Possible Selves: Beginner teachers' identities as shaped by part-time and full-time teacher education programmes

by

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Declaration

“I declare that the dissertation, which I hereby submit for the degree MAGISTER EDUCATIONIS 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.”

.....

Mické van Heerden

3 October 2019

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“The author, whose name appears on the title page of this thesis, has obtained, for the research described in this work, the applicable research ethics approval. The author declares that she has observed the ethical standards required in terms of the University of Pretoria’s *Code of Ethics for Researchers* and the *Policy guidelines for responsible research*.”

Abstract

Beginner teachers' identities are formed by past school experiences, the ideas, and approaches promoted by their teacher education programmes and an ideal of teachers they hope to become (Beauchamp and Thomas, 2011; Anspal, Eisenschmidt and Löfström, 2012). The focus of this study was to understand the possible influence of two different teacher education programmes on beginner teacher identity and the forming thereof during the early years of teaching.

This study was underpinned by an Interpretivist epistemological paradigm, in line with the reiterative process of understanding which marks the fluid progressions of beginner teachers' identities. The conceptual lens employed in this study consisted of the Possible Selves Theory (Markus and Nurius, 1986), combined with the metaphorical use of "threads". This study employed a qualitative methodological paradigm, with a comparative case study as research design (Zartman and Goodrick, 2005). Participants were selected by purposive sampling and involved six beginner teachers within their first three years of teaching; three from each teacher education programme (full-time and part-time). Selection criteria stipulated participants had to be within their first three years of teaching, have graduated from either a full-time or part-time teacher education programme, and that part-time participants had to be employed full-time at a school while studying to be selected. Data collection methods comprised of semi-structured interviews, researcher's journal and field notes. The process of data analysis was guided by thematic content analysis.

Findings from this study attest that beginner teacher identities are unstable; classroom reality differs vastly from teacher education programme curricula; and teaching practice plays a significant role in the preparation of student teachers. The main finding of this study was that full-time participants only comprehended the reality of teaching once full-time employment commenced, compared to part-time participants who realised the realities of teaching considerably earlier. Recommendations were made regarding practice, policy, and future research.

Key Terms: Beginner teacher identity, full-time student, part-time student, Possible Selves Theory, teacher education programmes.

Language editor

I, Annatjie de Bruyn, hereby confirm that I did the Language Editing for the thesis/dissertation of Mické van Heerden, student number: 14454310, for the Degree in Magister Educationis in the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria, June 2019.

Electronically signed at Pretoria on the 2nd day of July 2019.

……..

Annatjie de Bruyn

Language Editor

Dedication

I dedicate this research to the two most important men in my life, my father and my husband. Thank you for your endless support and love.

"We look at life from the back side of the tapestry. And most of the time, what we see is loose threads, tangled knots and the like. But, occasionally, God's light shines through the tapestry, and we get a glimpse of the larger design with God weaving together the darks and lights of existence."

- John Piper

Acknowledgements

To have achieved this milestone in my life, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the following people:

- My Heavenly Father, who provided me the strength, knowledge and perseverance to complete this study*. "'For I know the plans I have for you' declares the Lord, 'Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."'* – Jeremiah 29:11
- Dr Yolandi Woest, my supervisor, for her invaluable advice, guidance and inspiring motivation throughout difficult times during this research. Thank you for every word of encouragement and keeping me calm when the tears flowed, and stress wanted to take over.
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"An invisible thread connects those who are destined to meet, regardless of time, place, or circumstance. The thread may stretch or tangle, but will never break."

- Chinese Proverb

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List of abbreviations

B. Ed	Bachelor of Education degree
DoHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
MRTEQ	Minimum Requirements for teacher Education Qualifications
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate in Education

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1. CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL ORIENTATION

"We don't accomplish anything in this world alone ... and whatever happens is the result of the whole tapestry of one's life and all the weavings of individual threads from one to another that creates something. "

— Sandra Day O'Connor (2007)

1.1 Introduction

As a child, I remember assisting my mother in her work room. She was a stay at home mother, but moreover a dressmaker. All our ball gowns, matric farewell dresses and special occasion dresses were made by her. She also made dresses, clothes, curtains, duvet covers, everyday wear and anything imaginable. Because of all the clothing being made, there were always threads everywhere; threads on the floor, threads on the carpet and even threads on our clothes - especially when we helped her. As I got older, she taught me how to work the sewing machine and how to sew basic articles of clothing. Today, as an adult, I see how difficult it actually is to get rid of these threads while sewing garments; some are wanted and some are unwanted, but they are still part of the threads that keep everything together.

Our lives are made of different threads, interwoven with intricate detail, to create a tapestry that represents our lives. From birth to death, and everything in between, has an influence on our tapestries. The decisions we make, people we meet, relationships we build, actions we take, who we choose to be with in life and our identity – that is all shown in our individual tapestries. It Is a part of human nature and development to have different chapters in our lives. Baby, toddler, child, teenager, student, adult … In a comparable manner, our tapestries are similarly woven in "parts" and with different threads, according to the chapter of our lives we find ourselves in. Various chapters and stories have been written about the path that, for example, a hero needs to take. These different "threads" show the climax and struggles of the hero's story.

In Greek mythology, for instance, a literal thread is used to show one hero's journey. Theseus, the King of Athens's son, wanted to win the heart of a young Princess Ariadne. In order to do so, he had to enter a labyrinth and slay the Minotaur inside. The princess had given him a spool of red *thread* to unspool as he descends down

into the labyrinth, to find his way out again. In this myth the read thread represents guidance, continuity and escaping from challenging situations (Ilynska, Ivanova and Senko, 2016). I now invite you, the reader, to follow my (multi-coloured) threads as guidance through this study and to help with following the continuity of my ideas and findings brought forth.

I use the metaphor of threads throughout this study to weave a tapestry and to illustrate the journey undergone by the beginner teachers that participated, as well as my personal journey throughout the research study writing process. Simon (2013) positions the argument for using a metaphor such as threads and tapestries by stating that this creative component represents the "highly-revered, altruistic and important nature of learning and teaching, which will enhance its stature and invaluable contribution to the world" (p. 77). The metaphor ties in with the beginner teachers' weaving of their professional identity tapestry that represents their beginner teacher identity and the different threads that have an influence on that tapestry. The tapestry metaphor also ties in with my personal weaving of this research study and the journey I went on to discover not only the beginner teachers' voices but also my own. I called my way of approaching this study through this metaphor the *theoretical threading* of the dissertation.

The beginner teacher's tapestry is influenced by many threads woven together. How did the choice of their paths to becoming a teacher influence their teacher identity during the early years of their careers? The 'answer' to this question forms part of the beginner teacher's tapestry of their emerging teaching identities. In this study I focus on three main threads of the beginner teacher's identity as a tapestry, namely the nature of being a beginner teacher, different teacher education programmes and the Possible Selves Theory as conceptual framework (in conjunction with my metaphorical use of threads).

The following extract from my research diary shows the thinking process on the day that the metaphor of threads was decided on.

Research diary entry 1-1

My supervisor suggested that I look into the metaphor of threads – threads weaving a tapestry, the tapestry of a beginner teacher's identity. I absolutely LOVED the idea. When I started thinking about it and looked for quotes to add to my dissertation, it just all made sense. And that's when I saw that my own dissertation was also like a tapestry that I was busy weaving and making my own. I thought about my mother and how as a little girl, when I helped her make clothes and she taught me how to sew. There were always threads everywhere. When I sew even now, I can never quite get rid of all the threads every time. Threads have always been a part of my life, I just haven't noticed it yet until now, thinking about it in this way. – 9 October 2018

In this chapter, I provide a general orientation of the study. First, I explain the background to this study. Next, I validate my reasons for embarking on this particular study (rationale) by introducing the research question that directed the study. Thereafter, I offer a brief overview of the chosen theoretical framework and the research methodology on which the study was based, as well as describe the quality criteria and ethical matters considered in this study. Finally, I provide a brief summary of each chapter.

1.2 Background and Context to the study

Many student teachers' initial ideas of what it means to become a teacher aren't adequate or complex enough (Beltman, Glass, Dinham, Chalk and Nguyen, 2015). For beginner teachers, it is difficult to understand the array and totality of their teaching identity as it relates to society in today's world (Beauchamp and Thomas, 2011). It is essential to start right at the beginning – why do students choose to become teachers? Which different kinds of routes are available to becoming a teacher, and how does a student decide which route is best for them? Lortie (1966, p. 85) compared the sensation of the beginner teacher being "thrown into the deep end to sink or swim", to the "Robinson Crusoe" approach - stranded on a desert island and facing the challenges of survival all by yourself. Generally speaking in the education world, a beginner teachers' socialization remains a sink or swim approach (Smit and Du Toit, 2016).

Halford (1998) remarks that teaching is a profession where the young gets eaten. The comprehensive duties of an experienced teacher are undertaken by beginner teachers, including the administration and instruction of a full class of learners (Worthy, 2005). From my own experience, I can say that the first year or two of teaching was largely the most difficult in my teaching career. Likewise, simply keeping their head above water takes up an unbalanced amount of time and effort for beginner teachers (Fantilli and McDougall, 2009). Marshall, Fittinghoff and Cheney (1990) recommended that beginner teachers are incapable of focusing on the main areas of general student objectives, individual students' needs and long-term planning until they have endured the initial shock that is their first year of teaching.

Younger, Brindley, Pedder and Hagger (2004) indicate the importance of developing a beginner teacher identity built on personal experiences of their own, while simultaneously stressing the need that teacher educators help those student teachers to understand and cope with the complexities of teaching. This learning process helps student teachers to actively create an identity of themselves as teachers, while acquiring content knowledge, pedagogical expertise and educational approaches (Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop, 2004; Rodgers and Scott, 2008; Beauchamp and Thomas, 2009). That process of constructing their own sense of self is part of the discovery of their beginner teacher identity.

A basic tenet is that individuals hold multiple identities, and those identities are inescapably in a fluid state (Hickey and Roderick, 2017). As part of an interactive and social process, humans need to understand the objects involved and as a result interact and act on this source of meaning (Hong, 2010). One part of the multiple identities that an individual can have, is their professional identity. Van Der Want *et al.* (2018) stated that when you are interacting in social situations and negotiating your roles within a specific context, you are building and maintaining your professional identity. Beginner teachers shape their beginner teacher identity relative to certain interactions; pre-service teachers who train and are presented with different teaching practices, and then as teachers who share their first experience in the teaching profession (Hong, 2010). Beginner teacher identity is part of a teacher's development of their professional identity, which in turn falls under the individual's multiple/true self identity.

The well-being of beginner teachers as new members to the teaching profession, are influenced by the solid development of their teaching identity (Beauchamp and Thomas, 2011). The process of active building and renewal of knowledge help student teachers develop into becoming a professional teacher (Borger and Tillema, 1996) from many different sources of guidance. Sources for the renewal of knowledge include reflecting on their own as well as other' practices, and retrieving information from literature, educators, mentors, pupils and peers (Oosterheert and Vermunt, 2001; Tang, 2006).

The reasons for choosing to become a teacher is considered a central basis in the teaching profession and one of the important factors in the choice is teacher education programmes (König and Rothland, 2012). Looking at reasons for choosing to be a teacher has various categories (Topkaya and Uztosun, 2012). Moran *et al.* (2001) and Brookhart and Freeman (1992) point out three basic classifications of motivations for choosing teaching as a career: intrinsic motives such as interest, intellectual accomplishment and personal skill; extrinsic motives such as remuneration and extensive vacations; and altruistic motives such as enhancing the growth of other individuals. For myself, the motivation for choosing teaching as a career was initiated by my family who are all teachers or in a teaching position.

Research shows that "teachers who experience different contexts (as students themselves) may adopt different approaches to teaching in those different contexts" (Lindblom-Ylänne, Trigwell, Nevgi and Ashwin, 2006, p. 294). Education is made successful by teachers who construct knowledge from practical situations in conjunction with the knowledge they learn from books (Kessels and Korthagen, 1996). One of the utmost important aspects in changing the idea of teaching, when it comes to beginner teacher education, is the influence of teaching practice experience (Stones, 1981; Tillema, 2000). Hobson (2002, 2003) stated that the common idea of students registered in a one-year PGCE (Post Graduate Certificate in Education) programme, is that they rank time spent with university tutors on campus as trivial when compared to what they learned from time spent with their school-based mentors and in actual schools. This concurs with the view held by Lortie (1975), who suggested 44 years ago, that beginner teachers' formal training may not be as valuable in their

goal to become professional teachers, when compared to the observation of their own school years.

Traditional full-time programmes, rely on professors and others as their main faculty, and can be regarded as more academic and theoretical; while part-time programmes utilize experts as their mentors, emphasizing on practice and field work (Levine, 2006). Darling-Hammond (2006) states that there is a current dilemma in teacher education where they need to integrate two different kinds of knowledge; experience based knowledge that is generally gained through teaching practice and classroom realities, as well as theoretically based knowledge that is taught at university. Some programmes often have students engaged in course work in isolation from practice and then only at the end there is a small amount of time allocated towards practice, and often those practical classrooms do not represent the course work at all (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Practical teaching in a classroom is an important part of teacher education, as student teachers are provided with the vital connections that exist between practice and theory, as well as the prospect to improve and define their teaching skill (Koç, 2012). Thus, different teacher education programmes will produce different beginner teachers.

As a guiding source to teacher education programmes in South Africa, it is important to mention the *National Policy on the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications* (MRTEQ) framework (Department of Higher Education and Training [DHET], 2015). The MRTEQ framework advises the development and design of teacher education programmes in South Africa, by providing procedures on the depth, choice and rigidity of said programme (Nomlomo and Sosibo, 2016). This framework delineates the basic organisation of admission requirements, capabilities and results to be demonstrated by student teachers when they want to enter the teaching profession, the layout of the teacher education programmes and the various categories of teacher knowledge that should be included in the curriculum (Nomlomo and Sosibo, 2016). These categories include practical, pedagogical, disciplinary, situational and fundamental knowledge (DHET, 2015).

In this study, the teacher identity of beginner teachers who participated in no formal class setting or limited formal classes and worked full-time (at schools) was set and explored against those of beginner teachers that were enrolled full-time at tertiary institutions. Becoming a teacher comes with a great deal of hardships and can be more intimidating for a beginner teacher who has not yet comprehended what their teaching identity is, thus who they *are* as teachers. This study attempts to draw attention to the anticipated research question, namely the influence that different teacher education programmes have on beginner teachers' identity.

1.3 Rationale and Motivation

"I began to think of the text as a tapestry that I would carefully unpick. But when one does unpick a tapestry, the result is usually a jumbled tangle of short and disconnected threads."
- Honan, E. (2007, p. 536)

1.3.1 Personal motivation

The phenomenon I want to understand is the influence that different teacher education programmes have on beginner teacher identity; the threads that form a beginner teacher's identity. This study has a very personal meaning me. When I started my first year of teaching as a full-time teacher after being a teacher's assistant for four years (and studying part-time), I became acutely aware of the differences between beginner teachers who studied at different institutions.

I only perceived how valuable my years as a teacher's assistant was once I started teaching full-time after I graduated. I remember that I was the only beginner teacher who was already working at the school; the other new teacher was also a beginner teacher but had studied full-time and thus had limited teaching experience. I felt considerably empowered and confident to be in the classroom compared to the other teacher, especially when it came to insignificant tasks like completing the daily register, classroom management and communicating with parents. The reason why I felt that she lacked confidence, was because she seemed nervous and unsure when it came to minor, everyday tasks that had to be completed; she was afraid to ask questions on how to do it and made mistakes because of it. Later in the term she started to ask my assistance, instead of her Head of Department, and she told me it

was because she felt “silly to ask” and did not want to embarrass herself in front of the experienced teachers. The end of the first term I had to help the other beginner teacher to finalise her class register. I recall thinking that this was such an easy task to do and that I have been doing it since my first year as a teacher’s assistant. How can the other teacher not know this, since she has the same qualification than I have? That is when I started to become aware of the differences between beginner teachers who study part-time versus full-time.

This phenomenon was fascinating to me, and I started to wonder whether this was a singular occurrence or whether it happened at every school. I started to pay more attention to the beginner teachers every year, and the way that they handled their first years of teaching. What I noticed was that it was not a one-time phenomenon that only happened to me as a beginner teacher, but that it happened frequently. No matter which teacher education programme the beginner teachers graduated from, there were major differences in how they formed their teaching identity; in the kind of teachers they were becoming. When I finished my Honours degree (also through a part-time programme), I decided that I wanted to find out what lies behind this phenomenon. That is where the topic for my study was born; the first thread woven in my research tapestry.

Observing my first research diary entry below shows the journey that I went on in order to find the correct research topic. As stated, the topic changed a number of times, but behind it all was the same idea that I wanted to focus on.

Research diary entry 1-2

I started off with numerous ideas for my dissertation, and it changed several times. Each time I met a new person that I thought would help me, it would change according to their perception. All I knew was, I wanted to focus on beginner teachers and different teacher education programmes. I went off course a few times, but in the end it all bounced back to my main focus. The thing I wanted to learn more about, to conduct research about, to teach other people about, was finally coming true. – 26 April 2017

One of the motivations of conducting this study was to gain pedagogical depth of knowledge on the topic. Over the past year, I have become more involved in the management and support of the full-time student teachers at our school, who are studying part-time. Helping them to become a successful beginner teacher is one of my main goals. I try to help them with assignments, exams, classroom management and provide any support they may need.

The professional justification for doing this degree is to expand my work opportunities in the future. Furthermore, obtaining a Masters' degree might possible help open doors for me when I want to apply for a promotion or if I want to move to a tertiary institution where higher qualifications are required. This study will also help gain greater insight into the world of beginner teachers and whether their route of studying has an influence on their teaching identity.

1.3.2 Scholarly motivation

This study can be used as part of a larger body of knowledge on teacher identity, more specifically on the concept of beginner teacher identity. Since I started with this study, I have noticed that I was supportive in helping student teachers find out what kind of teacher they are and what kind of teacher *they* want to be, instead of just telling them what to do. Even though I can help the students from my own experience, conducting this study has broadened my knowledge and helped me to gain the theoretical depth needed first to understand the concept better myself and second to provide better advice and help the students find their beginner teacher identity.

On a scholarly level, professionals might begin to consider implementing more appropriate strategies within their induction programmes in order to include beginner teachers. Academics may also value the findings of this study as significant for future research. Throughout the process of this study, it became apparent that there is not sufficient literature on teacher education programmes, especially in the context of South Africa. This study might help gain insight into South African teacher education programmes and hopefully encourage researchers to investigate this topic further.

The purpose of this study is to understand the influence of different teacher education programmes (part-time and full-time) on beginner teacher identity.

1.4 Research questions

- How do full-time teacher education programmes influence beginner teacher identities?

- How do part-time teacher education programmes influence beginner teacher identities?

1.5 Concept clarification

For the purpose of this study, the conceptualisation of key aspects are explained below in alphabetical order.

1.5.1 Beginner teacher

A beginner teacher can be defined as a newcomer to the teaching profession and who usually has zero to three years of teaching experience (Davis and Cearley-Key, 2016). The beginner teacher's identity is moulded by former school experiences, the ideas and methodologies stimulated by their teacher education programmes, and the aim of the type of teacher they wish to mature into (Woest, 2016).

1.5.2 Beginner teacher identity

Certain characteristics are commonly reviewed in studies, even though there is a discussion internationally about the common definition of beginner teacher identity. (Beauchamp and Thomas, 2011), some characteristics are widely attached to it in recent studies. Teacher identity develops as a trajectory of participation and interaction in a teacher community (Beltman *et al.*, 2015). The beginner teachers' identity thus stems from the same idea; a trajectory of interaction in a teaching community (Beltman *et al.*, 2015).

1.5.3 Influence

According to the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* (2017), influence can be defined as "the power to change or affect someone or something; the power to cause changes without directly forcing them to happen" and "a person or thing that affects someone or something in an important way". Beltman *et al.* (2011) states that individual opinions and experiences as well as insights of what is expected in a particular context is an

important aspect of beginner teachers' identity, and influences their choice of certain teaching practices.

1.5.4 Full-time student

A full-time student is a student who is obligated by the teaching institution to allocate all or mostly all of their useful time to their studies and is therefore categorized by the institution as a full-time student (GilesFiles, 2015). For the purpose of this study, this means a full-time student cannot be working full-time or be in a permanent teaching position.

1.5.5 Full-time tertiary institution

This institution refers to a tertiary institution where students study full-time. Full-time tertiary institutions design programmes that help future teachers to fully understand a wide range of topics (such as teaching, learning, and cultural and social contexts) as well as equip them to apply these understandings practically in complex classroom situations with increasingly diverse students (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Characteristics of this institution include numerous contact sessions attended by the student during the week, comprehensive communication with lecturers and support from fellow students available every day. With the concept of being a full-time programme and having a full class schedule, this mode of study does not allocate time for students to be employed full-time. Therefore, these students cannot be employed full-time at a school or any other workplace.

1.5.6 Part-time student

Part-time students attend lectures/classes, but classes are usually in the evenings or at set times; this method of studying offers a great deal of flexibility as you can work full-time while studying (Bolliger, 2017). For the purpose of this study, only participants who worked full-time at a school while studying part-time, were included.

1.5.7 Part-time tertiary institution

This institution refers to a tertiary institution where students only attend limited contact sessions and are able to work full-time. Characteristics of this institute include contact sessions that are attended over the weekend (or no contact sessions at all), limited contact with lecturers, and fellow students can only meet face-to-face over weekends.

Most or all communication (whether with lecturers or fellow students) are done through online communication, either through messaging instruments or the institution's website and discussion boards. Distance education (which forms part of part-time studying) can be defined as a formal education programme where the institution is separated from the learning group, and where resources, faculty and students are connected by interactive telecommunication systems (Simonson, 2003).

1.5.8 Teacher education programme

Student teachers learn "how to teach" in the space provided by teacher education programmes (Nqubane-Mokiwa, 2017). For that reason, a successful teacher education programme is one that cultivates "the capacity to inquire sensitively and systematically into the nature of learning and the effects of teaching" (Darling-Hammond, 2015, p. 170). It prepares potential teachers and teacher education students to "learn to draw upon and use their understanding of the subject matter, learning, development, culture, language, pedagogy, and assessment in addressing concrete problems of practice" (Hammerness, Darling-Hammond and Bransford, 2012, p. 358).

1.6 Overview of the conceptual framework

This study employed the theory of Possible Selves in conjunction with threads as a metaphor, to form a conceptual framework. According to Markus and Nurius (1986) the possible selves characterize people's ideas into what they want to develop into. It also demonstrates what someone want to grow into and what they are scared of becoming (Markus and Nurius, 1986). The Possible Selves Theory illustrates how future-oriented thought is driven by the pursuit of self-relevant goals, and delivers identity-relevant information (Hamman *et al.*, 2010). Possible future selves are embodied by particular, individually unique hopes, fears and fantasies, and are not just any set of fictional states of being (Markus and Nurius, 1986). For the beginner teachers' identity, that included their own hopes, fears and fantasies of the image they have of what kind of teacher they want to become in future. More importantly, it included the beginner teachers' past selves – their experiences from their teacher education programme. The past self that the beginner teacher had formed during their studies will have an influence on their identity when starting as a teacher in their first years of teaching.

The past selves of beginner teachers had an influence on the beginner teachers' possible selves and future selves. Full-time students referred to their past selves which had no teaching experience, but a great deal of theoretical knowledge; that can influence their present selves when they are a beginner teacher. This was compared to beginner teachers who had studied part-time, whose past self showed more confidence but may lack in some theoretical knowledge as they did not have the same support and guidance from lecturers and classes that full-time students had.

From the interviews, it was gathered that the participants' past selves had a great influence on their beginner teacher identity. Most of them had an idea of what they wanted their beginner teacher identity to be but struggled to achieve that goal. Some of them were stuck in their past self; the teaching identity that they had displayed while still being a student teacher. Those who had slightly more practical experience had a better idea of the present self of their beginner teacher identity, and even knew what they had to do to achieve their future self - the goal of who they wanted to be as a teacher.

1.7 Overview of research methodology

The study employed a qualitative methodological paradigm (c.f. Chapter 3). The qualitative researcher studies people in their own environment (Maree, 2016), thus with my study I considered the beginner teachers and how they survived and constructed an initial teacher identity in their own environment. The reason for choosing qualitative research is that I was fascinated in the stories of beginner teachers and whether their identity was influenced by their teacher education programme – did they feel ready and well-prepared after their tertiary training? Qualitative research also allowed me to gather stories from beginner teachers with different backgrounds, in this case from beginner teachers who studied either part-time or full-time.

Within this study I used a case study design. By using a case study design, I can compare the two different teacher education programmes (part-time and full-time) and their influence on beginner teachers' identity. Comparing these two teacher education programmes will produce information about the similarities, differences and patterns that arise from the development of beginner teachers' identity.

For participant selection, the focus was on beginner teachers within the first three years of their teaching career, who graduated from one of the two types of institutions being used for this study (part-time or full-time teacher education programmes). This study made use of purposive sampling, which means that the participants were chosen according to specific criteria, which will be elaborated on in Chapter 3. The participants that were selected had copious data to share and their participation was instrumental to my findings.

The data was collected by conducting face-to-face semi-structured interviews. The interviews were steered by a set of semi-structured questions. To preserve the data and ensure that it was interpreted properly, audio recordings were used to transcribe the interviews into written form. Audio recordings made it much easier for me as researcher to repeatedly examine the content of the interviews and verify what the participants said.

To analyse the gathered data, thematic content analysis was used. This form of data analysis was ideal for the current study, as I was able to formulate themes from the interviews that I conducted and report on the similarities and differences that arose from the participants' answers. The interviews that were conducted served as a platform to enlighten the description of the study.

1.8 Quality criteria

Interpretivism was adopted for this study, which is a particular lens through which I examined the practice of research; a paradigmatic vision of social science (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). To make the study trustworthy, interpretivist research requires definite components (c.f. Chapter 3). The Interpretivist researcher usually adheres to the following criteria: credibility, generalisability, dependability and confirmability, in accordance with Guba's model of trustworthiness as described by Shenton (2004).

In this study, credibility was maintained by presenting every interview as a whole and without any editing that may alter the opinions of the participants. To be able to generalise the findings of this research, the participants were chosen in a gender and racially unbiased way. After analysing the data, the themes were discussed with participants to confirm that I interpreted their opinions correctly and to ensure

dependability. Conformability will be ensured by keeping record in the forms of a research diary and transcriptions of all the interviews; interviews will be recorded and saved so that I can listen to them persistently while analysing for themes.

1.9 Ethical considerations

The following concerns were considered in this study (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005): informed consent, confidentiality, deception, harm to participants, reporting results and language differences (c.f. Chapter 3). The participants were given a consent form and informed at all times of what they were doing and why. They were also assured that their answers would be handled confidentially, and their identities were protected. No deception occurred as the participants was informed about the study at all times. The research was not harmful to participants and they had the option to withdraw at any stage of the study. The participants knew for which institution the results will be published in. I was also sensitive to the different cultures and language differences that existed (c.f. Appendix A: Interview protocol; and Appendix B: Letters of consent).

1.10 Overview of chapters

To ensure the well-woven tapestry that is my research study, I needed to make sure all the different threads are organized. To guarantee a well-structured research report in which the research questions and aims are addressed and in which the content weaves a logical thread, chapters were structured in the following manner:

Chapter 1: General Orientation

Chapter 1 gave the reader an indication of why I wanted to do the study, i.e. the rationale and purpose of the study, as well as an overview of the key concepts and research methodology I followed.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This chapter focuses on important aspects from literature. It provides a critical review of literature pertaining to this research by discussing the three threads that make up the tapestry of a beginner teacher, namely the nature of beginner teachers' selves, different teacher education programmes and the Possible Selves Theory.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

In this chapter, the focus is on an in-depth discussion of the research methodology as well as the research design used for this study. I also explain how participants were selected and strategies used to collect and analyse the researched data. Quality criteria and ethical considerations important for this study is also elaborated on.

Chapter 4: Data analysis – Full-time beginner teachers

This chapter provides an in-depth sketch of the full-time participants and informs the reader of what was discovered during the data analysis.

Chapter 5: Data analysis – Part-time beginner teachers

This chapter starts with a detailed sketch of the part-time participants and enlightens the reader of what was discovered during the data analysis.

Chapter 6: Recommendations and conclusions

Chapter 6 provides the similarities, differences and new findings of this study, as well as the limitations and recommendations.

2. CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

*"**Invisible threads** are the strongest ties."*

— Friedrich Nietzsche (1844 – 1900)

2.1 Introduction

Everything in life is tied together. People are tied together by relationships. Business, economy and trade are all tied together in their common quest for profit. Our actions are tied to consequences. Our rights are tied to responsibilities. Nietzshe's quote about invisible threads endorses the strength of ties. Beginner teachers' thoughts, actions and ideas are tied together by different threads that all weave into an intricate pattern, creating a beautiful tapestry which becomes their teacher identities. In a sense, the literature review for a study also entails the choosing of relevant threads and weaving them together to create an academic argument on a specific topic, on the basis of what previous researchers found.

Evaluating earlier research on a topic is called a literature review (Bailey, 2017). For this literature review, I surveyed scholarly articles, books, and other sources applicable to a my specific area of interest (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, 2011) in order for me as researcher to find all literature applicable to my study. For this study, I used the Google Scholar search engine to find journal articles and saved them on my laptop where I could access them electronically. I contacted the university librarian to help me find literature regarding different teacher education programmes, as I could not find any on my own. My supervisor sent me various articles to read, and I visited the university library to access books on my topic of study. Only articles and books that were published in English were used.

Beginner teachers are influenced by many threads that weave together to form their teaching identities. Just as the beginner teacher is a tapestry made of different threads, this study is also made up of many different threads. Searching for literature meant that I collected works, or threads, which helped to put together the tapestry that is this study.

In this chapter I divide the literature review to include three core threads that weaved together the most relevant concepts to answer the research question posited by this study. I start with the first thread, namely the *nature of beginner teachers' selves*. This includes influences on choosing teaching as a career, the development of beginner teachers' identities and general challenges faced by beginner teachers. Next, I elucidate *teacher education programmes as an influential construct on beginner teachers' identities*. I provide a brief history of teacher education programmes and discuss the nature of teacher education programmes both locally and abroad as well as the aims of teacher education programmes. I include a discussion on the different 'routes' to becoming a professional teacher and the practical aspects of teacher education programmes. I then tie this section together with illustrating the influence of teacher education programmes on beginner teachers' identities as it is currently presented in the scholarly literature reviewed for this study. Lastly, I discuss the *Possible Selves Theory* (Markus and Nurius, 1986) as conceptual framework which underpinned and informed the literature review of this study.

A note on terminology: Teaching practice vs Workplace integrated learning

While conducting my literature research, it became evident that two different terms were being used with regards to work experience, namely *workplace integrated learning* and *teaching practice*. Jackson (2018) mentions that "workplace integrated learning is also referred to as work-based learning and cooperative education" (p. 2) while Foncha, Abongdia and Adu (2015) remarks that "teaching practice is an important component of becoming a teacher" (p. 127).

It is important to note that the two expressions are somewhat similar in definition, but when examined closer one can see there are nuanced differences between the two. I explain these differences after the following definitions from current literature.

Foncha, Abongdia and Adu (2015) defines teaching practice as:

> School experience or teaching practice is an important component of becoming a teacher. This is the case because it exposes student teachers' experience in the actual teaching and learning environment. During teaching practice, a student teacher is given the opportunity to try the art of teaching before actually getting into the real world of the teaching profession (p.127).

Alternatively, Jackson (2018) defines workplace integrated learning as:

> Workplace integrated learning's key purpose is to develop professional competence, achieved through the application of theory into practice in an authentic setting (p. 3).

Both terms refer to new employees trying to apply theory into practice while being exposed to a certain workplace environment. On the one hand, "Workplace integrated learning is the term most often used within the Australasian context, to identify the myriad experiences that engage students in the workplace" (Ferns, Campbell and Zegwaard, 2014, p. 1). On the other hand, where teaching practice is concerned, it is "positioned alongside discussions on practising an engaged pedagogy to enable teaching practices that are more congruent with an Afrocentric worldview" (Cherrington, 2017, p. 72). While scrutinizing different articles concerning workplace integrated learning, I noticed that the term "workplace integrated learning" was more often used in professions regarding engineering, health or business sectors as well as from Australasian journals. This contrasts with the term "teaching practice", as it was the leading term in Educational journals *worldwide*.

For the purpose of this study, the two terms were used interchangeably. Teaching practice was the preferred term to use because it was the predominant term used in the literature obtained. However, I acknowledge the existence of workplace integrated learning and that it is similar to teaching practice.

2.2 First thread: The nature of beginner teachers' selves

"The universe is a trillion, trillion threads moving in seemingly unrelated directions. Yet when you look at them together, they create a remarkable tapestry."
- Richard Paul Evans

As a beginner teacher, you feel like you have to do and be in countless places all at once, as I can attest from my own experiences. All the different things to remember, things to do, things *not* to do, where to be and when you have to be there – it all seems like it is unrelated to the one thing you studied for: just being a teacher.

Nevertheless, as a beginner teacher, even though it feels unrelated, it all forms part of molding you into becoming a teacher. All the directions that you are being pulled in, all the moments when you feel like you want to unravel at the ends… that is where the nature of a beginner teacher's self is formed; that is where their threads are woven into a tapestry called their teaching identity.

Within the first intense and formative years of teaching, the time spent learning to teach influences the decision on what type of teacher people want to become as well as whether they want to remain in the teaching profession (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). Fantilli and McDougall (2009) state that there is a need for the voices of beginner teachers while they are in the challenging process of outlining how they are going to be successful, and that existing research has a gap and is not sufficient. The voice of the beginner teacher, with particular reference to the development of their own teaching identity in the first years of teaching, ought to be essential in drafting or adapting any programme that adds to the prospect for achievement in this profession. Essentially, the voice of those for whom changes are being implemented, namely beginner teachers, must be embraced in order to understand their reality in a difficult landscape (Fantilli and McDougall, 2009).

We know (quite often) that pedagogy is the main focus in our teacher preparation programmes, but once out in the world of work, beginner teachers must also confront a roller coaster ride of emotions and personalities within the context of the school community. Unlike student teachers who receive assistance and aren't afraid to ask for assistance, beginner teachers often need to face the realities of surviving the first years teaching on their own (Podsen and Denmark, 2007). Beginner teachers are expected to execute tasks and be operational even though they are set similar duties as their colleagues who are more experienced. However, most of those teaching tasks are unfamiliar to the beginner teachers – curriculum, students, professional norms, resting requirements, as well as administrative policies and procedures (Feiman-Nemser, 2001).

2.2.1 Beginner teachers' identities: Training and the first years

There are two basic professional duties that beginner teachers partake in – teaching and learning to teach – and certain aspects can only be experienced in practice, no matter the quality of the teacher education programme (Rusznyak, 2015).

Learning to teach only starts when beginner teachers enter their own classroom and encounter what real teaching feels like. The different teacher education programmes lay the groundwork and offer practical modules in teaching, but nothing prepares a beginner teacher for the realities of a real classroom.

As early as 1983, Bush stated that:

> The conditions under which a person carries out the first years of teaching have a strong influence on the level of effectiveness which that teacher is able to achieve and sustain over the years; on the attitudes which govern teachers' behavior over even a forty-year career; and, indeed, on the decision whether or not to continue in the teaching profession (p. 3).

Early on, Veenman (1984) documented that beginner teachers faced an immense reality shock; beginner teachers experienced severe problems during their first years, and also stated that the knowledge gained during their teacher education was being "washed out" (Korthagen, Loughran and Russell, 2006). It is improbable that beginner would be able to participate in the solution of educational problems or teach according to demanding new standards for student learning, if they do not have access to sustained opportunities to learn at every step in their teaching career (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). A general definition of the teaching profession is that teaching is a transformed profession, with little or no stability between teacher education programmes and schools (Cooney, 2001; Sowder, 2007).

The concepts of self and identity have a vague association; that being said, the common definition of identity itself refers to how someone is perceived by themselves and others (Beijaard, 1995). Beginner teachers' professional identities have been formed by their individual school experiences, the methods and thoughts endorsed by their teacher education programme and an idyllic model of the teacher they have a hope of becoming (Beauchamp and Thomas, 2011; Anspal, Eisenschmidt and Löfström, 2012). While keeping in mind the correlation between teacher identity and the different theories about teaching, Mayer (1999) appealed that the concept of teacher identity is based on central principles about teaching and what it means to be a teacher; Mayer (1999) also stated that these principles are constantly restructured on the road of growing into a professional teacher.

Tickle (2000) indicated that there are two aspects which seem intertwined in a beginner teacher's identity, namely what others expected of them and what different teachers rated as significant. Early on, Borich (1999) similarly stated that the sense of self-identity that teachers experience, is comprised of how they relate that self-sense compared to others in professional settings; it is also developed from the duties and responsibilities of a teacher and accepting that professional role. Also, Korthagen (2004) stated that teaching activities and the teachers' professional identity may guide their view about teaching.

In the past few years, teachers' professional identity development as research topic have extended (Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop, 2004; Ponte and Chapman, 2008). A transmission or change in professional identity can be seen when a student teacher graduates and enters the workforce as a teacher; an emphasis is placed on the individual and their social setting as an essential part where understanding can be developed from that interchange (McNally, Blake, Corbin and Gray, 2008).

Ponte and Chapman (2008) provide different aspects that reflect upon a teacher's professional identity, namely their subject knowledge as well as personal reflection, their individual teaching style, their relationships with students, and their problem solving skills. Significant, too, are how they associate themselves with colleagues and parents, how involved they are in professional bodies and what type of teacher they hope to become (Ponte and Chapman, 2008).

Original studies by Mayer (1999) appealed that a separation between the terms teacher identity and teachers' practical roles should be presented: teaching identity incorporates a personal characteristic along with how one identifies with the teaching professional or how they feel as a teacher, whereas a teaching role denotes what is required to be a teacher in terms of performance and skills. In order to be recognized as a professional teacher, teachers need to not only "do the job" of teaching but also participate in the intellectual aspect of teaching (Korthagen, 2017). The beginner teacher's identity is influenced by numerous factors, and in this study I explored one of these – the teacher education programme through which they completed their studies.

2.2.2 Challenges faced by beginner teachers when in practice

During the last few years, teachers' roles have changed immensely; this is caused by an amalgamation of more diverse students as well as an intensification of tasks and demands. Other organizational and planning duties such as cooperation with parents and extra-curricular activities add to the workload of teachers (Lindgren, 2005). These same burden-loaded roles are expected from newly graduated teachers as well, namely independently organizing and carrying out their work while adapting to the school's expectations and local culture, and can overwhelm beginner teachers while they try to cope with everyday routine at school (Bjarnadòttir, 2005).

The classroom reality can often conflict with the teaching practice experienced by student teachers, no matter how good their training at university might have been (Lindgren, 2005). Conflicting experiences can contribute to the beginner teachers feeling unprepared when faced with issues such as classroom management, meeting pupils' expectations and understanding their school's culture (Stanulis, Fallona and Pearson, 2002). Simultaneously, beginner teachers generally create high, sometimes impractical, expectations for themselves. The experiences beginner teachers encounter upon their shift from student to teacher, frequently results in imaginative and capable teachers being frustrated, unsatisfied and finding their work unbearably difficult, eventually increasing the possibility of that beginner teaching becoming a victim of the profession (Fantilli and McDougall, 2009).

Incorporating teaching practice as an important aspect for the training of beginner teachers, is becoming a typical aspect for the majority of teacher education programmes. While completing their teaching practice, student teachers temporarily work at schools while they prepare and convey genuine lessons to actual pupils (Darling-Hammond, Hammerness, Grossman, Rust and Schulman, 2005). Practical experiences are more successful and effective when the actual experience reflect the realities of teaching (Rots, Kelchtermans and Aelterman, 2012).

Cochran-Smith (2005) and Zeichner (2010) stated that "These experiences, the exposure to the basic aspects of teaching, such as instructional planning, lesson delivery and interacting with real-life learners, falls short from the preparation that is deemed satisfactory for teaching in the twenty-first century due to its interwoven and growing responsibilities and obligations. In part, this is because teachers' engagement

in activities outside the classroom has become equally important to those inside the classroom. Aside from teaching, teachers are expected to cooperate effectively with peers, contribute to different intra-school and interschool activities and maintain a sound parent–teacher relationship, to name but a few of the excessive demands of teaching today." As a beginner teacher myself, I can agree with this statement. With times, the pressure from school management and even parents have given me the impression that the extra-curricular activities sometimes have higher priority than academics and classroom teaching. This can create confusing emotions for a beginner teacher as you do not know where to provide more attention – curricular or extra-curricular.

2.3 Second thread: Teacher education programmes

"Experience is never limited, and it is never complete; it is an immense sensibility, a kind of huge spider-web of the finest silken threads suspended in the chamber of consciousness, and catching every air-borne particle in its tissue."

- Henry James

Practical experience for a teacher is one of the most important parts of the whole teacher education programme, as defined later on. As inferred by James's quote, experience is never limited or complete, and the same relates to not only beginner teachers but also teachers overall. Everyday life of a teacher is ever-changing and no two days are the same. Teachers must be able to adapt to every single day to any situation given to them, whether it be a difficult child, a change in school routine or administration from the department that needs to be completed immediately. Thus the first years of involvement for a beginner teacher in schools are important for them as they gain vital experience. Different teacher education programmes allow for different practical sessions; full-time students may only get a few week's practical experience, and part-time students may have the option of working at a school while studying which means they gain experience the whole year around. This thread called the teacher education programme weaves an integral part of the beginner teacher's tapestry – the part that influences the most of their identity – the basic learnings of being a teacher. In the following section I provide a brief overview of the history of teacher education programmes.

2.3.1 Overview of the history of teacher education programmes

Teacher education finds itself in a critical stage. Rots *et al.*, (2010) point out the immense reality shock that student teachers experience, coming from the realities their practical training's classroom experience, may result in the termination of their teaching career dreams even before they graduate.

In certain countries, teacher education has taken the form of "training on the job", where the schools are now involved in this important part of teacher education (Korthagen, Kessels, Koster, Lagerwerf and Wubbels, 2001, p. 2). Back in 1990, Goodlad already argued that the preparation of student teachers for the realities of classroom teaching, is lacking and unsuccessful in outdated teacher education programmes. That being said, some teacher educators argued that it is their duty to provide student teachers with an appropriate basis in psychology and sociology for example, and not just help them obtain practical tools for managing a classroom (Korthagen *et al.*, 2001). This is what Clandinin (1995) already 24 years ago called "the sacred theory-practice story"; the conversion of theory on good teaching into practical use, being considered in teacher education. Nonetheless, numerous studies have indicated that it is still inadequate insufficient and unreal to simply transfer theory into practice (Korthagen *et al.*, 2001).

Granting that many full-time teacher education programmes now include multiple teaching practice timeframes which span across the duration of the programme, there still exists a vast disconnect between the students' opportunities to experience classroom reality and what they are taught in their university modules (Zeichner, 2010). Ever since teacher education programmes came to light, there has been a definite challenge for teacher educators to help student teachers when it came to theorizing the correlation between theory and practice (Grossman, Hammerness and McDonald, 2009).

The correlation between theory and practice influences student teachers' experience when they enter their teaching practice (Cheng, Cheng and Tang, 2010). Three core facets orientates these influences' source, namely teaching context, pre-training experiences and the teacher education programme (Cheng, Cheng and Tang, 2010). Figure 2.1 represents the different sources of influences on student teachers' conceptions of teaching.

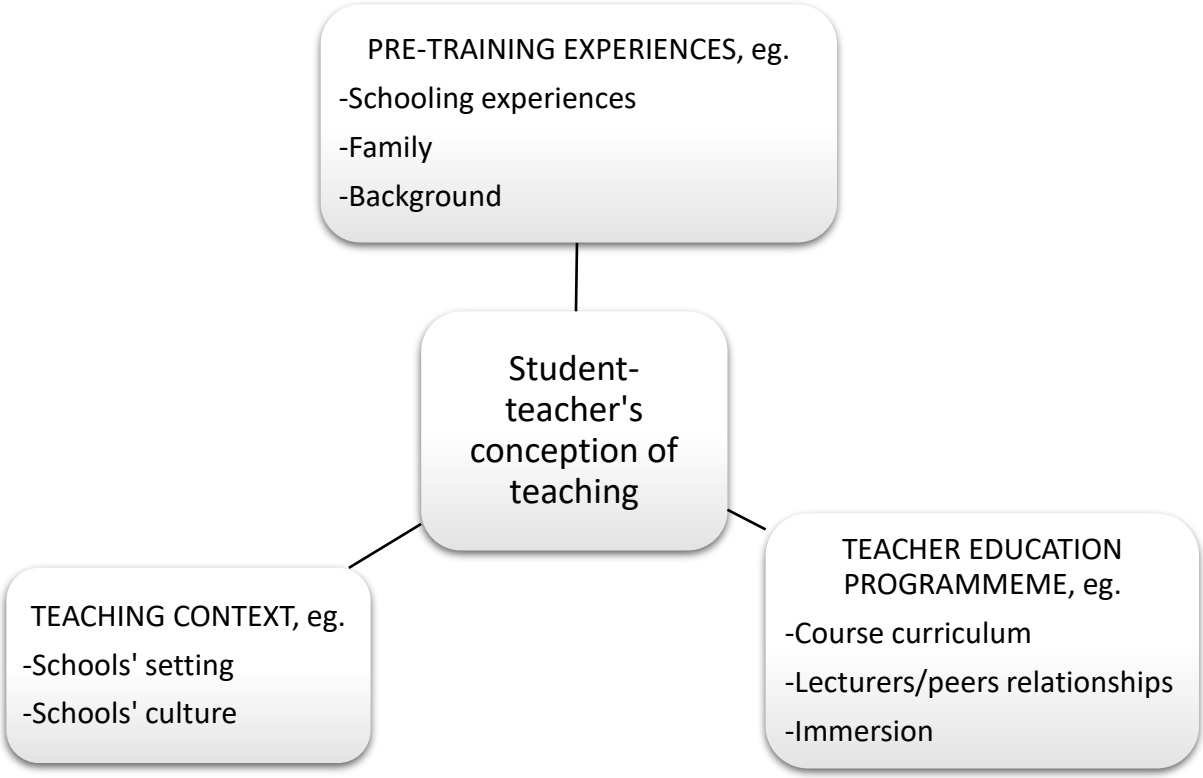

Figure 2-1: Different influences on student teachers' conceptions of teaching (Cheng, Cheng & Tang, 2010)

For the purpose of this study I focused on only the third leg of Cheng's model (Figure 2.1), namely teacher education programmes. Teacher education programmes comprise of diverse scopes: the content and teaching of the prescribed curriculum in addition to the hidden curriculum (Cheng, Cheng and Tang, 2010).

The content of many teacher education programmes include assorted modules which include subject-matter readings; general and the basis of education studies; teaching techniques; and teaching practice (Zeichner and Gore, 1990; Stuart and Tatto, 2000). Furlong, Barton, Miles, Whiting and Whitty (2000) stated that many student teachers sees higher education as a vital source of models and ideas for teaching by observing their lecturers who teach them. This possibly falls part of a case of "apprenticeship of observation" as Lortie (1975) defined.

2.3.2 Teacher education programmes in South Africa

Each South African child has the basic right to quality, and yet there remains fragments of the school system which still engages in low-quality education in various historically underprivileged parts, regardless of the country's positive turn since 1994 (Fourie and

Fourie, 2017). Teachers need to be motivated and well trained with the aim to be competent to carry out a teachers' seven roles as demarcated in the *Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications* (MRTEQ) (Fourie and Fourie, 2017).

Mashau, Mutshaeni and Kone (2017) stated that:

> One of the greatest challenges facing the South African education system is the lack of production of sufficient qualified, competent teachers that can provide quality teaching for all school subjects and phases (p. 167).

Initial teacher education (ITE) programmes in South Africa was offered in teacher training colleges, but were racially divided during the apartheid era (Pournara, 2009). The end of the apartheid system in 1994 allowed for a new democratic lenience and conveyed several modifications in teacher education and higher education programmes. The Department of Education (1997) renovated the, then current, education system by presenting a new syllabus supported by values of social fairness, access and redress, through it notice 1196 of 1997, "*White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education in South Africa"* (Kanjee, Sayed and Rodriguez, 2010; Sayed and Motala, 2012). Two major changes in higher education were the amalgamation of teacher training colleges into universities (Pournara, 2009) and the improvement of Teachers' Certificate, Diploma and Higher Diploma courses into two qualifications: the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) and Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) (Department of Higher Education and Training [DHET], 2015).

With the B.Ed. degree being a four-year programme, the PGCE is presented part-time over two years or full-time over one year, after obtaining a Bachelor's degree or equal diploma (DHET, 2015). Admission into the PGCE programme requires students to have achieved the essential content knowledge in teaching a subject (Nomlomo and Sosibo, 2016). Nevertheless, aside from their content knowledge, students still need to attain practical and pedagogical knowledge which needs to be applied in a real classroom context (DHET, 2015). As a result, a practical timeframe of between eight to twelve weeks are required from PGCE students, where they spend supervised time in schools and assessed on their teaching practice (Nomlomo and Sosibo, 2016).

Mukeredzi, Mthiyane and Bertram (2015) point out that in South Africa, evidence indicates great numbers of under-and unqualified teachers, and as a result the quantity

of competent and qualified teachers remains a challenge. This may be a result of the reformation of teacher education, the extension of access to schooling and the termination of teacher colleges after 1994, all of which generated severe qualified teacher demand exceeding supply (Mukeredzi, Mthiyane and Bertram, 2015).

Perraton (2015) held that there are four important elements to include in teacher education. These elements are increasing student teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects they are to teach, refining the general educational background of the student teachers, the expansion of practical abilities and proficiencies, and teaching of children (Mashau, Mutshaeni and Kone, 2017). In South Africa, seven joint roles have to be fulfilled by all teachers (DHET, 2015). Furthermore, the DHET (2015) also specifies a set of basic capabilities required of newly qualified teachers. It is the responsibility of teacher educators to provide student teachers with the necessary information that will support them to be competent in these roles successfully (Fourie and Fourie, 2017). Part of the responsibility also lies with the teacher education programme which must provide accurate content for teacher educators to support student teachers in their journey.

2.3.3 Teacher education programmes abroad

There has been a rise in social needs over the last two decades, which resulted in education structures to be tested ever more globally (Pretorius, 2004). Societies are constantly being changed by political adjustment, economic globalisation, workplace reform, advanced technologies and demographic changes. Taking into account these changes, several countries have become attentive to the fact that the traditional modes of delivery of education would not suffice anymore. As a result, comprehensive transformation of educational programmes has been implemented by several countries since the late 1980s (Pretorius, 2004).

Nicklin (1994) stated that commonly, the biggest alteration in teacher education programmes in the United States, included building closer connections with public schools, lengthening teacher education programmes to five years, assigning potential teachers in schools more regularly and adding the importance of technology in schools. Even though Nicklin commented on teacher education programmes in 1994, it is still relevant today in the United States.

As part of the transformation movement, one initiative that was deemed reasonably successful, was the establishment of Professional Development Schools that functioned as locations for experimental practicums of student teachers and for in-service training for the development of working teachers (Pretorius, 2004).

The term *Professional Development Schools* can be defined as a collection of public schools and universities forming a partnership, meaning that they work together in the preservice education of teachers by sharing the decisions concerning teaching practice and placement throughout the teacher education programme (Morey, Chiero and Bezuk, 1997). It is important to note that within the South African context, this does not occur, where tertiary institutions and schools work independently from each other. Even though the lecturers visit and observe the students during their practical term, there is a lack of in-depth communication and deep engagement between the school and university to state what is expected from both parties.

One of the main opinions mentioned as part of the teacher education programmes abroad, is that they have a close relationship between the tertiary institution and the schools that host students for their practical term. This does not happen in South Africa, which indicate that there is a divide and uncertainty of what both parties expect from each other. Tertiary institutions in South Africa must forge a closer relationship with schools, so that when students are placed for their teaching practice, the school can follow the guidelines as communicated directly from the tertiary institution. With that closer relationship also comes an open line of communication from the schools' side; this means that the tertiary institutions can have an input from the schools as well, for example the implementation of practical terms.

2.3.4 Aims of teacher education programmes

Teacher education programmes' objective is to ensure that student teachers are equipped with a set of competencies that are unique and content specific, in order to handle the challenges and complexities that may arise in their teaching career (Banks *et al*. 2001). Using their knowledge gained from their teacher education programme in practice can be quite challenging though (Cheng, Cheng and Tang, 2010).

Researchers agree that in order for teacher education programmes to be influential, they need to have a strong image of teaching, that it needs to be meticulously related

to practice, and that teacher educators need to be structurally and conceptually coherent (Darling-Hammond, 1999; Brouwer and Korthagen, 2005; Kennedy, 2006; Boyd *et al.*, 2009). Successful teacher education programmes have coherent modules that include teaching practice, and portray a shared vision to offer opportunities for students to connect their teaching practice experiences with their university modules (Klette and Hammersness, 2016). In other words, for a teacher education programme to be successful, they need to offer coherent modules; but students may not perceive such programmes as successful even though programme coordinators may have purposely intended them to be so (Canrinus *et al.*, 2017).

2.3.5 Different routes to "becoming a teacher"

Levine (2006) raised the problem of choosing where a teacher should study: in full-time programmes offered by traditional universities or by means of one of the many part-time programmes, which is basically two sides to the same coin. Full-time programmes traditionally rely on professors and lecturers as programme coordinators, with the module focus on theory and academic resources; while part-time programmes utilize school experts as primary resource, emphasizing on practical experience (Levine, 2006).

This is an important question that is integral to the second thread of different teacher education programmes, as it influences the development of beginner teachers' identity. It also shows that there are questions being raised in research about the differences in teacher education programmes, and that more research needs to be conducted to fully comprehend the extent the different teacher education programmes have on the beginner teacher.

Next follows a discussion of the two main routes, namely full-time teacher education programmes, and part-time teacher education programmes. Teacher education programmes have an important role to play in developing beginning teachers' identity (Pendergast, Garvis and Keogh, 2013). Searching for relevant literature specifically on the influence of different teacher education programmes on beginner teacher identity was challenging during this research process. Searches usually resulted in an explanation of the offerings of and requirements for these programs and/or their historical place in the educational arena, but very little studies were found on the link between teacher education programmes and its influence on beginner teacher identity.

Articles related to the two different teacher education programmes, namely full-time and part-time programmes, were specifically problematic to examine because of the lack of a clear link with the specific focus of the study. I therefore feel that this study added a noteworthy contribution to existing literature.

2.3.5.1 Full-time teacher education programmes

There are different opinions when it comes to teacher education programmes; some believe that the teaching profession requires a vast amount of education before becoming a practitioner, much like medicine or law, and some believe that teaching is like a skill that is learned mainly on the job, like journalism (Levine, 2006). Levine (2006) also states that the ever-changing prospects for schools are worsened by the divide over whether teaching is a career or a profession, whether tertiary institutions or unconventional programmes should be responsible for teacher education programmes, and whether teachers should be in the classroom while studying for their job or study for their job before being a classroom.

Accentuating the intricacy associated with learning to teach, Darling-Hammond *et al.* (2005, p. 368) specified that, “Even when observing good teaching or experiencing it for oneself, one cannot easily glean a deep understanding of the complexity of the work”. This can be contributed to the fact that many student teachers have acquired either a deeply rooted, or limited idea, of teaching and learning from their own schooling experiences before they enter teacher education (Nomlomo and Sosibo, 2016).

2.3.5.2 Part-time teacher education programmes

Beginner teachers receive a certain amount of support to help preserve the start of their career; this short-term preservation is subjective to the quality and level of support given (Joiner and Edwards, 2008). During recent years, the shift from being a student teacher to a teacher of students have become more prevalent in teacher education programmes who customarily offer support to beginner teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2009). Intrinsically, there are recognized benefits of beginner teachers’ involvement in well-made programmes which value decent support and preparation for sensibly designated, qualified advisors (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Brock and Grady, 2009).

Part-time students have the opportunity to be able to work while they study, where full-time students have the opportunity to be part of a student life culture. Student life culture can be explained as providing a student with a variety of choices but little guidance (Mitchell, 2014). Student life plays a particular role in higher education. Students attend classes with the intention to learn; made possible by attending classes but also in the numerous teachable moments that occur outside the classroom\(Mitchell, 2014). These moments are imperative to the forming of a students' identity, and in turn will then have an impact on their future/teaching identity.

2.3.6 The practical aspects of teacher education programmes

Teaching practice is a vital part of teacher education, by means of offering student teachers the opportunity to outline and improve their teaching expertise as well as providing an important association between practice and theory (Koç, 2012). Traditional teaching practice models assign student teachers to mentor teachers which will supervise their performance during the course of their practicum at the designated school (Koç, 2012). Furthermore, a university lecturer may occasionally visit the school to supervise and evaluate lessons and progress made by the student teacher (Zeichner, 2006).

These mentors to the student teachers (namely the university lecturer and school mentor teacher) work together with the student to assist them in gaining essential professional knowledge and skills (Healy and Welchert, 1990). Even though existing literature states the "perfect" way of gaining practical experience, realistically it does not always transpire that way. Numerous problems can occur during teaching practice; the mentor teacher a student is assigned to may be unaccommodating or the university lecturer may never visit. These realities can result in a student teacher partaking in a negative practical experience or not learning enough during their practicum. This has an effect on the manner in which the beginner teacher shapes their beginner teacher identity.

Practical experience is the basis of a teacher education programme, as spending a vast amount of time in schools, taking part in practical experiences of different lengths, forms part of learning to teach. Wilson, Floden and Ferrini-Mundy (2002) stated that practical experiences are seen as the single most influential element to teacher education by both beginner and experienced teachers alike. Potential teachers who

could not get comfortable with class management, discipline and instruction are often incapable of focusing on their students' needs, regardless of how prepared they are for their subject lessons (Wilson, Floden and Ferrini-Mundy, 2002).

The reality of classroom teaching can still differ vastly from teaching practice, no matter how successful the teacher education programme was in preparing their students for their future profession. Numerous beginner teachers may therefore feel overwhelmed by the transition from being a student teacher to teaching full time (Lindgren, 2005). For instance, the specific methods and basic courses that the student teachers complete, is not common knowledge for mentor teachers with whom students interact with for the period of their teaching practices (Zeichner, 2010). Student teachers learn different teaching methods in their university modules, but they rarely have the opportunity to observe, implement or be given dedicated feedback about those methods.

Even if the teaching methods supported in university modules occur while they are observing their mentor teacher's lessons, they do not inevitably gain access to the decision-making and thinking progressions of those skilled mentors (Darling-Hammond *et al.*, 2005; Zeichner, 2007) who are typically immensely undercompensated for the intricate and demanding effort they are expected to do with student teachers. Darling-Hammond (2009) stated that the absence of association amongst university modules and teaching practices can be referred to as the Achilles Heel of teacher education.

2.3.7 The influence of teacher education programmes on beginner teachers' identities

In this section I discuss the influence of teacher education programmes on beginner teacher identity. Finding relevant literature on this topic was especially challenging as there was limited resources involving this specific question. This gap of the influence of teacher education programmes on beginner teacher identity in literature is what I hoped to fill by conducting this study. In contrast to some of the limited resources that I could find, there were some resources that concurred with the literature I sought after. Zuzovsky and Donitsa-Schmidt (2017) stated the following:

> Both models have their advantages and disadvantages. The advantages of one are considered the disadvantages of the other and vice versa. The concurrent model *(part-time teacher education programmes)* offers a more integrated learning experience and a longer period of socialization into the profession, but requires an early career decision from people who are also less mature and less knowledge-able. Structured in a more rigid manner, it does not allow much flexibility. By contrast, the consecutive model *(full-time teacher education programmes)* relies on a stronger foundation of previously acquired subject matter knowledge. It allows for a later and more flexible entry into teacher education and more readily accommodates changes in students' interests, conditions and changes in the labour market (p. 415)

Similar to the above quote, the interview transcriptions revealed that one of the biggest influences that teacher education programmes had on the participants' beginner teacher identity, was practical experience. Since there is limited literature available, I decided to discuss the issue of practical experience in this section.

In a blatant difference from their teaching practice, many beginner teachers often do not have any support once employed full-time. Experience is important for evolving practical wisdom but it is not adequate (Lunenberg and Korthagen, 2009). The triangle in Figure 2-2 shows the relationship between theory, experience, and practical wisdom. This model's three elements are essentially different in nature, but it is the teacher and their identity who makes the elements come together or not (Lunenberg and Korthagen, 2009). It is important to note that this is a complex, non-linear progression, in which the situation (i.e. circumstances within the workplace), performs a vital reassuring or obstructing role (Lunenberg and Korthagen, 2009). Beginner teachers can start developing their teaching identity once they realize that a definite gap exists between theory and practice, between their prior as well as newly gained opinions about teaching, or between reality and their idealistic world (Lee and Schallert, 2016).

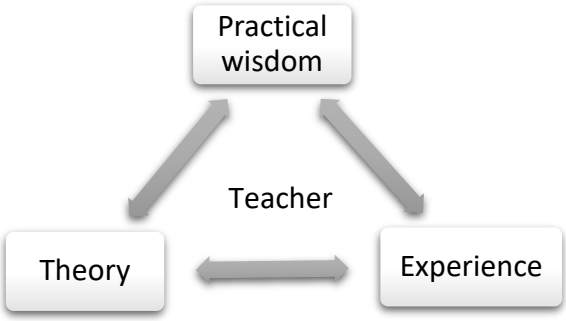

Figure 2-2: "The triangular relationship between practical wisdom, theory and experience" (Lunenberg and Korthagen, 2009, p.229)

To understand the relationship between the three legs of Figure 2-2, it can help to distinguish between theory and practical wisdom. From their teacher education programme, beginner teachers may have gained knowledge about the emotional side of leaning, namely key philosophies and notions, but they may also have deepened their theoretical perception into why it is important to show empathy towards students (Lunenberg and Korthagen, 2009). However, this perception cannot guarantee that beginner teachers will know how to react empathetically in situations or be able to be aware of their learners' feelings, when they first start teaching. Being able to identify different learners' feelings and needs, as well as being able to react to those feelings in a pedagogical tactful manner, is the essence of practical wisdom (Lunenberg and Korthagen, 2009).

Korthagen *et al.* (2001) add that it is the teacher education programmes' responsibility to equip student teachers with a comprehensive view on the essence of education. A beginner teacher should be offered not only the practical tools for dealing with classroom management, but be presented with a suitable foundation in sociology and psychology as well (Korthagen *et al.*, 2001). Providing beginner teachers with a complete background of the teaching profession as part of the teacher education programme will have a positive influence on beginner teacher identity, as it will help complete the triangular relationship between practical wisdom, theory and experience.

There remains limited research about the identity construction of beginning teachers entering teacher education, and the impact of the teacher education programmes on the development of these attributes (Pendergast, Garvis and Keogh, 2013). Because of this limited literature on the topic, I believed that the model presented by Lunenberg and Korthagen (2009) held the closest relevant information.

In the next segment I discuss the third thread to the beginner teachers' tapestry, namely the Possible Selves Theory.

2.4 Third thread: The Possible Selves Theory

> *"Don't you ever think of going back?" Silly question. "**There are threads that help you find your way back, and there are threads that intend to bring you back.** Mind turns to the pull, it's hard to pull away. I'm always thinking of going back."*
>
> *— Jeanette Winterson, Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit (1985)*

The third and final thread to my beginner teacher's tapestry is a thread that repeats itself over and over – it's the thread that starts the tapestry, it changes and shows up in the middle again, and it adds the finishing touch to it. The Possible Selves Theory is exactly that – it entails that you as person, or beginner teacher, has a past self (where the tapestry begins), a present self (the middle part) and a future self (where the tapestry finishes off). Even though you are the same "self", or thread, throughout your tapestry of becoming a teacher, you change and adapt and become a teacher because of all the influences at every stage of your teaching career. Your past self is where you began; your studies and the teacher education programme you chose. Your present self is where you are now as a beginner teacher; what experience you gain and challenges you face. Your future self is your aim as a teacher; what you wish to become and the identity you wish to have one day as a successful teacher.

Abend (2008) states the purpose of including theory as:

> Theories are formulated to explain, predict, and understand phenomena and, in many cases, to challenge and extend existing knowledge within the limits of critical bounding assumptions. The theoretical framework is the structure that can hold or support a theory of a research study. The theoretical framework introduces and describes the theory that explains why the research problem under study exists (p.1).

Throughout this chapter, I have outlined that this research study is made up of three threads that contribute to answering the research questions. Although each thread on its own can be quite ordinary, when woven together they are stronger than a single thread and form an expedient whole (Erard, 2013).

These threads that produced a whole, can also be woven into the tapestry that is the Possible Selves Theory. The Possible Selves Theory clarifies that people have a past self (where the tapestry begins), a present self (the middle part) and a future self (where the tapestry's loose ends are tied together).

Fundamentally, the metaphor makes use of a noun ("thread/tapestry") as well as a verb ("weave") and highlights how "weaving threads/tapestries" can be seen as a moving and enduring process. Simply stated, this metaphor can be used to help readers contemplate how skills mature over time (Erard, 2013). Tying that metaphor together with the Possible Selves Theory, fits perfectly, as the theory has at its basis that identity is a changing process and that it develops over time, just as the weaving of a tapestry does. There is a constant ongoing process, where you started (your past self), where you see yourself now (present self) and where you hope to be one day (your future self). The successful inter-weaving (Simon, 2013) of the metaphor with the Possible Selves Theory is what gives this conceptual framework vigour, rigour and is what links this research study together successfully.

In this section I briefly discuss the theory as well as the application thereof for this study.

2.4.1 History and background of the Possible Selves Theory

Markus and Nurius (1986) stated that the Possible Selves characterize what people would want to develop into. The theory also represents the individuals' fears of who they are becoming and their hopes of who they would like to come to be (Markus and Nurius, 1986). The pursuit of self-relevant goals as well as an illustration of how future-oriented thoughts may provide information relevant to a person's identity, is a part of the Possible Selves Theory (Hamman *et al.*, 2010). The Possible future self is represented by particular hopes, fears and fantasies for each individual, and are not just a random set of abstract roles or states of being (Markus and Nurius, 1986). For the beginner teachers' identity, that includes their own hopes, fears and fantasies of what kind of teacher they image to be in the future.

Researchers on current issues involving teacher identity, have been using the Possible Selves Theory to address these similar interests (Hamman *et al.*, 2010). There are complex and multifaceted dimensions to identity development; when

teachers do introspection they entertain both notions of “Who am I?” as well as “Who am I as a teacher?”, which confirms an inseparable connection and creates a problem when exploring teacher identity (Beauchamp and Thomas, 2011, p. 763). Part of the Possible Selves are the Past selves, where an individual may be identified with again in the future (Markus and Nurius, 1986). An adult, for example, will never be a small child again. Through these processes, beginner teachers’ thoughts about their past identity may work together with their present to influence different teaching and learning circumstances; the progress will be clearly shown in their projected future selves (Lee and Schallert, 2016).

Although understandably, many researchers focus primarily on present identity, it is frequently recognized that the current self does not exist in a vacuum (Strahan and Wilson, 2006). Even though an individual’s identity may be concerned with the behaviours and state of mind about their present self, reflections on their past self as well as their future fears and hopes must be included (Sedikides and Skowronski, 1995; Taylor and Wayment, 1995; Ross and Wilson, 2003). This broader conceptualization of identity extends the focus into both directions and suggests that a person’s present identity is influenced by both their past and their possible future selves (Strahan and Wilson, 2006). In turn, Strahan and Wilson (2006) explained that present identity affects individual’s constructions of their remembered and predicted selves. Researchers have found evidence that both past and future selves wield an important impact on the present self (Markus and Nurius, 1986; Oyserman, And and Bybee, 2002; Ross and Wilson, 2003).

The past selves of beginner teachers can thus have an influence on the beginner teachers’ Possible Selves and future selves. Full-time students may have the past selves with no teaching experience, but a great deal of theoretical knowledge. That can influence their present selves when they are a beginner teacher. A lack of experience may influence their feeling of readiness when teaching, but the fact that they have more theoretical knowledge can boost their confidence and in turn shape their teaching identity.

2.4.2 Criticism against the Possible Selves Theory

Critics against research on teacher identity put forward suggestions that, as presently theorized, this theory could come across as too narrow as it does not take advantage of both beginner and expert teachers and the insight they may offer (Hamman *et al.*, 2010). As a case in point, Rodgers and Scott (2008) stated that some questions on the development of identity has been left unexamined because most of the research in teacher identity has become known without giving thought to psychological models of such identity development. “Left largely unexplored by this literature, however, is the black box of how teachers should go about making the psychological shift from being authored by these forces to authoring their own stories, and how teacher educators might facilitate this process” (Rodgers and Scott, 2008, p. 733).

During their literature review, Beijaard *et al*. (2004) brought to light the understated deliberation of various factors, namely contextual and situational factors, that exists in the vast context that is the development of teacher identity. During a similar study, Cardelle-Elawar, Irwin and Lizarraga (2007) explored the experiences from teachers of three different countries (USA, Spain and Ghana), and discovered that context played a significant role in the development of teacher identity. Their exploration revealed that the development of teacher identity may possibly be influenced by cultural factors such as perspectives on history, politics, economics and their personal culture (Hamman *et al.*, 2010). Cardelle-Elawar *et al.* (2007) speculate that the circumstances where teachers are employed may alter a teacher’s identity. When looking at these situations, it is clear that when theoretical frameworks explore the development of teacher identity, that circumstantial considerations should be included (Hamman *et al.*, 2010).

When applying the Possible Selves Theory in the situation of developing new teacher identities, one can explore the motivations and influence that self-concepts may have on accomplishing goals relevant to teaching identity, as well as unfold the influence of future-oriented thought in teacher identity development (Hamman *et al.*, 2010). In the context of this study, it indicates that even though beginner teachers had a preconceived idea of what they want their teaching identity to be, it changed over the course of their first years in the teaching profession.

2.4.3 Linking the third thread: Application of theory to this study

Linking the Possible Selves Theory to relevant research on beginner teacher identity is significant as it concentrates on investigating the growth of beginner teachers' identity (Hamman *et al.*, 2010). Applying this theory to my study creates the necessary conceptual framework that explores identity-relevant, future-oriented and goal-directed aspects (Hamman *et al.*, 2010) when used in conjunction with the metaphor of threads. It also examines beginner teachers in their transition into becoming a teacher and forming their own beginner teacher identity; their beginner teacher identity will in turn have an influence on their identity formed in their first years of teaching.

Hamman *et al.* (2010) excites the following:

> Possible Selves Theory seems to be a particular good fit for examining the developing teacher identities of the newest teachers – student teachers engaged in their final teaching practicum, and newly graduated teachers during their first year of teaching. Both groups consist of individuals at varying points during the important phase of transition from student to teacher (p. 1349).

Beginner teachers' theoretical growth into becoming a teacher requires both inward and outward emphasis; the methods of developing their teacher identity can be influenced by critically examining themselves internally, while on the external level attention needs to be given to the school environment, students and other teachers (Lee and Schallert, 2016). Recent studies highlight the significance of examining themselves internally when proficient development is needed in beginner teachers (Conway and Clark, 2003; Poulou, 2007; Watzke, 2007), and recommend the outward concepts of teaching need to be developed in conjunction with this internal examination. This development path needs to be devoted to both the internal and external characteristics, working in conjunction with each other (Lee and Schallert, 2016). In this way, beginner teachers start to solidify their concept of self as they grow in understanding teaching's basic nature. These changes become lifelong as they project themselves as teachers and stimulate their conceptual renovation. An example is shown in Figure 2-3 as a model of the interrelation between teacher identity development and conceptions of teaching.

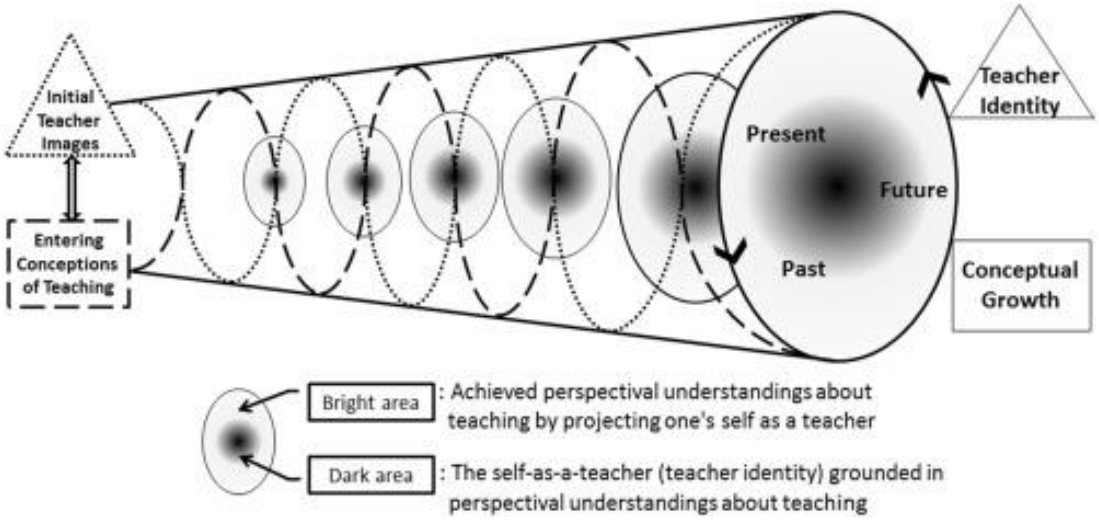

Figure 2-3: "The interrelation between teacher identity development and conceptions of teaching" (Lee and Schallert, 2016, p. 80)

In this model represented in Figure 2-3, the basic properties for teacher identity development are shared by the two aspects that form part of said development, namely teacher identities and concepts of teaching. Beginner teachers use their expanding knowledge of teaching to recognize, adjust and recreate their opinions about teaching and their Past Selves, which results in a better understanding of what it entails to be a teacher (Lee and Schallert, 2016). As Lee and Schallert (2016) explains it, "these changes are represented in the model by ovals that are increasing over time, with a bright area to refer to a growing perspectival understanding about teaching and a dark area to refer to a growing sense-of-self-as-teacher, eventually leading to a teacher identity grounded in more sophisticated perspectival understanding about teaching" (p. 80).

This study explored the influence that part-time and full-time teacher education programmes had on the beginner teachers' identity. In terms of this theory it entailed that beginner teachers' identity may have been influenced by their past selves, which has been influenced by specific teacher education programmes, and that the fears, hopes and dreams of their possible future selves in turn also influenced their present selves. Thus, the beginner teachers' identity was influenced by both their Present Self together with their Future Self, which developed their concept of teaching. This model illustrated this "dynamic mechanism by representing the two different routes as intertwined (or knotted), and as developing through spiralling phases" (Lee and Schallert, 2016, p. 81). This made it clear that the beginner teachers' identity is knotted

and weaved together by their identities, or Possible Selves, connecting to the metaphor of threads. Beginner teachers may have an idea of what they think their teaching identity is (Present Self); but that identity is ever changing and will result in a different teaching identity later in their career, a Future Self that they may see as a teaching goal.

2.5 Synthesis of findings

In this segment I briefly list the main findings of the existing literature discovered within this field of study.

First thread: The nature of beginner teachers' selves

- Beginner teachers' identities are unstable (Mayer, 1999; Beauchamp and Thomas, 2011; Anspal, Eisenschmidt and Löfström, 2012)
- Classroom reality differs from teacher education programme learnings (Bjarnadòttir, 2005; Lindgren, 2005; Fantilli and McDougall, 2009)
- Teaching practice experience is vital for beginner teachers prepare for their first year of teaching (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Darling-Hammond *et al.*, 2005; Rots, Kelchtermans and Aelterman, 2012)

Second thread: Teacher education programmes

- Limited literature on teacher education programmes exist in the South African milieu, especially on part-time teacher education programmes *and* relative to the influence thereof on beginner teacher identity
- South Africa's teacher education programmes are not up to standard compared to programmes abroad (Pournara, 2009; Modisaotsile and Madisaotsile, 2012; Sosibo and Nomlomo, 2014; Mukeredzi, Mthiyane and Bertram, 2015)
- Teaching practice is a vital part of a teacher education (Wilson, Floden and Ferrini-Mundy, 2002; Korthagen, Loughran and Lunenberg, 2005; Zeichner, 2007, 2010; Koç, 2012)

Third thread: The Possible Selves Theory

- Beginner teachers' Possible Selves are influence by both their past self and future self (Markus and Nurius, 1986; Strahan and Wilson, 2006; Lee and Schallert, 2016)

- The beginner teachers' identity development is influenced by their conception of teaching; their Possible Selves are all intertwined and has an influence on each other (Hamman *et al.*, 2010; Lee and Schallert, 2016)

Limited research about different teacher education programmes was available in the literature under review. Incomplete research was also exposed on the influence of teacher education programmes on beginner teacher identity (Chubbuck *et al.*, 2001; Beauchamp and Thomas, 2009; Cherrington, 2017; Du Plessis and Sunde, 2017). Most of the past research on beginner teacher identity only comprised of identities and factors that influenced them (Hobson *et al.*, 2009; Hong, 2010; Canrinus *et al.*, 2012; Nomlomo and Sosibo, 2016), except for the influence of teacher education programmes. It is for this reason that I believed this study would be essential in contributing to the existing literature and to add value to future research.

The following extract from my research diary shows the exhilaration experienced when I noticed the literature discovered in this chapter were all connected. While summarizing the findings, I reminisced this elation and felt that this study really may have the intended impact that I hoped for.

Research diary entry 2-1

It feels like everything is starting to fall into place. I think I'm really getting the hang of this "research" thing. It is a lot of work… reading a lot, thinking a lot, typing a lot, reading a lot… but the best feeling is when you read an article, and see how it matches up with another article that you read. And once you start putting everything together, it just flows and feels right. This is so exciting! - 3 March 2018

2.6 Conclusion: Weaving together three threads

In this chapter, I explored the three different threads that weave together the tapestry that is a beginner teacher. The first thread was the nature of beginner teachers' selves. The second thread explored different teacher education programmes and the practical aspect of those programmes. The third thread explored the Possible Selves Theory and the application thereof to a beginner teacher's identity. All three threads together weave a beautiful tapestry that forms the beginner teacher.

3. CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

"Words form the thread on which we string our experiences"

- Aldous Huxley, "The Olive Tree" (1936)

3.1 Introduction

In keeping with my conceptual framework of incorporating threads throughout my study, either weaving together the beginner teachers' identity or weaving together my dissertation, this chapter was where I could see that all my research threads were starting to weave a pattern. It was just a glimpse, but the pattern was starting to develop in my dissertation tapestry. The main data collection method was words: words spoken by beginner teachers in the form of semi-structured interviews as well as my research diary – their words and mine. It is their words which started to form the pattern of my dissertation tapestry, but also with their words I could start forming the tapestry that is their beginner teacher identities.

The focus of this study is to understand the influence of different teacher education programmes on beginner teacher identity. In chapter 2, I offered a conceptual lens in the form of the Possible Selves theory weaved together with the metaphor of threads. I also presented a composition of the relevant literature to my study. In chapter 3, I illuminate my role as researcher, refer to, and quote from my researcher's diary to shed light on how I dealt with all methodological aspects during the journey of this study. I discuss my methodological decisions as they inform the study. I justify my choice of research design and data collection strategies. I also set out the ethical issues that I encountered and dealt with during the study. I conclude this chapter with a discussion of the steps taken to ensure quality.

3.2 Role of the researcher

My role as researcher was to invest myself in collaborating with the participants in order to gather and analyse data, to be able to understand as core goal (Maree, 2016). For this research, it was to create an understanding of the phenomena at hand, namely the influence of different teacher education programmes on beginner teacher identity. Additionally, I needed to be able to move deeper into the phenomena being studied by asking additional questions and following intuitions, all the while remaining sensitive

to the participants and recording the data as accurately as possible (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010).

I chose to incorporate the use of a research diary (c.f. Chapter 3.6.4). It was vital that I used a research diary in order to deal with any biases that may have surfaced. I studied through a part-time teacher education programme while working full-time at a school; because of that there was the possibility of biased opinions that could emerge. By using a research diary, I could write down my personal opinions and think critically about them before I used it in this study. That resulted in me being able to disregard certain opinions that were influenced by my own experiences, and only observing the thoughts that were truly unbiased and relevant.

The extract below illustrates one of the struggles that I encountered while conducting this research study. It does not indicate an unbiased opinion, but rather the impact that reality has on a researcher. A researcher's diary not only deals with potential biases, but it also deals with personal matters, help construct outlines for chapters and keep track of timelines. Every element that has an influence on the study – whether personal or academic – can be recorded in the researcher's diary. Even though it is important to focus as much time as possible on your study, there are certain realities that one cannot put aside.

Research diary entry 3-1

I met with my supervisor again today. I am in two places at the moment – I am busy finishing up my research proposal, but I am also getting married in a month! I don't know where to take and where to leave – both are very important and very exciting! My supervisor suggested that I focus on my wedding and then work full speed once I get back from honeymoon. Shifting focus for now, but never forgetting what's important. – 27 July 2017

3.3 Research design

In this section I discuss the research design that this study followed. In table 3.1 I present in tabular format the research design (the research plan of this study). The different aspects of the table are then explained in detail after that.

Table 3-1: Research design

Research questions	• How do full-time teacher education programmes influence beginner teacher identities? • How do part-time teacher education programmes influence beginner teacher identities?
Focus	The focus of this study is to understand how different routes of teacher education programmes influence beginner teacher identity. This study explored experiences of beginner teachers, who studied either through full-time or part-time teacher education programmes, during their first years of teaching. It also discovered how beginner teachers developed their own teaching identity and to which extent their teacher education programme (full-time or part-time) had and influence on their identity.
Research design	
Ontological perspective	Nominalist perspective
Epistemological perspective	Interpretivist paradigm
Research approach	Qualitative research approach

To examine the practice of research, I had to deliberate three lenses significant to research: Ontological assumptions, which provided the Epistemological perspectives, which then contributed the Methodological considerations, as suggested by Hitchcock and Hughes (in Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, p. 3)

Paradigms are “models or frameworks for observation and understanding which shape both what we see and how we understand it” (Rubin and Babbie, 2013, p. 32). Fundamentally, paradigms provide us with a different perspective of reality, and are “frames of reference we use to organize our observations and reasoning” (Rubin and Babbie, 2013, p. 32). Denzin and Lincoln (2008, p. 31) offer a definition for a paradigm as a “net that contains the researchers’ epistemological, ontological and methodological premises”.

The term Ontology can be raised as our views of the world together with how we perceive reality, such as asking of “what kind of being the human being is” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008, p. 31) or pondering over “the nature of phenomena, entities, or social reality” (Mason, 2001, p. 14). Numerous ontological perceptions are used to refer to the diverse outlooks on reality, for instance of truths and opinions, subject and object, or deeds and actions (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, 2011). Qualitative research can use certain ontological perspectives applicable; for instance, when it is expected of the reality being examined to entail basic motivations, meanings, beliefs, as well as perceptions (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, 2011).

The ontological assumption states that you either accept that social reality can be understood by assuming that it has an external point of view; or be understood through words and within levels of individual consciousness – the realist or nominalist position (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). The nominalist stance was chosen, and it can be defined as the participants’ internal and subjective experiences that are important (Maree, 2016). For this study, it was the beginner teachers and their internal identity and experience of their first year of teaching that was viewed as significant. The influence of different teacher education programmes on beginner teacher identity was seen as an internal understanding that beginner teachers face. This internal experience is connected to the Possible Selves of the beginner teachers – what they view their teaching identity as and their teaching identity goals.

Issues explored in Epistemology perspectives include “what the relationship is between the inquirer and the known’’ (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008, p. 31) and “what might represent knowledge or evidence of the social reality that is investigated” and “what is counted as evidence” (Mason, 2001, p. 16). Burrell and Morgan (in Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, p. 6) explain Epistemological perspectives as knowledge that can be viewed in one of two ways: as a positivist stance or an interpretive stance.

When searching to understand people’s lived experiences from their personal perspective, often referred to as “inside perspective”, the Interpretivist approach is employed (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, 2011). Rather than studying facts like the positivist paradigm, interpretivism strives to “understand subjective meaningful experiences” as well as “the meaning of social actions within the context which people live” (Snape *et al.*, 2014, p. 7), involving focusing on personal connotations individuals

assign to reality. Therefore, the interpretivist paradigm emphasizes “the importance of interpretation and observation in understanding the social world” (Snape *et al.*, 2014, p. 7) which is an integral component of qualitative research.

Interpretivism was adopted for this study, which was used as a paradigmatic outlook on society (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). Interpretivism may lead to me having a more subjective, participatory role in the research process, and being empathetically and personally immersed in the research (Maree, 2016). With this study resonating more personally to me and my identity as a beginner teacher, it seemed fit for me to see this research through an interpretivist lens. It is important to note that an unbiased lens was used to interpret the findings in this study, but by being personally immersed it assisted me to empathize with the participants. The beginner teachers who participated interpreted their own teaching identities differently, and by being subjectively involved I could better understand what they meant and how they felt during their first year of teaching. By being able to interpret the interviews more accurately, it meant that the findings were more extensive and inclusive of relevant data.

The term methodology refers to how data for research is collected and how world knowledge is gained (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). Within any research, the methodology being applied stems from the ontological and epistemological perspectives used (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, 2011). The study made use of a qualitative methodological paradigm. Creswell (2003) defines qualitative research as an approach that explores and understands the meaning of participants to their human or social problem and without manipulating the data, provides a holistic interpretation of the research being conducted (Creswell, 2008). The qualitative researcher studies people in their own environment, thus with my study I studied beginner teachers and how their beginner teacher identity was influenced by the teacher education programme they chose.

The rationale for choosing qualitative research is that I was fascinated in the stories of beginner teachers and how they experienced their first years of teaching – in which way was their teaching identity influenced by the teacher education programme they had chosen? Qualitative research also allowed me to gather stories from beginner

teachers with different backgrounds; in this case from beginner teachers who either studied part-time or full-time.

3.4 Research methodology: Comparative case study

In the following section I relate to the research methodology that this study encompasses. In table 3.2 I present in tabular format the research methodology (the implementation of this plan). The different aspects of the table are clarified in detail afterwards.

Table 3-2: Research methodology

Research methodology	
Comparative case study research	
Population	The population was beginner teachers within their first three years of teaching who were enrolled at one of the two teacher education programmes being used for this study (part-time or full-time).
Participant selection	This study makes use of purposive sampling. The participants were selected based on the following specific criteria: • They are beginner teachers (within their first 3 years of teaching after graduating). • They received tertiary teacher education at either a part-time or full-time teacher education programme; an equal quantity of participants was chosen from both pools. • They are able to express themselves verbally in English, which is the interview language. • They are willing to share their experiences about their first year of teaching.

	• Participants chosen from part-time teacher education programmes worked full-time at schools.
Data collection	Literature review Face-to-face, semi-structured interviews Audio recordings of interviews, transcribed verbatim Researcher's journal
Data analysis	Thematic data analysis
Quality criteria	Credibility Generalizability Dependability Confirmability
Ethical considerations	Informed consent Confidentiality; Reporting results Harm to participants; Deception; Cultural and language differences

Within this qualitative study, I used a comparative case study design. According to Zartman and Goodrick (2005) two or more cases are covered in comparative case studies, in order to yield a more generalizable understanding about spontaneous conversation – in this study the why and how certain teacher education programmes are successful or not. They also state that it involves the scrutiny of the differences, similarities and emerging patterns shared by multiple cases with a mutual objective. By using a case study design, I compared the different teacher education programmes (part-time and full-time) and their influence on beginner teachers' identity. Comparing these two teacher education programmes produced information about the similarities, differences and patterns that arise from the development of beginner teachers' identity.

In this study, it was appropriate to use the case study method as it answered the research question correctly and satisfactory. The case study method is successful because it offers the researcher complexity when investigating the phenomenon by means of observing events directly, analysing journal articles and documents, as well as procuring data from several interviews (Yin, 2003). The focus of the study was to explain and describe rather than predict, thus the use of the case study method was

more suitable (Merriam, 1988). Furthermore, by using a case study, a more accurate review of the phenomenon could be generated (Yin, 2003).

The magnitude in which an intervention affected the results of a study, is one of the most differentiating characteristics of the case study method, and places importance on exploring the cause of influences and results (Zartman and Goodrick, 2005). For this study, the intervention is the part-time or full-time teacher education programmes. The results of the interventions are to what extent the beginner teachers' identity is influenced by the different teacher education programmes. Each teacher education programme had various factors that influenced beginner teacher identity. As a result, the intervention as teacher education programme had different results. Beginner teachers from full-time teacher education programmes had different factors that influenced their beginner teacher identity when compared to the participants from part-time teacher education programmes. Thus, the research design essentially examines two different case studies; the influence of full-time teacher education programmes on beginner teacher identity as well as the influence of part-time teacher education programmes on beginner teacher identity.

3.5 Participant selection

As it is unmanageable to incorporate a complete population in any study, participant selection or sampling is used and refers to the procedure implemented to select only a small ration (or portion) of the original population intended for the study (Maree, 2016).

3.5.1 Population and participant selection

Researchers using the qualitative method are rarely non-random when their data sources are selected – they have a clear purpose for their sampling (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005). Individuals are selected based on the amount of information they can produce about the research topic being investigated (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005). For this study, the population was beginner teachers within their first three years of teaching who were enrolled at one of the two teacher education programmes being used for this study (part-time or full-time).

The participants who were enrolled at a part-time teacher education programme were chosen only if they worked full-time at a school during their enrolment. This is to better illustrate the difference between full-time students who engaged in contact sessions but could not work or gain practical experience, against part-time students who could gain work-related experience but could not engage in contact sessions.

According to Maree (2016), using purposive sampling consists of covering the events and situations that need to be incorporated in the data collection, in conjunction with participant selection. Because of that definition, I chose to use purposeful sampling to select my participants because I had to select them according to specific criteria. The specific sampling criteria will be discussed next.

3.5.2 Selection criteria

This study makes use of purposive sampling (Maree, 2016). There are certain criteria in mind when this sampling method is used (Maree, 2016). The participants were selected based on the following specific criteria:

- They are beginner teachers (within their first 3 years of teaching after graduating).
- They received tertiary teacher education at either a part-time or full-time teacher education programme; an equal quantity of participants was chosen from both pools.
- Participants chosen from part-time teacher education programmes worked full-time at schools.
- They can express themselves verbally in English, which is the interview language.
- They are willing to share their experiences about their first year of teaching (Pseudonyms were used to protect their identity).

The participants that were chosen can be categorised within the following table:

Table 3-3: Selection of participants

Participant	Pseudonym	Gender		Racial group			Teacher Education Programme	
		Male	Female	White	Black	Indian/ Coloured	Full-time	Part-time
Participant A	Emma		x	x			x	
Participant B	Angelina		x			x	x	
Participant C	Colin	x		x			x	
Participant D	Fred	x			x			x
Participant E	Hannah		x	x				x
Participant F	George	x		x				x

As stated in the categorisation of participants in Table 3-3, it can be shown that participants were selected on a gender and racially unbiased way to ensure fairness and diversity in content. This helped in the generalisability factor of this study – the more diverse the participants are, the more generalizable the findings can be.

3.6 Data collection

Qualitative research is a true-to-life approach that is implemented when the researcher does not try to influence a specific phenomenon that is under investigation, and when that phenomenon is based in a real-world situation (Maree, 2016). Maree (2016) also explains that qualitative research is applied to real-life circumstances and consequently, unobtrusive data gathering techniques, like interviews, are central in the naturalist (interpretive) paradigm. The following data collection techniques were used for this study.

3.6.1 Literature

Existing scholarly literature in the relevant field was compared with the data obtained from the participants. The information obtained from literature sources combine with the information obtained from other data gathering techniques and are reported in this format in this research document.

3.6.2 Semi-structured interviews

Jupp (2006, p. 157) argues that an interview represents a meeting or dialogue between people where personal and social interaction occurs, but for research: An interview is a two-way dialogue in which the interviewer asks the participant questions to collect data and learn about ideas, beliefs, views, opinions and behaviour of the interviewee. I conducted face-to-face interviews. The interviews were guided by a set of semi-structured questions. According to Maree (2016), a semi-structured interview can define the line of inquiry that is needed for the research. A semi-structured interview can provide a better understanding of the person's reasoning because the same tailored questions get probed to one or more participant (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005).

The semi-structured questions that are probed toward the participants were contextually adapted and followed the logic of the participants' narrative but allowed the researcher to ask for more detail and further examples that are needed (Norgaard and Parnas, 2012). The participants were always encouraged to speak freely and were rarely interrupted (Norgaard and Parnas, 2012).

My interview questions (see Interview protocol at Appendix A) included questions on the beginner teachers' understanding of identity and what they saw as their beginner teacher identity, as well as the teacher education programme they graduated from. Further questions included exploring whether they felt their choice of teacher education programme had an influence on that identity or not, and what aspects are important to keep in mind when choosing a teacher education programme.

The following questions were directed at the participants:

1. What do you see as a beginner teaching identity?
2. What do you see as your own teaching identity?
3. How did the institute you graduated from influence your teaching identity? for instance, how you teach, how you handle situations and teaching practice experience?
4. Do you think your teaching identity would have been different if you had chosen the opposite teacher education programme? For instance, part-time and full-time. Why do you say so?
5. What would you like other beginner teachers to know when choosing their teacher education programme? Why do you think that aspect is important?
6. Do you think that aspect had an influence on your teaching identity?

These questions were asked to gain a better understanding of the participants' first year of teaching. The first two questions regarded the participants' beginner teacher identity; this gave an insight into what they perceived as their beginner teacher identity and assisted me to decipher which Possible Self they referred to as their identity at the moment. The next two questions asked the participants to comment on their teacher education programme and the influence it had on their beginner teacher identity. This is directly in correlation to the research question being asked. By interpreting these questions' findings, I could compare it to the literature gathered on the topic. The last two questions probed the participants to comment on which aspects to take into consideration when choosing a teacher education programme, and whether these aspects had an influence on their beginner teacher identity. These questions were valuable as they helped me gain greater insight into what the participants deemed as important in a teacher education programme. I interpreted these insights also as factors that had an influence on beginner teacher identity.

3.6.3 Audio recordings and transcription

Audio recordings were used to record, and later transcribe (see Appendix C), the oral information into a written form (Polkinghorne, 2005). By doing this, it allowed me to go back to the recordings to verify information that was used (Polkinghorne, 2005). Isaac (2017) states that recording research interviews is a great way to capture qualitative

data and ensure descriptive validity. An advantage of recording interviews is that an audio recording also allows you to refer back to the interview and take a fresh look at the interview data (Chege, 2017). All the interviews were recorded for analysis purposes and to ensure that participants' words were documented correctly. Interviews were transcribed and are attached in the Appendices.

3.6.4 Research diary

The researcher's diary can be seen as an important part of the progress of the researcher and the assembly of research knowledge (Engin, 2017). My research diary assisted me to keep track of the progress of my study, as well as inscribe summaries of meetings with my supervisor and note different ideas that came up.

3.7 Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis is usually based on an interpretive viewpoint that tries to establish how participants make meaning of a specific phenomenon by analysing their perceptions, attitudes, understanding, knowledge, values, feelings and experiences to approximate their construction of the phenomenon (Maree, 2016).

In a qualitative study, the data analysis and interpretation can be seen as a continual learning process which enlightens the researcher with new insights as the study progresses (Loots, 2011). For this study, the phenomenon is the influence of different teacher education programmes on beginner teacher identity. Throughout this study, the focus was on providing an accurate description of the phenomena that is being studied, namely the influence of different teacher education programmes on the readiness of beginner teachers.

The analysis strategy that was used is thematic content analysis, which is an organized approach to qualitative data analysis that categorizes and summarizes content (Maree, 2016). Thematic data analysis involves identifying, analysing and reporting different themes that are founded within the data that is collected (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This form of data analysis was the ideal form for the current study as I could categorize and summarize the interviews and report on the different themes found in the data. The interviews that were done only served as a platform to inform the description of the study.

All the interviews and conversations that were conducted with the beginner teachers were recorded, documented and transcribed to ensure that all the necessary analytical processes were taken during the analysis process. I consulted with my supervisor on a regular basis to establish the broad themes that emerged from the data (Loots, 2011). After my supervisor agreed on the themes and sub-themes that emerged, I entered a point of saturation (Loots, 2011). The data thereafter was categorised into relevant themes (Loots, 2011). Connections between categories and themes were used to further my understanding of the beginner teachers' first years and to shape the organization of the data for portrayal in my final document.

3.8 Quality criteria

Interpretivist research needs certain elements to make the study trustworthy. The quality criteria employed in this study will be discussed in this section.

3.8.1 Credibility

The aim of credibility is to portray an accurate presentation of the context or the event that is being described by the researcher (Mayan, 2001). The researcher, at all times, tries to present findings that are convincing and believable (Maree, 2016). In this study, credibility was maintained by presenting every interview as a whole and without any editing that may alter the opinions of the participants. The interviews were transcribed without any alteration; there was no change in context, sentence structure or wording. This was important because the participants' view of their beginner teacher identity cannot be changed and needed to be interpreted exactly as they said it in order to fully understand their experiences.

3.8.2 Generalisability

Maree (2016, p. 305) describes Durrheim and Wassenaar's (2002) definition of generalisability as the degree to which generalisation can be made from the data and context of the research study to the wider population and setting. An Interpretivist researcher would not necessarily generalise the findings of the study, but will give very rich detailed information of the perceptions of the participants (Maree, 2016). To be able to generalise the findings of this research, the participants were chosen in a gender and racially unbiased way. This makes the findings more applicable to a wider population because it includes participants from a wider population.

The participants had numerous opinions and remarks that coincided with each other that made it possible to generalise the content into themes, as discussed in Chapter 4.

3.8.3 Dependability

"Dependability refers to the degree to which the reader can be convinced that the findings did indeed occur as the researcher says they did" (Durrheim and Wassenaar, 2002, p. 64). Themes that emerged from the data were discussed with the participants to ensure accuracy (Creswell, 2008). The researcher triangulated the data that was collected during the process, this included the interviews that were conducted and the themes that emerged from the data (Maree, 2016). After analysing the data, the themes were discussed with participants to ensure that I interpreted their opinions correctly. I also used those themes as a basis for my literature review, to ensure that the themes are represented in literature as well and not only in the few participants.

3.8.4 Conformability

The data that was retrieved from this study accurately represented the information that the participants provided the researcher with, and the interpretation of the data would not be invented by the inquirer (Polit and Beck, 2012). To ensure that conformability is constantly being developed within a study, an audit trail was needed to assist the conformability; it keeps record of all the steps that were taken during the research process, as referenced to in the Appendices (Barusch, Gringeri and George, 2011). For this study, the record was kept in the form of my research diary and transcriptions of all the interviews; interviews were recorded and saved so that I can listen to them persistently while analysing for themes. All articles, journals and books used for literature were stored (either printed or electronically) and cited where used in this study.

3.9 Ethical considerations

I conducted my research according to the code of ethics of the University of Pretoria. According to the Code of Ethics for Research, researchers at the University of Pretoria have the following responsibilities: social responsibility, justice, benevolence, respect for the individual and professionalism (University of Pretoria, 2010).

The following concerns have been taken into consideration for this study (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005):

3.9.1 Informed consent

The beginner teachers were informed at all times of what they were doing and why. The participants each received an informed consent form. A Letter of consent (see Appendix B) was dispensed to each participant. Throughout the interview process, it was made clear that the participants were allowed to withdraw at any time and that they were under no obligation to take part.

3.9.2 Confidentiality

The beginner teachers' confidentiality was assured; that their identification (as well as their school's) will not be revealed at any stage of the research, even after the data collection processes were concluded. Pseudonyms were used throughout the interview process in order to assure anonymity.

The beginner teachers were informed beforehand that the data that was being collected would be used for the completion of a Master's degree in Humanities Education, conducted through the University of Pretoria. The results reported can be made available to the participants upon request.

3.9.3 Harm to participants

The research that was conducted would not be harmful (given emotional, physical etc.) to the beginner teachers that participate in the research study. All the participants that were involved in this study were given the option to withdraw themselves at any stage of the study if they felt uncomfortable with the research that was being conducted.

To ensure that no deception occurred, the beginner teachers were given all the information that informed them about the study, at all times. The data that was collected is the data that the beginner teachers provided to me. I was sensitive to the different cultures that I worked with, as well as the language barriers that may have existed.

3.10 Conclusion

In this chapter, I outlined the research design and research methodology. This study was done using a qualitative research approach, with an interpretivist paradigmatic view. A comparative case study research methodology was used in face-to-face, semi-structured interviews to gain insight into the beginner teacher's identity and the influence that different teacher education programmes have on it. Data analysis was done using thematic content analysis. The interview transcriptions of beginner teachers provided personal insights into how beginner teachers form their own teacher identity and the influence of different teacher education programmes. The chapter concluded with a discussion of the ethical considerations as well as the quality criteria for this study. A vital part of the research process is quality measurements, as it confirms that the study and its end results obey to proper ethics and meet the necessary requirements, making it trustworthy. The next chapters go into detail about the data interpretation and the subsequent findings of this study. Chapter 4 contains the data from full-time beginner teachers, and chapter 5 includes data from part-time beginner teachers.

4. CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS – FULL-TIME BEGINNER TEACHERS

"Nature uses only the longest threads to weave her patterns, so that each small piece of her fabric reveals the organisation of the entire tapestry."

- Richard P. Feynman (1967, p. 34)

4.1 Introduction

This research study, which is also embodied as my research study tapestry, is finally being woven into a finished product. Chapter 4 illustrates how the threads of the literature review and the beginner teachers' interviews intertwine to create the final tapestry, using the threads from full-time teacher education programmes. The threads that weave beginner teachers' identities became more prominent and supported the threads from relevant scholarly literature as I worked through the transcripts of the interviews. By exploring data elicited from each participant's interview, each of them started to represent a different colour thread that weaves into my research study tapestry. The quote from Feynman (1967) was remarkable because he states how each small piece of thread influences how the entire tapestry is woven. In this chapter, I could see the fabric being exposed in two tapestries: the tapestry representing the full-time beginner teacher's identity as well as my research study tapestry woven against existing literature in the field.

In this chapter, I first introduce the three participants that studied full-time, by detailing the interview experience as well as the background context of each participant. Then, I present and discuss the findings from this study under each of the emergent themes and its relation to the existing body of knowledge. In line with the rest of the study, this chapter is interspersed with extracts from my researcher's diary.

4.2 Sketch of participants

The participants are introduced before presenting the findings of the study in order to share, in more detail, my experiences of the interviews, the interaction I had with them and the background context of each participant. In order to preserve confidentiality,

pseudonyms were used to identify the participants, as part of the ethical considerations of the study (cf. Chapter 3.9). Biographical details and pseudonyms are used as stipulated in Table 3-3 in Chapter 3.

The data shared in this section includes i) their current working environment, ii) the participants' teacher education programme from which they graduated, iii) my perception of their personality traits regarding their beginner teacher identity, iv) a tentative engagement with the Possible Selves theory, and v) their opinion on what to keep in mind when choosing a teacher education programme.

From my interviewing the participants, I noticed that some of the participants referred to their Present Self when explaining their beginner teacher identity, and some of them mentioned their Future Self. This was important as I connected the referral to the Possible Selves Theory as part of my conceptual framework. The Possible Selves Theory describes the importance and changing aspects of "self-relevant, future-oriented self-concepts, and how these self-views relate to motivation for present and future action" (Hamman *et al.*, 2010). These self-concepts connect to "how individuals think about their potential and about their future" (Markus and Nurius, 1986, p. 954). Possible Selves contribute to the fluidity or flexibility of the self because they are differently stimulated by the social situation a person is in and determines the nature of the functioning self-concept (Markus and Nurius, 1986).

In more recent research done by Harrison (2018), he added to Markus and Nurius (1986) by stating that:

> In particular, possible selves are a key component of the 'working self-concept' of how we see ourselves within a given moment; familiar and vivid images that are cognitively accessible and guide our everyday decision-making and the processing of personal experiences (p. 6).

Later work by Markus, Nurius, and their colleagues constructed additional components into the original theoretical framework (Harrison, 2018). One component described is 'elaborated' possible selves, which is the degree to which possible selves are fully-formed and detailed, with a clear vision of what that self would be like and the transitional steps needed to get there (Harrison, 2018). Elaborated possible selves have a stronger impression on the individual's choices than those that are vague or that lack a plausible pathway to achieve them (Cross and Markus, 1991).

For the purpose of this study, only the original three tenets of the Possible Selves Theory were applied; the previous component was only mentioned to show that there have been recent studies conducted that add to the original work of Markus and Nurius (1986).

At the same time, the Possible Selves Theory may reflect a person's expectations, including hopes, ambitions, fears, and pressures that he or she expects in the near or distant future (Hamman *et al.*, 2010). The fact that some participants referred to only their Present Self, and some referred to both their Present and Future Selves, show that the beginner teacher identity is fluid and can change depending on the social situation that the beginner teacher is exposed to.

In order to keep with my conceptual framework of threads, I will associate each participant with a coloured thread according to the way I perceived their identity. I have included an excerpt from my research diary outlining my decision-making process on labelling each participant.

Research diary entry 4-1

I started working on my themes today and was thinking about how I can incorporate my metaphor of threads into this chapter. I wanted a golden thread to weave through my whole study to tie it together, as I saw my study as a tapestry being woven as well. I had a chat with my supervisor and she suggested I think of different types or materials of threads, like satin and wool… I thought about my own life and remembered that my classroom management includes colour-coding everything. I decided to associate each participant with a coloured thread, a colour that I think best captures their emerging teacher identity as I engaged with them during the interview process. - 31 November 2018

4.2.1 Participant A: Emma

Emma is a White female, working at a primary school. She studied full-time and is currently in her second year of teaching. The interview process with Emma was quite interesting – she was easy to talk to and her answers were thought-provoking. I could immediately establish that Emma was a person who was quite a perfectionist and needed to follow steps in a logical order. From her description of her beginner teacher identity I established that she likes to express her individuality and inspire new ideas in her class – thus I associated her with a yellow thread. I see yellow as a logical, yet inspiring colour, as well as bright and lighting up the room – which is how I perceived Emma. The following extract is where she describes her own beginner teacher identity.

Verbatim transcript extract 4-1: Emma

> *"How I use myself, and the knowledge I have in class, to attract all the kids in class to learn, what they're supposed to learn, and what's the ways that I can prove that so that everyone has essential information that they can take with, and increase their knowledge day after day."*

In the extract, Emma mentions her beginner teacher identity and talks about her identity in the present tense, thus referring to her Present Self. That indicates that she is already thinking of herself as a beginner teacher and not as a student anymore. When asked about what is important to take into consideration when choosing a teacher education programme, Emma mentioned workload and preparation. According to her, the workload of full-time studies is not a great deal as it gives you enough time to study, but with part-time you will have your studies as well as your work to focus on. She also mentioned feeling unprepared for all the administrative tasks that are a reality in schools, that full-time studies did not properly prepare her for.

4.2.2 Participant B: Angelina

A Coloured female working at a primary school, Angelina studied full-time and is currently in her first year of teaching. Interviewing Angelina was an amusing experience as she is very sociable and open-minded. I had the sense that she is a teacher that tries to make it fun for her learners and that she has a relaxed classroom environment as I listened to her description of her beginner teacher identity. I associated an orange thread with her – for me, orange represents someone who is very outgoing and likes to be around people. She views her beginner teacher identity as a future-oriented goal, but then moves on to describe it in the present tense, showing how the nature of her identity is still fluctuating and that it changes constantly.

Verbatim transcript extract 4-2: Angelina

> *"The teacher identity I'm going for; is not having everything set out straight and everything needs to be perfect, because I know things are going to come up that wasn't planned, I need to think quickly and need to figure it out. So, especially teaching the younger ones, my teacher identity I would definitely say is a more relaxed, accept things as they come, but still having that order in my classroom, trying to make it fun for the kids."*

This extract illustrates that she may still be unsure of what her beginner teacher identity may be; she has an idea of what she wants to be (her Future Self) but already feels confident that certain aspects of her beginner teacher identity (Present Self) have shifted from being a student teacher to a beginner teacher. Angelina mentioned the dedication and practical experience as an important factor to take into consideration when choosing a teacher education programme. According to her, it is important to know whether you are dedicated enough to self-study if you want to study part-time. She says that she would not have been successful as a part-time student because she preferred going to class full-time and having lecturers helping her. She does, however, state that she would have preferred a more practical experience that only part-time students could benefit from when working at a school while studying.

4.2.3 Participant C: Colin

As a secondary school teacher, Colin is a White male who studied full-time and is currently in his first year of teaching. Going through the interview process with Colin was very peaceful; there was no haste in his answers, he took his time thinking and then answered briefly. While Colin was describing his beginner teacher identity, he reminded me of one of my primary school teachers – a strict classroom management style, but with a calm and peaceful environment. He believes in following the rules and being strict yet relatable. Immediately I thought of associating blue thread with him – a colour that represents peace and the desire to live according to set principles and beliefs. As can be seen from the following extract, Colin mentions only his Future Self. That demonstrates that he may still be unsure of what his beginner teacher identity is at the moment but that he has a hope of the type of teacher he would like to become.

Verbatim transcript extract 4-3: Colin

> *"I would say my own teaching identity would be a teacher that children could relate to, an open and friendly teacher but still… let's say strict. Friendly but still strict and according to the rules. I am a teacher that has…my teaching identity is to always be prepared, to get children to be involved in a lesson, which I feel is one of the most important aspects."*

Colin felt strongly about the importance of subject choice when asked what to take into consideration when choosing a teacher education programme. He added that the main subject you choose to teach is an important choice, as you have to enjoy the subject in order to teach it well. He also stated that choosing a subject in high demand will help you secure a job once you graduate.

As a prelude to the next section, I have included a table as a visual presentation of the themes that emerged from the data. I will discuss each theme and subtheme in the sections that follow.

Table 4-1: Visual presentation of themes

Main theme	Subthemes
Theme 1: Beginner teachers' initial perceptions of teaching as a profession	• Intrinsic factors influencing initial perceptions • Extrinsic factors influencing initial perceptions
Theme 2: Participants' observations on full-time teacher education programmes	• Retrospective reflection on choice of a teacher education programme • Participants' opinion of full-time teacher education programmes
Theme 3: The influence of a full-time teacher education programme on beginner teacher identity	• Beginner teacher identity development • Preparation and authentic challenges • The role of practical experience

4.3 Theme 1: Beginner teachers' initial perceptions of teaching as a profession

For the first theme, I discuss beginner teacher' initial perceptions of teaching as a profession. Beginner teachers enter the teaching profession with a perception about the role they need to play (Nichols *et al.*, 2017). This perception of the role they need to play can be seen as their perception of how they would choose their Future Self to manifest as a teacher. Compared with studies concerned with beginner teachers reflecting about past and present actions, reflection for action allows new teachers to consider their past experiences "with a view toward the future: to imagine the kind of teacher they want to become, and to use their formative years as a means to project a designated sense of self as a teacher" (Hamman *et al.*, 2010). Using the Possible Selves Theory is vital as it shows how the beginner teachers, without realising it, thought about who they were as students (past self), who they are right now (present self) and who they see themselves as a successful teacher (future self).

The first theme is important as it ties in with the first thread of this study: the nature of beginner teachers. In order to understand the influence that different teacher education programmes had on beginner teacher identity, we first need to understand what the nature of the beginner teacher entails and what their initial perceptions are.

Only then can we compare it to what influence the teacher education programmes had after the beginner teachers started working full-time.

In the following section, I describe the findings of my study and integrate it with relevant findings in the current literature on the topic. I present the recorded data under each subtheme while explaining the respective subthemes.

Guzel-Stichert (2005) makes the following statement about beginner teachers' initial perceptions of teaching as a profession:

> Students begin teacher education programs with their own ideas and beliefs about what it takes to be a successful teacher. These preconceptions are formed from thousands of hours of observation of teachers, good and bad, over the previous fifteen or so years. Undoubtedly, student's conceptions of teaching are incomplete, for they typically see and hear only the performance side of classroom teaching. With this in mind, a thoughtful teacher educator might ask: What are the preconceptions about teaching and learning held by our students? (p. 14).

4.3.1 Intrinsic factors influencing initial perceptions

Intrinsic factors include seeing teaching as socially worthwhile and important, and also includes teaching children and having an interest in teaching a school subject (Balyer and Özcan, 2014). Initial perceptions of teaching have an influence on the beginner teacher identity because the intrinsic factors that the participants experienced all differed according to the teacher education programme they chose. This supplements the research question which explored the influence of different teacher education programmes on beginner teacher identity; the different teacher education programmes provided varied initial perceptions to teaching, which in turn influenced the beginner teachers' identity.

Findings of this study agreed with the view of Balyer and Özcan (2014), however throughout the interviews conducted, the majority of the participants mentioned that the idea that they had of what it meant to be a teacher, and what it was like being a teacher, differed vastly. The participants who studied full-time noticed this change in perspective once they started teaching. Two of the three participants who studied full-time mentioned how they had to change their perception of teaching once they walked into their own classroom.

Emma noted that you will be put in uncomfortable situations, by saying, *"… you need to know, beforehand, that there will be situations that you will not have an idea how to handle"*, (Participant A, Emma).

It is important to note that the full-time participants only had limited practical experience, which means that their preconceived idea of what it meant to be a teacher did not have an extended amount of time to develop and change according to what the realities of a classroom environment is; compared to part-time participants who worked full-time at schools. Colin stated that, *"I believe that if I studied part-time, for I studied full-time, I might have gotten the opportunity to learn more and be more prepared. But on the other hand, studying part-time would kind of already make you a teacher, so you would have learned from the job"*, (Participant C, Colin).

Angelina mentioned how she had to change her teaching identity in order to be able to handle everyday classroom situation, saying, *"… coming from a university you have a certain mind-set, of how things need to be, and then when you actually start teaching you see that it's completely different"*, (Participant B, Angelina). She also added that what she had learned in books, differed vastly from what it really meant to be a teacher. Her teacher education programme created a different perception of what it means to be teaching full-time compared to the reality of teaching. Angelina said that, *"…like studying out of books and actually doing it physically is completely different, I realized that when I walked in and had my own classroom"*, (Participant B, Angelina).

A vital point to bear in mind is that the beginner teachers had a choice of whether they wanted to change their method of teaching or not; it was not forced upon them and they were not told to change their teaching identity. They instinctively noticed that the way they were teaching was troublesome and that they were struggling to keep up with daily activities; their perception of what it meant to be a teacher was blemished and they had to change in order to adapt to their schools' culture and climate*, "…you can't choose the amount of work that you have to do. You can't choose about all the admin that you're supposed to be doing, and admin is a reality in school… It's part of your daily job, and then at the end of the day you go home and think, ah I'm done for the day, but no, you're not"*, (Participant A, Emma). Their sense of self was evolving and changing, in order to adapt to the circumstances around them.

While conducting the literature search, it was clear that there was limited literature regarding the differences between full-time and part-time beginner teachers' experiences of initial perceptions of teaching. This shows a gap in the existing literature that I hope this study will fill. Nonetheless, it is clear from the interviews that there were intrinsic factors that influenced the participants' perceptions of teaching as a profession, namely a change in the realistic expectation of what it meant to be a teacher and how the teacher education programmes do not include the realities of teaching in the curriculum.

4.3.2 Extrinsic factors influencing initial perceptions

Balyer and Özcan (2014) mention that extrinsic factors that motivate student teachers to choose teaching as a career, refer to economic status (security of employment), as well as conditions of service (working conditions and holidays) and social status (contribution to society). It was evident throughout the interview process that the most common extrinsic factor that the participants found had influenced their perception of the teaching profession, was the number of administrative tasks that presented itself (conditions of service) which they did not expect. Two of the three participants mentioned administration and the struggle of coping with the amount of administrative tasks in their first year of being a teacher. The participants who studied full-time said that they were not adequately prepared for the administrative tasks that are a reality in teaching. Emma explained that administrative tasks are a certainty in a school that you do not know about until you are in a school environment, as can be seen in the following statement:

Verbatim transcript extract 4-4: Emma

> *"… admin is a reality in school. You don't know about it if you have full-time studies, I'm sorry but you don't. And, I won't say unfortunately they don't teach you that at varsity, but unfortunately they don't teach you that there's so much admin. Most of your work is going about admin. Finding stuff, writing stuff up, referring a kid or writing a report, whatever."*

Colin agreed, adding that more practical experience would have given him more exposure to the realities of preparation, discipline and administration in a school environment. The following statement confirms it:

Verbatim transcript extract 4-5: Colin

> *"I believe, one should do teaching practice every year for a small period of time to start forming your identity, and do more subjects on how to prepare lessons, how to prepare work schedules, planning when to do which lessons, how long lessons should be, discipline and handling discipline, um, school admin… things like that. Things that the university never taught me."*

Fourie and Fourie (2015) argue that teachers' application of standards and policies should be contextualised within the school setting, suggesting that correct application of standards and policies may look different from classroom to classroom and from school to school. Nonetheless, it seems that many beginner teachers find instructional alignment difficult, even though they regard it as an important goal, and as a result, the actual alignment of instruction with standards and policies remain low (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2015; Fourie and Fourie, 2015).

This coincides with the participants' feedback; executing day-to-day administrative tasks (such as application of standards and policies) are challenging because the beginner teachers are not properly prepared for instructional alignment. The following extract from my research diary shows how even after a couple of years, some full-time students still remember the way they struggled when they started teaching:

Research diary entry 4-2

Today I had an informal conversation with my friend and an acquaintance. My friend asked about the progress of my study, as she knows I'm in the final stretch. Another lady asked about my topic, and I told her it is about the influence of different teacher education programmes on beginner teacher identity. Both ladies are teachers for more than 5 years now, and both had studied full-time. They immediately commented about the amount of administrative tasks that they were not prepared for at all. A long conversation then emerged about how they really wished they were better prepared for all the administrative duties and how that is the first thing they try to teach new beginner teachers. I found it truly stimulating that even after many years they could still remember this factor that they struggled with! – 25 July 2019

These extrinsic factors, namely the amount of administrative tasks and the responsibilities of a teacher, are important in the beginner teachers' perception of teaching as a profession. Being hesitant and uncomfortable in a school environment influences your beginner teacher identity. When a beginner teacher feels more confident in handling the day-to-day responsibilities of school administration, they can focus more on their teaching identity and who they want to be and become a teacher.

4.4 Theme 2: Participants' observations on full-time teacher education programmes

In this section, I describe full-time teacher education programmes, by reflecting on the participants' observations and experiences of said programme. One can comprehend beginner teacher identity better by understanding the teacher education programme they experienced and see it through the beginner teachers' eyes.

4.4.1 Retrospective reflection on choice of a teacher education programme

One of the main goals of a teacher education programme should be to help prospective teachers develop a good understanding of the relationship between teaching and learning (Guzel-Stichert, 2005). The type of teacher education programme a student chose has a major impact on their beginner teacher identities. Each teacher education programme has different modes of providing practical experience, different ways of learning and a different mind-set that the student has to be in. Traditionally, full-time teacher education programmes rely on professors as their main faculty and can be regarded as more theoretical and academic (Levine, 2006).

Findings of this study concurred with the view of Levine (2006) as participants shared the same ideas. Colin raised the concern when asked about his teacher education programme. From his experience, he felt that a lot of the modules he took at university did not influence his beginner teacher identity as it felt irrelevant and unnecessary. This can be substantiated by the following statement, "*I feel a lot of subjects, we take as university students, while studying education, is unnecessary. It takes a lot of time, it is easy, and does not really have an influence on how you teach, or how you should teach"*, (Participant C, Colin).

All those differences (practical experience, ways of learning and mind-sets) affect the beginner teacher's identity, as they shape their way of teaching and their way of thinking based on the way that they learned it. Emma mentions that the full-time teacher education programme taught her how to be disciplined in her studies, and how that affected her way of teaching, i.e. her beginner teacher identity. This is evident in the following statement:

Verbatim transcript extract 4-6: Emma

> *"Where I think, if I didn't have that discipline, self-discipline, to go to class and say I want to pass my degree, I want to get this over and done with, then I wouldn't have had been as good as a teacher as I've been now."*
> *"… if I didn't have that discipline at varsity, I wouldn't have that in my classroom with my kids."*

Angelina refers to the fact that what she was taught through her teacher education programme, differed from her experience when she started teaching. In that sense, she feels like she still needs to figure out her beginner teacher identity, but already has some basis to work from. The following statement endorses that realisation:

Verbatim transcript extract 4-7: Angelina

> *"… coming from a university you have a certain mind-set, of how things need to be, and then when you actually start teaching you see that it's completely different. So while I'm still busy figuring out my teacher identity I already know some things that work for me."*

All three participants agreed that their full-time teacher education programme did influence their beginner teacher identity. One participant felt it had a very positive impact for her, whereas two participants differed in the fact that it had little to no impact on their beginner teacher identity.

4.4.2 Participants' opinion of full-time teacher education programmes

The participants were asked to comment on their choice of teacher education programme, in order for the readers to understand their experiences from their perspective. By understanding their perceptions and opinions, one can better understand the influence that their teacher education programme had on their beginner teacher identity. In reading studies dealing with teacher education programmes, Cochran-Smith and colleagues (Cochran-Smith, 2005; Rodgers and Scott, 2008; Cochran-Smith *et al.*, 2017) point to the fact that most of the studies evaluating the effectiveness of teacher education programmes, compare what is viewed as 'traditional' programmes and 'alternative' ones. While traditional programmes are pre-service, campus-based programmes, the alternative ones are school-based programmes carried out mostly on-job in schools (Zuzovsky and Donitsa-Schmidt, 2017).

When student teachers do not understand the central structure of their teacher education programme, they find it difficult to make sense of the relation between the different modules they have (Rusznyak, 2015). Angelina stated that *"… the university that I studied at, I feel like that was the best option for me because I'm not the person to self-study. So, going to class every day and having a lecturer explain everything to me, um, definitely helped me"*, (Angelina, Participant B). This shows that Angelina knew that a full-time teacher education programme was best for her style of studying; she knew she did not do well with individual studying and would benefit from extra help from her lecturers and peers. Emma had the opposite experience, *stating "… the varsity taught me, being self-disciplined, and to know I need to go in to get my work. No one is there to help me get my degree"*, (Participant A, Emma). Emma's opposite experience shows that she also benefitted from a full-time teacher education programme, in the sense that it helped her with self-discipline.

Teacher education programmes mark the first entry point into the profession, and the way they are designed determines both the quantity and quality of the teaching force (Zuzovsky and Donitsa-Schmidt, 2017). It is likewise well documented that teaching content in teacher education programmes plays a vital part in the development and structure of the knowledge base which teachers can draw upon when performing their profession (Rasmussen and Bayer, 2014). This can be clearly seen in the following statement from Angelina.

Verbatim transcript extract 4-8: Angelina

> *"… they've also told me how to be more flexible, because as people we usually want things to be done a certain way, at a certain time, um, it needs to go according to plan. But when you teach, you have to have that room for disappointment, for things going completely wrong, and you need to quickly fix it. Everything's not gonna go as planned, so I would definitely say the university prepared me for all of that and it also helped you to, like, calm down, step back, first look at the situation before carrying on."*

Angelina's comment shows that she understood how important her teacher education programme was in her preparation for the reality of the classroom. From the participants' perspective, it is clear that the teacher education programme that they chose, definitely was the right teacher education programme for them. Two participants, in particular, commented on how the full-time teacher education programme taught them about self-discipline and helped them because they were not inclined to self-study. These are advantages to a full-time teacher education programme; students have various opportunities to contact lecturers and peers and they can receive help face-to-face.

4.5 Theme 3: The influence of a full-time teacher education programme on beginner teacher identity

In this section, I report on the findings related to full-time education students as beginner teachers. I present the recorded data under each subtheme while explaining the respective subthemes. Studying through a full-time teacher education programme mean that participants studied full-time and did not work at a school, for the purpose of this study. Three participants who studied full-time were interviewed.

4.5.1 Beginner teacher identity development

Beginner teacher identity is generally defined as how an individual perceives him/herself and by others (Beijaard, 1995). This is similar to the research of Van Der Want *et al.* (2018), which stated that teacher identity is expressed as an answer to the questions of who you are as a teacher and what kind of teacher you want to become.

According to Oruç (2013),

> Human beings have the ability to influence their own lives and environment, but they are also shaped by the environment they live in. As part of society, teachers experience many opportunities to both change themselves, and to be changed by the influences around them. The students they teach, the preservice preparation and in-service professional development they receive and sometimes the profession of teaching as a whole are important factors in shaping their identity (p. 207).

Beginner teacher identity is how the participants developed who they are as teachers and how they formed/hope to form into a successful teacher. In the section where I described the participants, I mentioned how each participant viewed his/her own beginner teacher identity. From the interviews, it was also clear that all three full-time participants had not formed a clear image of what they wanted their beginner teacher identity to be.

Emma mentions that she was scared and did not think that she would feel insecure in her first year of teaching, by saying, *"I walked in, at the beginning of last year, scared out of my mind, thinking this is my class, I need to make it work, and obviously you don't think about it at the beginning of your first year starting to teach*", (Participant A, Emma). Angelina agreed with Emma, stating that the idea of what it means to be a teacher differed a lot from what the realities were. Angelina said, *"… coming from a university you have a certain mind-set, of how things need to be, and then when you actually start teaching you see that it's completely different"*, (Participant B, Angelina).

One participant went as far as saying that his tertiary institution did not have a big influence on his beginner teacher identity, but rather the teaching practice that he experienced had the bigger influence. The following statement provides that feedback:

Verbatim transcript extract 4-9: Colin

> *"But, I honestly believe, my institution did not have a big influence on my teaching identity. During teaching practice where we learned, um, where we worked at schools for 6 months, there my teaching identity was formed and shaped, I believe. It gave me the opportunity to prepare for what being a full-time teacher would be. So I learned more from teaching practice than I did from my institution."*

This shows that the beginner teacher identity is an ever-changing part of who the beginner teacher is. This agrees with the findings of Beauchamp and Thomas (2011) as well as Anspal, Eisenschmidt and Löfström (2012) when they state that beginner teacher identity is formed by different factors such as past school experiences, the concepts and methods promoted by their teacher education programmes and an ideal of the teacher they hope to become.

The fact that beginner teacher identity is ever-changing, coincides with the use of the Possible Selves Theory, which is the lens employed to look at this research study. The development of various possible selves could include an unlimited and diverse array of future self-projections, but it is important to note that the development of possible selves is connected with representations of the current self (Hamman *et al.*, 2010). That is, future selves are derived from individually significant desires, hopes, uncertainties, and doubts, but these aspirations and fears are influenced by an individual's current (and past) specific social, cultural, and environmental experiences (Hamman *et al.*, 2010).

Thus, when a beginner teacher walks into a classroom for the first time, they will all have a certain expectation. Whether it is a reality, or even a realistic idea, will be the deciding factor of how long it will take for the beginner teacher to develop his/her beginner teacher identity.

4.5.2 Preparation and authentic challenges

Beginner teachers endured a shift in identity due to the variety of experiences they gained in the process of becoming a teacher (Beauchamp and Thomas, 2009). Moreover, student teachers may continue to face identity modifications throughout their teaching career because of interactions within their school and outside communities (Beauchamp and Thomas, 2009). Nichols *et al.* (2017) state that a beginner teachers' identity is not about what someone is, but rather the significance is about what someone is becoming.

The preparation and challenges of the participants are linked to Figure 2-3, where the interrelation between teaching identity and the conception of teaching is explained. A beginner teachers' conception of teaching is influenced by their preparation (including their teacher education programme) as well as challenges they endure during their

teaching practice as well as their first year of teaching. Participants used their expanding knowledge of teaching to acknowledge, modify and reconstruct their beliefs about teaching and their Past Selves, resulting in more sophisticated understandings about what it means to be a teacher (Lee and Schallert, 2016). For many of the participants, their preconceived beliefs about being a teacher were challenged by conflicting classroom-based experiences (Nichols *et al.*, 2017).

Challenges during the early years can also be part of the intrinsic and extrinsic factors that influence the perceptions of teaching as a profession. For beginner teachers, everyday routine at school can be overpowering; the newly graduated teachers are expected to autonomously organize and carry out their work and simultaneously adapt to their school's climate and culture (Bjarnadòttir, 2005). As mentioned earlier, some of the challenges that beginner teachers face in the early years are the amount of administrative tasks and feeling prepared for the teaching profession. The majority of the participants agreed to that fact, supporting Bjarnadòttir's (2005) statement. Angelina in particular mentioned that she felt extremely unprepared, as can be seen in the following statements:

Verbatim transcript extract 4-10: Angelina

> *"… at the end of the day, they don't teach you that at varsity. They don't teach you, how to think on your feet, how to handle conflict situations, with kids, with parents, with colleagues, with your HOD, with anyone, they don't teach you that."*

The other two participants agreed with Angelina, stating that the unknown was something they had to accept fairly quickly in order to be able to adapt to their situations. Thus the findings of this study agree with Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) in the sense that the challenges faced during the participants' first years of teaching changed and modified their beginner teacher identity.

4.5.3 The role of practical experience

Lunenberg and Korthagen (2009) has the following to say about practical experience:

> Practical wisdom is the sensitivity for and awareness of the essentials of a particular practice situation that shape our perception of this situation, and help us find possible courses of action. Practical wisdom makes use of practical knowledge, but goes beyond it, as it helps the practitioner to perceive the essence of a situation (p. 4).

Practical experience was a recurring theme amongst the participants when asked how their full-time teacher education programme influenced their beginner teacher identity. It was clear that two participants felt very strongly about the effect that practical experience can have on beginner teacher identity. Angelina noted that she would have appreciated more practical experience, that the lack of practical experience made her feel lost, *"… when I walked into the classroom, I was completely lost, um, I did not feel that I had enough practical experience to be able to work with the kids"*, (Participant B, Angelina) whereas Colin commented on the positive effect that practical experience had for him "*it was during teaching practice where we learned, where we worked at schools for 6 months, there my teaching identity was formed and shaped"*, (Participant C, Colin).

One participant felt that there would not be a difference, but going through her interview it was clear that she saw part-time students as people who did not work at a school, but someone who worked in a different career altogether. For the purpose of this study, it was defined that part-time students work at a school while studying, thus building up more practical experience than full-time students. Her comment about the practical experience was thus disregarded.

Even though the experience is vital in developing practical wisdom, it is not sufficient (Lunenberg and Korthagen, 2009). The triangle in Figure 2-2 (cf. Chapter 2.3.7) that shows the relationship between theory, experience, and practical wisdom, are essentially different in nature, but it is the teacher and their identity who makes the elements come together or not (Lunenberg and Korthagen, 2009). From the perspectives of all participants, they noticed that their beginner teacher identity is ever-changing and that the more they experienced teaching first-hand, the more they built their practical wisdom.

Both Angelina and Colin commented that they feel their beginner teacher identity would have been very different if they had had the opportunity to gain more practical experience. Angelina commented that, *"I believe that if I studied part-time… my teacher identity would have been completely different. Because, then I would have gained more practical experience, working with the kids, hands-on experience"*, (Participant B, Angelina), while Colin said that, *"During teaching practice… there my teaching identity was formed and shaped, I believe. It gave me the opportunity to prepare for what being a full-time teacher would be. I learned more from teaching practice than I did from my institution"* (Participant C, Colin).

It is important to note that the full-time participants had the necessary theoretical knowledge, they just did not understand yet how to use it practically. This can add to the overwhelmed feeling they had; they had not yet realized that their theoretical knowledge is just as important as practical experience. Their lack of practical experience made them feel overcome and lost, which meant they could not focus on nor see the benefits of their theoretical knowledge. It all revolves in one big circle, until the beginner teacher can feel more confident and knowledgeable in the practical side of teaching. Only then, when they are relaxed, will the theoretical knowledge come creeping back in and will they remember that they were not *that* lost as what they thought.

Wilson, Floden and Ferrini-Mundy (2002) stated that experienced and beginner teachers alike see experience as a powerful — sometimes the single most influential — factor of teacher education. Similarly, to be in a practical career environment such as teaching, any experience is crucial, especially for beginner teachers. Certain aspects of teaching can only be experienced in a physical classroom, as two of the participants have pointed out. Anyone who has ever been in a teaching position would be able to agree on the value of experience in a classroom environment, as Lunenburg and Korthagen (2009) concur.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter presented and analysed the data according to the identified themes and integration with existing literature on the topic. It began with an introduction. I then introduced the beginner teachers who participated in this study by detailing the

interview experience as well as the background context of each participant. Finally, I presented and discussed the reflections and interpretation of the data, supported by interview extracts taken from the verbatim transcripts. The beginner teachers' responses were given according to the themes identified. Possible Selves lens was interspersed in between the data and literature to show the relativeness of the conceptual framework.

The first theme focused on the beginner teachers' initial perceptions of teaching as a profession. The subthemes related to this theme included the intrinsic factors influencing initial perceptions as well as the extrinsic factors influencing initial perceptions of teaching. The second theme discussed the participants' observation of full-time teacher education programmes. The third theme focused on the influence of a full-time teacher education programme on beginner teacher identity. The last theme had subthemes which included beginner teacher identity development, preparation and authentic challenges, and the role of practical experience.

In the next chapter, I analyse and explain the data from the participants who studied at a part-time teacher education programme. Although the themes and subthemes coincide with the themes and subthemes of this chapter, the data consists only of the transcripts form the part-time participants.

5. CHAPTER FIVE: DATA ANALYSIS – PART-TIME BEGINNER TEACHERS

*"This is one more piece of advice I have for you: don't get impatient. Even if things are so **tangled** up you can't do anything, don't get desperate or blow a fuse and start yanking on one particular thread before it's ready to come undone. You have to realize it's going to be a long process and that you'll work on things slowly, one at a time."*

— Haruki Murakami, Norwegian Wood (1987)

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter illustrated how the threads of the literature review and the full-time beginner teachers' identities were intertwining to create the final research tapestry. Chapter 5 adds to that tapestry by providing accompanying data from the part-time participants. The researched scholarly literature was juxtaposed to the data elicited from each participant's interview to create a more complete picture of beginner teacher identity. The quote from Murakami was significant for this part of the research study, as it adds understanding to the journey I went on to create depth and clarity to my research tapestry. The following excerpt from my research diary outlines the decision-making process on creating different chapters for my findings, namely splitting the data from full-time and part-time participants into two different chapters.

Research diary entry 5-1

My supervisor and I decided that it would be better to split my research analysis and findings into two chapters, separating the full-time and part-time participants. At first, it was such a discouraging idea – the whole study was just about complete and now I have to put in more work! But, as I started to do the split I noticed that it simply made more sense and that it will be much less confusing to read. I found Murakami's quote and it just fit in perfectly! This study cannot be yanked around and I can't blow a fuse or give up; this is a long process with many threads to untangle, and just a bit more time will (hopefully) make it better than it was. – 19 May 2019

As in chapter 4, in this chapter, I first introduce the three participants that studied part-time, by detailing the interview experience as well as the background context of each participant. Then, I present and discuss the findings from this study under each of the emergent themes and its relation to the existing body of knowledge.

5.2 Sketch of participants

Before presenting the findings of the study, the participants are introduced in order to share, in more detail, my experiences of the interviews, the interaction I had with them as well as the background context of each participant. Pseudonyms were used to preserve confidentiality, as part of the ethical considerations of the study (cf. Chapter 3.9). Table 3-3 in Chapter 3 also stipulated the biographical details and pseudonyms used.

The data shared in this section include i) their current working environment, ii) the participants' teacher education programme from which they graduated, iii) my perception of their personality traits regarding their beginner teacher identity, iv) a tentative engagement with the Possible Selves theory, and v) their opinion on what to keep in mind when choosing a teacher education programme.

Beginner teacher identity development is how the students developed into a beginner teacher and the ways in which they construct their beginner teacher identities. Ponte

and Chapman (2008) state that professional identity considers how teachers view themselves, how they relate to students, deal with problems and how they identify themselves with teaching as a profession. Initial studies by Mayer (1999) agreed with Ponte and Chapman by stating that teacher identity is a set of personal characteristics incorporating how one identifies with being a teacher and how one feels as a teacher. From my interviewing the participants, I noticed that some of the participants referred to their Present Self when explaining their beginner teacher identity, and some of them mentioned their Future Self. This was important as I connected the referral to the Possible Selves Theory, which is my conceptual framework.

The Possible Selves Theory (Markus & Nurius, 1986), used in the context of teacher identity development, offers a framework for unfolding not only the influence of future-oriented thought in the early expansion of teacher identity, but also a means of scrutinizing the contextual, motivational and self-regulative involvement self-concepts may have on opinions and actions intended to achieve identity-relevant teacher goals (Hamman *et al.*, 2010)

In recent studies conducted by Harrison (2018), he stated that:

> Over time, changes in the mutable working self-concept feedback into more persistent forms of self-knowledge that frame our identity. In this way, a possible self can become progressively more embedded in the ways in which we see and understand ourselves. This process of becoming then works to determine what forms of present action are legitimate and comfortable (p.4)

He adds that a possible self might be more (or less) desirable than others, capturing future feelings of happiness, success, security, or wellbeing (Harrison, 2018). The construction of Possible Selves is an act of meaning-making, where we find self-relevant ways of discovering what it is possible to be: ‘what we expect about the future is dependent on what we are now (and vice versa)’ (Erikson, 2007, p. 354). The fact that some participants referred to only their Present Self, and some referred to both their Present and Future Selves, show that the beginner teacher identity is fluid and can change depending on the social situation that the beginner teacher is exposed to.

In order to keep with my conceptual framework of threads, I will associate each participant with a coloured thread according to the way I perceived their identity.

5.2.1 Participant D: Fred

Fred is a Black male working at a primary school. He studied part-time while working full-time at a primary school. Fred worked 4 years at a primary school as a student teacher, and currently, he is in his first year of teaching as a qualified teacher. While interviewing Fred and talking about his beginner teacher identity, it became clear that he is very passionate about the learners in his class. During his interview, we talked about the learners in his class and I noticed that he knew a lot about every learner and that he had a deep emotional bond with them. A purple thread immediately stood out to me when I chose a colour to associate Fred with. Personally, purple represents emotional connections and participation in humanitarian projects. When Fred described his own beginner teacher identity, he mentioned only his Present Self as a part of his beginner teacher identity.

Verbatim transcript extract 5-1: Fred

> *"I think the way you teach is something that you can make your own, how you teach, stuff that I do different… my teaching identity would be having a healthy relationship with the learners in my class, trying to find out who they are, where they live. You know, just trying to figure out their life and where they are at the moment, you know? And then working with that and loving them, for who they are."*

The extract reveals that he feels confident in who he is as a beginner teacher, and that he has moved on from being a student teacher to a beginner teacher. Fred mentioned that his practical experience played a very big part during his years of studying, and thus he highlighted that as an important aspect to take into consideration when choosing a teacher education programme. He emphasized that it is vital to try and work full-time while you are studying part-time, as that practical experience helped with his confidence in classroom management. He also stated that choosing the correct school to work at while studying part-time, a school that will support you as student-teacher and help you grow your beginner teacher identity, will be advantageous.

5.2.2 Participant E: Hannah

As a White female primary school teacher, Hannah studied part-time while working full-time at a primary school. She worked 4 years at a primary school as a student teacher, and currently, she is in her second year of teaching as a qualified teacher. Hannah's interview was very insightful – at first glance she seemed quiet and not really willing to talk, but as we started talking I became aware that she just reflects sensibly before she answers. As she described her beginner teacher identity I could imagine her being a structured and action-oriented teacher. I associated a red thread with Hannah for that fact – that she represented a strong will and is an ambitious person who will work hard to achieve her goals. When Hannah interpreted her beginner teacher identity, as shown in the following extract, she mentioned only her Present Self as part of her beginner teacher identity.

Verbatim transcript extract 5-2: Hannah

> *"I see myself as a caring teacher that will always go the extra mile for the students in front of me. I am very professional and I take my job very seriously. And I always try, it sounds really crazy, but I always try to give my very best performance while I'm teaching… My personality has definitely shaped my teaching identity as I am a person who loves fun, but I also need a lot of structure and routine so that gets incorporated a lot in my class. I let the learners have fun, but we have fun in a structured way."*

That demonstrates that she sees herself as a beginner teacher already and not a student-teacher anymore. Experience, according to Hannah, is a very important factor to take into consideration when choosing a teacher education programme. She adds that the fact that she graduated with 4 years' experience is something that nobody can take away from you. She states that studying full-time and part-time will both offer you the same degree, but working while studying part-time will offer you the crucial experience necessary for understanding what it means to be a teacher.

5.2.3 Participant F: George

As a White male working at a primary school, George studied part-time while working full-time at a primary school. He worked 4 years at a primary school as a student teacher, and currently he is in his second year of teaching as a qualified teacher. Throughout the whole interview process with George, I felt at ease as he answered in relaxed tones. He was very open and honest about every answer, as well as thankful for being able to participate in this study and potentially help other beginner teachers. I learned that he was caring and honest in his classroom as well when he described his beginner teacher identity. This made me associate a green thread with George. For me, green represents someone who strives for safety and security and acknowledges people around them. When asked about how he interprets his beginner teacher identity, George mentioned only his Present Self as a part of his beginner teacher identity.

Verbatim transcript extract 5-3: George

> *"I see myself more than just a simple educator trying to teach a syllabus to learn to gain new knowledge and information. I feel, I'm there to inspire, to guide, support and love all learners as they are all equal. In class, I have a very open policy regarding talking and asking questions, because I feel with interactive learning and a safe place, where learners feel free to express themselves, is a more sufficient place of learning. I'm a strong male figure which relates to both boys and girls, which helps with discipline and order in class as well outside the classroom environment."*

The extract exhibits that he has confidence in himself as a beginner teacher already, a "strong male figure" and not a student-teacher anymore. When asked about what is important to take into consideration when choosing a teacher education programme, George mentioned the financial situation and learning styles. Full-time studying is much more expensive than part-time studying when comparing study fees, according to him. He also states that the fact that you can work while studying part-time is a benefit financially; you can earn an extra income that you may not have been able to

earn if studying full-time. George also said that your learning style will determine which teacher education programme suits you best; he states that part-time studying requires a lot of self-discipline and good time management.

As a preface to the next section, I have included a table as a visual presentation of the themes that emerged from the data. I will discuss each theme and subtheme in the sections that follow.

Table 5-1: Visual presentation of themes

Main theme	Subthemes
Theme 1: Beginner teachers' initial perceptions of teaching as a profession	• Intrinsic factors influencing initial perceptions • Extrinsic factors influencing initial perceptions
Theme 2: Participants' observations on part-time teacher education programmes	• Retrospective reflection on choice of a teacher education programme • Participants' opinion of part-time teacher education programme
Theme 3: The influence of a part-time teacher education programme on beginner teacher identity	• Beginner teacher identity development • Preparation and authentic challenges • The role of practical experience

5.3 Theme 1: Beginner teachers' initial perceptions of teaching as a profession

The first theme relates to beginner teachers and their initial perceptions of teaching as a profession. Beginner teachers tend to experience higher levels of tension and stress conveyed by classroom experiences that challenge their internal beliefs about what it means to be a teacher (Nichols *et al.*, 2017). This is relevant to the research question, as the discovery of whether a beginner teachers' identity is influenced by their teacher education programme is being investigated. The different teacher education programmes all influenced the beginner teachers' perception of what it means to be a teacher differently. Teaching is not a technical job; rather, teachers invest their selves into their work, and it is this developing identity of self that not only influences beginner teachers' actions and emotions, but also how they form their future identity (Nichols *et al.*, 2017).

Even before education students step into a class, they have a preconceived perception of what teaching is (Lindgren, 2005; Korthagen, Loughran and Russell, 2006; Beauchamp and Thomas, 2011). The Possible Selves Theory maintains that we all create visions of ourselves in the future and that these have a motivational power, especially where they are clear, comprehensive, consistent with fundamental norms, and supported by significant others (Harrison, 2018). It can stem from past experiences of their own schooling, what other students or friends have told them or what image they have drawn from their studies. Beginner teachers' initial perceptions of the teaching profession were influenced by the different teacher educator programmes they completed.

From the interview data, it was established that initial perceptions of teaching influenced the unstable state of the beginner teachers' identities and these perceptions were in turn inclined by their experiences of their part-time teacher education programme. In the following section I describe the findings of my study and integrate it with relevant findings in the current literature on the topic. I present the recorded data under each subtheme while explaining the respective subthemes.

5.3.1 Intrinsic factors influencing initial perceptions

Intrinsic factors refer to the beginner teacher's unique challenges, interests, and personal growth; in other words, the work itself and its underlying tasks and activities (Iancu-Haddad and Oplatka, 2009). Early perceptions of teaching have an influence on the beginner teacher identity because the intrinsic factors that the participants experienced all differed according to the teacher education programme they chose. This complements the research question which explored the influence of different teacher education programmes on beginner teacher identity; the different teacher education programmes provided diverse early perceptions to teaching, which in turn influenced the beginner teachers' identity.

Findings of this study agreed with the view of Iancu-Haddad and Oplatka (2009), yet throughout the interviews conducted, the majority of the participants revealed that the idea that they had of what it meant to be a teacher, and the realities of being a teacher, differed immensely.

It is important to note that for the purpose of this study, part-time participants were chosen only if they worked full-time at schools while studying. The part-time participants had the whole length of their studies (generally 4 years) for practical experience, and thus had enough time to realise the realities of a classroom environment and had time to mature their perceptions of teaching. Hannah explains this dilemma by stating that her teacher education programme gave her substantial practical experience and that her beginner teacher identity would have been completely different had she chosen a different path of studying.

Verbatim transcript extract 5-4: Hannah

> *"… I honestly don't think that being a full-time student would have given me such a positive feeling or outlook on the teaching aspect if I had to have been at a university for a full 4 years and then come to a school and then have to find myself and have to identify myself. Because you would have all this book knowledge, but you really wouldn't have any practical knowledge that you could link the two with. And at the end of the day, that is also what gives you the experience."*

Research at Konstanz University in Germany regarding the phenomenon of "transition shock", showed that during the induction phase, teachers faced a huge gap between theory and practice (Korthagen *et al.*, 2001). Korthagen adds that as a result, beginner teachers pass through a rather distinct attitude change during their first years of teaching, in general not changing recent learning and teaching insights but creating an adjustment to present practices in schools (Korthagen *et al.*, 2001). The findings of this study coincide with Korthagen *et al.* (2001). Hannah mentioned again how she had to change her teaching identity in order to be able to handle day-to-day situations, *"… you get thrown into the deep end but it teaches you very quickly how to swim and how to become a strong teacher"* (Participant E, Hannah).

A significant factor to take into account is that the beginner teachers had a choice of whether they wanted to change their method of teaching or not; it was not forced upon them and they were not expected to change their teaching identity. They intuitively noticed that the way they were teaching was taxing and that they were struggling to

keep up with daily events; their perception of what it meant to be a teacher was flawed and they had to transform in order to acclimate to their schools' culture and climate. One participant mentioned that what he had learned in books, differed a great deal from what it was really like to teach, saying, *"… people skills, working with colleagues, it's experience that you do not get from a book, it is stuff you need to experience first-hand"*, (Participant D, Fred).

The difference was that full-time students only realised it after they have graduated, whereas part-time students who started working at a school while studying experienced the real demands of teaching from the start. While conducting the literature search, it was clear that there was no literature regarding the differences between full-time and part-time beginner teachers' experiences of initial perceptions of teaching. This shows a gap in the existing literature that I hope this study will fill.

Nonetheless, it is evident from the interviews that there were intrinsic factors that influenced the participants' perceptions of teaching as a profession, namely a change in the realistic expectation of what it meant to be a teacher and how the teacher education programmes do not include the realities of teaching in the curriculum.

5.3.2 Extrinsic factors influencing initial perceptions

Extrinsic factors are based 'outside of the beginner teacher's self' as well as on rewards and punishment such as salary, administration, and promotion (Iancu-Haddad and Oplatka, 2009). Balyer and Özcan (2014) mention that extrinsic factors that motivate student teachers to choose to teach as a career, refer to economic status (security of employment), as well as conditions of service (working conditions and holidays) and social status (contribution to society). It was evident throughout the interview process that the most common extrinsic factor that the participants found had influenced their perception of the teaching profession, was the number of administrative tasks that presented itself (conditions of service) which they did not expect. All three participants mentioned administration and the struggle of coping with the amount of administrative tasks in their first year of being a teacher.

The participants who studied part-time mentioned administrative tasks as an important factor that influenced their perception of teaching as a profession. The difference from the full-time participants, however, was that all three of them agreed that teaching

while studying, helped them to be more prepared when it came to teaching in their first year as a beginner teacher. Fred commented on everything he was able to do and understand because he was already comfortable in the school environment. This is evident in the following statement:

Verbatim transcript extract 5-5: Fred

> *"… if I had to study it full-time I think I wouldn't be able to cope with the admin, with the learners, with everything you need to do. Um, the routine of the school, figuring stuff out, like how to fill in certain forms or documents, how to work with learners in class, what are you allowed to say, what are you not allowed to say."*

Hannah and George added the responsibilities of a teacher to the list of administrative tasks. They, too, felt that they were adequately prepared for these factors because they already had had exposure to it when they were student teachers at the school. This can be seen in the following two statements:

Verbatim transcript extract 5-6: Hannah

> *"… I had my own classes that I had to deal with and I had my own admin and I knew how the attendance register worked and I knew how the money book worked, and I knew how the school's discipline worked, and I was able to modify and adjust the discipline in my own classes that I was working with, because I had an idea of what the school expected of me."*

Verbatim transcript extract 5-7: George

> *"Being a part-time student helped me to see how to do everything, which is required for being a teacher, and not only being book smart, and know how to carry knowledge of a subject over to learners, um but also basics like class discipline, school finances, attendance registers, extra mural activities, time management, and the list goes on."*

These extrinsic factors, namely the volume of administrative tasks and the duties of a teacher, are important in the beginner teachers' perception of teaching as a profession. Being tentative and uncomfortable in a school environment influences your beginner teacher identity. When a beginner teacher feels more assertive in handling the day-to-day duties of school administration, they can focus more on their teaching identity and who they want to be and become as a teacher.

5.4 Theme 2: Participants' observations on part-time teacher education programmes

In this section, I describe part-time teacher education programmes, by reflecting on the participants' observations and experiences of said programme. An enhanced understanding of beginner teacher identity can be grasped by understanding the teacher education programme that the beginner teachers endured, and experiencing it through their eyes.

5.4.1 Retrospective reflection on choice of a teacher education programme

The type of teacher education programme a student chooses will have a major impact on their beginner teacher identity. Part-time teacher education programmes utilize practitioners as their principal instructors, emphasizing on practice and fieldwork (Levine, 2006); meaning that while the students are still studying, they have the opportunity to work full-time. For the purpose of this study, part-time students work full-time at a school while studying through a part-time teacher education programme.

Hannah mentioned that the influence that her part-time teacher education programme had on her beginner teacher identity was important. According to Hannah, she had more time to try different ways of teaching and that those teachable moments made her beginner teacher identity develop earlier on in her student years, rather than only once she graduated. She stated that, *"… the institute that I graduated from definitely helped my teacher identity because I went through a trial and error stage while I was doing it. I could see what was working for me and what was not working for me"*, (Participant E, Hannah). This finding concurs with Mitchell's (2014) point of view, who states that even though students learn in a classroom, they learn so much more in the thousand teachable moments that occur outside of it, i.e. the school environment.

Hannah also stated that her CV is much stronger than, for example, somebody who had just completed a full-time teacher education programme. The fact that she has gained more practical experience, all thanks to her teacher education programme, made her feel more confident in what she has developed her beginner teacher identity into. The following statement confirms this component:

Verbatim transcript extract 5-8: Hannah

> *"… I also feel that if I had maybe chosen full-time I wouldn't have been able to put on my CV that I have teaching experience. So, already my teaching identity is that much stronger because I have all of this teaching experience than somebody that has been at a full-time institution has on their CV."*

George agrees with Hannah, in the sense that his identity was created over a longer period of time. He states that because he had more time in a school environment, he had more time to develop his beginner teacher identity and to feel more confident in what he was doing in class. In his interview he said, *"Creating your identity is a process, which I feel is done over a long period of time, and by studying part-time it was easier to find myself and to stand on my own feet in the educational world"*, (Participant F, George).

All three participants agreed that their part-time teacher education programme influence their beginner teacher identity. They felt they had more time in a school environment and that their beginner teacher identity had a longer time to develop into what they want it to be.

5.4.1 Participants' opinion of part-time teacher education programmes

One line of research that examines teacher education programmes, focuses on the structural characteristics of the various programmes, regardless of whether they are traditional or alternative (Stuart and Tatto, 2000; Boyd *et al.*, 2009; Zuzovsky and Donitsa-Schmidt, 2017). For example, Stuart and Tatto (2000) examined teacher education programmes in several countries including the US, the UK, Mexico, South Africa and Malawi. They identified several operational characteristics of such programmes: length (short or long), timing (pre-service or on-the-job training), location

(campus-based or school-based), importance given to the different components of the programmes (disciplinary content, educational foundations, pedagogy, didactics, practicum and research methodology) and level of integration between the various components (integrated or sequential) (Zuzovsky and Donitsa-Schmidt, 2017).

George commented on his teacher education programme by saying that*, "… being a part-time student and working in a school environment, gives more clarity on what it truly means to be a teacher"*, (Participant G, George). His feeling of clarity meant that he had more confidence when he started as a beginner teacher, because his teacher education programme allowed him to delve into his beginner teacher identity before he actually had to start teaching.

Consequently, teacher education programmes need to support students' self-worth beliefs as part of their professional education. It is also important to explore how the characteristics of teacher education programmes might support and build teachers' self-worth beliefs (Christophersen *et al.*, 2016). Hannah's following statement proves that point, stating *"I literally got to grow within a school system and I got to evolve in my way as a teacher because I was constantly busy with teaching every single day",* (Participant E, Hannah). Her part-time teacher education programme helped her to evolve and adapt her beginner teacher identity while she was busy studying. This means that by the time that she had to teach full time, she already had a better-developed beginner teacher identity than those beginner teachers who had not worked at a school while studying.

Interestingly enough, even though participants were asked to comment on their specific teacher education programme, the full-time participants had some comments on part-time teacher education programmes as well. Angelina stated that *"… all the other teachers that did it part-time, I feel like they had more of an advantage and they knew exactly what to expect when walking into a classroom because they had more years working with the kids"*, (Participant B, Angelina). Colin agreed with Angelina, adding, *"I believe part-time would have been a better choice because even though you are working, you are not a full-fledged teacher. You are still learning, you are learning by observing and doing a little, and then systematically increasing the amount of work you do",* (Participant C, Colin).

However, Emma did not have the same feeling toward part-time teacher education programmes, which is evident in the following statement.

Verbatim transcript extract 5-9: Emma

> *"… if you do it part-time and are working, then you have 2 things to do and worry about, your actual work and your studies. And there's a lot of people who can't handle that pressure of doing both."*
> *"Especially if you're working at a school while working part-time. Because the school expects from you to do the work that they set out for you. Because you have a full day at school to do teaching or whatever, and then obviously hockey, netball, cricket, whatever they expect from you to do."*

Form the extracts above, it is clear from all 6 participants (both full-time and part-time), that five of them believe that a part-time teacher education programme has more benefits for beginner teachers in terms of practical experience and developing their beginner teacher identity. Only one participant felt that a part-time teacher education programme would not benefit her at all, which shows that the different teacher education programmes and their influence on beginner teacher identity really depends on different characteristics of the beginner teachers.

5.5 Theme 3: The influence of a part-time teacher education programme on beginner teacher identity

In this section, I report on the findings related to part-time education students as beginner teachers. I present the recorded data under each subtheme while explaining the respective subthemes. For the purpose of this study, studying through a part-time teacher education programme means that participants studied part-time and worked full-time at a school. Three participants who studied part-time while working at a school were interviewed.

5.5.1 Beginner teacher identity development

In the section where I described the participants (Sketch of participants, c.f. Chapter 5.2), I mentioned how each participant initially viewed their own beginner teacher identity. When it comes to the beliefs about teaching and teacher identity, Mayer (1999) claimed that teacher identity is based on primary beliefs about teaching and what it means to be a teacher, and that these beliefs are continuously restructured in the process of becoming a professional teacher. Korthagen (2004) also stated that beginner teachers' identities have an impact on their beliefs as well as their teaching actions. It is important to perceive beginner teachers' identity in relation to daily practice in the classroom (Van Der Want *et al.*, 2018). Beginner teachers' identity represents not only their current (present self), but also their ideal frame of reference concerning the classroom (future self) (Van Der Want *et al.*, 2018).

From the interviews, it was clear that all three participants who studied part-time had already formed a rough image of what they wanted their beginner teacher identity to be or how it had already and strongly emerged. This is in accordance with McNally *et al.* (2008), which state that graduating from a teacher education programme and starting to work as a teacher can be seen as a transfer or shift in beginner teacher identity, where the interaction between the beginner teacher and their work environment is highlighted as a central part where understanding of the profession was developed. For these participants who studied part-time while working at a school full-time, the shift in their beginner teacher identity started much earlier because they had the opportunity to interact with their work environment (a school) sooner than full-time students.

This can be related to the Possible Selves of the beginner teachers; full-time students' (present self) identities were much more unstable compared to the part-time students. Harrison (2018) noted that:

> …we all envisage a range of possible identities for ourselves, framed by factors both within and beyond our control... These possible selves are part of building a wider narrative that we use to make sense of our lives in our own social context. (p.4)

The part-time students had more time to develop their identities and mature their present selves to achieve their teaching goal or future self. Unfortunately, the full-time students could only begin with that process once they started teaching, which meant that their teaching goal or future self was under more pressure. The full-time students had unstable present selves and could not develop their identities without first understanding and maturing their present self. Only after they have found and understood their present self, could they formulate and start working toward their future self, their teaching goal.

All three part-time participants agreed to the fact that they had much more time to develop their beginner teacher identity because they were working at a school while they were students. Hannah explained that from an early stage of being a student-teacher while studying part-time, she could try different ideas on what she thought would work for her. This is apparent from the following statement:

Verbatim transcript extract 5-10: Hannah

> *"… At one point, I was basically the teacher for 5 weeks in the class. And that already helped me, from an early stage, to identify what works for me as a teacher and what doesn't work for me as a teacher so that once I graduated it wouldn't be such a bomb shock for me in class."*
> *"… but the understanding of the curriculum and the understanding of a class setup – that is something that you can learn within your first year but if you haven't been at a school it takes you longer."*

Hannah felt like she had an advantage when it came to developing her beginner teacher identity because she had much more time to develop and iron out flaws in her teaching. By the time Hannah graduated, she could start as a beginner teacher with *some* experience and had a better idea of how she viewed herself as a teacher and what she planned on doing.

5.5.2 Preparation and authentic challenges

Challenges during the early years can also be part of the intrinsic and extrinsic factors that influence the perceptions of teaching as a profession. Beginner teachers face a variety of identity-related pressures and problems that refer to classroom management (Van Der Want *et al.*, 2018). As mentioned earlier, some of the challenges that beginner teachers face in the early years are administrative demands and feeling unprepared for the teaching profession. All three participants agreed that their part-time teacher education programme meant that they had more time to develop as teachers from working full-time. This is in line with the statement by Rots, Kelchtermans and Aelterman (2012), that the more the practical experiences mirror real-life teaching, the more effective it will be. For that reason, it is possible that the beginner teachers who studied part-time may feel that their practical experience gave them a "head start" to develop their teaching identity, in comparison to those who studied full-time. All participants who studied part-time also showed more confidence in how they view themselves as teachers.

It seemed reasonable to determine that the beginner teachers, who were learning about navigating the management and instructional pressures of teaching, needed to pay attention to the perceived successes and failures of their teaching practice (Nichols *et al.*, 2017). A factor that can be noted as a challenge for part-time students, is the concept of teaching practice. One way in which teaching practice can be seen as a challenge and perceived as a failure is when the student cannot cope with navigating both studying responsibilites as well as the pressures of teaching. One participant noted that *"… if you study part-time and are working, then you have two things to do and worry about; your actual work and your studies. And there's a lot of people who can't handle that pressure of doing both"*, (Participant A, Emma). She also stated that the work environment added pressure, by saying, *"especially if you're working at a school while working part-time, the school expects from you to do the work that they set out for you. Because you have a full day at school to do teaching or whatever, and then obviously hockey, netball, cricket, whatever they expect from you to do"*, (Participant A, Emma). This can be translated into challenges that only part-time students face: they have to manage between the responsibility of teaching as well as staying on track with their studies.

All three participants agreed to the fact that administration is a struggle while teaching and that they did not learn enough about the full extent thereof during their teacher education programmes. George specifically mentioned that a big challenge he noticed was the learning styles of student teachers, by saying that, *"… you should consider your learning style, because part-time studying requires a lot of self-discipline and good time management"*, (Participant F, George). For George, it was key to have self-discipline when studying part-time. With part-time teacher education programmes, there are little to no contact sessions to attend and support from lecturers are only electronically. That means that you as a part-time student need to be able to be disciplined enough to stay on track of assignments and due dates, as well as study for exams, all while working full-time and having the same responsibilities as other teachers regarding extra-curricular activities.

5.5.3 The role of practical experience

To add to 4.5.3 where Lundberg and Korthagen (2009) mentioned practical wisdom, they also stated that:

> Experience is what one gains from operating in the real world, in practice (in our case the real world of teaching in schools), and encompasses both the environment (e.g., the classroom) and one's own inner reality while relating to this environment. This inner reality is multi-layered, as it encompasses, for example, good or wrong ways of doing things (know-how), beliefs about practice, as well as a sense of professional identity developed through internal encounters with the 'I' that goes through the experiences (p. 5).

Findings from this study agree with the view of Lundberg & Korthagen (2009), as practical experience was a recurring theme amongst the participants when asked how their part-time teacher education programme influenced their beginner teacher identity. It was clear that all three participants felt strongly about the positive effect that practical experience had on their beginner teacher identity.

Teaching practice is an important part of teacher education, as it offers student teachers with an essential connection between theory and practice and the opportunity to define and develop their teaching identity (Koç, 2012). Fred's statement substantiates that of Koç (2012), when he said that his practical experience had a big impact on his beginner teacher identity. He commented that the school he was working

at was a ‘perfect school’ in the sense that they provided support and guidance and helped him grow into a successful beginner teacher. He stated that the practical experience that he gained was invaluable and that it was essential to forming his beginner teacher identity, as can be established from the following statement:

Verbatim transcript extract 5-11: Fred

> *“… I got my experience from my school, my practical experience was from the school I teach at the moment… it is out and out where I teach at the moment who gave me the advantage or the experience, to teach like I teach now.”*

Hannah agreed with Fred and added that not only does the practical experience form an essential part, but also what you can learn from other, more experienced teachers while working at a school. Previously, Hannah elaborated on how her beginner teacher identity was influenced by the practical experience that she had in a class. But later on, she also commented on how much she was able to learn from other teachers while gaining practical experience. Traditionally, student teaching practice models assign student teachers to mentor teachers, to be supervised throughout the practicum at a school (Koç, 2012). Koç is corroborated by Hannah; according to her, some of the most important aspects of her beginner teacher identity came from observing other teachers and noting what worked in a classroom environment and what did not. Her following statement illustrates this idea:

Verbatim transcript extract 5-12: Hannah

"… I had a lot of examples to learn from, and I had a lot of people that I could grab knowledge from."
"… where I was actually dealing with problems and seeing how the teachers actually react to certain situations so that I could either gain from that or decide for myself that I won't ever handle a child that way."
"I think there's a lot of influencing aspects that need to be taken, or factors, that need to be taken into consideration. But I would definitely, if I had to sum it up, I would label it as experience."

George also agreed with the other two participants. He noted that he had a head start compared to full-time students with little practical experience because it meant that his CV was stronger and that he had more confidence in the classroom. This is evident from the following statement:

Verbatim transcript extract 5-13: George

"As a part-time student I felt I'm much better equipped than any full-time student to handle any situation in a school environment. Um, I know it is a strong statement to make, but by being in the school environment and working while studying, has shaped and prepared me a lot more than which being a full-time student could have."
"I also feel it gave me a head start in the teaching industry where I had more teaching experience compared to a full-time student. Experience is key to help you find your own teaching identity."

Practical knowledge is derived from the cumulative experience of 'what works' by those who partake in the practice (Rusznyak, 2015). Practical knowledge is therefore produced by teachers (and other specialists) working within classroom environments (not outside of it, like theoretical knowledge) (Rusznyak, 2015).

All three participants seem to agree that practical experience is key to being confident and having a stronger beginner teacher identity. They also agreed that part-time teacher education programmes created that opportunity for students to work full-time at school while studying, something which full-time teacher education programmes cannot offer.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter presented and evaluated the data according to the identified themes and incorporation with obtainable literature on the topic. First, I provided an introduction to this chapter. Next, I sketched the beginner teacher show participated in this study by detailing the interview experience as well as the background context of each participant. Finally, I presented and discussed the reflections and interpretations of the data, supported by interview extracts taken from the verbatim transcripts. The beginner teachers'' responses were given according to the themes identified.

The first theme focused on the beginner teachers' initial perceptions of teaching as a profession. The subthemes related to this theme included the intrinsic factors influencing initial perceptions as well as the extrinsic factors influencing initial perceptions of teaching. The second theme reflected in the participants' observation of part-time teacher education programmes. The third theme focused on the influence of a part-time teacher education programme on beginner teacher identity. the subthemes included beginner teacher identity development, preparation and authentic challenges, and the role of practical experience.

In the final chapter of this study, the findings are discussed further by using the existing literature as the necessary backdrop. I also refer to and answer the relevant research questions that were initially posed in chapter 1. Finally, I conclude this dissertation by explaining the significance of this study and making recommendations for future studies.

6. CHAPTER SIX: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

"The challenge is always to find the good place to end the book. The rule I follow with myself is that every book should end where the next book would logically begin. I know that some readers wish that literally all of the threads would be neatly tied off and snipped, but life just doesn't work that way."

- Robin Hobb (1952)

6.1 Introduction

This final chapter is where I showcase the final tapestry that represents the influence of different teacher education programmes on beginner teacher identity, as well as my research tapestry. Some threads will be neatly tied off, but some threads will need to be woven into a new tapestry through further recommendations and research.

Chapter 4 and 5 introduced the participants and described the themes that emerged from the collected data. In this final chapter, I present an overview of the main findings of this study in relation to the existing body of knowledge, which is followed by addressing the research questions. Next is a discussion of the significance of the study and its possible limitations. I then propose recommendations for future research and practice, focused specifically on different teacher education programmes. Finally, I reflect on the impact this study had on my personal research journey.

6.2 Summary of chapters

Organizing all the different threads has resulted in a well-woven tapestry that is my research study. This has assured a well-structured research study in which the content flowed logically and in which the research questions were addressed. The chapters were as follows.

Chapter 1: Research focus

Chapter 1 gave the reader an indication of why I wanted to conduct this study, i.e. the background, as well as the rationale and purpose of the study. It also gave an overview of the key concepts, the conceptual framework and research methodology I followed. A short synthesis of the quality criteria and ethical considerations were also

mentioned. The metaphor of threads was also explained and established the first part where I started to weave my research tapestry.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This chapter focused on the relevant aspects of existing scholarly literature in the field. It provided a critical review of literature pertaining to the influence of different teacher education programmes on beginner teacher identity. I discussed the three threads that made up the tapestry of a beginner teacher, namely the nature of beginner teachers' selves, different teacher education programmes and the Possible Selves Theory. I also presented the conceptual framework, which consisted of the Possible Selves Theory together with the metaphor of threads.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

In this chapter, the focus was on an in-depth discussion of the research methodology as well as the research design used for this study. I also explained how participants were selected by using the purposive sampling method. Then I discussed strategies used to collect and analyse the researched data, namely the use of semi-structured interviews and audio recordings. Quality criteria and ethical considerations important for this study were also elaborated on.

Chapter 4 and 5: Data analysis and interpretation

Chapter 4 analysed the data from participants who studied through a full-time teacher education programme, and chapter 5 analysed data from participants who studied through a part-time teacher education programme. These chapters introduced the participants and associated them each to a coloured thread. I then informed the reader on what was discovered during the interview analysis by creating three themes, with subthemes, that linked to the research questions under investigation.

Chapter 6: Recommendations and conclusions

Chapter 6 provided a summary of the main findings of this study, recommendations, addressed the research question and added a conclusion of the study. In this chapter, the research tapestry was refined and completed.

6.3 Findings of this study in relation to the existing body of knowledge

This section will discuss the similarities and differences between the findings of this study and the literature gathered, as well as the generation of new knowledge. The similarities will show where existing literature concurred with the findings of this study, whereas the differences will point out where existing literature did not coincide with the findings.

6.3.1 Similarities between the findings of this study and existing literature

- *Existing literature proves that beginner teachers' identities are unstable (Mayer, 1999; Beauchamp and Thomas, 2011; Anspal, Eisenschmidt and Löfström, 2012).*

Scholarly literature also states that beginner teachers' Possible Selves are influenced by both their past self and future self (Markus and Nurius, 1986; Strahan and Wilson, 2006; Lee and Schallert, 2016). The beginner teachers' identity development is influenced by their conception of teaching; their Possible Selves are all intertwined and influences each other (Hamman *et al.*, 2010; Lee and Schallert, 2016). This is in line with the findings of this study, which revealed that participants noted they had to change their identities – they had a preconceived present self – and had to adapt to the school environment.

- *Similar to the findings of this study, literature further showed that classroom reality differs from teacher education programme learnings (Bjarnadòttir, 2005; Lindgren, 2005; Fantilli and McDougall, 2009).*

This was a very important factor noted by the participants; they felt unprepared for the realities of teaching and that the teacher education programme curriculum did not necessarily link to classroom realities they were facing when they started teaching. Both full-time and part-time teacher education programme curriculums are focused on the theoretical side of teaching, whereas participants commented on how crucial the practical experience was, especially in preparing them for the classroom realities of the first year of teaching. The difference between the two teacher education programmes is that part-time teacher education programmes provide the opportunity for beginner teachers to gain practical experience while studying, compared to full-

time teacher education programmes which provide limited practical experience. This was similarly perceived in the findings of this study. The part-time participants could gain the crucial practical experience while studying already, making their transition to beginner teacher much easier, whereas the part-time participants had to endure the transition into beginner teacher together with practical experience only when they started working full-time. Findings from research by Zuzovsky and Donitsa-Schmidt (2017) resonates with what was found in my research. Full-time participants, even though more knowledgeable in the theoretical background of teaching, may lack in practical experience. Part-time participants on the, other hand, have that practical experience but their theoretical background may not be as strong as their counterparts.

- *Teaching practice experience aids beginner teachers in preparing for their first year of teaching (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Darling-Hammond and Hammerness, 2005; Rots, Kelchtermans, and Aelterman 2012).*

Likewise, literature also states that teaching practice is a vital part of a teacher education programme (Wilson, Floden and Ferrini-Mundy, 2002; Zeichner, 2007, 2010; Lunenberg and Korthagen, 2009; Koç, 2012). This agrees with the findings of this study, in which part-time participants illustrated the importance of teaching practice and how it enabled them to feel more prepared. Full-time participants also noted how they would have valued more practical experience to develop their beginner teacher identity better.

6.3.2 Differences between the findings of this study and existing literature

According to my literature search, no differences could be found between this study and the existing literature. There is limited literature on teacher education programmes in the South African context, especially in part-time teacher education programmes (Chubbuck *et al.*, 2001; Beauchamp and Thomas, 2009; Cherrington, 2017; Du Plessis and Sunde, 2017). It is important to note that it is according to *my* literature search that I could not find any differences; some resources could easily have been missed as I did not have access to all journals. It is also humanly impossible to read through every journal on a certain topic, as the worldwide web has expanded vastly.

This expansion has made many journal articles more easily available but has also increased the available research pool. Literature in another language could also have been missed during my literature search.

6.3.3 Findings of this study

This section first discusses general findings from the study, and then concentrates on the main findings discovered in this study.

6.3.3.1 General findings

The next section presents the findings that emerged from the data analysis, in line with the identified themes from chapter 4 and 5 (cf. Table 4-1 and 5-1 respectively).

Theme 1: Beginner teachers' initial perceptions of teaching as a profession

Most of the participants' initial perceptions of teaching as a profession were influenced by their teacher education programme. Participants had a certain idea of what it would be like to be a teacher, but once they started teaching, they realised that it was a different world than expected. Their idea of what it meant to be a teacher, against what was a reality, differed vastly. Many of the participants changed their perspectives of teaching, and thus changed the way they built their beginner teacher identity.

The perceptions of teaching as a profession differed between full-time and part-time participants. The full-time participants had a steeper learning curve when it came to adapt to the realities of teaching, as they did not have a lot of practical experience. The part-time participants also had to adapt to the realities of teaching, but their learning curve was milder. This can be attributed to the fact that they had more practical experience of working full-time at a school. This is not necessarily a feature of their chosen part-time teacher education programme, but rather that their teacher education programme allowed them to be able to work full-time while studying part-time.

As an intrinsic factor, the curriculum of the two different teacher education programmes both painted an 'idealistic' picture of what the teaching profession is like. The participants agreed that the picture painted, and the reality was immensely different from each other. They had to adapt to the school culture and climate and

noted that their teacher education programmes theory did not necessarily link to practical reality. Another reality that was unforeseen by the participants, an extrinsic factor, was the number of administrative tasks that were part of everyday teaching. They felt that the teacher education programmes could expose them more to what that reality is, in order to start as a teacher successfully.

Themes 2 and 3 of full-time beginner teachers: The influence of a full-time teacher education programme on beginner teacher identity

The participants who studied through full-time teacher education programmes created the impression that they did not have a clear beginner teacher identity formed before they started teaching. When describing their beginner teacher identity, the participants stated who they "hoped" they would be and not who they are at the moment; which suggests that they did not yet have a clear beginner teacher identity. The participants mentioned that the preparation for teaching was insufficient and that they felt ill-prepared to walk into a class and be able to teach successfully and without fault.

The role of practical experience was a recurring theme for the participants and the impact that it had on their beginner teacher identity. The participants felt that their beginner teacher identity would have manifested differently if they had more practical experience before they started teaching. The participants' choice of studying through a full-time teacher education programme had various influences for each participant.

Themes 2 and 3 of part-time beginner teachers: The influence of a part-time teacher education programme on beginner teacher identity

The participants who studied through part-time teacher education programmes agreed that they had more time to develop their beginner teacher identity. The participants stated that working full-time at a school meant that they felt adequately prepared for teaching full-time. The different beginner teacher identities of the part-time participants were also viewed as stronger and more confident; they had a stronger idea of what they wanted their beginner teacher identity to be. They knew that it would most probably change over the years to come, as they gained more experience and knowledge in teaching.

The participants felt confident about the positive effect the practical experience had on their beginner teacher identity. They mentioned how practical experience gave them more time to observe mentor teachers and it helped build a strong CV. For the participants, more time in a classroom meant they had more time to form their beginner teacher identity. There were many influences on the participants' choice of a part-time teacher education programme.

6.3.3.2 Main findings

I view the following as the main finding and thus the scientific contribution in this research study: Full-time participants only realised the reality of teaching after they have graduated and started working, compared to part-time participants who realised the realities of teaching early on because they worked full-time while studying.

This is significant, as this realisation can have a meaningful impact on the beginner teacher's identity. Imagine you want to be a seamstress, and you have to sew a buttonhole using a sewing machine. In one situation, you have the instructions printed and all the theoretical knowledge about how to thread the machine's needle and sew the buttonhole, but you have only practiced a few times. In the other situation, you practiced every day while learning the theoretical aspects (steps) at the same time. On the day that you have to thread the machine's needle and sew a buttonhole, there will be a remarkable difference between the two seamstresses; especially in their confidence and how they perceive themselves as a seamstress. This is how beginner teachers feel at the start of their career as full-time teachers. This shows the significance that the realisation early-on of the realities of teaching can have on beginner teacher identity.

Even though the full-time participants thought that they were prepared and ready for the realities of teaching, this study proved that they were not; a realisation that they only came to when they started teaching. This study also contributed to the literature on beginner teachers' perceptions of teaching (c.f. Chapter 4.3). Full-time beginner teachers' preconceived idea of what it meant to be a teacher did not have an extended amount of time to develop and had to change according to what the realities of the classroom environment were. The beginner teachers' identities were influenced by uncomfortable positions in a school environment; if they had felt more confident in handling the day-to-day responsibilities of school administration, they would be able

to focus more on their teaching identity and who they want to be and become as a teacher.

While conducting the literature search, it seems that there was no literature regarding the differences between full-time and part-time beginner teachers' initial perceptions of teaching. When considering the research design used, namely the comparative case study design, I found a possible gap in research. From my literature search, I could not find another research study that compares the two different teacher education programmes with comparative case study design as a methodology. The fact that there may be a gap in existing literature, may also be regarded as a form of a new finding. In the academic world, it is important to know where there are voids in research, in order for them to be filled with future research. A gap in research shows that something remains to be discovered on a certain topic; research should attempt to fill missing pieces of information in the existing literature.

Literature from a South African context specifically, could be seen as slim when it came to research conducted on beginner teachers. There was partial literature that engaged with the lived experiences of full-time and part-time beginner teachers (Hobson, 2009; Hong, 2010; Nomlomo and Sosibo, 2016). Research that has viewed the beginner teacher identity through the lens of the Possible Selves Theory was also left wanting; most literature focused on either beginner teacher identity or the Possible Selves Theory, but not both. This is concurred by Hamman *et al.* (2010), who states that most researchers utilizing the Possible Selves Theory are interested in how individuals observe and achieve important transition phases of their lives, but that few efforts have been concentrating on exploring how this theory may relate to the development of beginner teachers.

6.4 Significance of this study

The significance of this study lies in the findings which revealed the influence of different teacher education programmes on beginner teacher identity. Therefore, it added to the current body of knowledge related to beginner teacher identity, and the limited understanding of teacher education programmes especially in the South African context from the unique research design and conceptual lens of this study.

Earlier studies by O'Brien and Furlong (2015), which is confirmed by this study, suggest that despite the fact that beginner teachers have spent time developing knowledge in a particular field (through teacher education programmes), or feel that they have interest and skills in specific fields of knowledge, there is a strong attraction towards practice and away from the more theoretical scopes of teacher education. This need for practical experience appeared to have a strong impact on the shaping of a beginner teacher's identity, and in the subsequent construction of successful teacher identity, as this study endorses earlier studies by O'Brien and Furlong (2015). This is where the different teacher education programmes played a role, in the sense that full-time programmes provided limited or much less practical experience; whereas part-time programmes gave the students, where possible, opportunity to work full-time at a school and gain practical experience. Because of the difference in practical experience, the two types of beginner teachers (former full-time students and part-time students) had different approaches of forming their beginner teacher identity.

This study draws attention to the differences between full-time and part-time teacher students. As shown in the data analysis of this study, it is important to acknowledge a difference between these students, as they experience the routes of studying differently. Higher education institutions may use these findings to ensure that the shortfalls of their teacher education programmes are addressed (whether it is practical or theoretical). When beginner teachers, who were full-time students, commented that they feel lost and unprepared for their first year of teaching, institutions need to ask themselves what role and responsibility was expected of them, as well as if there are ways they could influence the nature of beginner teachers and their teaching identity. Furthermore, prospective students may find these findings valuable to compare possible routes to becoming a teacher and make sure they choose the correct route of studying according to what will suit their requirements.

From the literature read, it is clear that there is an unsatisfactory level of learner achievement in South Africa, and that it is no surprise that the quality of teacher education itself is becoming a crucial point of (National Education Evaluation and Development Unit, 2013). Evidence is increasingly sought to prove that all student teachers are prepared in such a way that they will be able to positively affect Grade 12 results. In this regard Korthagen, Loughran and Lunenberg (2005) claim that in the

light of the increasing attention paid to the nature of teaching and teachers' work, there has also been an increasing focus on the quality of teacher education and the professional expertise of teacher educators themselves (Griffiths, Thompson and Hryniewicz, 2014).

This study is important as it may help different teacher education programmes gain insight into whether their teaching strategies are in line with other teacher education programmes. Full-time teacher education programmes may gain insight on whether they prepare their students efficiently for their first year of teaching, owing to the fact that full-time students cannot work as teachers and some part-time students may have the opportunity to work full-time. Part-time teacher education programmes may gain insight on whether their theoretical preparation is in line with full-time teacher education programmes.

6.5 Limitations of this study

For the purpose of this study, I worked with beginner teachers within the province of Gauteng, in South Africa. The purposive sampling method was used as I had to select the participants according to specific criteria. The geographical area was restricted to the province of Gauteng, because of time restraints and travel time to meet the participants at a location that was suitable to them. Participants were chosen as stated in chapter 3 (cf. Chapter 3.5), namely they had to be a beginner teacher (1-3 years teaching experience) that graduated from either a full-time or part-time teacher education programme. The participants who graduated from a part-time teacher education programme had to have worked full-time at a school while they were studying. Three participants were chosen from each teacher education programme. As a very small group of participants were chosen, the findings of this study cannot be generalised to the wider population. The methodology also created another limitation. With case study research, each of the participants' perspectives was considered. This means that trying to replicate the same cases would be challenging.

6.6 Recommendations

From this study and its findings, the following recommendations can be indicated.

6.6.1 Recommendations for practice

The findings of this research can be used to help beginner teachers determine their beginner teacher identity and teach them how to adjust their beginner teacher identity to adapt to their school environment. It can be recommended that experienced teachers use the findings of this study with the intention to help beginner teachers face the realities of what it means to be a teacher. Schools can design induction programmes that will help beginner teachers transition from being a student teacher to a teacher of students. The induction programmes can include important aspects that are only experienced in a real school setting; for example, basic administrative tasks and classroom management.

6.6.2 Recommendations for policy

This study is important as it will help full-time and part-time teacher education programmes gain insight into whether their teaching strategies are in line with what is required from students in practice. Full-time teacher education programmes can also gain insight on whether they prepare their students efficiently for their first year of teaching, owing to the fact that full-time students cannot work as teachers and part-time students can work full-time.

To adequately serve these beginner teachers, institutions need to look beyond their demographic characteristics to be able to identify these individuals, their perceptions, and experiences from their perspectives. This study has the potential to enable and design a series of seminars about the first years of teaching. From this study, professionals might begin to consider implementing more appropriate strategies within their induction programmes to include beginner teachers.

The Department of Education can consider implementing a policy that requires a minimum practical experience timeframe. The Department can also link teacher education programmes with schools as stakeholders to ensure that all students are ensured the necessary practical experience.

It would also be recommended that the Department ensures the implementation of the MRTEQ policy that states what a teacher needs to be competent at once graduated. Certifying the application of the MRTEQ policy will force teacher education programmes to revise their curriculum and make sure that all students graduate with the required knowledge.

6.6.3 Recommendations for future research

The insight gained from this study can be used to inform further research on teacher education programmes. It can also be used as part of a larger body of knowledge on teacher identity, more specifically on beginner teacher identity. Currently, there is a gap in existing literature regarding the influence of teacher education programmes on beginner teacher identity.

The insight gained from this study can advise further research on teacher education programmes and the experiences of beginner teachers from those different programme routes. It can also add to the limited research of the influence of different teacher education programmes on beginner teacher identity.

6.7 Personal professional reflection

Undertaking this research study has been an instrumental learning experience. I have gained some understanding of the nature of research and of the cyclical, sometimes messy, nature of the research process. I have learned, for example, that things do not fit neatly into categories and that research can be frustrating and sometimes tedious, yet at other times immensely rewarding and even exhilarating.

This research study has also provided some key ideas which have helped me scrutinize my own professional standards and guidelines for possible changes to my own future practice. My own path to becoming a teacher was demanding as I studied part-time and worked as a teacher's assistant full-time. Through that path, I became aware of the differences between full-time teacher education programmes and part-time teacher education programmes on an informal, non-research-based level. It was that mindfulness that intrigued me into following an actual path of research to understand the phenomenon that had presented itself to me. The first thread of my

research tapestry was threaded through the needle the moment I decided to conduct this research study.

I intend to further explore the influence of different teacher education programmes on beginner teacher identity since I now have a growing awareness of how the beginner teacher identity can be stimulated. I have also begun to speak to my colleagues, and I pay attention to our beginner teachers, how much we value they bring to the school and the role that we play in helping them in developing their beginner teacher identity. The research process has also encouraged me to view my own teaching identity and has provided a wealth of resources from which I can learn to improve the help I can offer to beginner teachers. Even though my research tapestry is finally complete, there is still further research that I wish to explore. Fortunately, one can never have too many tapestries hanging in your house. This research tapestry will serve as my first, but hopefully not my last.

6.8 Conclusion

Different teacher education programmes undeniably have an influence on beginner teacher identity. It is when scrutinizing the theme of beginner teachers' perception of teaching as a profession and the linked theme of the influence of teacher education programmes on beginner teacher identity, where one notices the truth behind the topic and research question. Practical experience played a crucial role in the development of beginner teacher identity. The extent of that practical experience, which will influence the amount of time a beginner teacher has to mature their beginner teacher identity, all depends on the teacher education programme they choose. Aspiring teachers have to choose the teacher education programme which suits their personality, budget and learning style the best, all while keeping in mind the different practical experience that comes with each. The past experiences of a beginner teacher cannot be changed or rewoven; it forms part of their Past Self. The true nature of a teacher is what they do with the hundred thousand threads that weave their future; will they be able to adapt and become a successful teacher? Or will their seams unravel to the point of their teaching tapestry being lost forever? *That* Future Self, is one image that nobody can predict; one can only try their best and hope for a prosperous outcome.

“The future is a hundred thousand threads, but the past is a fabric that can never be rewoven.”

- Orson Scott Card, “The Ender Quintet” (2013, p. 858)

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All images used (balls of yarn, threads and tapestries) were obtained through Google Image Search. The following websites were accessed:

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview protocol

Possible Selves: Beginner teachers' identities as shaped by part-time and full-time teacher education programmes.

Details of interview			
Time of interview		Duration of interview	
Date		Venue	
Participant	A / B / C / D / E / F	Part-time	Full-time

Biographical details of interviewee:

1. Pseudonym given: _____
2. Gender: _____
3. School working at: _____
4. Number of years teaching as a qualified teacher: _____
5. Institution graduated from: _____

a. Part-time ☐ b. Full-time ☐

Interview questions:

1. What do you see as a beginner teaching identity?
2. What do you see as your own teaching identity?
3. How did the institute you graduated from influence your teaching identity? for instance, how you teach, how you handle situations and teaching practice experience?
4. Do you think your teaching identity would have been different if you had chosen the opposite teacher education programme? Like part-time and full-time. Why do you say so?
5. What would you like other beginner teachers to know when choosing their teacher education programme? Why do you think that aspect is important?
6. Do you think that aspect had an influence on your teaching identity?
7. Why did you choose your particular teacher education programme? Why did you choose to become a teacher?

Appendix B: Letters of consent

Department of Humanities Education

Research study

Possible Selves: Beginner teachers' identities as shaped by part-time and full-time teacher education programmes

Research conducted by:

Ms. M. van Heerden (14454310)

Dear Participant

You are invited to participate in an academic research study conducted by me, Mické van Heerden, Masters student from the Department of Humanities Education at the University of Pretoria.

The purpose of the study is to explore how different routes of teacher education programmes influence beginner teachers' identity. This study will explore how beginner teachers develop their own teaching identity and whether different teacher education programmes have an influence on that process.

Please note the following:

- This is an anonymous study, which means your name will not appear in the final dissertation. The answers you give will be treated as strictly confidential as you cannot be identified in person based on the answers you give.
- Your participation in this study is very important to us. You may, however, choose not to participate and you may also stop participating at any time without any negative consequences.

- You will be asked to take part in an interview, in which open-ended questions will be asked and your answers will be recorded. The interview will be arranged at a place and time convenient to you.
- The results of the study will be used for academic purposes only and may be published in an academic journal. We will provide you with a summary of our findings on request.
- If you have any questions or comments regarding the study, please feel free to contact me via email at mickevh@gmail.com .
- If any further information is required in terms of this research study, please contact my supervisor, Dr. Yolandi Woest (lecturer at the University of Pretoria – Department of Humanities Education) at yolandi.woest@up.ac.za .

Please sign the form to indicate that:

- You have read and understand the information provided above.
- You give your consent to participate in the study on a voluntary basis.

Name of participant: _____

_____ _____

Participant's signature **Date**

Thank you in advance for assisting me in this research.

Yours sincerely

_____

Mické van Heerden (researcher)

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Education
Fakulteit Opvoedkunde
Lefapha la Thuto

Department of Humanities Education

Research study

Possible Selves: Beginner teachers' identities as shaped by part-time and full-time teacher education programmes

Research conducted by:

Ms. M. van Heerden (14454310)

Dear headmaster

One of your teachers are invited to participate in an academic research study conducted by me, Mické van Heerden, Masters student from the Department of Humanities Education at the University of Pretoria.

The purpose of the study is to explore how different routes of teacher education programmes influence beginner teachers' identity. This study will explore how beginner teachers develop their own teaching identity and whether different teacher education programmes have an influence on that process.

Please note the following:

- This is an anonymous study, which means the participant's and school's name will not appear in the final dissertation. The answers he/she gives will be treated as strictly confidential and the school cannot be identified based on the answers he/she gives.
- Your teacher's participation in this study is very important to us. The participants may, however, choose not to participate and he/she may also stop participating at any time without any negative consequences.

- The participants will be asked to take part in an interview, in which open-ended questions will be asked and his/her answers will be recorded. The interview will be arranged at a place and time convenient to him/her.
- The results of the study will be used for academic purposes only and may be published in an academic journal. We will provide you with a summary of our findings on request.
- If you have any questions or comments regarding the study, please feel free to contact me via email at mickevh@gmail.com .
- If any further information is required in terms of this research study, please contact my supervisor, Dr. Yolandi Woest (lecturer at the University of Pretoria – Department of Humanities Education) at yolandi.woest@up.ac.za .

Please sign the form to indicate that:

- You have read and understand the information provided above.
- You give your consent to participate in the study on a voluntary basis.

Name of headmaster: _____

_____ _____

Headmaster's signature **Date**

Thank you in advance for assisting me in this research.

Yours sincerely

_____

Mické van Heerden (researcher)

Faculty of Education
Fakulteit Opvoedkunde
Lefapha la Thuto

Consent form

I, _____ (your name), agree/do not agree (cross out what is not applicable) to participate in this research study titled: **Possible Selves: Beginner teachers' identities as shaped by part-time and full-time teacher education programmes**. I am fully aware that I will be interviewed about the abovementioned topic for approximately one hour at a venue suitable for me outside of school hours. I understand that the interview will be audio taped for accuracy purposes.

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

I understand that the researcher pledges to the following principles:

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

Name of participant: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix C: List of interview transcriptions

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTIONS

Possible Selves: Beginner teachers' identities as shaped by part-time and full-time teacher education programmes

Participants chosen:

Participant	Pseudonym	Gender		Ethnicity			Teacher Education Programme	
		Male	Female	White	Black	Indian/ Coloured	Full-time	Part-time
Participant A	Emma		x	x			x	
Participant B	Angelina		x			x	x	
Participant C	Colin	x		x			x	
Participant D	Fred	x			x			x
Participant E	Hannah		x	x				x
Participant F	George	x		x				x

Details of interviews:

Participant	Date of interview	Time of interview	Duration	Venue
Participant A	05-09-2018	15:00	58 mins	Krugersdorp
Participant B	26-08-2018	12:00	38 mins.	Pretoria (phone call)
Participant C	22-09-2018	17:00	36 mins.	Pretoria (phone call)
Participant D	01-09-2018	09:00	42 mins.	Pretoria
Participant E	02-09-2018	20:00	52 mins.	Pretoria (phone call)
Participant F	26-09-2018	17:00	48 mins.	Jubaweni Sportscamp

PARTICIPANT A

Biographical details of interviewee:

1. Pseudonym: Emma
2. Gender: Female
3. School working at: Primary school
4. Number of years teaching as a qualified teacher: 2 years
5. Institution graduated from: Full-time ✓

Interview:

Researcher	What is your understanding of the term beginner teacher identity?
Participant	Okay, so what I understand about it is that how I use myself, and the knowledge I have in class, to attract all the kids in class to learn, what they're supposed to learn, and what's the ways that I can prove that so that everyone has essential information that they can take with, and increase their knowledge day after day. And to have the essential reading skills and writing skills, for example the foundation phase to go to the next grade.
Researcher	What do you see as your own teaching identity?
Participant	I believe in everyone has to have more than one chance. If you fail, I will help you to understand it in another way. If I, for example, explain something on the board and you do not understand, I will ask "listen who does not understand what I'm doing" and I will try another method to come to that kid's level of understanding and development skills. Um, essentially you have those kids that catch on quickly, so you have that kids that understands immediately, but you have your kids that you need to visualize the things, do it with your body and do it in a funny way or different, um, voice, so that they understand. You also put music on for that kid, or for example, you have kid that's in an Afrikaans school but doesn't really understand Afrikaans, so I would pull him aside, explain the work in English, and then I will send him off with the understanding that he knows what he's supposed to be doing. So, it's literally being innovative the whole time. And I always see, okay this is how this kid is reacting to me being funny in the class, this is how my kids are reacting when I am strict in class, this kid is normally haywire and looking outside the window so, for example, that kid I would move nearest to my table where I am standing and explaining the work. So I have that kid's attention the whole time. I can be strict, but being strict and being funny, also goes hand in hand. Because, I teach them, there's a time and a place for everything. If I'm playing, we're playing. But if I'm working, I'm working. And when I'm working, I like silence. Because you can't work and play all together, then the concentration isn't there. Half of the class uses their minds for funny, which is great, but if it is

	work time, they need to be quiet, slow it down, and literally this is working time. So, that's how I handle it.
Researcher	How did the institute you graduated from influence your teaching identity? For instance, how you teach, how you handle situations and teaching practice experience?
Participant	Okay, so I studied at the University of Pretoria, TUKS. Um, I feel that with everything that they taught me, being like, it's also if you want to be in class, but if you're not in class you lose the work. So, essentially it depended on me, whether I'm in class getting the work and knowing what's going on. So, for me it was being self-disciplined to say, okay, this is my time to be in class. And I think, essentially, that made me also disciplined in my class. So, yes I can be funny and whatever, and for a moment I can joke around with the kids, but I know where the line is, where the funny stops and the work starts going, and where the kids need to concentrate. Where I think, if I didn't have that discipline, self-discipline, to go to class and say I want to pass my degree, I want to get this over and done with, then I wouldn't have had been as good as a teacher as I've been now. Um, I know that yes, being funny is awesome and the kids love it, but there needs to be a line. Life isn't a joke always, so at the end of the day I also need to say to myself in class sometimes, okay enough is enough, we need to be serious right now. And with the varsity, they actually taught me, because I'm literally one of those kids, like oh look at that and look at this, and I understand those kids in my class. You have you ADHD kids in your class, so essentially for those kids I have to be self-disciplined to say the playing stops now, we're working, for those kids. Because if I don't do that, they won't learn whatsoever, and they fall behind. So, the varsity taught me, being self-disciplined, and know I need to go in to get my work. No one is there to help me get my degree. Essentially it's on my, on my own. So, whereas, maybe if I did part-time, I don't really know if I would've been done by now, whatsoever. I think I'll still be busy with it, to be quite honest (laughs). But, ja, that's how I felt about it. And essentially, like I was skipping classes at varsity also for a while, when all of a sudden I had a new lecturer in one of my classes, and I thought by myself, okay so I really messed up, because we were busy with group assignments. I had a group, but I had no idea what was going on in that group… essentially I did give in that group assignment, but the lecturer told me that I want to see you in my office when, you will bring me the group assignment. I was there and I gave it in, so. But, I had to have that strict rules in my life, because essentially, a teacher of you don't have rules, like if you look in the kids' books or whatever, even on their person, if you're not strict, they won't be strict. If you don't care how they write, they don't care. So that was also essential. Because, if I mark, for example, the papers that they're writing now, if I can't see what that kids wrote, I can't give him marks. And now you have your

	HOD or whoever that marks your books again, then they can't see, then they get angry at you, because why didn't you get your kids to write neatly. Now, your discipline is important, because if I don't say, this is how I want it, they do whatever they want. Um, and essentially, I teach them discipline, they don't get teached discipline at home. That's the illusion that is out there in the world, that kids are disciplined at school. Even the most behaved kid learns discipline from the teacher. Essentially it's actually quite sad, the kids sit, and they're on their phones, tablets or in front of the TV. They don't know how to play. So, they get frustrated in class because they have to sit still, they don't know what it is to sit still. And that's why discipline is so important. And if I didn't have that discipline at varsity, I wouldn't have that in my classroom with my kids. Yes, talking, by all means, but when you have to work and concentrate, you have to work and concentrate, as easy as that.
Researcher	Do you think your teaching identity would have been different if you had chosen the opposite teacher education programme? Like part-time and full-time.
Participant	Okay, ja.
Researcher	Why do you say so?
Participant	If I had been with the part-time studies, I think I wouldn't have been such a strict teacher. Um, strict isn't bad, um, kids need rules, yes, definitely, because especially in the area that I'm teaching you will see and you will realize that they don't have structure, whatsoever. Um, and obviously with the kid's background, which is chaotic, and it is sad, that you need to have that structure in your class. Um, full-time studies had an influence obviously on me to say, this is what I need to do for the day. I need to finish this assignment, I need to study for my test, I need to do this, I need to be in class, I need to do, I need to make myself food, I need to whatever… I had structure. Whereas, part-time is, I know I don't have to do it immediately. Now, I see it with all the student teachers at our school, there's a few obviously that has structure, like I need to do this now and get this done. Then you have your other part-time students that is like, no it's not that important, I can submit it later, I can submit it late or whatever, and they're not that strict in class. Those teachers do struggle, um, the kids are more fluent in my classes, if I can put it like that, they're not that structured and they don't really know that much about if I have to work, I have to work, because if I want to play, that is fine. And, not being bad-mouthing people that are doing their studies part-time, there's nothing wrong with it, but they… there's a lot of them that doesn't have that structure that gives them that now work time, I have to do it now, my deadline is now. Which, in my case, I don't think that I would have been done with the studies if I had done it part-time, because if I don't have a deadline that's really bothering me, then, so what, I can do it later. Um, it's, if you tired, you're tired, and I

	understand it, but part-time studies do give you that more time and space to do it. Except if you're working at a school as well, then I don't know how they do it. But, luckily for me I didn't do it, the structures of their work is also, um, more intense. But they get away with a lot of stuff that is not true to the study programme that they're in. So, whereas if you're a full-time student, everyone tells you that you need to do it on your own, it's your marks and it's not my marks. Whereas a part-time student says, listen won't you give this to me or give me that. So, obviously, you didn't have that bigger responsibility, and obviously, it's the part-time students that are not that structured. The structured part-time students are doing their own work and says, you know what, this is my work, which is great. But you have that group of people that, you know, has that you help me and I'll help you type of thing. So, I think, part-time… part-time is amazing, I think because you have a lot of more free time on hand if you're not working, but I prefer full-time, because you have one thing to focus on, and that is your studies. Whereas if you do it part-time and are working, then you have 2 things to do and worry about, your actual work and your studies. And there's a lot of people who can't handle that pressure of doing both. Um, I think if I had done that way, I wouldn't have done my studies, I would have done the work, because the experience is there. The studies and the marks and the theoretical work, I don't care about. Especially if you're working at a school while working part-time. Because the school expects from you to do the work that they set out for you. Because you have a full day at school to do teaching or whatever, and then obviously hockey, netball, cricket, whatever they expect from you to do. My experience I would have, sort of not preferred that at all, as easy as that.
Researcher	What do you think is important for beginner teachers to know/take into consideration when choosing their teacher education programme? Why do you think that aspect is important?
Participant	Well, obviously as a matriculant, they need to know the workload. If you do it full-time, yes you have time to do it, and focus on that. If you do it part-time, you need to know yourself that good to know, you will be able to focus on both of them. It doesn't help you're doing it part-time and you know you can't focus on both your activities that's running. Now, um, also, if you consider going into education, unfortunately there's a lot of people that's gone through it, um, they start off doing their studies and their studies are so amazing, it's really amazing I loved it and I loved every second of it, um, but, you can consider whether… if they have been to a school, if they had been able to work with whichever kids sitting in front of you. You can't choose which kids are coming to your class, you can't choose the amount of work that you have to do. You can't choose about all the admin that you're supposed to be doing, and admin is a reality in school. You don't know about it if you have full-time studies, I'm sorry but you don't. And, I won't say unfortunately they don't teach you that at varsity, but unfortunately

	they don't teach you that there's so much admin. Um, most of your work is going about admin. Finding stuff, writing stuff up, referring a kid or writing a report, whatever. It's part of your daily job, and then at the end of the day you go home and think, ah I'm done for the day, but no you're not done because your brain goes zip, what are you going to do about this kid, obviously. And I think it is important to know if you are creative enough to keep that class as a unit, working as a unit. For your smart kids, your middle kids and your less gifted kids, to make sure everyone is working together and working as a unit. So no one is disturbing anyone or fighting or teasing or whatever, because you have that and you need to know, you have to think on your feet.
Researcher	Do you think that aspect had an influence on your teaching identity?
Participant	Um, I walked in, at the beginning of last year, scared out of my mind, thinking this is my class, I need to make it work, and obviously you don't think about it at the beginning of your first year starting to teach. You need to know, that every mark every kid gets, is going on your name, um, is a performance level on your name. You don't think about it, because it's the kid's fault, that he's not doing the work, when in actual fact it's your fault… not really, but everyone, the parents, the kid, the HODs, whoever, says that it's your fault, you didn't put in that effort. So obviously you are innovative, but different methods you can use in class, and you need to think beforehand about the kids. Yes, people tell you ja it's not that bad and what what what, but, sure in some cases it's not that bad. But if you get that class that is that bad, that the kid stands up and just starts fighting with anyone else that's near him or just looking in his direction, you need to know how to handle that kid. You need to know, how to handle each, little different body, connecting with that kid, because if you don't connect with the kid, you lose that kid, as simple as that. And then, the fighting starts, the bad marks, it just goes on worse. And you can't keep the kid, or be angry at the kid for doing something in a way of innocence. Because, they will play bumping each other, play play play, then someone falls and breaks his arm. You can't be angry, it started off as playing with each other, and you need to know, beforehand, that there will be situations that you won't have an idea how to handle. And, the first reaction is to fight. And that's the wrong reaction. The first reaction, should be to listen, because if you listen to everyone's stories, there's 3 sides to the story – the first kid's story, the second kid's story and the truth. And that's how you handle it. And then, at the end of the day, they don't teach you that at varsity. They don't teach you, how to think on your feet, how to handle conflict situations, with kids, with parents, with colleagues, with your HOD, with anyone, they don't teach you that. And you need to know, from day one, how to handle yourself and stand up for your rights. They don't even teach you how to be like, this is my space, I'm the teacher here, you are the parent and you will listen and you will respect me. You get that parent that doesn't want to hear your side and admit you're right, but you need to do it also with respect, and you need to do it

	calmly, but also politically correct, otherwise you are also going to be in trouble. But they don't teach you that. And if I have to give a first year, or a starting off student at varsity advice, look how all the professors handle themselves in class. There are professors that will make a mistake in class, do they pack up and run or do they fix it and go on. Because if you have that, if you look at how other people put themselves and handle a mistake, then you start learning how to handle it. In any class at varsity, you will see that there is students that are going to go for the professor, I was one of them! (laughs) I was going the professor. And the way they handled me, to settle me down, shaped me how to handle my kids in my class. And that's how you do it. You look, you see and you learn. Essentially, education overall, for kids and for teachers, is a learning curve. Every year, you learn something new. Every, well every day, you learn something new. Whether it's from yourself, or from the kids, or the parents, or a colleague, or HOD or principal, every day you learn something. And don't be afraid to learn, don't be afraid to ask, is you don't ask you won't learn, as easy as that.

PARTICIPANT B

Biographical details of interviewee:

6. Pseudonym: Angelina
7. Gender: Female
8. School working at: Primary school
9. Number of years teaching as a qualified teacher: 1 year
10. Institution graduated from: Full-time ✓

Interview:

Researcher	What is your understanding of the term beginner teacher identity?
Participant	I see the term, um, beginner teacher identity as the identity that you build up as a new teacher. Um, for instance, you need to find something that works for you; how you want to teach, your style of teaching, what works for you, that's all a part of your identity. It's the way you teach the learners in your class, because not everything works for every teacher so you need to find your own way of doing your things, your own identity as a teacher. It establishes you as a teacher.
Researcher	What do you see as your own teaching identity?
Participant	Um, being a teacher of 32 kids, and it is my first year teaching, I believe that I'm slowly but starting to get my own teacher identity and I've realized the things that work for me in my classroom. Because coming from a university you have a certain mind-set, um, of how things need to be, and then when you actually start teaching you see that it's completely different. So while I'm still busy figuring out my teacher identity I already know some things that work for me. Um, like for instance I know that I am working with younger kids, so I try to make it more fun for them in a way where they will still be able to learn stuff. So, that's basically the teacher identity I'm going for; it's, um, not having everything set out straight and everything needs to be perfect, because I know things are going to come up that wasn't planned, I need to think quickly and need to figure it out. So, like I said, especially teaching the younger ones, my teacher identity I would definitely say is a more relaxed, um, accept things as they come, but still having that order in my classroom, um, trying to make it fun for the kids type of identity. Ja, like I said, I'm still figuring it out myself, but for the couple of months that I've been teaching now, I'm starting to realize and notice my own teacher identity.
Researcher	How did the institute you graduated from influence your teaching identity? For instance, how you teach, how you handle situations and teaching practice experience?
Participant	So, from the university where I studied, I learned a lot of different things. Um, for instance they would teach us how to handle certain situations, like when a parent

	comes to approach you, because there's, um, a big argument or something, you should know which steps to take before actually trying to sort it out yourself. Um, they've also told me how to be more flexible, because as people we usually want things to be done a certain way, at a certain time, um, it needs to go according to plan. But when you teach, you have to have that room for disappointment, for things going completely wrong, and you need to quickly fix it. Everything's not gonna go as planned, so I would definitely say the university prepared me for all of that and it also helped you to, like, calm down, step back, first look at the situation before carrying on. Um, ja, the university definitely taught me a lot, but then again, like studying out of books and actually doing it physically is completely different, I realized that when I walked in and had my own classroom. Everything is not as glamorous as it seems in a textbook. You need to think for yourself as well.
Researcher	Do you think your teaching identity would have been different if you had chosen the opposite teacher education programme? Like part-time and full-time.
Participant	Oh yes.
Researcher	Why do you say so?
Participant	I believe that if I studied part-time, or with UNISA, it would have been… my teacher identity would have been completely different. Because, then I would have gained more practical experience, working with the kids hands-on experience, whereas the institution that I studied with, we only had our practical in the last year and not even for the whole year. So, when I walked into the classroom, I was completely lost, um, I did not feel that I had enough practical experience to be able to work with the kids. Whereas all the other teachers that did it part-time, I feel like they had more of an advantage and they knew exactly what to expect when walking into a classroom because they had more years working with the kids. Whereas I had only a couple of weeks, and then it's completely different from being a student teacher to actually being a teacher. So, while you're a student teacher, you have all that help, and when you have your own classroom, it's your class, you need to figure out how you're going to run your class. So, I definitely feel like, it would have benefitted me if I did do it part-time, or did it through UNISA to gain more practical hours.
Researcher	What do you think is important for beginner teachers to know/take into consideration when choosing their teacher education programme? Why do you think that aspect is important?
Participant	Um, when choosing your teaching programme, education programme, I believe that each person is different. So, you should take the one that works best for you. Um, if you are dedicated and you can self-study, then definitely I would encourage people to then go with the part-time studying route, because you will gain more experience, more practical hours, you can become a teacher assistant.

	So, you can already test out the waters before becoming a teacher yourself. But then, if you are not that dedicated, and you understand things more by going to class every day, then definitely the full-time way. But, I would say, while doing it the full-time course, definitely try and find yourself a job already working with kids. It doesn't necessarily have to be a school, but just so you can test out the waters yourself to see, okay, this is what I want to do, I'm definitely interested in it. Um, for me, the university that I studied at, I feel like that was the best option for me because I'm not the person to self-study. So, going to class every day and having a lecturer explain everything to me, um, definitely helped me. I would have just liked to have more practical hours with it, but I believe that that was definitely the best choice for me.

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PARTICIPANT C

Biographical details of interviewee:

1. Pseudonym: Colin
2. Gender: Male
3. School working at: High school
4. Number of years teaching as a qualified teacher: 1 year
5. Institution graduated from: Full-time ✓

Interview:

Researcher	What is your understanding of the term beginner teacher identity?
Participant	It is how you as a beginner teacher approach certain aspects of teaching, with regards to discipline, preparing lessons, um, how you adapt to certain changes, how you handle your first year. What is your way of teaching, your own, um, unique style.
Researcher	What do you see as your own teaching identity?
Participant	I would say my own teaching identity would be a teacher that children could relate to, an open and friendly teacher but still, um, I won't say strict with discipline but, um, yes okay let's say strict. Friendly but still strict and according to the rules. I am a teacher that has, my teaching identity is to always be prepared, um, to get children to be involved in a lesson, which I feel is one of the most important aspects.
Researcher	How did the institute you graduated from influence your teaching identity? For instance, how you teach, how you handle situations and teaching practice experience?
Participant	My institution I graduated from did teach me a few aspects of teaching and how to prepare a lesson – to some degree. But, I honestly believe, my institution did not have a big influence on my teaching identity. During teaching practice where we learned, um, where we worked at schools for 6 months, there my teaching identity was formed and shaped, I believe. It gave me the opportunity to prepare for what being a full-time teacher would be. So I learned more from teaching practice than I did from my institution.
Researcher	Do you think your teaching identity would have been different if you had chosen the opposite teacher education programme? Like part-time and full-time.
Participant	I believe so, yes.
Researcher	Why do you say so?
Participant	I believe that if I studied part-time, for I studied full-time, I might have gotten the opportunity to learn more and be more prepared. But on the other hand, studying

	part-time would kind of already make you a teacher, so you would have learned from the job. I believe both scenarios have different aspects to teaching your, or help in shaping your teaching identity. But I believe part-time would have been a better choice because even though you are working, you are not a full-fledged teacher. You still, you are still learning, you are learning by observing and doing a little and then systematically increasing the amount of work you do. I think that, that would have been a better option, seeing as during my teaching practice I already learned more, in 6 months, than I did in 3 and a half years of university classes. I feel a lot of subjects, we take as university students, while studying education, is unnecessary. It takes a lot of time, it is easy, and does not really have an influence on how you teach, or how you should teach. I believe, one should do teaching practice every year for a small period of time to start forming your identity, and do more subjects on how to prepare lessons, how to prepare work schedules, planning when to do which lessons, how long lessons should be, discipline and handling discipline, um, school admin… things like that. Things that the university never taught me.
Researcher	What do you think is important for beginner teachers to know/take into consideration when choosing their teacher education programme? Why do you think that aspect is important?
Participant	I feel when choosing an education programme to study before becoming a teacher, it is very important to take a few things into consideration. The first thing is, is a subject you enjoy. Um, I've realised that there are a lot of teachers who teach subjects they do not enjoy, and it makes them miserable, it makes them unable to cope, so think about what you did during school, what subjects you enjoyed the most, which subjects you have a passion for and make sure that is one of the key… one of the main subjects you choose. And then, make sure you choose a subject also from those you like, that you know you will be able to find a job in. Make sure it is a subject that is wanted or not as readily, or has as many teachers who study it. Because that would make life a little more difficult for you when searching for a job. And yes, make sure it is a subject that you are willing to study for 4 years, because you are going to do the subject for 4 years, and you're going to have to have a passion for that subject.
Researcher	Do you think that aspect had an influence on your teaching identity?
Participant	I do believe that teaching a subject you personally enjoy makes the teaching experience a lot more enjoyable and worthwhile. So yes, my choice in subject did have a big influence on my teaching identity. Different subjects teach differently and this will affect how you teach.

PARTICIPANT D

Biographical details of interviewee:

1. Pseudonym: Fred
2. Gender: Male
3. School working at: High school
4. Number of years teaching as a qualified teacher: 1 year
5. Institution graduated from: Part-time ✓

Interview:

Researcher	What is your understanding of the term beginner teacher identity?
Participant	So, I think it is very important for a beginner teacher to understand their identity. How they are going to be, what they are going to do… um, I think if you are asking my understanding, it is how does a beginner teacher look, how does a beginner teacher teach, um, act in certain ways, um, what ideas do they have. Um, do they have innovative ideas, do they have new ideas, or do they still do the mundane old teacher stuff. Um, yes.
Researcher	What do you see as your own teaching identity?
Participant	Um, I think the way you teach, something that you can make your own, how you teach, um, stuff that I do different. So, maybe using more, um, slideshow presentations, um, the way I think about stuff. You know, if it is a new way, um… my teaching identity would be having a healthy relationship with the learners in my class, trying to find out who they are, um, where they live. You know, just trying to figure out their life and where they are at the moment, you know? And then working with that and loving them, um, for who they are. Um, like when we grew up we would just used to like the teachers who are the boss of the class, and you were not allowed to actually have a conversation with him or her. Um, and I don't want to be that type of teacher. I want to be the type of teacher who listens to learners and, um, communicate with them and have a warm relationship.
Researcher	How did the institute you graduated from influence your teaching identity? For instance, how you teach, how you handle situations and teaching practice experience?
Participant	I don't think a lot, um, because everything was book knowledge so you actually just had to read through the textbook and then you had to do it in class. So, I will say not really a lot. Um, I got my experience from my school, my practical experience was from the school I teach at the moment. Um, how I teach, my admin and how I should handle situations – my confidence in class, on the playground or what you should do, um. So I would say my, um, institute didn't

	really do anything for my teaching identity at all, um, so ja, is out and out where I teach at the moment who gave me the advantage or the experience, um, to teach like I teach now.
Researcher	Do you think your teaching identity would have been different if you had chosen the opposite teacher education programme? Like part-time and full-time.
Participant	Um. Yes.
Researcher	Why do you say so?
Participant	I think, I would have had a different teaching experience or teaching identity if I did, like um, another education programme. If I had to go, um, full-time, like at the moment I'm a full-time teacher and studied part-time, um where if I had to study it full-time I think I wouldn't be able to cope with the admin, with the learners, with everything you need to do. Um, the routine of the school, figuring stuff out, like how to fill in certain forms or documents, how to work with learners in class, what are you allowed to say, what are you not allowed to say. The rules of, well not the rules, the laws, of education is very important. And people skills, um, working with colleagues, um, its experience that you do not get from a book, it is stuff you need to experience first-hand. So definitely I would say I would have had a different teaching identity um, if it weren't for teaching full-time in class. Um, basic stuff like operating certain teaching programmes, you know, it's small stuff but it makes a big influence. Class management is also very important. Um, how you greet a class, how they walk in, um, then how the class commences from there.

PARTICIPANT E

Biographical details of interviewee:

1. Pseudonym: Hannah
2. Gender: Female
3. School working at: Primary school
4. Number of years teaching as a qualified teacher: 2years
5. Institution graduated from: Part-time ✓

Interview:

Researcher	What is your understanding of the term beginner teacher identity?
Participant	I think beginner teacher identity is the ideal image that you create for yourself at the start of your teaching career. This image is created through doing your different teaching practices at schools, and through observing mentor teachers that you are being placed with who kind of create this idea of how you would maybe want to be in your class one day, the kind of teacher you'd want to be, the support that you would give to your students. It… it is basically this persona you create. Um, it is also, it is the way that the person understands themselves as being a teacher and how they would like to be, or how they'd like to remain in teaching. So, if you are, an example that I can give, if you are with a really bad mentor teacher, then you're obviously going to say you'd never ever want to be like that. And that would be your goal for teaching. But if you are with a really good teacher, then is obviously going to motivate you to always want to be as good as that teacher that you were with.
Researcher	What do you see as your own teaching identity?
Participant	I see myself as a caring teacher that will always go the extra mile for the students in front of me. I am very professional and I take my job very seriously. And I always try, it sounds really crazy, but I always try to give my very best performance while I'm teaching, um, the reason for that being is I teach KG (kindergarten) students, 4-5 year olds, and they're basically like a sponge at this moment in their lives so they seep in all the information that they can get. So I try to make it as memorable as possible for them, and enjoyable. You want learning to be enjoyable for them, so I, I try to focus on that a lot. Um, also, I believe that each child is unique and is capable of learning. Um, a lot of people would say that you get learners that are maybe not as clever, or gifted as what the new term would be called, however I am a firm believer that some learners just take a bit longer to learn than others. But, at the end of the day, no matter how big or how small, each learner is definitely learning something. I try to implement a large amount of differentiation in my class, definitely for that simple

	reason of each child learning at a different stage or different level or different time than the one next to them. So, I think differentiation plays a big role in my class, um, to accommodate each learner's learning style and their learning pace. I believed, while I was studying, that I could literally change the world, that my teaching degree would let me change the world, and since graduating, um, that perception of mine has changed, because I now believe that I need to change a child's life so that they can change the world. It doesn't go about me wanting to change the world, it goes about them giving the power to change the world. I would also say my teaching identity is shaped by knowledge regarding my phase in the curriculum, as well as the different aspects that will influence the young learner in front of me. Um, I can't be a successful teacher if I don't know what's happening in my curriculum, and also I can't teach a learner new things if I have no idea what I have to teach. My personality has definitely shaped my teaching identity as I am a person who loves fun, but I also need a lot of structure and routine so that gets incorporated a lot in my class. I let the learners have fun, but we have fun in a structured way.
Researcher	How did the institute you graduated from influence your teaching identity? For instance, how you teach, how you handle situations and teaching practice experience?
Participant	Okay, well basically I studied through UNISA, um, and UNISA is not a full-time university for their teaching degrees. It a distance learning programme, meaning I'm a part-time student, I do not, I'm not on campus on a full-time basis. So, what I basically did was I, the moment I matriculated I started working at a school as a student teacher, so I had a student internship. And that is basically where my teaching identity started. Because I, each year, sometimes twice a year, I would be placed with a different mentor teacher. So, I had a lot of examples to learn from, and I had a lot of people that I could grab knowledge from. So, the institute that I graduated from, helped me a great deal to shape my teaching identity because I was, every year I had to have a teaching practice for 5 weeks. So for 5 weeks I had to prepare lessons and I had to submit them and I had to teach lessons, I was basically the teacher for 5 weeks in the class. And that already helped me, from an early stage, to identify what works for me as a teacher and what doesn't work for me as a teacher so that once I graduated it wouldn't be such a bomb shock for me in class. I learned a lot in, um, in aspects of how to handle different situations because I think, when you are a student teacher, and you are doing your degree from, like as a part-time student, it benefits you in a certain way. Because you are able to find solutions to problems on your own. You are not stuck at a university for 4 years and then only once you've graduated then you have to find solutions to problems. So, UNISA definitely benefitted me as a teacher because I had to solve situations as a teacher while I was actually still studying. So, the institute that I graduated from definitely helped my teacher

	identity because I went through a trial and error stage while I was doing it. I could see what was working for me and what was not working for me.
Researcher	Do you think your teaching identity would have been different if you had chosen the opposite teacher education programme? Like part-time and full-time.
Participant	I definitely do think my teaching identity would have been different.
Researcher	Why do you say so?
Participant	Um, if I had to have been a full-time teaching student, or let's say, a student on a campus on a full-time basis, I definitely think I would not have had such a successful teaching identity. Because I would have had one lecturer - or let's put it this way – one lecturer per subject taken or per module or per course or whatever the layout of the university would have been. I would only have had one lecturer to learn from and I wouldn't have been in a full-time class situation where I was actually dealing with problems and seeing how the teachers actually react to certain situations so that I could either gain from that or decide for myself that I won't ever handle a child that way. So, I think it would have been different, but I don't think it would have benefitted me to have been a full-time student because I definitely learned so much in my four years that I was placed at the school, um and that I was working at the school. Because we got normal responsibilities of a normal qualified teacher, um, I had my own classes that I had to deal with and I had my own admin and I knew how the attendance register worked and I knew how the money book worked, and I knew how the school's discipline worked, and I was able to modify and adjust the discipline in my own classes that I was working with, because I had an idea of what the school expected of me. So, immediately I could say okay I'm not going to be the strict teacher, but I'm going to be the firm teacher. Um, I also feel that if I had maybe chosen full-time I wouldn't have been able to put on my CV that I have teaching experience. So, already my teaching identity is that much stronger because I have all of this teaching experience than somebody that has been at a full-time institution has on their CV. So, I can already elaborate on my teaching identity and I can already say but this is, I have a firm teacher identity, than somebody that has only started now once they've graduated. They still have to find their feet and they still have to identity who they are when they are teaching because they've only had a short amount of time in which they could have identified what works for them and what doesn't work for them. So, where I have already had my trial and error base when I was at a part-time institution, somebody that was already at a full-time institution hasn't benefitted from that aspect. Therefore, I honestly believe that had I had been at a full-time institution, I don't think I would have been such a successful teacher, if I can put it that way? Because I don't think I would have been able to gain so much and benefit so

	much from teaching and actually find that it was for me, and find ways that was successful for me in my class. Because I have seen and I have compared myself to teachers that have been at a full-time institution where many of them had become education dropouts, if I can put it that way, because for 4 years they have been studying this thing but they haven't actually had a lot of practical experience. So therefore one could say that studying part-time and working at a school, allows you immediately to identify whether this job is for you; is this your passion or is it just something you want to do for the cliché things of you get afternoons off and holidays. Um, whereas studying full-time doesn't give you that. I think part of your teaching identity is definitely understanding that this is a passion, working with other people's children – their masterpieces – so your teaching identity definitely has to have an aspect of passion in it and studying part-time has allowed me to grow within my passion because I have seen so many different teachers work with kids in a different way and I have been able to take from that and go with that. So, yes I do think that my teaching identity would have been a whole lot different had I had been studying at full-time institution. But to give a more definite answer, I don't think it would have been in a positive aspect.
Researcher	What do you think is important for beginner teachers to know/take into consideration when choosing their teacher education programme? Why do you think that aspect is important?
Participant	Well, I don't actually think there is an important aspect here. I think there a lot of influencing aspects that need to be taken, or factors, that need to be taken into consideration. But I would definitely, if I had to sum it up, I would label it as experience. I think, it need to go about what you want to gain at the end of your degree when you graduate. Do you want to be able to stand up and say I've graduated, but now I need to find a job, or do you want to stand up and say I've graduated while working part-time, and I'm certain of a job? I think that, for me, would personally be the most important aspect because experience is nothing… it is something that nobody can ever take away from you. Um, the skills that you learn, um, I don't want to say the methods of teaching but the understanding of the curriculum and the understanding of a class setup – that is something that you can learn within your first year but if you haven't been at a school it takes you longer. So I would definitely say, experience is the most important factor when you are trying to make this choice, because both universities or both programmes are going to offer you the exact same degree. However, it's never basically about that paper – it always goes about what happens after the degree. So, for me, if I had to advise any young and upcoming teachers that really want to go into teaching, I would definitely advise them to go for the part-time programme and try and do a student internship at a school or get a job at a school, um, while they are studying because that is the way that my teaching

	identity was shaped and that is the way that I became a successful teacher. I literally got to grow within a school system and I got to evolve in my way as a teacher because I was constantly busy with teaching every single day. It wasn't that I was just going and sitting in a lecture hall and listening to what one lecturer had to say. I was interacting with the kids and I had different mentor teachers, so for me, that was beneficial. Um, and I would almost say it is more beneficial than having the student life or, you know, being in a lecture hall with one person that is sharing their experiences but you cannot relate to those experiences because you haven't lived them yet. So for that simple reason I would definitely say, the most important aspect is taking experience into consideration.
Researcher	Do you think that aspect had an influence on your teaching identity?
Participant	I, I do think that this aspect had an influence on my teaching identity, um as I have explained previously, I think that if I had been in a lecture hall I would never have been able to have gained the confidence to teach and, um, the experience. Because, being in a full-time university doesn't allow for that; you have your simple teaching practices that you have to go and do. But for me that was at a part-time university, I had my teaching experience, or my teaching practice for 5 weeks, but every day was a teaching practice for me. And, I think when you're a student, you get thrown into the deep end but it teaches you very quickly how to swim and how to become a strong teacher. So, I do think this aspect of thinking about experience; I definitely do think that it benefitted my teaching identity and it helped shaped me to be a better teacher. Um, because now, looking back, I don't think I would have changed it and I also, I don't think that anybody else can ever take that experience away from me. It is something I can share with new and upcoming teachers and it's an experience that I can help them with. I can, I think that because I had so many mentor teachers that I could learn from, I was able to take the good, but I could also speak about the bad that I had seen. Um, so in that sense I can also help new teachers and say to them, listen, I would maybe not have done it this way but let's try and consider doing it that way, because this way would break a learner down but this way influences them for the better. So, I definitely think that it has helped me and it has made me grow as a teacher, and I honestly don't think that being a full-time student would have given me such a positive feeling or outlook on the teaching aspect if I had to have been at a university for a full 4 years and then come to a school and then have to find myself and have to identify myself. Because you would have all this book knowledge, but you really wouldn't have any practical knowledge that you could like the two with. And at the end of the day, that is also what gives you the experience. So, I think, that would be the most important aspect that one would have to consider and, also yes, it does have an influence on your teaching identity, um because it had one on mine.

PARTICIPANT F

Biographical details of interviewee:

6. Pseudonym: George
7. Gender: Male
8. School working at: Primary school
9. Number of years teaching as a qualified teacher: 2 years
10. Institution graduated from: Part-time ✓

Interview:

Researcher	What is your understanding of the term beginner teacher identity?
Participant	I think it is a new beginning of self, taking a step out of the student life and perspective and entering a world where you have the power to create the type of persona of teacher which you want to become. As a beginner, I also understood that you are still going to learn and will be shaped, as it is a process. Um, an identity is not only created by what you think of yourself, but also the way in which other people, like co-workers or learners, see you and create their own opinions about you. So in short I think a beginner teacher identity is when you learn what kind of teacher you want to be.
Researcher	What do you see as your own teaching identity?
Participant	I see myself more than just a simple educator trying to teach a syllabus to learn to gain new knowledge and information. I feel, I'm there to inspire, to guide, support and love all learners as they are all equal. In class, I have a very open policy regarding talking and asking questions, um, because I feel with interactive learning and a safe place, where learners feel free to express themselves, is a more sufficient place of learning. I'm a strong male figure which relates to both boys and girls, which helps with discipline and order in class as well outside the classroom environment. Then, thriving to grow and learn more is also part of who I am as a teacher, I easily adapt and stay up to date with current trends and changes happening, which also makes life as a teacher in the modern day age a lot easier. My teaching identity is a part of who I am as person but can also be a brilliant act on some days (laugh).
Researcher	How did the institute you graduated from influence your teaching identity? For instance, how you teach, how you handle situations and teaching practice experience?
Participant	As a part-time student I felt I'm much better equipped than any full-time student to handle any situation in a school environment. Um, I know it is a strong statement to make, but by being in the school environment and working while studying, has shaped and prepared me a lot more than which being a full-time

	student could have. Being a part-time student helped me to see how to do everything, which is required for being a teacher, and not only being book smart, and know how to carry knowledge of a subject over to learners, um but basics like class discipline, school finances, attendance registers, extra mural activities, time management, and the list goes on. That is where I feel it helped me to shape my teacher identity from the being as, and also helped me to find my own teaching identity much easier. By being a part-time student and working in a school environment, um gives more clarity on what it truly means to be a teacher.
Researcher	Do you think your teaching identity would have been different if you had chosen the opposite teacher education programme? Like part-time and full-time.
Participant	Yes
Researcher	Why do you say so?
Participant	By not being in a school environment, not being exposed to real life situations, and learning how to study independently, would have changed my whole perspective on teaching, which therefore would have changed my teaching identity. Um, I also feel it gave me a head start in the teaching industry where I had more teaching experience compared to a full-time student. Experience is key to help you find your own teaching identity.
Researcher	What do you think is important for beginner teachers to know/take into consideration when choosing their teacher education programme? Why do you think that aspect is important?
Participant	There is a lot of factors which must be taken into consideration when deciding which programme is most suitable for you. Um, the first thing I think is your financial situation which you are in. The money aspect is one of the most deciding factors for any student because studying full-time is more expensive compared to part-time studying, depending at which institute. The second thing I feel which you should consider is your learning style, because part-time studying requires a lot of self-discipline and good time management. The third reason I think which will influence your choice would be, do you want to work with an extra income or rather enjoy the full packaged of the student life. This could also help if you want to experience how it is to teach, maybe get a job at a school by being a student teacher. Then, finally, you should always remember that you are not obligated to finish your studies as you might have started, um you may switch between part-time and full-time and this applies vice versa. These are only my opinions which I think may have an effect on your choice of an educational programme.
Researcher	Do you think that aspect had an influence on your teaching identity?
Participant	Some of the aspects most certainly had a big influence on my choice of an educational programme but also shaped my teaching identity in the process as well. I feel my choice to work full-time at a school while studying part-time most

	certainly shaped the way I'm teaching and my view to teaching. Creating your identity is a process, which I feel is done over a long period of time, and by studying part-time it was easier to find myself and to stand on my own feet in the educational world.