. This limits the generalisation of the findings of this study. However, in discussing the recommendations for novice teachers transitioning to township schools, it is important that novice teachers have a role to play in their transition.

6.3.1 Recommendations in respect of the novice teachers' self.

To minimise challenges at the beginning of a novice teacher's career, it is suggested that a greater emphasis should be placed on the acquisition of practical experience during pre-service teacher training and that teachers should participate to a greater extent in programmes such as work integrated learning or volunteer teaching before

they enter the profession. Participants claimed that their work integrated learning better prepared them for the teaching profession while helping them discover a passion for teaching. Some claim that it is impossible to fully prepare for classroom challenges through a textbook. Student teachers can learn much more about classroom management through participating in non-teacher roles such as being teaching volunteers or teacher assistants. This is supported by other studies that suggest that work integrated learning can give student teachers the necessary skills and knowledge that are needed to succeed early in a teacher's career (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017: 266, Miles & Knipe, 2018: 110).

6.3.2 Recommendations in respect of the novice teachers' individual context

This study revealed aspects that helped the participants through their first years of teaching. Being proactive in the transition period is recommended, as novice teachers cannot expect to be supported if they do not ask their colleagues, HODs and principals for help. Multiple participants in this study suggested that novice teachers should take the initiative and go to their superiors when they struggle. As novice teachers often lack the experience of a veteran teachers, they should try to learn from the experiences of others as well (Mumthaz and Kgomotso, 2016: 96). Not only should novice teachers ask for help from their more experienced colleagues, but they should attempt to establish sound professional relationships with their colleagues. This can lead to a collaborative environment which makes the novice teachers feel safe, welcomed and improves the teacher's self-esteem (Karataş & Karaman, 2013: 21).

Other traits that have helped some of the participants include innovation and persistency. It is evident from this study that novice teachers in township schools face multiple challenges throughout their first years of teaching. It is vital that novice teachers should be innovative enough to come up with solutions to classroom problems on their own without giving up. Some of the participants also claimed that being prepared and organised helped them to cope during their transition into the workplace. Internationally studies found that being prepared was very important for teachers who struggled with feelings of inadequacy in the classroom (Karataş & Karaman, 2013: 19).

6.3.3 Recommendations in respect of the novice teachers' situational support.

As the responsibilities of principals are becoming more time consuming and complex, many participants noted that it is not the sole responsibility of the principal to check on the well-being of novice teachers. However, principals are urged to introduce novice

teachers to their HODs as soon as possible. According to the PAM document, HODs should be responsible for the smooth functioning of their departments, therefore they must provide guidance, teaching strategies and resources to all teachers, including novice teachers (RSA, 2016b: 36). Novice teachers are recommended to develop a sound professional relationship with their HODs and ask their HODs for support when needed. Novice teachers should also be confident enough to seek the advice of their colleagues, as their colleagues might have experienced the same challenges too and they know the context of the school.

Township schools are also recommended to support all novice teachers through programmes such as mentorship and induction. Implementing mentoring programmes can ensure that novice teachers have the necessary care, direction and support when they transition into the workplace (Stewart et al., 2019: 295). Induction can benefit novice teachers, as it allows for professional growth, support and guidance at the beginning of a novice teacher's career (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004: 281).

6.3.4 Recommendations in respect of the novice teachers' coping strategies.

It is recommended that novice teachers must always try to better themselves by becoming lifelong learners. A great way for novice teachers to improve themselves is to partake in learning opportunities such as workshops. In the study many participants claimed that they improved their teaching abilities by attending workshops and learning from experts in the field.

It is also recommended that novice teachers should implement strategies such as self-reflection to improve their teaching and coping abilities on their own. Some of the advantages linked to reflection include building practical and theoretical knowledge, expertise and professional confidence (Mumthaz & Kgomotso, 2016: 93).

6.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study was conducted at two independent schools in the Ekurhuleni District in Gauteng Province. Both are primary schools, and most of the participants were Foundation Phase teachers. If a similar study were to be conducted in other regions of Gauteng, or at public schools, the findings might differ. This study was only done on a small sample of schools in the Ekurhuleni District, which means that the results cannot be generalised to the rest of the schools in the area.

Interviews and a focus group discussion were used as main data collection strategies which can result in participants withholding information, because they do not trust the interviewer (Riyami, 2015: 414). Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, many interviews were conducted on digital platforms such as WhatsApp calling. It was more difficult to obtain information because I could not see the participants or hear them at times due to a faulty network connection.

6.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study gives a glimpse into the realities of a novice teacher transitioning from university to the workplace. The participants shared their experiences about their transition which indicated that they have multiple resources available that can help them transition into a township school more smoothly. Against the background of the study, it seems that further research could be done to ensure that the findings are more generalisable. This study involved interviews with fifteen participants from two independent schools and a focus group discussion, but a larger quantitative study is suggested to enable more generalisable findings. A comparative study between independent schools and public schools in the Ekurhuleni District could uncover even more barriers or resources during novice teachers' transition and explore the effect of varying school contexts on the transitioning of student teachers into the teaching profession. A similar study could be conducted at high schools in this area.

More research is needed to find a correlation between novice teacher's ability to cope and their work integrated learning experience. This study should focus on the experiences of South African novice teachers. A large-scale quantitative study can also be undertaken to uncover more generalisable findings about novice teachers' experiences regarding their work integrated learning. More research regarding the relationship between novice teachers' personalities and a successful transition could be conducted to determine values and traits that could benefit novice teachers when transitioning into the workplace.

A study on novice teachers that left the teaching profession can be conducted to look at the different challenges they face and the types of support or lack of support they had. This study can highlight the problem areas that school management can work on to support and motivate novice teachers in their first five years of teaching.

An in-depth study, that captures the HODs and principals' opinions regarding their roles towards novice teachers, is also suggested. A study comparing the support provided to

novice teachers at township schools and urban schools respectively can also be considered. This study can include the type of support principals, HODs and colleagues provide to novice teachers. Lastly, further research about the effects of workshops on novice teachers' teaching abilities is also suggested. This study can investigate the usefulness of workshops and the novice teacher's experiences thereof.

6.6 CLOSING REMARKS

One of the biggest problems facing the American education sector is the problematic dropout of novice teachers (Warsame & Valles, 2018: 17). This problem is not unique to the United States of America, as problematic dropout rates of novice teachers are observed world-wide (Meristo & Eisenschmidt, 2014: 1). Some speculate that the reason why novice teachers leave the profession prematurely is because they do not receive the necessary support to cope during their first years of teaching (Warsame & Valles, 2018: 17). Luckily, this was not reflected by the participants of this study as they generally had a positive experience regarding the support that they received during their transition.

This study used Schlossberg's (2011: 159) transition theory framework to better understand the transition of an individual. More specifically, this study focused on the 4S-system that identified four main areas that influence a transitioning individual's experience. These areas were self, situation, support and strategies. In each area, the participating novice teachers had at least one resource that helped them during their transition. For example, in the 'self' system, most of the participants had gone through work integrated learning which helped them to prepare better for the classroom. In the 'situation' system, the participants demonstrated values and traits, such as confidence and persistency, which helped them to adjust to the classroom. In the 'strategy' system, the participants gained new coping strategies through self-reflection or workshops. These strategies helped them to better their teaching abilities, and by doing so improve their abilities to cope. The system with the most resources was the support system. Many participants felt that their school provided them with ample support through HODs, colleagues and mentors.

There were also some systems that posed challenges for the participants, such as the 'self' system. The participants felt that their theoretical knowledge did not sufficiently prepare them for classroom practice and when they entered the profession, they received little guidance from their school. Specifically, participants from School B

encountered challenges regarding their support system. They felt that they had limited support from their principal and a lack of mentorship. They were also not given an induction when they entered the profession.

Although there are still areas in which schools and universities can improve regarding the support they give to novice teachers, the participants are generally satisfied with their position in the school. Some of the participants also recognised that time was their greatest teacher. Novice teachers will inevitably be confronted by challenges throughout their careers. Çakmak (2013: 55) noted that first year teachers are placed in unfamiliar circumstances and if they receive the appropriate support, they can gain the necessary skills and competencies that will help them throughout their teaching careers. According to the participants, every time they overcame a challenge they grew from that experience. As a result, they are much more confident and comfortable with their teaching ability than when they started.

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ADDENDUMS

ADDENDUM A: GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER




8/4/4/1/2

GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	29 September 2020
Validity of Research Approval:	08 February 2021– 30 September 2021 2019/624
Name of Researcher:	Beckman K
Address of Researcher:	281 Trouw Street Capital Park Pretoria
Telephone Number:	087 456 0609/ 012 323 0361
Email address:	KristellBeckmann4@gmail.com
Research Topic:	Transitioning from university to workplace : experiences of novice teachers in township schools
Type of qualification	Master's in Education Management ,Law and Policy
Number and type of schools:	3 Secondary Schools
District/s/HO	Ekurhuleni North , Ekurhuleni South

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

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


 29/09/2020

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

1. Letter that would indicate that the said researcher/s has/have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.

2. The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s must be approached separately, and in writing, for permission to involve District/Head Office Officials in the project.
3. **Because of COVID 19 pandemic researchers can ONLY collect data online, telephonically or may make arrangements for Zoom with the school Principal. Requests for such arrangements should be submitted to the GDE Education Research and Knowledge Management directorate. The approval letter will then indicate the type of arrangements that have been made with the school.**
4. **The Researchers are advised to make arrangements with the schools via Fax, email or telephonically with the Principal.**
5. A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) that would indicate that the researcher/s have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.
6. A letter / document that outline the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned, respectively.
7. The Researcher will make every effort obtain the goodwill and co-operation of all the GDE officials, principals, and chairpersons of the SGBs, teachers and learners involved. Persons who offer their co-operation will not receive additional remuneration from the Department while those that opt not to participate will not be penalised in any way.
8. Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal (if at a school) and/or Director (if at a district/head office) must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.
9. Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the last quarter of the academic year. If incomplete, an amended Research Approval letter may be requested to conduct research in the following year.
10. Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.
11. It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent of all learners that are expected to participate in the study.
12. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.
13. The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organisations.
14. On completion of the study the researcher/s must supply the Director: Knowledge Management & Research with one Hard Cover bound and an electronic copy of the research.
15. The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.
16. Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards



Mr Gumani Mukatuni

Acting CES: Education Research and Knowledge Management

DATE: 29/09/2020

ADDENDUM B: LETTER TO PRINCIPALS



Faculty of Education

Letter to the teacher participant requesting informed consent

Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms

**PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY: Transitioning from university to workplace:
Experiences of novice teachers in township schools.**

I am currently enrolled for a M Ed degree in Education Management Law and Policy at the University of Pretoria. Part of the requirements for the awarding of this degree is the successful completion of a significant research project in the field of education.

I consider it a privilege and a great honour to invite you to become a voluntary participant in this research project. The title of my approved research study is **Transitioning from university to workplace: Experiences of novice teachers in township schools.** This study will be conducted at three primary schools situated in the Ekurhuleni North and Ekurhuleni South Districts of the Gauteng Department of Education.

The aim of this study is to investigate novice teachers' experiences regarding their transition from university to the workplace. I sought permission from the Gauteng Department of Education, your principal and your SGB Chairperson to conduct this research and it is my intention to gather the information I require for this study project as follows:

As part of this research, I need to conduct interviews which should take approximately 45 minutes. The interviews will be conducted after school hours at a time and venue convenient to you. Each of the participants has had different experiences within their working environment, and as the selected participant educators, they must be working in those selected schools as teachers prior to or during this research. As a participant in

this project, your role will be to respond to questions put to you during the interview, and you may also ask questions of your own to clarify any issue concerning the interview or a matter that may arise during the interview. The interviews will be recorded for data analysis purposes.

As a participant, you will not be asked to reveal information that will allow your identity or that of your school to be known. Neither you as an individual, or your school, be mentioned by name or indeed be allowed to be identified by any manner or means whatsoever in the research report. Where appropriate, pseudonyms will be used. To ensure that you are comfortable with the information you give, you will be provided with a confidential electronic or written transcript of your own interview and will have final approval of both its accuracy and its content. Please allow another hour for this process. Follow-up interviews might be required to clarify some matters but this will also be voluntary and confidentiality will be guaranteed. I have included herewith, for your information, a schedule of the interview questions as part of the information gathering process.

Please be assured that all the data collected from this study will be kept strictly confidential, with not even the Department of Education having access to the raw data obtained from the interviews. In addition, the data collected will be used for research purposes only. Furthermore, if you decide to participate in this study, you have the right to withdraw at any time during the data collection process without any penalty. Please understand that the choice for you to participate is entirely voluntary.

At the end of the research study you will be provided with a copy of the research report containing both the findings of the study and recommendations on how teachers experience their transition from university to the workplace. I will also be willing, at your request, to present the findings of the study to you. At no time will I be questioning or purposefully interacting with the learners at your school for either personal or research reasons. The research study presents a unique opportunity for you to get involved in the process of research to investigate teachers' experiences of their right to a safe working environment.

PERMISSION FOR RESEARCH

I, _____, hereby give permission to Kristell Beckmann to include me as a participant in her research on **Transitioning from university to workplace: Experiences of novice teachers in township schools.**

Signature: _____ Date: _____

ADDENDUM C: CONSENT FORMS



Faculty of Education

Letter to the teacher participant requesting informed consent

Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms

**PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY: Transitioning from university to workplace:
Experiences of novice teachers in township schools.**

I am currently enrolled for a M Ed degree in Education Management Law and Policy at the University of Pretoria. Part of the requirements for the awarding of this degree is the successful completion of a significant research project in the field of education.

I consider it a privilege and a great honour to invite you to become a voluntary participant in this research project. The title of my approved research study is **Transitioning from university to workplace: Experiences of novice teachers in township schools.** This study will be conducted at three primary schools situated in the Ekurhuleni North and Ekurhuleni South Districts of the Gauteng Department of Education.

The aim of this study is to investigate novice teachers' experiences regarding their transition from university to the workplace. I sought permission from the Gauteng Department of Education, your principal and your SGB Chairperson to conduct this research and it is my intention to gather the information I require for this study project as follows:

As part of this research, I need to conduct interviews which should take approximately 45 minutes. The interviews will be conducted after school hours at a time and venue convenient to you. Each of the participants has had different experiences within their working environment, and as the selected participant educators, they must be working in those selected schools as teachers prior to or during this research. As a participant in

this project, your role will be to respond to questions put to you during the interview, and you may also ask questions of your own to clarify any issue concerning the interview or a matter that may arise during the interview. The interviews will be recorded for data analysis purposes.

As a participant, you will not be asked to reveal information that will allow your identity or that of your school to be known. Neither you as an individual, or your school, be mentioned by name or indeed be allowed to be identified by any manner or means whatsoever in the research report. Where appropriate, pseudonyms will be used. To ensure that you are comfortable with the information you give, you will be provided with a confidential electronic or written transcript of your own interview and will have final approval of both its accuracy and its content. Please allow another hour for this process. Follow-up interviews might be required to clarify some matters but this will also be voluntary and confidentiality will be guaranteed. I have included herewith, for your information, a schedule of the interview questions as part of the information gathering process.

Please be assured that all the data collected from this study will be kept strictly confidential, with not even the Department of Education having access to the raw data obtained from the interviews. In addition, the data collected will be used for research purposes only. Furthermore, if you decide to participate in this study, you have the right to withdraw at any time during the data collection process without any penalty. Please understand that the choice for you to participate is entirely voluntary.

At the end of the research study you will be provided with a copy of the research report containing both the findings of the study and recommendations on how teachers experience their transition from university to the workplace. I will also be willing, at your request, to present the findings of the study to you. At no time will I be questioning or purposefully interacting with the learners at your school for either personal or research reasons. The research study presents a unique opportunity for you to get involved in the process of research to investigate teachers' experiences of their right to a safe working environment.

The findings of this study could be useful to education practitioners in future. The research study has the potential to provide insight into educators' experiences regarding their transitions from university to the workplace. The research study presents a unique opportunity for you to get involved in the process of research to investigate the current situations experienced by fellow educators in your immediate vicinity insofar as how they view the management of novice teachers.

We also would like to request your permission to use your data, confidentially and anonymously, for further research purposes, as the data sets will be the intellectual property of the University of Pretoria. Further research may include secondary data analysis and using the data for teaching purposes. The confidentiality and privacy applicable to this study will be binding on future research studies.

If you decide to participate in this research study, kindly indicate this by completing the consent form at the end of this letter.

Yours sincerely

Kristell Beckmann
Student researcher

Dr André du Plessis
Supervisor

PERMISSION FOR RESEARCH

I, _____, hereby give permission to Kristell Beckmann to include me as a participant in her research on **Transitioning from university to workplace: Experiences of novice teachers in township schools.**

Signature: _____ Date: _____

ADDENDUM D: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:

This study seeks to investigate the experiences of novice teachers in township schools by looking at challenges encountered, and support given to the novice teacher.

SOURCES OF DATA TO BE COLLECTED:

Data will be collected by conducting semi-structured interviews with educators with no more than five years working experience. These participants will be from primary schools in the Ekurhuleni district in Gauteng.

Most of the semi-structured interviews will be conducted online via digital platforms such as Skype, Zoom or GoogleMeet.

PROTECTION OF CONFIDENTIALITY:

You can be certain that you will not be harmed in any way by participating in this research. I will make use of pseudo names throughout the study to ensure that your identity will be kept confidential. Your personal details will be protected and will not be available to any unauthorized individual(s). Be aware that you are allowed to withdraw at any stage during this study without any repercussions. You will have the opportunity to review the transcriptions of our interview.

DURATION OF INTERVIEW:

The semi-structured interview will not exceed 45 minutes. During the interview I will have predetermined questions, but I could ask you to explain your answers or give an example.

The entire interview will be recorded via audio and transcribed. After I have transcribed the interview, I will arrange a meeting to discuss the findings, email you the transcript or arrange a meeting on a digital platform such as Skype, Zoom or GoogleMeet.

During the interview I will also be making notes as the discussion progresses.

BIOGRAPHICAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION:

SECTION A: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION - EDUCATOR

1.

Academic qualification

2.

Year in which degree/ diploma was obtained

3.

Grade(s) taught

4.

Subjects taught

1.

2.

5.

Years at current school

Years at previous school(s)

Total years of teaching

6.

Role at previous school

SECTION B – Educators transition from university: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW – EDUCATORS

- 1. How did your tertiary training and employers prepare you for teaching?**
- 2. What were your main concerns when you started teaching? How did you address these concerns?**
- 3. What were the biggest challenges you faced with regards to teaching so far?**
- 4. What support programmes were made available to you during your transition into the workplace?**
- 5. What informal support did your employers offer to you during your transition into the workplace?**
- 6. How have you benefitted from the support given by your employers?**
- 7. What do you feel was lacking regarding your support when transitioning into the workplace?**
- 8. In your opinion, what makes a support programme effective?**
- 9. How did you deal with challenges in your first years of teaching?**
- 10. How did your employers help you to face unfamiliar challenges?**
- 11. What do you understand under the term “coping mechanism”?**
- 12. What coping mechanism did you use to face these challenges? How did you acquire them?**

ADDENDUM E: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION PROTOCOL

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:

This study seeks to investigate the experiences of novice teachers in township schools by looking at challenges encountered, and support given to the novice teacher.

SOURCES OF DATA TO BE COLLECTED:

More detailed data will be collected by conducting a focus groups discussion with six educators with no more than five years working experience. These participants have participated in my semi-structured interviews.

The focus group discussion will be conducted online via digital platforms such as Skype, Zoom or GoogleMeet

PROTECTION OF CONFIDENTIALITY:

You can be certain that you will not be harmed in any way by participating in this research. I will make use of pseudo names throughout the study to ensure that your identity will be kept confidential. Your personal details will be protected and will not be available to any unauthorized individual(s). Be aware that you are allowed to withdraw at any stage during this study without any repercussions. You will have the opportunity to review the transcriptions of our interview.

DURATION OF THE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION:

The focus group discussion will not exceed 60 minutes. I will have predetermined questions to help me guide the discussion, but I could ask you to explain your answers or give an example.

The entire focus group discussion will be recorded via audio and transcribed. After I have transcribed the interview, I will send a transcription to each of my participants to assist with member checking.

During the interview I will also be making notes as the discussion progresses.

**SECTION A: TRANSITIONING FROM UNIVERSITY TO THE WORKPLACE:
FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION - EDUCATORS**

- 1. What were your expectations of teaching when you attended tertiary institutions?**
- 2. How did your view of teaching change when you entered the profession?**
- 3. What content or advice gained through university do you still use frequently?**
- 4. What disadvantages do you feel you have when you entered this profession?**
- 5. How did you address or overcome these disadvantages?**
- 6. What are some of your most negative experiences of teaching? How did these experiences begin or escalate?**
- 7. What were some of your most positive experiences when joining the profession?**
- 8. Currently, who or what provides the most support to you? How is the support provided?**