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**PREPAREDNESS OF NEWLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS TO MANAGE AND
TEACH IN THE INTERMEDIATE PHASE**

BY

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ABSTRACT

One of the important purposes of the higher education system is to alleviate societal challenges via producing competent, newly qualified teachers (NQTs) for the South African classroom. The competence of the NQTs is to contribute to quality teaching and learning. This research study explored multiple stakeholders' perspectives on the preparedness of six newly qualified teachers hailing from one of the largest teacher education institutions within the Western Cape, South Africa. The data is drawn from interviews, questionnaires, observations, and teaching documents produced before the participants completed their formal qualifications, especially during Teaching Practicum, and after obtaining their formal teaching degree qualification.

The analysed data revealed that **a)** NQTs require extra practical exposure within schools during their initial teacher programme, **b)** Senior Management Teams at schools indicate a disconnect between this sampled initial teacher programme and the kinds of teachers required for the South African classroom and **c)** the Intermediate Phase Teaching Practice Coordinator challenges the deficit model of teaching practice to be replaced with an affirmatory curriculum drawing on student teachers' existing resources. A collective response to these above critiques is seen to foster a new kind of beginner teacher for the context of the South African classroom.

The findings of this thesis revealed that all six NQTs underwent contrasting experiences; however, all NQTs are in agreement that the ITE programme was sufficiently designed to prepare them for the real world.

Furthermore, this study recognises the great importance of a collaborative partnership between HEIs and primary schools in producing competent beginner teachers as envisaged by the national policy Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (DHET, 2015).

Implications for the preparedness of future student teachers are discussed, and recommendations for further research are elaborated.

KEYWORDS

Beginner teacher competencies

Collaborative teacher education partnerships

Intermediate Phase Schooling

Managing classroom

Newly qualified teachers

Newly trained teacher

Novice teachers

South African schooling system

Teaching

DECLARATION

I, Stacey Botha, declare that the contents of the dissertation/thesis represent my own unaided work and that the dissertation/thesis has not previously been submitted for academic examination towards any qualification. Furthermore, it represents my own opinions and not necessarily those of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

Signed:



Date:

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my girls, Annabella Rose Botha and Annalee Colleen Botha. You are my continued motivation always to want to do my best and know that you, too, are capable of achieving success through hard work. Your mother loves you both dearly.



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List of Abbreviations

Acronyms	Full meaning of acronyms
B.Ed.	Bachelor of Education
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
CPUT	Cape Peninsula University of Technology
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education
ETDPSETA	Education Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority
FGL(s)	Focus Group Interview(s)
FP	Foundation Phase
Gr.	Grade
HDS	Historically Disadvantaged Secondary school
HEIs	Higher education institutions
IIEP	International Institute for Educational Planning
IP	Intermediate Phase
ISPFTED	Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ITE	Initial teacher education
MRTEQ	Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications
MT	Mentor-Teacher
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
PANSALB	Pan South African Language Board
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SACMEQ	Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers Union
SAFCERT	South African Certification Authority
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team
TIMMS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TP	Teaching Practice or Teaching Practicum
WC	Western Cape
WCED	Western Cape Education Department

CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

“Education is not the filling of a bucket, but the lighting of a fire”. W. B. Yeats¹

1.1 Introduction and background to the study

Within the Faculty of Education at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, students registered for a Bachelor of Education degree (B.Ed.) are given the first-hand opportunity to experience life within the classroom only a few months after registering for this degree. These pre-service teachers are now considered ‘professionals’ from the first step into the school. They are of legal age and registered at a tertiary university in a specific area, with regulations they should abide by (CPUT, Course Information and Fees, Intermediate Phase Teaching, 2019). Below is a breakdown of what the “*Students are expected to*” do whilst being out on Teaching Practice (TP) over the four years of their degree programme. The list below was taken from the CPUT Faculty of Education TP handbook (2019) for intermediate phase pre-service teachers, which stipulates that students should:

- Show sound knowledge and understanding of CAPS when planning lessons.
- Write up comprehensive lesson plans for all lessons they teach and complete reflections on these lessons.
- Show all their planning and preparation to their tutor-teacher at least 24 hours in advance.
- Generate and maximize the use of original teaching resources and learning activities.
- Assist with group work, some administration tasks, marking, and preparing the classroom.
- Assist their tutor-teachers with break duty and all extra-curricular activities.
- Interact with learners throughout the day.
- Plan to ensure Active Learning takes place in every lesson.
- Stimulate and challenge learners.
- Always communicate effectively.

Mutemeri (2010) refers to the minutes on 17 February 2009 of the Parliamentary Monitoring Group of South Africa, which debated the difference between “quality teachers” and “quality education”. Mutemeri asserts that the general idea of the meeting was that one cannot talk about quality teachers before quality education, as “you cannot give what you do not have” (2010:1). This comment by the researcher Mutemeri makes it very clear that teachers should know what makes a good educator, what good teaching is, and be able to give the appropriate support to learners that will lead to excellence in education. Teacher education is a global profession that must be adequately understood (Wadesango, 2022: 1).

Reviewed literature on the preparedness of Newly Qualified Teachers (Wadesango, 2022; Samuel, Dudu, & Sebatana, 2022; Gashu, 2022) shows that readiness for the real-world classroom situation must happen for pre-

¹ Yeats, W.B. and Mandela, N., 2006. " Education is not the filling of a bucket, but the lighting of a fire. Dicapai pada Februari, 16(2016), pp.1-4.

service teachers to become skilled professionals within their places of employment. Various systems and processes should be in place or made available to prepare students.

Examining the B.Ed. prescribed academic programme

The Faculty of Education at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology is the biggest teacher education provider in the Western Cape (South Africa), having students from all over the country and the rest of the world (CPUT, 2019). The central business of the faculty of education at this university of technology is the development of teacher education from pre-service (undergraduate level) through the B.Ed. four-year degree programme. The Faculty of Education within the University of Technology is divided into two campuses, wherein the Mowbray campus instructs students in English. In contrast, the Wellington campus has Afrikaans as the medium of instruction.

A few essential aspects are outlined for the academic programme for student teachers registered within the Intermediate Phase course at the University of Technology. The researcher has only looked at three of the prominent features of the course for this research study. The Faculty of Education Handbook (2015) outlines the following:

- The total number of 15 subjects are taught at the first-year level and must be passed.
- The maximum time allowed to complete a programme shall be double the minimum completion duration, for example, eight years for a four-year qualification; and
- The pass percentage for any subject is 50%.

In reviewing the Bachelor of Education: General Education & Training: Intermediate & Senior Phase first-year programme, whereby the course code is BEGTIS, an overview of 15 subjects is assigned to all registering students. It is essential to note the subjects on offer and the significance thereof; in essence, to see their contribution to learners in the real-life classroom and the retention of pre-service teachers at this higher educational institution. Under the Heading Appendix N is a copy of the first-year Intermediate Phase course outline from CPUT (2019). By investigating the prescribed list of available subjects and interviewing the NQTs (newly qualified teachers) who obtained their B.Ed. qualification, the researcher was able to determine whether specific courses were beneficial or not in the preparation of pre-service teachers for the real-world classroom situation within the context of the South African education system. The findings were interesting for my study, as it assisted me in establishing recommendations to various stakeholders within education on the preparedness of newly qualified teachers.

1.2 Problem Statement

Having observed student teachers out on Teaching Practice (TP) through the lens of an experienced teacher and nominated mentor-teacher for student teachers entering my place of employment, I have become distinctly aware of a large number of students, even those in their final year, who are incapable of ensuring that they are incorporating the seven roles of being an educator in their teaching as prescribed by the Norms and Standards for Educators (NSE, 2000). The seven roles comprise “specialist in a phase, subject or practice; learning mediator;

interpreter and designer of learning programmes and materials; leader, administrator and manager; scholar, researcher and lifelong learner; assessor and (playing) a community, citizenship and pastoral role” (NSE, 2000).

The lack of preparedness of the NQTs to carry out the seven roles appropriate to their specific position in the school is evident in their management of time, lesson planning write-up, managing of classes, and lack of pedagogical teaching styles. My observations on this phenomenon have caused me to want to investigate and explore the preparedness in the teaching and managing abilities of newly qualified teachers who obtained their qualifications from a university of technology. For this reason, the researcher set out to interview eight newly qualified B.Ed. graduates, 2 Senior Management Primary School Staff Members (one primary school principal and one deputy principal), and 1 Intermediate Phase Teaching Practice Coordinator.

It is imperative that researchers working at universities, and especially within the field of education, acknowledge the significant number of problems the South African education system is facing; so, by confronting these problems, researchers can contribute positively to research in this area at higher educational institutions (Van der Walt, Potgieter, Wolhuter, Higgs, Ntshoe & Higgs, 2010).

1.3 Aim of the study

The over-arching aim of the study is twofold: first, to determine the pitfalls relating to newly qualified teachers in their classrooms and, second, to use the findings within Chapter 4 of the thesis to make recommendations about how teachers can be better prepared for the workplace challenges.

1.3.1 *The objectives of the research are:*

- To determine the alignment of competencies of NQT to the MRTEQ concerning the teaching of content and managing of learners.
- To explore the readiness of NQTs to teach grade-specific content and manage the teaching environment.
- Exploring how challenges (*such as lack of management support, overcrowded classrooms, lack of educational resources*) hamper newly qualified teachers when executing their duties; and
- To consider the teaching theories which influence their classroom practice.

1.3.2 *Research questions:*

Main research question: What does teacher preparedness mean for Newly Qualified Intermediate Phase teachers?

Sub-question 1: What are the newly qualified teachers’ understandings of their preparedness?

Sub-question 2: How does newly qualified teachers’ preparedness reflect in their practice?

Sub-question 3: What are the perceptions of stakeholders (IP TP Coordinator & School Management) regarding what constitutes the readiness of NQTs?

1.4 Literature reviewed

1.4.1 Introduction

In this section of the Literature Review, the researcher discusses local and international research that has been completed on the preparedness of Newly Qualified Teachers within the schooling context. The researcher aims to consider earlier research, what major research studies have been previously conducted on the readiness of pre-service teachers, and sketch a framework concerning how this proposed study will fill the current knowledge gap, which, according to Robinson (2016: 2), arises from the view that “Poor-quality teachers are holding back South Africa's education system”.

In this study, the term Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) will refer to individuals who have obtained their teaching degree at a university of technology and who have not taught for more than one year. The term ‘newly qualified teachers’ is internationally used by researchers to describe “beginner teachers who are fresh from college” (Boakye & Ampiah, 2017: 2). An array of literature on teacher education describes ‘newly qualified teachers’ as those who have been working within various time frames such as five years (MetLife Foundation Survey of the American Teacher; National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future; Ingersoll as cited in Boakye & Ampiah, 2017: 2) whereas a total number of three years is proposed by Bartell (cited in Boakye & Ampiah, 2017:2). In South Africa, the researchers Arends and Phurutse (2009: 1) use a somewhat similar term to describe Newly Qualified Teachers, and this term is ‘beginner teachers’. Beginner teachers are Newly Qualified Teachers in the first three years of their careers (Arends & Phurutse, 2009: 1).

1.4.2 Teaching in the 21st century at South African public schools: A look at the vision of teacher unions

On the 5th of September annually, across the globe, a celebration which is known as ‘World Teachers’ Day’ or better known as ‘International Teachers’ Day’ is enjoyed by educators. According to the Electronic News Channel Africa (eNCA, 2013), teachers in South Africa have been described as “depressed and helpless”. This 24-hour television news broadcaster which focuses on South African and African stories, justifies the dismal feelings of teachers by stating that teachers in South Africa must contend with “ill-discipline, insufficient teacher training and heavy workloads” (eNCA, 2013). The General Secretary of SADTU (South African Democratic Teachers Union), Mugwena Maluleke, responded and outlined the reasons for this scourge by stating the following:

Teachers are absent because if you look at the leave that they fill, it's about depression. They feel they are helpless; nobody is willing to help them with the level of ill-discipline in the schools. Because they love their teaching, they end up taking it, and they get sick (p 1).

Additionally, in the report, Maluleke (SADTU, 2013:1) asserts that teachers are grappling with educating "100 pupils" per time in overcrowded classrooms and also teaching a curriculum "which they have not been trained to teach". In an article titled “*Teachers not protected by law*”, the eNCA gives a horrific account of two teachers in Johannesburg (Gauteng Province of South Africa) who were gunned down by their pupils, and what is more

shocking about this story is the fact that these pupils were still in primary school (eNCA, 2013). In 2015, the *Mail & Guardian* newspaper published a variety of articles based on South African teachers; some of them highlight the reality and read as follows: “Good teachers are in short supply”, “Most of our new teachers can’t” (Mail & Guardian, 2017). This is the sad reality of the life of a teacher within the South African schooling system.

Classroom management skill is one of the most critical components of effective teaching skills and is brought to the international forefront in a study titled *Pre-Service Teacher Training in Classroom Management: A review of State Accreditation Policy and Teacher Preparation Program* (Freeman, Simonsen, Briere, & MacSuga-Gage (2014: 112). The researchers revealed that numerous pre-service teachers in America might not be equipped to successfully manage their learners at the end of their qualification programme. This is brought on by the non-existence of classroom management content and learned techniques (Freeman et al., 2014:113). Furthermore, the absence of content within this teacher-preparedness programme - which should focus on managing learners' behaviours - forces newly qualified teachers to feel unprepared for entering the teaching field (Freeman et al., 2014:116). This phenomenon listed by Freeman et al. concurs with the *Cape Argus* newspaper article written by Tswana and Hlati (2017), titled “Teachers not coping with overcrowding”, which indicated that schools within the Western Cape (South Africa) are “affecting the quality of teaching and negatively impacting on the behaviour of pupils” (Tswana & Hlati, 2017: 1).

Additionally, many teachers stayed away from work due to being “physically and emotionally drained”. This was brought on by the outsized pupil-to-teacher ratio, 46 learners to 1 teacher (Tswana & Hlati, 2017:1). Tswana and Hlati (2017) go further by concluding that this occurrence of overcrowding has become the norm in a large number of public schools within the Western Cape and although the executive director of NAPTOSA (National Professional Teachers’ Organisation of South Africa) states that “teachers are not coping”, the government blames this on a lack of money. The government added the following sentiment:

There is no simple, lasting solution to the problem of overcrowding and shortages of classrooms. Both are caused by insufficient money (Tswana & Hlati, 2017:1).

Furthermore, The Equal Education (EE) report titled *Of “Loose Papers and Vague Allegations” - A Social Audit of the Safety and Sanitation Crisis in Western Cape Schools* (2015) revealed issues which were most hindering education in their schools in the year prior: poor sanitation, insecurity at and on the way to school, teacher shortages, discriminatory teenage pregnancy policies and the illegal use of corporal punishment (2015: 1). Two broad issues arose in consolidating the previous year’s report: school safety and sanitation. The Equal Education (2015) data report, collected from 244 schools within the Western Cape, included interviewing various stakeholders serving 217,388 learners. This information is of vital importance to the designed instruments that will be used within the researcher’s study, as the researcher intends to investigate whether NQTs have been made aware of the realities of teaching in schools, whilst being confronted with the disturbing state of social issues, as outlined within the EE report (2015:1-11) and how the university mediated their experiences while out on Teaching Practice.

Abbas (2009: 51) researched how newly qualified teachers dealt with learners' social problems within historically disadvantaged communities within the Western Cape, South Africa. One distinct theme that emerged from the study was the "Pre-service teacher training" segment. Three NQTs and one experienced teacher formed part of the criterion sampling for the survey by Abbas. They were asked whether they had received training during their pre-service teaching programme in dealing with learners' social problems. All three participants indicated that the pre-service training did not prepare them to deal with learners' social issues.

The findings of the study done by Abbas (2009) have a fundamental bearing on the current research, making recommendations regarding NQT's preparedness in their classrooms. The researcher aimed at building on what had already been realised by previous researchers like Abbas. The proposed recommendations ought to explore a segment that looks at assisting teachers with the real-life social problems of learners within South African schooling. Moreover, on the international front, where teachers are likewise concerned about educational issues, teacher unions are fighting for a similar cause as the South African unions are. Kevin Courtney, the deputy general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, which is the principal teachers' trade union for England and Wales, urges the minister in his cabinet to do way more for his teachers (*The Guardian*, 2015). He states the following:

The government must urgently tackle the causes of excessive workload, provide the funding needed for additional pupil places and restore teachers' pay to a level that will attract newcomers.

The literature reviewed by Boakye and Ampiah (2017: 3) gives detail about the challenges experienced by Newly Qualified Teachers. These challenges are listed as follows:

- The threat of unemployment.
- Inadequate knowledge and skills.
- Decreased self-efficacy and increased stress.
- Early attrition.
- Newcomers' role and position in a work community, and
- Importance of workplace learning.

These challenges identified by the researchers Boakye and Ampiah (2017: 3) are not in isolation from those identified by other researchers. Tynjälä and Heikkinen (2011) tracked the performance of five pre-service teachers within a teacher education programme, and the study revealed that further challenges experienced are as follows:

- Testing pressures;
- Lack of administrative support;
- Lack of up-to-date resources;
- Lack of parental involvement; and
- The difficulty of balancing their teaching responsibilities and their personal lives.

The challenges listed above have caused teacher unions to modify the description points of what constitutes a competent teacher. The 21st century requires teachers to be clued up on various technological resources to

improve the teaching and learning experience. Pre-service teachers must be taught how to use digital equipment to better teach lessons to learners within the 21st-century classroom (Tunjera, Tiba, Condy & Chigona, 2016). In a study that focused on converting a digital story into a video-recorded story, a sample of 100 pre-service teachers and fifteen participants were involved in a digital storytelling project. The findings were that there is a great need for teacher training institutions (such as a university of technology) to develop digital literacy skills in pre-service teachers for their use in 21st-century classrooms (Tunjera et al., 2016: 1).

From the commencement of their teaching career, pre-service teachers must not be misinformed about the reality of this choice in the profession, as suggested by Du Plessis and Mestry (2019) and De Witt (2011). Poverty is rife in many African countries. This has severe consequences for the provision of quality education, which NQT should know about that NQT should know about before entering the teaching arena. Literature in South Africa especially points to rural schools that face terrible challenges unique to their environment. Challenges such as a lack of parental interest in children's education, insufficient funding from the state, a lack of resources, underqualified teachers, and multi-grade teaching are barriers to effective education (Du Plessis et al.). In summary: through the literature reviewed, it is unmistakable that education in its broader context, not only here in South Africa but internationally, is grappling with innumerable challenges and policy (and reforms thereof) by the applicable stakeholders gradually addressing these issues in managerial positions.

1.4.3 Investigating alternative intervention programme/s to assist in the preparedness of pre-service and newly qualified teachers

What is meant by teacher *preparedness*? According to the Oxford Living Dictionaries (2017), *prepare* means "to make (someone or something) ready for use or consideration". Within the context of this current study, it implies a period of "readying" a pre-service university of technology student teacher for life within the South African classroom, with the complete competencies in managing learners' behaviour and attitudes within a specific phase (Intermediate Phase in the case of this study or Grades 4 to 7) and also teaching the set curriculum as outlined and dictated by the Department of Basic Education in South Africa. The concept of *preparedness* differs from *preparation* since it denotes how satisfactorily someone (e.g. a newly qualified teacher) has already been trained for something to occur, i.e. going into the real world and teaching learners. It may be translated in this context as a teacher's "state of readiness"; has the teacher been properly prepared concerning managing and teaching learners within the real-life South African classroom situation?

In a study that looked at developing thinking and practice in education in a group of NQTs in England, the researchers concurrently recognised the need to assist first-year newly qualified teachers within their teaching positions, as these individuals were not fully prepared for life in the real-life classroom and schooling setting. The study's findings established that an overall culture of "fit in" was evident, mainly where behaviour management was concerned, as these NQTs were emulating their fellow teachers (also known as mentors). There was a deficiency in their teaching philosophy as soon as they entered the workplace (Haggarty, Postlethwaite, Diment & Ellins, 2011: 17). A considerable intervention was firstly needed, in essence, to alter the dogma that existing mentors of

the NQTs held, firstly so that proper support could be given to their new fellow staff members and secondly, to bring about change in the pedagogical perceptions of newly qualified teachers (Haggarty et al., 2011:18).

In the study titled *Teacher Preparedness in Dealing with Learners' Social Problems* (Abbas, 2009), the researcher investigated how pre-service and in-service teacher-education programmes prepared teachers to deal with learners' social problems. The study's outcome concluded that the pre-service teacher training programmes did not equip teachers with the skills to deal with learners' social issues. Although teachers received some form of training at schools, the training was not effective in assisting them. Teachers should receive pre-service training to deal with learners' social problems by adding a module such as Sociology of Education. The teacher training programmes and continuous in-service training programmes should ensure that teachers are exposed to current Departmental policies and documents that can assist them in dealing with learners' social problems (Abbas, 2009:65). Also, closer to home, in Durban (South Africa), a study was conducted on two newly qualified teachers entering the teaching profession. The results emanating from this narrative account of how teachers develop indicate that a sense of what the *teachers' role* is and what their *identity* entails was unmasked (Samuel & Stephens, 2010). The overall study explored two primary questions in teacher education preparedness: 1. ***"Who are we?"*** and 2. ***"What do we wish to become?"*** The concluding study ended with the researchers revealing an extra question that carries great importance in the development of teachers, which is: 3. ***"What do we bring with us?"*** The last question is vital for any education faculty to consider and explore, especially in leading up to graduates obtaining their formal degrees (Samuel & Stevens, 2010).

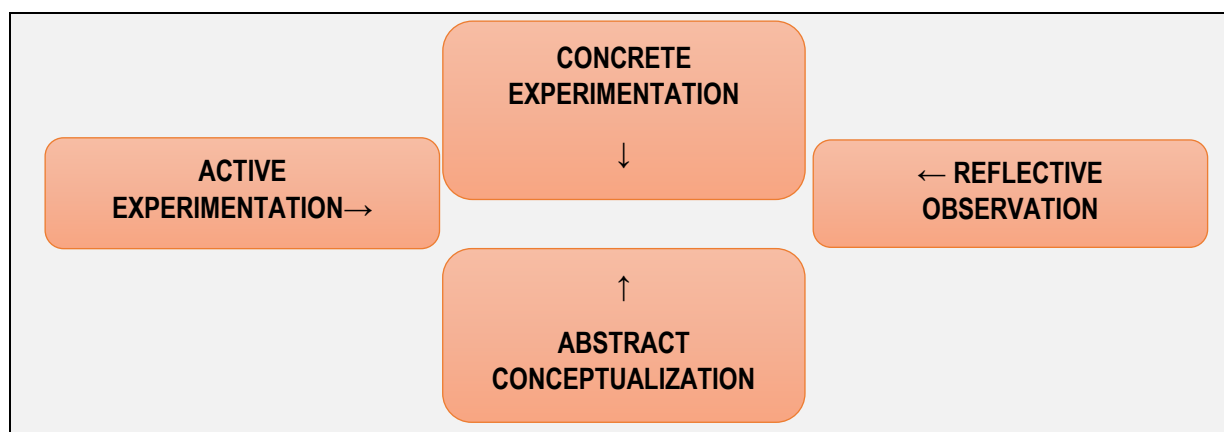
In essence, the preparation process for teachers at higher educational institutions is complex because of the ever-changing notions of the profession. Based on an in-depth synthesis of current research and literature relevant to the preparedness of newly qualified teachers, the theory of "Experiential Learning" is most applicable for this study.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

1.5.1 Experiential Learning as a theory

Experiential learning focuses on the learning process for the individual. All undergraduate university students within the faculty of education would have, at the end of the degree course, experienced learning in some sort of way. This means that progression at the higher educational institution over the years has led to learners evolving from undergraduate students to fully-fledged graduates. Experiential learning is a meaning-making process that can be illustrated by the four-step experiential learning model (ELM) as set forth by Kolb (1984).

1.5.2 Table 1.1: Kolb's Four-Step Experiential Learning Model (ELM)



Kolb (1984: 2014) stipulates that the theory has four interesting dimensions whereby the first two dimensions involve opposite abilities that are needed to learn effectively, namely 'Active Experimentation' versus 'Reflective Observation'. The two extremes represent a continuum of how individuals make new information meaningful. Individuals fall somewhere on this spectrum as their preferred way of giving information meaning. Active Experimentation is the "doing" dimension of learning that involves "hands-on" application and utilization. Kolb further provides detail on 'Reflective Observation', the "watching" dimension that ponders what is observed and reflects on its possible application and utilization. Both dimensions are required to maximize the learning process, according to Kolb's theory (1984). In essence, newly qualified teachers must have been able to experience first-hand the real-life classroom situations from the outset of their undergraduate teaching careers (whilst in Teaching Practice) to determine whether or not this career was fitting for them. This information is vital in ascertaining how the university prepares these beginner teachers over four years in readying themselves for the Intermediate Phase South African classroom.

The horizontal extremes of Kolb's learning cycle are composed of 'Concrete Experiences' and 'Abstract Conceptualization'. The two extremes represent a continuum of how individuals take in new information. Newly qualified teachers fall somewhere on this spectrum regarding their preferred way of processing and absorbing further information. Concrete Experience is the dimension where individuals such as these NQT and pre-service teachers involve themselves fully and without bias as they experience their reaction to the new information. In this case, the information would pertain to the conceptualization of being a teacher within the South African education system. Abstract Experience is a dimension where individuals (in this case, NQTs) involve themselves in thinking about new information and abstractly contemplating its suitability and applicability. Furthermore, some of both are required to maximize the learning process (Kolb, 1984).

To conclude, it is evident that Kolb's 'Experiential Learning Theory' is the most fitting scheme for this study, as this theory is best suited to formal learning, which is evident at a university level to ultimately acquire one's degree.

1.6 Research Design and Methodology

The researcher decided to position this study within the domain of phenomenology. Edmund Husserl (1859–1938) is credited as the founding father of phenomenology, and interpretive phenomenology is one of the sub-branches. Henning, van Rensburg and Smit (2004: 25) describe interpretivist research paradigms as suitable for seeking participants' views, experiences, and perceptions. The researcher's justification for this qualitative approach is based on gaining first-hand insight into the lived experiences of newly qualified teachers. It focuses on how they make meaning of their worlds (reflecting on pre- and post-degree certification).

1.6.1 Study Design

This section aims to outline the qualitative research approach adopted for this study. Also, an exploratory inquiry will be used within the study to interpret the aspects of meaning associated with this phenomenon. This section will cover parts of the research methods and methodology and support the reasoning behind choosing a self-designed questionnaire, one-on-one interviews and focus-group interviews, including documentation analysis (*Teaching Practice Evaluation Sheets*) as multi-method data production instruments. Other aspects addressed under this section include a discussion of the site and sample selection.

According to Donalek (2004:516), in qualitative research design, phenomenology is used to study areas where little is known about a particular phenomenon. Participants are enlisted who have either lived or are living the phenomenon in question and describe their experiences. The object of the study is to investigate the preparedness of newly qualified teachers after graduating from the university. The justification for phenomenology as a conceptual approach to the study is that it allows for the opportunity to describe phenomena as they appear to the person experiencing the phenomena (Touhy, Cooney, Dowling, Murphy & Sixsmith, 2013:17). Richards and Morse (2007:49) assert that two major assumptions emanate from phenomenology. According to Richards and Morse, the first assumption is that "perceptions" present us with evidence of the lived world - not as it is thought to be, but as it is lived (2007:49). To phenomenology, lived experience is imperative. The inference brought on by phenomenology makes it known that human life can only be understood within this context. The second assumption is that human existence is within a specific context "as being in the world is a phenomenological phrase that acknowledges that people are in their worlds and are understandable only in their contexts" (Richards & Morse, 2007:50).

This means that when a researcher decides to study individuals who have experienced a phenomenon, they have a more significant advantage in obtaining their perceptions of their actions. This study, therefore, used an interpretive phenomenology methodological design framework since the study focuses on the lived work worlds of newly qualified teachers.

1.6.2 Site and Sampling

The research sites included six schools located in the Cape Town Metropole, Western Cape, South Africa and one faculty of education at a university of technology. I used a purposive sampling selection of participants for the study. I focused on newly qualified teachers, as these teachers have spent sufficient time both on campus within the faculty of education at the university of technology and in schools on teaching practice. The sample of this

study initially consisted of 8 newly qualified teachers who obtained their B.Ed. degree from a university of technology, 1 Intermediate Phase Teaching Practice Coordinator and two selected primary school managers (1 principal and one deputy principal) located in the Western Cape, South Africa. The motive for purposively selecting 8 NQTs who completed their B.Ed. degree at a university of technology is because of their insights into the programme, their experiences gained during the completion of their qualification, and ultimately the views and opinions these teachers have on how prepared they were for the real-world classroom. Furthermore, the intention to interview two school managers (principal and deputy principal) will aid in the 'real-world expectation' of school managers when interviewing NQTs at their schools concerning job placements (employment). Also, interviewing the Teaching Practice Coordinator at the university of technology will assist the researcher in establishing alignment between what constitutes appropriate preparedness and unpreparedness in teaching and managing within a classroom.

1.6.3 Sampling

The table below summarises the data production methods, the sampling, and projected timeframes for data production. After that, a detailed description of the research design will be given.

Table 1.2: Sample Size

No.	Data production method	Sampling	Projected timeframe
1.	Semi-structured one-on-one interview with the Teaching Practice Coordinator of the B.Ed. Course	1 Teaching Practice Coordinator	April 2020
2.	One-on-one semi-structured interviews with 2 school managers	2 WCED Managers (1 School Principal & 1 Deputy School Principal)	August-September 2020
3.	Documentation analysis - Teaching Practice Evaluation Sheets.	6 Newly qualified teachers	Oct 2020
4.	One-on-one semi-structured interviews with six newly qualified B.Ed. graduates	6 Newly qualified teachers	April - May 2020
5.	One self-administered questionnaire to the six newly qualified teachers	6 Newly qualified teachers	April – May 2020
6.	One focus-group interview with all newly qualified teachers (<i>Via WhatsApp Messenger</i>)	6 Newly qualified teachers	July 2020
7.	One-on-one lesson observation	6 Newly qualified teachers	June 2020

1.6.4 Methods

1.6.4.1 A case study

In qualitative research, unlike quantitative research, the design or strategy is determined by the researcher's choice and actions (Fouché & Light, 2011). Therefore, the qualitative approach is carefully chosen because of its effective description of social problems. A primary distinguishing attribute of the qualitative case-study approach is that it requires the researcher to go into the field and move close to the people and circumstances there to capture what is happening (Patton, 2002). The main task of the case-study approach is to "explicate the ways people in particular settings come to understand, account for, take action, and otherwise manage their day-to-day situations" (Miles & Huberman, 1994:8). In the context of this study, "people in particular settings" refers to the six newly qualified teachers whom the WCED employs at the two public schools in the Western Cape (South Africa) and two primary school managers (one principal and one deputy principal), and the one Teaching Practice Coordinator.

1.6.4.2 Questionnaires as a data-production method

DeLyser, Herbert, Aitken, Crang, and McDowell (2010) state that qualitative research is pursued to comprehend the techniques used by humans to shape their understanding of past experiences, habits, and practices, which are constructed through numerous courses of action, to create meaning. Rather than trying to measure and quantify aspects of a singular social reality, qualitative research draws on methods aimed at recognizing 'the complexity of everyday life, the nuances of meaning-making in an ever-changing world and the multitude of influences that shape human lived experiences' (DeLyser et al., 2010:6). Thus, in considering my research questions, I aim to disseminate self-created questionnaires to all 6 the NQTs to understand the phenomenon under investigation better.

1.6.4.3 Interviews as a data-production method

The interview method was chosen to express the 'voice' of 8 newly qualified teachers (*only 6 in the end participated and those who opted out of the study rendered their reason for exiting*), two primary school managers (principal and deputy principal), and 1 Teaching Practice Coordinator. Patton (2002:206) distinguishes four types of interviews: informal conversational discussions, interview guides, standardised open-ended questions and closed qualitative interviews. On the other hand, Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2002:358) delineate interviews as structured, unstructured, non-directive or focused. In this research study, the instrument for primary data production was a semi-structured face-to-face interview, using an interview guide with each respondent to explore their experiences (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:76). Collis and Hussey (1997: 167) expand on this data-production method and state that a semi-structured interview is a formal engagement between researcher and interviewee where the interviewee is asked a series of questions through an interview guide or schedule that the researcher has developed. Furthermore, Heath et al. (2009:80) state that a semi-structured interview is often used when the researcher has a 'clear focus' in the research, in this case, the exploration of NQT's preparedness to manage and teach.

1.6.4.4 Documentation as a data-production method

My purpose for including documentation as a data-production method is to review the raw score rubric known as the 'Evaluation Form for Individual Lesson' of each newly qualified teacher, spanning the four-year degree

period. This implies from the first year of registration of the degree to the final year, which includes completing the Bachelor of Education degree. The pre-service teachers within the faculty of education at the university of technology are evaluated twice a year during teaching practice sessions in years one, two, and three. However, these pre-service teachers are evaluated four times in the final year - twice during Teaching Practice Session 1 and twice during Teaching Practice Session 2. This adds up to an equivalent of ten formal TP lessons critiqued by internal evaluators (lecturers working within the faculty) or external evaluators (recruited from outside the faculty) over the pre-scribed four-year degree programme.

1.6.4.5 Triangulation of data-production methods

Triangulation is seen as an operational technique to enhance the credibility of a research study. Triangulation refers to the researcher using more than one method or technique in the same study, as described above, contributing directly to the trustworthiness and credibility of the data and insights gained (Collis & Hussey, 1997:78; Van Der Valk, Van Driel, & De Vos, 2007: 341). This use of more than one technique enables the researcher to explore a phenomenon from more than one angle, enhancing the richness of the data (Cohen et al., 2007:141). Lincoln and Guba (1985:283) state that:

No single information item (unless coming from an elite and unimpeachable source) should ever be given serious consideration unless it can be triangulated.

However, it is essential to note that triangulation must form part of good research design and cannot be used to remediate a poor research design (Collis & Hussey, 1997:78).

1.7 Data Analysis

This research study was located in an interpretive paradigm, and interpretation was achieved through the data analysis process. Data analysis and interpretation constitute a critical stage in the research process which allows the researcher to construct dense descriptions, identify themes, generate explanations of thought and action evident in the case and theorise the case (Rule & John, 2011). The researcher Yin (2009: 26) defines the act of analysing data as follows: "Data analysis is the process of examining, categorizing, tabulating, testing or otherwise recombining evidence to draw empirically-based conclusions". Consequently, as an investigator, one can determine that data analysis means 'understanding the data' and 'understanding what information is conveyed' concerning understanding the preparedness of NQTs, especially how they were prepared before joining the schools as qualified teachers. Furthermore, Esau (2017: 103) mentions that a good data analysis can only happen when the researcher understands the presented data.







This research study used a multi-method research approach that uses quantitative and qualitative research methods. Henning et al. (2004) posit that qualitative data analysis can occur through open coding, which entails reading through the entire text generated from recorded information and identifying themes. The data production tools used were questionnaires, interview schedules (one-on-one and focus groups), and documentation analysis. The different instruments utilised per the research plan required specific forms of analysis, which were interpreted

via open coding. Data analysis and interpretation require creativity, discipline, and a systematic approach. Therefore, texts were read and re-read for clarity, and digital voice recordings listened to numerous times. I aimed to incorporate the five stages of qualitative data analysis used by Denscombe (2017), which are as follows:

1. Preparation of the data.
2. The familiarity of the data.
3. Interpreting the data (developing codes, categories, and concepts).
4. Verifying the data; and
5. Representing the data.

Below is an outline of the research methods employed for this study.

Table 1.3. Diagram representing segmentation of research methods:

Design Approach.	Methods.	Sample.	Participants.
Qualitative research. 	Case Study. 		
Report on experiences. 	One-on-one interviews, lesson observations & 1 focus group interview 	8 NQTs, Two primary school managers (principal and deputy principal) and 1 Teaching Practice Coordinator.	Newly qualified teachers. Primary school Managers.
<u>Multiple methods:</u> Observations + Questionnaires + Interviews + Documentation analysis = <u>Triangulation</u>	Questionnaire. 	6 NQTs	Newly qualified teachers.
	Documentation analysis. 	8 NQT's TP Evaluation sheets from 2016 to 2019	Newly qualified teachers from a university of technology.

1.8 Ethical considerations

Ethics in research has to do with the gathering of data and the subject's right to privacy. Ethical consideration should be given to all aspects of the inquiry and be done from the start, right to the end of the project. The researcher issued a written consent form to all the participants: 8 NQTs, 1 TP Coordinator and 2 Primary School Managers (1 Principal and 1 Deputy Principal) in the study. In doing so, the researcher explained to them the nature of the project and how its findings can contribute to the possible improvement of the future implementation of the programme.

It was important for the researcher to assure the participants of the protection of their privacy and inform them that their human dignity would at no point during the study be compromised. The participants were given a written assurance that anonymity and confidentiality would be maintained throughout the process (see *Appendix A* and

Appendix B, consent letters). Complete confidentiality was agreed upon between the NQTs and the researcher. The results of the outcome would be discussed with them. All participants will remain anonymous.

1.9 Trustworthiness

Wagner, Kawulich and Garner (2016: 275) state that 'Trustworthiness' is the term used in qualitative research that is similar to validity and reliability in quantitative research: it involves establishing the credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability of the data (in Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility and trustworthiness refer to the extent to which the reader can have confidence in the integrity of the data. Each participant will consent to participate in this research study freely and will be allowed to review their verbatim transcripts first hand before the write-up of the thematic analysis. Over the last few years, great strides have been made to show the rigour and trustworthiness of qualitative research (Shenton, 2004:75). Furthermore, Key (1997) stipulates that reliability estimates the consistency of your measurement. Key further specifies that reliability is the degree to which your instruments (data-production methods) are put under constructs under the same conditions by the same participants.

In qualitative research, the validity and reliability of the term are the same as trustworthiness; therefore, the researcher is making use of the term "Trustworthiness" within this study. Rymarchyk (n.d) puts it straightforwardly that social scientists rely on reliability and validity assessments to evaluate the quality of their measurement tools. Researchers within the field of social sciences should be highly wary of particular threats, primarily where the involvement of human participants is being studied. Within such studies, the researcher should "make every effort to minimise them" to safeguard the study's validity (Trochim, 2006:81). Validity is described by Gravetter and Forzano (2006) as the degree to which you measure what you are supposed to. This means that the researcher evaluates what they have set out to evaluate. The work of Lincoln and Guba (1985) is vital in understanding the notion of 'objectivity' in qualitative research. Conventional terms used to indicate the trustworthiness of the data are internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity, whereas qualitative inquiry revolves around notions of trustworthiness and credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:218).

The researcher proposes to safeguard the trustworthiness of the data by ensuring that, after the verbatim transcriptions of interviews take place, participants can view their transcripts for comment.

Lincoln and Guba (1985:189) outline that the trustworthiness of data is tested through four processes: credibility; transferability; dependability; and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:189). To ensure that the findings of this research study were fully utilised and held in principle with the validity thereof, the four-point criteria by Lincoln and Guba (1985) were employed.

1.10 Positionality within the research study

I took on the role of the interviewer of the in-depth one-on-one interviews, focus-group interviews and observations with all participants in the study. The research sites were six primary schools within the Western Cape, and only six purposefully selected participants who obtained their B. Ed. degree within the Intermediate Phase from the

Faculty of Education at a university of technology was included. It must be noted that the researcher acted as a non-participant in the research and facilitated the process of data production. In addition, my position as a senior teacher interviewing novice teachers was neutral, free of bias and unobtrusive; furthermore, my position did not interfere with what these teachers reported. The researcher can conclude that her research study embarked on presenting data that stems from trustworthiness and legitimacy regarding research.

1.11 Outline of the study

The study consists of five chapters. **Chapter 1** introduced the study by highlighting the seven distinct roles of being an educator as outlined by the MRTEQ (DHET, 2015) of South Africa. Also, Chapter 1 pointed to the lack of preparedness of NQTs in adequately executing their roles within the South African classroom, which leads to learners not receiving a quality education. Furthermore, numerous pieces of literature that point out factors that influence the lack of competencies (for example, lack of time-management, nonexistence of lesson planning write-up, inability to manage large classes, and their lack of pedagogical teaching styles) are postulated within Chapter 1 stated the rationale and motivation of why this research study should be explored and investigated. Incorporated within this chapter is the research methodological stance taken in soliciting rich data and the presentation thereof within this research study.

Chapter 2 sets out the contexts for the basis of this research. It provides a Conceptual Framework for one main theory, namely Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb, 1984). It also details the literature review under this main theory. The literature review sought to present factors relating to the commonality of how people (*in this instance, newly-qualified teachers*) construct their experiences of what they experienced: **a)** give detail of what was experienced at the university of technology, **b)** share the results by describing the experience, **c)** process the benefit or lack of benefits attached to the experience, **d)** generalize how relevant the experience was by attaching a real-life situation and **e)** apply the experience to a new situation. Experiential Learning makes discoveries and experiments with knowledge first hand, instead of hearing or reading about others' experiences.

Chapter 3 presents the methodology employed in this thesis. It is composed of research design, a brief motivation of methodological stance, reasons for selecting the schools, sample selection, and a description of participants. Also, the researcher included data production and data verification processes and ethical considerations in this section.

Chapter 4 explores the research results and discusses the findings by analysing the data collected. The themes that emerged from the analysed data are categorized into various sub-headers.

Chapter 5 provides a summary of research findings and conclusions and the limitations of the study, with accompanying suggestions and recommendations for future research. Furthermore, the chapter seeks to answer the research questions underpinning this research thesis.

1.12 Summary of the chapter

This introductory chapter provided a comprehensive introduction to the discussion and research on the preparedness of Newly Qualified Teachers in South Africa. The background and rationale for such a study were identified, and the influence of this study in contributing to the research body of knowledge on teacher preparedness was highlighted. The context of the study, newly qualified teachers' experiences, was underscored. The next chapter will present a detailed discussion of the conceptual framework and literature review that informed this study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

“It’s the teacher that makes the difference, not the classroom”. Michael Morpurgo²

Section A: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 provides the conceptual framework underpinning the study and an in-depth review of current literature related to schooling within South Africa and the numerous factors that influence the abilities or lack of ability relating to newly qualified teachers to manage and teach in such schools. Also, the researcher reviewed local literature, such as the Higher Educational Institution of South Africa’s Initial Teacher Education policy document, namely MRTEQ (DHET, 2015) and international literature, which seeks to explore the requirements needed to properly prepare NQTs to manage and teach in primary schools, particularly in under-resourced and dysfunctional schools in South Africa as postulated by the researchers Mlachila and Moeletsi (2019: 6).

2.2 Newly Qualified Teachers

The terms ‘*Newly Qualified Teacher*’, ‘*Beginner Teacher*’, ‘*Newly Trained Teacher*’ or ‘*Novice Teacher*’ (Boakye & Ampiah, 2017; DoHE, 2015; Akyeampong & Lewin, 2002; Arends & Phurutse, 2009: 1) are terms used to describe a graduate who has been awarded the Bachelor of Education degree (B.Ed.) or equivalent qualification from a reputable university, initial teacher training institution or other tertiary level institution. The term ‘newly qualified teachers’ is internationally used by researchers to describe “beginner teachers who are fresh from college” (Boakye & Ampiah, 2017: 2). An array of literature on teacher education describes ‘newly qualified teachers’ as those who have been working within various time frames such as five years (MetLife Survey of the American Teacher; National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, 2005; Ingersoll as cited in Boakye & Ampiah, 2017: 2) or three years according to Bartell (cited in Boakye & Ampiah, 2017:2).

The South African Department of Higher Education and Training National Qualifications Framework Act 2008 (Act No 67 of 2008) within the MRTEQ (DHET, 2015) states that the graduate should be able to demonstrate at the end of the degree programme that they have gained focused knowledge and skills in the teaching of a particular specialisation (*phase(s) and/or subject(s)*) (DHET, 2015: 22). In the current research study, the term Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) refers to individuals who have obtained their teaching degree at a university of technology and who have not taught for more than one year in their assigned teaching post.

The primary purpose of the B.Ed. programme in developing the NQT is to:

Provide a well-rounded education that equips graduates with the required subject content knowledge base, educational theory, and methodology that will enable them to demonstrate

² Morpurgo, M., 2021, March. How the Storyteller became Medallion Man. In IASL Annual Conference Proceedings (pp. 13-16).

competence and responsibility as academically and professionally qualified beginner teachers as outlined by MRTEQ (DHET, 2015: 22).

To become a well-rounded teacher who embarks on the path to teaching within the South African context, the NQT should have obtained the 11 stipulated competencies of the Higher Education and Training National Qualifications Framework. Table 4 (*below*), titled: '*Basic Competencies of a Beginner Teacher*', details the minimum requirements of a newly qualified teacher at the end of their B.Ed. programme as outlined by MRTEQ (DHET, 2015: 62). They are as follows:

Table 2.1: Basic Competencies of a Beginner Teacher

1. Newly qualified teachers must have sound subject knowledge.
2. Newly qualified teachers must know how to teach their subject(s) and how to select, determine the sequence and pace of content in accordance with both subject and learner needs.
3. Newly qualified teachers must know who their learners are and how they learn; they must understand their individual needs and tailor their teaching accordingly.
4. Newly qualified teachers must know how to communicate effectively in general, as well as in relation to their subject(s), in order to mediate learning.
5. Newly qualified teachers must have highly developed literacy, numeracy and Information Technology (IT) skills.
6. Newly qualified teachers must be knowledgeable about the school curriculum and be able to unpack its specialised content, as well as being able to use available resources appropriately so as to plan and design suitable learning programmes.
7. Newly qualified teachers must understand diversity in the South African context in order to teach in a manner that includes all learners. They must also be able to identify learning or social problems and work in partnership with professional service providers to address these.
8. Newly qualified teachers must be able to manage classrooms effectively across diverse contexts in order to ensure a conducive learning environment.
9. Newly qualified teachers must be able to assess learners in reliable and varied ways, as well as being able to use the results of assessment to improve teaching and learning.
10. Newly qualified teachers must have a positive work ethic, display appropriate values, and conduct themselves in a manner that befits, enhances and develops the teaching profession.
11. Newly qualified teachers must be able to reflect critically on their own practice, in theoretically informed ways and in conjunction with their professional community of colleagues in order to constantly improve and adapt to evolving circumstances.

The main reason for citing the above list of competencies for NQTs is the generic set of skills that every teacher should possess after the degree qualification. The set of skills is to ensure that these NQTs effectively execute their job. Regrettably, the literature points to the unpreparedness and inability of NQTs to fully perform within their employment, leading to a growing concern (Akyeampong & Lewin, 2002: 1). The researchers above gained

significant insight into NQT's university preparedness for the real-life classroom, compared NQTs and experienced teachers' attitudes towards the profession, and examined external factors that NQTs believed strongly affected their teaching abilities. The critical finding which emanates from the large-scale study conducted by the researchers Akyeampong and Lewin (2002: 4) points to NQTs that "were ill-prepared to handle the new elements of the curriculum" whilst they were at the higher educational institution and external factors such as "unavailability of instructional materials (mostly textbooks) and pupil absenteeism" contributed to a list of difficulties in adequately executing the teaching and learning process within the classroom. Research completed by Haggarty, Postlethwaite, Diment, and Ellins (2011: 3) attempts to ascertain the factors which could hamper NQTs from effectively executing their duties upon completion of their qualifications plus entry into the world of work and it was discovered that in most cases these teachers are confronted with a 'reality shock'. The term 'reality shock' described by the researchers Akyeampong, Ampiah, Fletcher, Kutor and Sokpe (2000) suggests that college training led NQTs to the false belief that teaching was less demanding until undergraduates experienced Teaching Practice within placed schools. These NQTs then experience first-hand that they cannot handle the 'behaviour management problems' within their designated classrooms after becoming qualified teachers. Haggarty et al. (2011: 9) go further and state that an added factor that NQTs experience is characterised by the careful 'pedagogical decisions' which must be made for 'difficult classes' that might end up disrespecting a carefully planned and creative lesson completed by the teacher, which evidently can be 'dispiriting'.

Furthermore, a one-year research project by the researchers Totterdell, Heilbronn, Bubb, and Jones (2002: 7) investigated a statutory induction policy for newly qualified teachers. The research findings obtained at the end of the induction policy gave significant insight into challenges that NQTs were experiencing, such as 'discipline problems' and handling children with behavioural issues. One key finding of such a programme in assisting NQTs during the first year of their teaching career emanates from the report and is cited here:

Recent research (Horne, 2001a; Macleod, 2000; Smithers & Robinson, 2001) suggests that recruitment and retention trends indicate that the teaching profession is not renewing itself and teacher shortage is becoming endemic. NQTs' experiences of induction should leave them feeling valued, involved in worthwhile and satisfying work and on a forward-moving professional trajectory (Totterdell et al., 2002: 153).

The research team points out the seriousness of assisting newly qualified teachers to come to terms with their reality of the real-life world of work and recommends that a programme be designed post-university to aid in developing the list of 11 competencies as described by MRTEQ. Should this process not be created, a significant loss of teachers to the profession will occur.

2.3 The state of the South African education system

2.3.1 A historical overview of education in public primary schooling in South Africa

Given the country's long history of racial inequalities, the researcher provides context to the assortment of challenges that teachers at primary schools faced, especially by those individuals of colour. Mlachila and Moeletsi (2019: 1) position their study, titled '*Struggling to Make the Grade: A Review of the Causes and Consequences of*

the Weak Outcomes of South Africa's Education System' within the setting of a rights-based framework which sketches an extensive narrative review of literature, that explains the "causes and the relatively low educational quality in South Africa". The gripping conclusion that the researchers above drew based on their study is outlined below:

The main explanatory factors are complex and multifaceted and are associated with insufficient subject knowledge of some teachers, history, race, language, geographic location, and socioeconomic status. Low educational achievement contributes to low productivity growth and high poverty levels, unemployment, and inequality (Mlachila and Moeletsi, 2019: 1).

The damaging impact which apartheid had within South Africa, especially on the oppressed non-white citizens (Blacks, Coloureds, and Indians) who did not belong to the oppressive white race at the time, still has a tremendous bearing on the type of education that particular learners, now classified as being marginalised, are currently receiving. There are still unequal 'social cohesion' levels between educational institutions in post-apartheid South Africa (Von Fintel, 2015; Schneider, 2016). The researcher Spaul (2013a) concurs with Von Fintel (2015) and Schneider (2016) and contends that a "*Poverty and Privilege*" system currently exists within our education system, whereby schools that predominantly served White learners under apartheid remain functional while schools that served Black learners remain dysfunctional (Brown, 2016: 18-19). Mlachila and Moeletsi (2019: 6) state that schools, where marginalised learners attend, are better known as "dysfunctional schools", and added to this description is the calculation that "eighty percent of South Africa's dysfunctional schools are in townships and rural communities".

The narrative review of literature in this research project addressed both perspectives from international and domestic literature on the state of primary schooling in South Africa (Van der Berg, Taylor, Gustafsson, Spaul & Armstrong, 2011; Mbiti, 2016; Spaul, 2011 & 2013b; Popova, Evans & Arancibia, 2016). These researchers, as mentioned earlier, were able to remark on what seems to work and what does not within the educational policies of South Africa. The consensus drawn was as follows:

1. In line with international trends, most of the increase in educational spending in South Africa has been aimed at increasing access and inputs (more resources), but the quality has significantly lagged.
2. Improving teacher training to close gaps in knowledge, improved school management, and greater teacher accountability are potential measures to improve educational performances in the long term.
3. Efforts to improve the availability of quality textbooks and related learning materials and improve parent involvement (through Parent and Teacher Meetings) are likely to impact learner performance positively.

Historical policy documents of the apartheid education system in South Africa details the uneven spread of funding toward Black learners. Branson and Leibbrandt (2013) identify that in 1994 spending on White learners within 'Model C' schools was 1½ times higher than that of Black learners in urban areas, including five times higher than in rural areas. Notably, the term 'Model C schools' refers to public schools located in urban areas and exclusively reserved for White learners during apartheid (Mlachila and Moeletsi, 2019: 9).

In an attempt to redress the injustices perpetrated by the apartheid government, the newly elected post-apartheid government set out to create numerous reforms to the old system, such as “increasing the government spending on education” and “revamping the school curriculum” (Branson and Leibbrandt, 2013: 7). An interesting fact observed by Van der Berg et al. (2011) is that South Africa’s attainment rates of levels of education up until 11 years of age are higher than most middle-income countries. Quality indicators in the aforementioned ‘attainment rates’ must be defined to assess their meaning as a constructive concept that contributes to the overall improvement of the learners’ formal education. Consequently, the researchers Heneveld and Craig (1996) outline the term ‘quality’ as both the inputs and outputs of education. So, one must look at the surroundings (environment) in which learning takes place and the quantifiable gains in learners’ skills, knowledge, and values.

For this research study, the term “quality” of education will refer to the cognitive skills that learners develop through school with desired outcomes that can be assessed. The quality of South Africa’s education substantially lags international standards (Mlachila & Moeletsi, 2019: 9). The researchers, as mentioned above, note the following:

In a group of Grade 4 learners from 49 countries, South African Grade 5 learners ranked bottom last in Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) test scores. Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2016 results show that 78 percent of SA’s Grade 4 learners cannot read in any language meaningfully.

Therefore, the above specifics by South African learners demonstrate that substantial deficits exist in critical learning skills of literacy and numeracy at an early level in their education. In their research report, the findings of the researchers Mlachila and Moeletsi (2019: 14) allude to the fact that “money is not the main issue”, however, and note that the quality of South Africa’s education at the primary level lags against peer Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) countries with much lower budgets on education. According to the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ, 2017), which is a consortium of education policy-makers and researchers who work with the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) to improve the research capacity and technical skills of educational planners, South African learners rank mid-table in reading and mathematics and are being outperformed by countries “with a lower allocation of government spending to education”. Although primary school education in South Africa is ‘still lagging,’ it is encouraging to note that the Grade 6 Mathematics SACMEQ test scores between 2007 and 2013 significantly improved by 0.06 standard deviations a year (SACMEQ, 2017).

2.4 Initial Teacher Education (ITE)

2.4.1 A brief look into an Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programme at a Higher Educational Institution (HEI)

Several compelling factors contribute to South Africa’s underperformance in education. Educational stakeholders, especially researchers, will revert to the damning legacy of apartheid and how twenty-six years later (at the time of writing) the vast discrepancy in educational attainments amongst various races is far too clear (Mlachila & Moeletsi, 2019: 29). For this research study, the researcher will be focusing on the perceptions and experiences

of 8 newly qualified teachers. The purposively selected sample of NQTs must have graduated from the Faculty of Education based within the HEI, better known as a technology-based university in Cape Town. According to the aforementioned teacher education university website, this purposively selected teachers' university is the 'biggest teacher education provider in the Western Cape (South Africa)', having students from all over the country and the rest of the world (CPUT, 2019). To ascertain whether the teacher training programme sufficiently prepares student teachers to become fully-fledged competent teachers, the researcher looked into past research based on student teachers from this university of technology (McAuliffe, 2013; Phillips, 2013; Pather, 2015; Sirkhotte, 2018; Tiba, 2018).

The research conducted by McAuliffe (2013: 22) focused on laying a good foundation in Mathematics in primary school. It involved a group of preservice student teachers intending to become Mathematics specialist teachers. Her study concluded that preservice teachers within the university of technology developed "common content knowledge and specialised content knowledge for teaching early algebra" (McAuliffe, 2013: 1). The relevance of the researcher McAuliffe (2013) relates to NQTs' personal belief system (since these teachers are now full-time teachers based on their designated set of learners) about the main pedagogical and didactical concepts which are most applicable to learners in the Intermediate Phase.

Furthermore, the findings are detailed below:

Their responses [Preservice teachers] indicated a growing awareness of the development of their mathematical knowledge for teaching through their own experiences of a richer and connected algebra and through guided support and reflection in the process of learning and teaching.

The research conducted by McAuliffe indicates the "imperative and crucial role of knowing the mathematics content and how to use the knowledge in teaching". It will be interesting to hear first-hand from the purposively selected NQTs how prepared they were to teach Mathematics within the IP. According to Phillips (2013: 3), in a study titled: *"Interrogating student and lecturer perspectives of professional knowledge delivery in the initial teacher training programmes in South Africa within a context of quality"*, the researcher had set out to interrogate three critical objectives in the initial teacher-training programmes in South Africa which were: 1) Professional development and knowledge of teachers, 2) Delivery of that knowledge from a pedagogical perspective and 3) Quality of current teacher training programmes. The study findings conducted by Phillips show that "students, lecturers, and in-service teachers believe that many components within the current teacher training programme need to be transformed" (Phillips, 2013: 4). Furthermore, the research of Phillips (2013) holds importance for this specific research study titled "Preparedness of Newly Qualified Teachers to manage and teach in the Intermediate Phase" because if an interrogation process fails to take place, as suggested by Phillips (2013), the absence of the process will "impact the quality of teachers who are exiting the current system [Initial Teacher Training Programmes].

The student teacher does not enter the initial teacher training programme without reservations of their own; therefore, Pather (2015: 6), in her doctoral dissertation *'Pre-entry academic and non-academic factors influencing teacher education students' first-year experience and academic performance'* suggests the following:

Higher education needs to consider student diversity, financial constraints of disadvantaged students, first-year curriculum planning and delivery, and the high cost of university studies. It needs to move away from viewing entering students from a deficit model to capitalise on their qualities of determination, optimism, enthusiasm and openness to learning, thereby creating an inclusive first-year experience that could encourage retention and student success.

Consequently, literature by Reay (2012) on higher education student experience and retention makes it clear that much research has ignored the impact of students' backgrounds and characteristics which influences their performance within an initial teacher training programme. However, in her research study, Sirkhotte (2018: 3) explored how lecturers and student teachers within an ITE programme 'incorporated, taught and experienced the concept of social cohesion' within a university of technology. The findings were somewhat synonymous with Pather (2015) and showed that "teacher educators' understandings and pre-service teachers' backgrounds influence their experiences of an ITE programme". The concepts obtained from the research mentioned above point to the importance of Experiential Learning. Kolb (1984), in his theory, dictates that 'Experiential Learning' is a meaning-making process and that everyone experiences learning differently. Hence, Pather (2015) concurs with Sirkhotte (2018) that your background will influence your learning-making process within the ITE programme.

Another fundamental concept that looks at preparing teachers to teach learners for the world of work is outlined in a study titled "The ability of Newly Qualified Teachers to integrate technology into their pedagogical practice" conducted by Tiba (2018: 3). The researcher recognised that the Western Cape Education Department is keen on making technology accessible to all learners and teachers. However, the main aim is to encourage NQTs "to adopt, adapt and use technology effectively in the classroom". Only once the importance of technology is seen in the 21st-century classroom can leaders at schools formulate programmes that will encourage teachers to integrate technology into their lessons effectively. Tiba (2018: 4) goes further to highlight the sample of NQTs who took part in her study and details the findings:

Seventy-four NQTs responded. The majority of teachers at no-fee paying schools did not have the ability to teach effectively with technology: they could not blend the technology with the pedagogy and content knowledge required for effective teaching. Teachers from fee-paying schools, however, were able to use constructivist, interactive modes of instruction because such schools could afford to purchase, protect and maintain technology while training teachers in its use.

The research findings conducted by Tiba (2018) hold importance for this research study to ascertain from NQTs the role which resources play within different quintile schools and keep in line with the list of Competencies as outlined by MRTEQ. Although certain researchers (Christie, Dieltiens & Lewin, 2006; Munje & Maarman, 2017) have indicated the impact which resources have in the classroom and how the learning of a child is influenced, researchers Tunjera, Tiba, Condry and Chigona (2016) state that the learning of technology must start with pre-service teachers within the initial teacher training programmes and it is there where they (NQTs) should be taught

how to use digital equipment within their classrooms, to affect better their teaching of lessons to learners within the 21st-century classroom. Unfortunately, after reviewing the literature on the importance of 'resources' within South Africa, the post-apartheid government has been unable to deliver on its promises of a better and equal education opportunity for all (Fiske & Ladd, 2004).

2.5 The state of Higher Educational Institutions in South Africa

A large number of racial disparities in retention exists within tertiary institutions in South Africa, and the disparity is possibly due to a variety of factors, three of which are as follows:

1. First, black students, having received poorer quality of education, are most likely unprepared for tertiary education and hence drop out in the early years of tertiary education.
2. Secondly, while white students are more likely to remain in tertiary education and pursue advanced degrees, black students often cannot afford to forgo the lost income associated with extending years of schooling. Hence, they typically move to employment after the first university degree or diploma.
3. Finally, many black students discontinue their studies even before graduating from their first degree due to financial constraints (DHET, 2017).

The above-listed factors correspond with research conducted by Moses, Van der Berg and Rich (2017), who observed issues relating to further studies at university, which are the financial constraints attached to obtaining the first undergraduate qualification and similarly limiting university access for many of South Africa's learners. According to Murray (2016), 25 percent of students enrolled in tertiary education in South Africa 'drop out' in their first year even though extended degree programmes have been designed and fully implemented to assist them. Notably, the Times Higher Education ranks world universities across six scores: teaching, research, citations, industry income, and international outlook and states that "South Africa's tertiary education far outperforms African peer countries and many other emerging countries" (Times Higher Education, 2017). It is observed that, although South Africa has several top-ranking universities, however, like in any other country, there are many public universities with weak student outcomes. Presented in Table 5 are the Times Higher Education African Universities Rankings in 2018.

Table 2.2: Times Higher Education African Universities Rankings in 2018

Times Higher Education African Universities Rankings in 2018		
African Ranking	University	Country
1	University of Cape Town	South Africa
2	University of the Witwatersrand	South Africa
3	Stellenbosch University	South Africa
4	University of Kwazulu-Natal	South Africa
5	Makerere University	Uganda

6	American University in Cairo	Egypt
7	Beni Seuf University	Egypt
8	University of Johannesburg	South Africa
9	University of Pretoria	South Africa
10	University of the Western Cape	South Africa
Source: Times Higher Education (2017).		

Upon reviewing the above-listed data, the researcher of this small-scale study has noted that the purposively selected university of technology does not appear in the data set. This information means that, although the initial teacher training at the one chosen higher educational institution services the majority of schools because their institution is the “biggest teacher education provider in the Western Cape”, it would be interesting to ascertain the reasons for the lack of institutional existence on the international universities ranking scale. Although the faculty of education at the purposively selected higher educational institution is merely one of 6 faculties, needless to say, the entire university does not appear within the ranking scale.

2.6 A review of the Minimum Requirements for a Teacher Education Qualification Framework

The policy on the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications MRTEQ (DHET, 2015) was designed through a review process involving the Council on Higher Education (CHE), the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), the Department of Basic Education (DBE), public universities and private higher education providers offering teacher education qualifications, the South African Council of Educators (SACE), the Education Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority (ETDPSETA) and teacher unions. The overall process sets broad standards for teacher education qualifications known as MRTEQ (DHET, 2015). Also, a detailed description of the minimum requirements for teacher education qualifications is intended to guarantee that the higher education system produces teachers “of high quality, in line with the country's needs” according to MRTEQ (DHET, 2015).

What makes the policy on the MRTEQ outstanding is the incredible depth of research from various educational stakeholders in ensuring that the needs of NQTs, especially those issues relating to the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degree programme, are addressed by the policy. Here are some of the issues which the policy raised in their research on the initial teacher programmes review:

- describes clear, specific requirements for the development of learning programmes, as well as guidelines regarding practical and work-integrated learning (WIL) structures;
- encourages teacher educators to become engaged in curriculum design, policy implementation and research;
- requires all teacher education programmes to address the critical challenges facing education in South Africa today - especially the poor content and conceptual knowledge found amongst teachers, as well as

the legacies of apartheid, by incorporating situational and contextual elements that assist teachers in developing competencies that enable them to deal with diversity and transformation;

- brings the importance of inter-connections between different types of knowledge and practices into the foreground, as well as the ability of teachers to draw reflexively from integrated and applied knowledge, to work flexibly and effectively in a variety of contexts; and;
- The notion of teacher roles continues to be a useful tool to assist in the design of learning programmes which, in turn, will result in the development of teachers who can contribute to the collective work of educating children in a school at different stages of their careers (DHET, 2015, 9-10).

From the above-cited research issues discussed within the policy framework, it can be summarised that teaching practice within the university programme should be aligned to the intended list of competencies for NQTs. Research by Mlachila and Moeletsi (2019: 4) make known that teachers exhibit poor content and conceptual knowledge, and collectively it is the responsibility of all teachers to contribute to the betterment of the South African schooling system. However, numerous pieces of literature (Mlachila & Moeletsi, 2019; StatsSA, 2016; TIMSS, 2015; PIRLS, 2016; Van Der Berg, Hofmeyr & Broekhuizen, 2017; Spaul, 2013) point to a deficit associated with teachers to properly execute their jobs as per the policy MRTEQ. The researcher Spaul (2013) describes that in the year 2007, Grade 6 Mathematics teachers took part in the SACMEQ III test, and the majority of South African teachers scored “below average for the test and struggled with questions that were aimed at learners” (Spaul, 2013 cited in Mlachila & Moeletsi, 2019). Therefore, this matter of ‘Teacher subject content knowledge’ is deemed a problem when teachers are required to pass on the knowledge which they do not know. This suggests that either the lecturers within the initial teacher training programmes are not sufficiently preparing NQTs for the real-life classroom or their programmes are not in line with the MRTEQ (DHET 2015) policy.

Noteworthy is that the researcher Spaul (2011: 4) points out that schools in disadvantaged communities face environmental challenges such as “low accountability and poor management” that overshadow the impact of teacher knowledge. Therefore, the researcher of this research project has become fully aware of the comprehensive literature which points to the debate in education that NQTs in South Africa are struggling to teach the prescribed curriculum. This deficit impedes their ability to manage learners. Most of the learners are those who daily experience poverty incidents in South Africa, especially learners that derive from predominantly black communities that have dysfunctional schools (Moses, Van der Berg & Rich, 2017).

2.7 Interrogating the expected Competencies of Newly Qualified Teachers

The policy titled the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications which details the expectancies of Newly Qualified Teachers is sketched within this research project under the heading titled Table 4: Basic Competencies of a Beginner Teacher. A replica of the list can also be found within the government policy document under the sub-heading Appendix C (MRTEQ, 2015: 64). This study aims to include pertinent literature which points to NQTs' ability to manage and teach within the Intermediate Phase classroom. This research study uses the literature and data produced as a yardstick for the minimum set of competencies outlined in the policy MRTEQ.

Furthermore, she will note contradictions between previous research conducted, which looked at the MRTEQ policy and ascertained whether teachers adhered to the list of competencies.

Teachers do not possess “sound subject knowledge”, as Spaul (2013: 5) suggested. This impacts their students’ learning when they are not learning the set curriculum within the specific primary school grades. McAuliffe (2013) and the Department of Higher Education and Training (2011: 6) concur with Spaul (2011) on the fact that teachers are facing challenges in their delivery of “poor content and conceptual knowledge” in their lessons and, as such McAuliffe proposes that teachers embrace the five types of foundational aspects of learning that are associated with acquisition, integration, and application of knowledge for teaching purposes, namely: 1) disciplinary, 2) pedagogical, 3) practical, 4) fundamental and 5) situational (McAuliffe, 2013: 20). A summary presented by the researcher above can be cited as follows:

1. **Disciplinary learning** or subject matter knowledge has two components, the study of education and its foundations as well as the study of “specific specialised subject matter that is relevant to the academic discipline underpinning the teaching subject”.
2. **Pedagogical knowledge** of how to present concepts, methods, and rules to create appropriate learning opportunities for diverse learners and how to evaluate progress.
3. **Practical knowledge** involves learning in and from practice and includes the study of practice through case studies and videos to help theorise practice and form a basis for learning in practice. It is an important condition for the development of tacit knowledge, which is essential for learning to teach.
4. **Fundamental knowledge** refers to general literacies, being competent in a second official language, the ability to use information and communication technologies and the acquisition of academic literacy that forms the foundation of effective learning in higher education.
5. **Situational learning** refers to knowledge about different learning situations, contexts and environments of education (poverty, HIV and AIDS, diversity, inclusivity, etc.) and includes current educational policy, political and organisational contexts.

The reason for listing the five different kinds of learning types is their relevance to the growth of Newly Qualified Teachers’ knowledge in educating learners and producing assertive and knowledgeable teachers for the real-life South African classroom situation. The above-rendered list of learning types and understanding of the selection of the appropriate learning types will cover the first three lists of competencies within the list of expectancies of Newly Qualified Teachers.

Moving on within the set criteria of NQTs is point number 4, which states:

Newly qualified teachers must know how to communicate effectively in general, as well as in relation to their subject(s), in order to mediate learning according to MRTEQ (DHET, 2015: 64)

Therefore, it is imperative that HEIs design their initial teacher programmes so that student teachers receive a good and solid grounding in the didactical principles of first and additional communicative subjects. The South African National Department of Education's RNCS (2002b:19 cited in Condy, 2006: 35) Home Language policy document stated the definition of Languages Learning Area Statement as:

- All eleven official languages: Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitonga, Afrikaans, English, IsiNdebele, IsiXhosa and IsiZulu.
- Languages approved by the Pan South African Language Board (PANSALB) and the South African Certification Authority (SAFCERT) include Braille and South African Sign Language.

Furthermore, the researcher Cunningham (2000: 64) took the approach that literacy is synonymous with education and that there are three commonalities:

1. the ability to engage in reading and writing;
2. contextualisation of language within the broad demands of the society; and
3. the striving for a minimal level of practical proficiency in reading, writing, and listening.

In summary, the researcher comments that today learners must be capable of making suggestions about the text as a sign of basic literacy, which is making meaning of their world. She claimed that learners must become more critically conscious of what they are using to construct meaning (Condy, 2006: 35). Further on, the next set of competencies (Number 5) details the importance of Information Technology (IT) skills, (Number 6) the significance of the NQT knowing the school's curriculum, including being able to design suitable learning programmes and (Number 7) discusses "diversity in the South African context to teach in a manner that includes all learners" MRTEQ (DHET, 2015: 64). Tiba (2018), in her research project, exposed the fast-paced world which is being revolutionised by the use of technological gadgets (which is better known as the 4th industrial revolution) and how important it is for teachers to expose their learners to various technological tools which will enhance their learning and influence their curriculum design. Tiba (2018: 4) states the following:

While NQTs from fee-paying schools had numerous resources that encouraged them to use technology regularly in their teaching, teachers at no-fee-paying schools lacked technological resources.

The abovementioned citing reveals the inadequate distribution of resources in South Africa. Also, her study exposed the "unequal nature of schools in the Western Cape," making it challenging to have technological resources in certain schools. However, the lack of resources and the design thereof should not deter teachers "from being trained to blend technology, pedagogy and content knowledge required for effective teaching with technology" (Tiba, 2018: 174).

Munje and Maarman (2017: 1), in their research study titled '*Do school resources matter? The effects of school resources on learner performance in poor communities*', aimed to "interrogate the role of resources in affecting learner performance in poor school communities". The findings are synonymous with Tiba (2018), which says that

resources are essential in learners' learning; however, Munje and Maarman (2017: 1) list alternative challenges that prevent learning. These challenges are cited as follows:

These resources include learning spaces and shelving spaces for books, combined with capabilities limitations, which seemed to hinder teachers and school administrators in their efforts to convert resources into learner outcomes.

Therefore, one cannot expect NQTs to use their gained competencies of IT skills to fully enter the learning space and execute their knowledge thereof when alternative external hindrances exist (Munje and Maarman, 2017: 8). Therefore, teachers should be prepared for the challenges they will face in the real-life classroom as NQTs and be ready to intervene creatively. The MRTEQ (DHET, 2015: 64) stipulates the importance of diversity by citing that:

Newly qualified teachers must understand diversity in the South African context in order to teach in a manner that includes all learners. They must also be able to identify learning or social problems and work in partnership with professional service providers to address these.

The term 'diversity' as defined by the Oxford Learner's Dictionary, is: "A range of many people or things that are very different from each other" ([Oxfordlearners Dictionaries, 2020](#)). Therefore, one can conclude that NQTs should be prepared to teach and manage an array of learners who derive from various upbringings, races, religions, communities, and social classes (e.g. upper class, working class, middle class, poor, etc.). It is the responsibility of the initial teacher training to expose the student teachers to an array of social classes whilst these learner teachers are in training, by doing Teaching Practice at schools, partially different from their own social class.

In continuing with the analysis of the MRTEQ list of competencies, the numbers 8, 9, 10 and 11 can be summarised as follows: a) the NQT should be able to manage the learners and create a conducive learning environment; b) NQTs must be able to assess learners in a viable way and also using an array of intervention methods in doing this; c) the NQT should be able to have a positive work ethic; and finally, d) reflect on their work to better their teaching skills for the betterment of their learners.

2.7.1 Managing learners

An array of literature (Morrell, 2001; Maree & Cherian, 2004; Maphosa & Shumba, 2010; Breen, Daniels & Tomlinson, 2015) addresses the perceptions which teachers hold about what it means to manage the diverse number of learners within their classrooms, in an unbiased and professional manner, without the need to enforce corporal punishment. Also, literature by researchers Shonkoff, Boyce and McEwen (2009) expands on the long-term effects of stress-related disease and cognitive impairment due to this wrongful notion of 'managing' learners. The researchers Simons and Wurtele (2010, cited in Breen et al., 2015) concur with Shonkoff et al. (2009) and add that learners who are exposed to corporal punishment "are more likely to use aggressive conflict resolution strategies with their siblings and peers".

The South African education system does not condone corporal punishment within any of the schools, and this historical defect in the management of learners is briefly explained by Morrell (2001: 1), who states:

The South African education system historically has used corporal punishment to maintain discipline. Criticism of its effects led, in 1996, to the banning of this form of punishment. But this legislative intervention did not end the use of corporal punishment in schools.

Indeed, in particular schools (Harber, 2001; Zulu, Urbani, Van der Merwe & Van der Walt, 2004 cited in Maphosa & Shumba, 2010) where indiscipline by learners occurs, and, more so in marginalised and poverty-stricken communities, some teachers still exert a sense of authority over learners by enforcing corporal punishment, knowing full and well that this act is unconstitutional as per the National Education Policy Act of 1996 (Republic of South Africa, 1996a: A-47) which states that:

No person shall administer corporal punishment or subject a student to psychological or physical abuse at any educational institution.

It is imperative that NQTs uphold the rules of the South African education policy and not allow the prevailing predicaments of a school setting to impact their abilities to seek alternative intervention methods to ensure that they manage their learners humanely and fairly, and only then will this act lead to a conducive learning environment.

2.7.2 Assessing learners

It is the responsibility of the NQT to assess their learners in a viable manner and ensure that alternative assessment methods are consulted to aid their learning. Therefore, the researcher Phillips (2013: 37) explains that according to Smyth (2011), a 'centralism towards the education curriculum' in South Africa has taken place, which is fundamental in the role of all NQTs. This means that the curriculum is predetermined at all levels and outlined within the CAPS policy. Furthermore, a detailed explanation from Phillips (2013: 37) is given on the importance of assessment in the South African classroom to keep in line with the requirements of MRTEQ. She states the following:

In South Africa, we have moved from the National Curriculum Statement (NCS), where all content and assessment were not predetermined, to the NCS with Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS), where content is pre-determined and where it becomes very prescriptive with regard to practice since CAPS prescribes content and time for each grade and every learning area.

Therefore, the role of initial teacher education programmes in grooming NQTs for the real-life classroom is of paramount importance to ensure that quality learning and assessment occur.

2.7.3 Work ethic

The MRTEQ (DHET, 2015) necessitates that NQTs should have a positive work ethic. The responsibility of the ITT (Initial Teacher Training) programme will be to expose student teachers to diverse schooling types. In the process, these student teachers, as they are known, will get a 'sense' of the kinds of working environments which they soon will join. The concept of *work ethics* refers to ethics practised in a work environment (Myburgh, Niehaus and

Poggenpoel (2002: 5). Ethics can be described as a set standards and norms according to which individuals live and act (Odendal, Schoonees, Swanepoel, Du Toit & Booysen, 1979: 210 cited in Myburgh et al., 2002); or sets of moral principles or rules of conduct (Fowler & Fowler, 1990: 401 mentioned in Myburgh, et al., 2002). In a study conducted by Singh (2002: 3) titled: '*Collegiality in education: a case study*' the objective of the project was to "investigate the effects of a collegial management style on teaching and learning over three years in a historically disadvantaged secondary school". The findings revealed that:

The exploitation of available resources in historically disadvantaged schools (HDS) coupled with a collegial management structure can improve the matriculation results. This study also indicates that physical resources cannot solely guarantee success at the matriculation level.

A shared vision espoused in collegiality can alter the landscape from dysfunctionality to efficiency and qualitative education (Singh, 2002: 3)

This study indicates, like others conducted by other researchers such as Mlachila and Moeletsi (2019), that resources and money are not always linked to the quality of work delivered by teachers and attained by learners, but alternative concepts in education will boost productivity (Singh, 2002; Myburgh et al., 2002). Therefore, Singh (2002) direct researchers who are keen on increasing productivity within the workplace to the 'transformational leadership and collegiality work ethics lens' as described by Sergiovanni (1992:43):

Transformational leadership entails the participation of all teachers as an interdependent group that forms an integral part of creating transformation in the school rather than the maintenance of control and power.

There must be a set objective when embracing this kind of educational leadership function within the schooling environment and it is driven by the need to attain a common goal (Sergiovanni, 1992: 5). The various stages of achieving a transformational leadership ethos, as described by Sergiovanni (1990: 8), are:

- Leadership by bartering
- Leadership by building
- Leadership by bonding
- Leadership by banking

The above listed four stages of transformational leadership depend on the required level of individual support and may not follow a set sequence but can be used to assist NQTs in developing a professional work ethic within their newly placed schooling environment, should these NQTs feel unprepared for their employment. The skills gained can lead to the heart of school improvement (Sergiovanni, 1992). The researcher notes that continuous professional development is a term used for post-degree attainment to assist individuals lacking proper formal training in certain areas of their professional careers.

2.7.4 Reflective practitioners

The eleventh skill set required by the competent NQT refers to their ability to reflect to improve upon their teaching skills for the betterment of their learners. The researcher Cranton (1994: 48 cited in Sirkhotte, 2018: 61) describes

the term 'reflection' as "critically assessing our interpretations of experience" and relates to transforming the self. Alternative definitions term reflection as being "active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusion to which it tends (Dewey, 1933, cited in Cranton, 1994:49). It is the perspective of the researchers Boyd and Fales (1983) that the term 'reflection' is best described as:

"The process of internally examining and exploring an issue of concern, triggered by an experience, which creates and clarifies meaning in terms of the self, and which results in a changed conceptual perspective" (cited in Cranton, 1994:49).

Therefore, one can summarise that the above definitions of the term 'reflection' point to the idea of an individual's personal experience; caused by an event. Therefore, one individual will have a unique perspective surrounding the occurrence of that specific event. The researcher Mezirow (1991) differentiates between three different types of reflection which are namely, 1) *content reflection*, 2) *process reflection* and 3) *premise reflection* (Cranton, 1994: 49 cited in Sirkhotte, 2018).

For this segment of the literature in which 'reflection' should become an essential part of NQTs' developmental process, and overall teacher identity, the researcher of this study will briefly expand on only one of the types of reflections (*Reflection type 1: Content Reflection*) as outlined by Mezirow (1991). This one reflection type is perceived as being the most fitting for this research project. Content reflection is best described as "the examination of the content or description of a problem" (Cranton, 1994: 49). In reflecting on the lesson presented, the NQTs should ask contextual questions such as: **What** was the theme of this lesson? **Was** the objective of my lesson achieved? **Why** were particular learners struggling with question 5 of the activity sheet, and did I explain the section enough? (Cranton, 1994: 51). Therefore, it is crucial to include reflection in ITE programmes. It is "one way to build the kind of reflections that challenge power and can productively work within tensions and contradictions" (Choudry, 2015:11 cited in Sirkhotte, 2018).

Phillips (2013) concurs and believes that reflecting on one's teaching and learning should take place during the in-service training at schools when student teachers are doing Teaching Practice. During the TP process, student teachers should learn to "construct and deconstruct" specific experiences by reflecting (Phillips, 2013: 57).

2.8 Interrogating the functional role and contribution of educational stakeholders' in providing quality education

In an attempt to eliminate poverty and decrease inequality in South Africa by 2030, the SA government introduced a socio-economic improvement programme known as the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030 (National Development Planning Commission, 2012). The National Development Planning Commission of South Africa states in the foreword of their blueprint of the country's intervention programme that the aim of this programme is as follows:

The National Development Plan is a plan for the country to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030 through uniting South Africans, unleashing the energies of its citizens, growing an inclusive economy, building capabilities, enhancing the capability of the state and leaders working together to solve complex problems.

I searched within the National Development Plan using “*Newly Qualified Teachers*” and “*Quality Education*” as key terms. I then identified key sentences that guided me in establishing intervention measures that the South African government intends to enforce to ensure that all learners, regardless of their race or class, receive a good quality education by the end of their primary schooling. Also, I want to point out that an added reason why I decided to explore the NDP 2030 by using the above-mentioned two keywords was to establish whether the SA government was aware of the relatively low educational quality in South Africa and what measures will be put in place by the year 2030. By doing a review process of the plan, the researcher is assessing the type of long-term preparation that the South African government plans to instil, which might be similar to this kind of research project.

The two phrases “*Newly Qualified Teachers*” and “*Quality Education*” were cited in the review of the NDP 2030. Herewith is the outcome:

Newly Qualified Teachers (Only one mentioning for the keyword)

- Investigate introducing professional certification. ***Newly qualified teachers*** would need to demonstrate certain competencies before they are employed in schools, and after that, they would be offered preliminary or probationary certification to be finalised based on demonstrated competence. The professional certification of all teachers would need to be renewed periodically.

Quality Education (Only five citings of the keyword)

- A sustainable increase in employment will require a faster-growing economy and the removal of structural impediments, such as poor-***quality education*** or spatial settlement patterns that exclude the majority.
- Although progress has been made to improve the lives of women, discrimination, patriarchal attitudes, and poor access to ***quality education*** persist. The plan deals with these factors holistically, recognising that key priorities such as education or rural development will have the biggest impact on poor women.
- To promote sustainable livelihoods, it is important that individuals or families, irrespective of income, can access services such as ***quality education***, health care or public transport.
- South Africa’s rural communities should have greater opportunities to participate fully in the economic, social and political life of the country, supported by good-***quality education***, health care, transport, and other basic services.
- In line with the priorities of the plan, people with disabilities must have enhanced access to ***quality education*** and employment.

Upon reviewing the above-listed citing in the NDP 2030, it is evident that the government has acknowledged that the current educational structures are not working for the country, and significant improvements should be made to provide all South African learners with better quality education. Simultaneously, the United States of America has the *No Child Left Behind Act* (2001) which has been an excellent motivator in producing NQTs that are fully prepared and functional for the real-life classroom situation from day one. The researchers Harris and Sass (2007) elaborate that teacher education and the connection to teacher productivity become a necessary investigation when the focus is specifically on ITT at universities.

It is, therefore, the notion of Darling-Hammond (2006: 300) that a significant needs analysis should take place at HEIs in what is perceived as vital preparation for teacher education by looking at the 'what' and the 'how' of teacher training. These include:

- Well-defined standards of professional practice and performance to guide and evaluate knowledge and clinical experience.
- Extended clinical experiences – well over 30 weeks of supervised practicum and student teaching opportunities in the program – carefully chosen to support and closely interwoven with course work.
- Extensive use of case methods, teacher research, performance assessments and evaluation that apply to learning about real problems of practice.
- Explicit strategies to help students confront their own beliefs and assumptions about learning and learning about the experiences of others different from them.
- Strong relationships, common knowledge and shared beliefs among school and university-based faculty jointly engaged in transforming teaching, schooling and teacher education.

The above elements are considered fundamental factors in producing NQTs 'that are able, from their first days in the classroom, to practice like many seasoned veterans, productively organizing classrooms that teach challenging content to very diverse learners with levels of skill many teachers are yet to attain' (Darling-Hammond, 2006:300).

2.9 Summary of the literature review

The literature reviewed in this section explored the history of education at public primary schools in South Africa and followed by interrogating an initial teacher programme at one selected higher educational institution where this research project was conducted. The current study used a selected case to explore the preparedness of newly qualified teachers who obtained their Intermediate Phase Bachelor in Education degree (B. Ed.) from a higher educational institution. The following section focuses on the conceptual framework used to frame the study regarding the preparedness of newly qualified teachers to manage and teach in the Intermediate Phase.

Section B: Conceptual Framework

2.10 Introduction to the Conceptual Framework

At the start of any research study, it is important to consider relevant theories underpinning the knowledge base of the phenomenon to be researched. By addressing simple questions, the researcher can begin to develop a loosely

structured theoretical framework to guide them. To enable a better understanding of the issues newly qualified teachers experienced in the South African classroom and the concomitant external factors that hamper quality teaching and learning, the researcher framed her study around one single theory consisting of an array of concepts. The selected theory is by David Kolb (1984) termed 'Experiential Learning Theory'. This theory is used as the guiding framework for this research project. The researcher has briefly explained the rationale for the selected theory on **page 26** in this thesis and cites it again:

To conclude, it is evident that Kolb's 'Experiential Learning Theory' is the most fitting scheme for this proposed study, as this theory is best suited for formal learning, which is evident at a university level to ultimately acquire one's degree.

The researcher will continue below by referring to literature that focuses on the selected theory.

2.11 An overview of Experiential Learning Theory in Education

Kolb (1984: 41) describes Experiential Learning as a process whereby knowledge is shaped through experience transformation. The fundamental notion is that for learning to occur, experiences have to transpire within the person's life. Based on Kolb's (1984) idea, Dhliwayo (2008: 2) set out to incorporate this theory into a prospective model for experiential or work-integrated learning (WIL) to better prepare graduates for the real-life workplace. The first proposition of the research project was merely to lecture the set curriculum programme of the HEI, and the second preposition realised that by incorporating this theory (post-reflection), universities "can produce entrepreneurs instead of just entrepreneurship "graduates" (Dhliwayo, 2008: 3). Interestingly, researchers Allsopp, DeMarie, Alvarez-McHatton, and Doone (2006) concur with Dewey (1938) and state that learning for the pre-service teacher is enhanced through teaching experience sessions and refer to these as 'site-based experience' (Phillips, 2013: 56).

The researchers Driver, Wood, Segal, and Herrington (2001 cited in Dhliwayo, 2008: 5) found that numerous deficiencies exist in the post-apartheid education system in South Africa, such as "infrastructure, qualified and motivated teachers, and a culture of teaching and learning has suffered severe damage". This comment cited by Driver et al. (2001) is similar to previous literature (Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007: 1) that states that:

Without teachers, there can be no education, and without education, sustained economic, political and social development is not possible. It is further argued that there are growing concerns that teachers are becoming increasingly de-motivated, which contributes to deteriorating teacher performance and learning outcomes.

The importance of experiences gained by teachers is imperative in their professional and personal lives, as the above comment dictates, but more so is the self-conscious, reflective process. The American philosopher, psychologist, educational reformer and scholar John Dewey (1859-1952) believed that human beings learned through a 'hands-on' approach, which is per the belief system of pragmatism - which details that one's reality must be experienced. Dewey states: "We do not learn from experience, but we learn from reflecting on experience". While Dewey (1938:25) settled on the notion that experience should be seen as the "shaping force" in teacher education, he also generated consciousness that "the belief that all genuine education comes about

through experience does not mean that all experiences are genuinely or equally educative". Phillips (2013) concludes that experience and education cannot be directly equated to each other.

The educational website (www.Experientiallearningdepot.com), specifically designed and dedicated to the founder David Kolb of the theory Experiential Learning, expands on specific components of this theory that make a unique kind of learning possible. The researcher Segar (2019: 1) lists the following seven concepts of the theory as follows:

- Active involvement
- Freedom to fail
- Personalised
- Student-led
- Authentic experiences/ Real-world connections
- Clear purpose
- Reflection

Students should be **active**, not passively learning throughout the activity at hand. The misconception regarding this specific theory is because of the practicality (*referring to learning through doing*) involved. Just because individuals (in this case, NQTs) get out of the lecture room and into the placed schools for Teaching Practice, this does not mean that learning occurs. Getting involved requires **inquiry** on the part of the student teacher. Questions, when asked, challenge their prior thinking, therefore developing solutions to **real-world/real-life issues** and embracing **failure** and "enthusiastically go back to the drawing board" (Segar, 2019: 1). The researcher further states that learning activities should be 'authentic and largely, if not entirely, student-led'.

The initial teacher education institution (as per the researchers' analysis of the literature) ensures that the four-year degree qualification has levels of attainment that should encourage student teachers to achieve set goals each year whilst completing TP. Therefore, TP must set a clear purpose. Student teachers find meaning in their progression from Teaching Practice 1 to Teaching Practice 4 by continuously seeking authentic experiences that help them learn by linking this to their professional growth. To finish, student teachers should be allowed ample opportunity to look back at their successes and failures, but this can only happen when they reflect (look back) by analysing their produced work. Reflection in Experiential Learning encourages "acceptance of constructive feedback and continuous self-improvement throughout life" (Segar, 2019: 5).

The advantages of this selected theory in exploring the preparedness of NQTs to manage and teach within the Intermediate Phase will entail that these beginner teachers reflect on their experiences gained within the teaching fraternity pre- and post-attainment of the B. Ed. degree. It is my view that the implementation of this theory for this research project will lead to the answering of the main research question, which is: ***What does teacher preparedness mean for Newly Qualified Intermediate Phase teachers?***

2.12 Visual summary of the conceptual framework underpinning this research study

Figure 1: Diagram representing the Experiential Learning Cycle



2.13 Summary of the chapter

This chapter has outlined the literature related particularly to Newly Qualified Teachers in the context of the South African education system. The researcher has also expansively interrogated the policy Minimum Requirements of the Teacher Education Qualification as outlined by the National Department of Higher Education and Training. Also, the researcher examined concepts from one theory, namely Experiential Learning, for this study. The methodology which the researcher used is outlined in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

“More important than the curriculum is the question of the methods of teaching and the spirit in which the teaching is given”. Bertrand Russell³

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 presents the implemented research methodology and design. A brief motivation of methodological stance, sample selection, and description of participants is provided, and reasons for selecting the schools for this study. The details of data production and verification processes and ethical considerations are provided. A qualitative approach was used to collect data. The chapter also describes the characteristics of the participating schools and the biographical details of the Newly Qualified Teachers.

3.2 Research Design

3.2.1 Justification for the use of a case-study design

Two main research methods may be used to collect data in a research project in the Social Sciences; the quantitative method gathers numerical data, and qualitative research collects non-numerical data to answer a given research question (Christensen, Johnson & Turner, 2011). There is also the mixed methodology data production method. Laher (2016: 86) state that qualitative research is not prescriptive by its very nature. The researcher's methods are often unique to a particular study and context. Hence, the main reason for selecting one initial teacher education university within the Western Cape is solely based on the large number of teachers trained here and eventually graduate from the university, then take up teaching positions within the same province. Creswell (2003) recommends that 3-5 participants be used for a case-study research; however, the researcher has decided on 8 participants for this study for more rich data. The strengthening of this case study stems from the collective initial teacher education programme experiences gained acquired by the purposefully selected cohort of newly qualified teachers emanating from this higher education institution.

3.2.2 Why a qualitative approach was adopted for this study

The research approach used in this research is qualitative. The researchers Christensen et al. (2011: 52) define qualitative research as follows:

Qualitative research is an interpretative research approach that relies on multiple types of subjective data and investigates people in particular situations in their natural environment.

Fouché (2007) asserts that in qualitative research, unlike quantitative, the design or strategy is determined by the researchers' choice and actions. Therefore, the qualitative approach is selected because it adequately describes individuals' formal education and in-service experiences. Niewenhuis (2016: 126) describe qualitative research as being concerned with “understanding the processes and the social and cultural contexts which shape various behavioural patterns”. Furthermore, Niewenhuis (2016: 126) state:

³ Russell, B., 2001. The problems of philosophy. OUP Oxford.

[Qualitative research] It strives to create a coherent story as it is seen through the eyes of those who are part of that story to understand and represent their experiences and actions as they encounter, engage with, and live through situations.

The researcher believes that having face to face engagement with the NQTs regarding their time spent at the initial teacher education institution and their first place of employment (post-graduation) will render strength and depth of exploration to this qualitative research study, which will be evident in the descriptions of the data.

The researcher is conscious of the enabling and constraining factors associated with the utilisation of a qualitative focused research approach and will juxtapose at this juncture of the thesis the disadvantages of qualitative research as described by Radu (2019: 1):

- It is a time-consuming process
- It is a labour-intensive approach- with reference to the data production process
- Qualitative research is not statistically representative

3.3.1 Site selection

The research sites where the study population was based are all public schools located in Cape Town in the Western Cape. The communities in which the schools are based range from impoverished milieu-deprived homes (*which are well-known for high crime levels, substantial primary and secondary schooling drop-out rate, teenage pregnancy, single-parent homes and large gangster groups*) to middle-class communities (*with large sports fields, security patrol cars, no evident gangsterism or dilapidated infrastructures*) in the affluent urban area of Rondebosch which is set within Cape Town's Southern Suburbs region.

The school is all selected based on the purposefully nominated NQT. The willingness and availability of the participants to contribute to research within the ITI was also a critical factor in the study. The school library was utilised for the one-on-one interviews and the focus group interview. The teaching practice coordinator offered his house as a meeting place. The interview took place in his lounge, which consisted of a large dining room table separating us from the digital recording device placed in the centre of the table. The two school managers (principal and deputy principal) offered their offices for one-on-one interviews. Organising a focus group amid a global pandemic⁴ was very challenging. It required careful planning and execution to keep in line with rules and regulations set up by the World Health Organisation (WHO)⁵ and the South African government⁶.

⁴ The COVID-19 pandemic in South Africa is part of the ongoing pandemic of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The outbreak was first identified in December 2019 in Wuhan, China.

⁵ The World Health Organisation declared the outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on 30 January 2020 and a pandemic on 11 March 2020.

⁶ On 15 March, the President of South Africa declared a national state of disaster, and announced measures such as immediate travel restrictions and the closure of schools from 18 March 2020.

3.3.2 The sample selection

The researcher Landreneau (as cited in Chipangura, 2013: 24) refers to the term 'sampling' as "a process of selecting a portion of the population in your research area which will represent the whole population". The population for this study was purposefully selected based on a set criterion. The set of criteria outlined below was the basis for choosing teachers as participants in this study:

- A full-time, first-year teacher (NQT)
- Graduated from the same ITE programme
- Graduated from the same ITE programme in the year 2019
- Willing to participate in the research study.

To give a motive for selecting the set kind of sampling in this research study, the researchers Cohen et al. (2002: 102) define purposive sampling therefore as:

Researchers hand-pick the cases to be included in the sample based on their judgment of their typicality. In this way, they build up a sample that is satisfactory to their specific needs.

Purposeful sampling is concerned with identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals who are especially knowledgeable about, or experienced with, a phenomenon of interest (Creswell, 2012 cited in Van Heerden, 2019).

3.3.3 Description of participants

Table 3.1 provides the biographical details of the participants as obtained from the teaching practice coordinator at the initial training university. Based on this information, the researcher approached the teachers to enquire if they were interested in participating in my research. The six teachers who voluntarily opted to be part of this research comprised one male and five females. All six teachers had been at the ITI from the initial registration date (*in January 2016*), placed within the same department (*Intermediate Phase Department*) and collectively graduated (*in December 2019*). It is also evident from **Table 3.1** that all these teachers had different first languages ranging from Afrikaans to English and also Xhosa. During the interviewing process, each participant would be interviewed in English and should they struggle to give clarity to questions asked will be allowed to speak in their home language.

The teaching practice coordinator worked at the university for six years and has been in his current position for three years (since 2018). The two sets of school managers (one principal and one deputy principal) had been in their positions for over ten years. They were included to contribute to the enrichment of data for this research. ***For each participant listed within Table 3.1, the biographical details of participants in the focus-group interview (listed below) were given a pseudonym.***

Table 3.1: Biographical details of participants in the focus-group interview

Teachers	Gender	First Language
Mr Madikizela	Male	IsiXhosa
Mrs Flowers	Female	English
Mrs Bezuidenhout	Female	Afrikaans
Ms Little	Female	English
Ms Watergate	Female	English
Ms White	Female	English

3.3.4 Biographical background of teachers

The questionnaires disseminated to all teachers at the start of the research were divided into three sections: **Section A**, **Section B**, and **Section C**. In **Section A** the researcher was able to gather biographical information (personal information: e.g. age, home language, etc.), in **Section B** the focus was on ascertaining a reflective review of the newly qualified teachers' ability to teach within the Intermediate Phase classroom, and in **Section C** the aim was on interrogating the abilities of NQTs in managing the classroom environment with the diverse educational needs of their learners. Additionally, other biographical data were obtained from the focus group interview as part of the introductory process. All six teachers were able to introduce themselves, including their first name, surname, and the respective grades they taught. These names will be kept anonymous, and each educator was given a pseudonym, according to Table 6. Also, it was essential to request each teacher to introduce themselves formally within the focus group webinar⁷. My research focused on reviewing the preparedness (in managing and teaching in the IP phase) of each individual's experience spanning over the four-year (2016-2019) degree programme.

3.3.5 Biographical background of school managers

My study used purposive sampling, as it sought NQTs who had done the undergraduate Bachelor of Education degree at this one Initial Teacher Education University of Technology. Therefore, the researcher set out to interview one primary school principal and one deputy principal who had employed NQTs from such an institution. The researcher considered two participants adequate in the event of conflicting responses to questions raised within the designed one-on-one interview schedule with both primary school management staff members (Appendix H). The first principal works at a school within the area of Lotus River, and she has been in her current position for ten years. A pseudonym used for Principal 1 is Mrs Lite. The deputy principal has been working at the school situated in Rondebosch East for five years. A pseudonym used for the Deputy Principal is Mr White. Both interview sessions took place on the respective school premises and inside the individuals' offices.

⁷ The Oxford Online Dictionary defines the word as "A seminar conducted over the internet". (www.oed.com)

3.3.6 Biographical background of the Intermediate Phase Teaching Practice Coordinator

As stated before, the Intermediate Phase Teaching Practice Coordinator has worked at the university for six years and has been in his current position for three years (since 2018). As the Work Integrated Learning (WIL) programme coordinator within the Intermediate Phase at this ITI, it is his responsibility to place many student teachers ranging from first-year to final year at various schools throughout the Western Cape, South Africa. In addition, he is responsible for ensuring that each student teacher is visited by a university appointed lecturer within the department or a paid external TP moderator to critique the presented lesson and teaching practice file/portfolio of the respective student teacher out at the school during the set TP time frame. This timeframe is usually twice per annum and is generally at the beginning of the second term (April) and third term (August). In addition, the coordinator relies on staff members to timeously submit their rubrics to him for scrutiny and also, as per departmental processes, should a final-year student teacher receive a 75%, which is a grade that indicates a distinction or even more, the TP Coordinator is expected to have the student teacher externally moderated by a TP Moderator. This person selected is usually an expert in the teaching fraternity and should possess a Master's degree or PhD in Education. The name of the Intermediate Phase Teaching Practice Coordinator at this one ITI will be kept anonymous, and he was given a pseudonym. The TP Coordinator will be called Mr Brand, and the data production tool employed with this participant is Appendix F: One-on-one interview schedule: Intermediate Phase Teaching Practice Coordinator. Detail of the themes derived from the interview with this participant is outlined in **Chapter 4** of this research study.

3.3 DATA PRODUCTION PROCESS

The methods used in gathering data for the research were one-on-one interviews, a focus-group interview, and documentation analysis. The use of documentation analysis was employed within this research to ascertain whether what was mentioned within the interviews could be verified. Photographs were used as a verification of the transcribed data. The photographs were not shared with the public but used as a stimulus guiding tool during the interviews process. I adhered to the safety governance requirements of the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA, 2013). The focus-group interview was employed to gather data on the newly qualified teachers' review of their experiences and training at the ITI in preparation for the real-life classroom. The focus-group interview was cardinal in establishing their opinions, having lived through the transition from first-year student teacher to graduate.

3.3.1 How I gained access to the schools

Consent was requested from the WCED to conduct research at one selected school, and the response came a few days after the request. After keeping abreast with government policies employed during the COVID-19 pandemic as a researcher, I had to abide by the set regulations. Immediately, meetings were arranged through emails and phone calls with the six teachers, one teaching practice coordinator and two primary school managers (Principal and Deputy) to discuss the nature of the research (Appendix A & B). The letter from WCED (Appendix D) was presented to both school principals on the day of our first meeting, stating the terms and conditions. Shown

in Table 7 is the outline of the data production schedule with time frames. Notably, the projected timeframe as described in Chapter 1 has changed due to the unprecedented COVID-19 global pandemic.

Table 3.2: An outline of the data production schedule employed for this research

Schedule	Time-Frames
One self-administered questionnaire to the six newly qualified teachers	7 th September 2020
Semi-structured one-on-one interview with the Teaching Practice Coordinator of the B.Ed. Course.	8 th September 2020
One-on-one semi-structured interviews with two school principals.	9 th & 10 th September 2020
Documentation analysis - Teaching Practice Evaluation Sheets.	11 th , 12 th & 13 th September 2020
One-on-one semi-structured interviews with six newly qualified B.Ed. graduates.	14 th to 18 th September 2020
Observation of lessons and sites	14 th to 18 th September 2020
One focus-group interview with all newly qualified teachers.	Webinar scheduled for Friday 25 th September 2020

3.3.2 OBSERVATION PROCEDURE

Kumar (2005) emphasises that observation is a purposeful, systematic and selective way of watching and listening to an interaction or phenomenon as it takes place. The researcher regarded observation as an added plausible approach within this study since I wanted to observe several fundamental aspects of the classroom setup and the lesson's execution. The elements which I reviewed were as follows:

- Observe the state of the classrooms
- Observe content being taught by the teacher, give detail of content taught and how this was taught
- Observe the classroom management style used by the teacher
- Inspect available resources/teaching equipment
- View the type of learning taking place

The Observation Scheduled (Appendix J) outlines the specific criteria used during my visit to the schools. I was a non-participant observer throughout the study. The staff members were timeously informed about my visit and were fully compliant. I was allowed to enter classrooms and take photographs of the various facilities and resources mentioned in the interviews. I concur with Brynard, Hanekom and Brynard (2014: 48) when stating that “observational techniques are used to determine how individuals, or groups of persons, react under specific circumstances, either natural or artificial”. Brynard et al. (2014: 48) also explain that one should “guard against bias or giving a distorted picture” and for this specific task, I used a digital camera during my observational procedure.

3.3.3 One-on-one lesson observation

The researcher's motive for including the observations of one-on-one lessons as a data-production method for this study relates to the critique raised by TP evaluators during the years of in-service training (completing teaching practice within schools). Therefore, the researcher first noted all the comments issued by teaching practice evaluators regarding the student teacher during their time on TP and aimed to use a comparative lens, in essence, to review growth from year 1 (undergraduate student teacher) to now NQT by observing their teaching and managing of IP learners. The Teaching Practice principles rubric used within this one ITT universities Intermediate Phase department, coupled with four years of teaching practice rubrics received from the Teaching Practice Coordinator, including the researcher's note about the presented lessons was purposefully reviewed and included in this research study.

3.3.4 Reason for one-on-one observation

Observation offers the social researcher a distinct way of collecting data. Denscombe (2017) references observation as a form of data production that draws evidence from the eye to witness events. She further states that it is best to observe what happens instead of merely assuming. I observed the condition of the school where learning occurs first-hand. Here I wanted to take note of the resources available to learners and newly qualified teachers, the staffing ratio of teachers to learners employed at the school, and the state of the facilities. The disadvantage of using observation as a data production method is related to the element of interpretation. Researchers do not have a rigid straightforward or mechanical system for observing and noting events as they occur. Still, the mind instead acts as the intermediary between the world and the way the individual experiences it, according to Denscombe (1997). The breakdown of the different categories of the sample is summarised in the diagram (Appendix J).

3.3.5 INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

The participants involved in the one-on-one interviews comprised the six newly qualified teachers, two primary school principals, and one Intermediate Phase Teaching Practice Coordinator at the one initial teacher education institution. The school-based sample consisted of the two school principals and six newly qualified teachers who graduated from an initial teacher education institution of technology-based within the Western Cape. The university-based sample consisted of one Intermediate Phase Teaching Practice Coordinator.

3.3.6 One-on-one interview

The scheduled one-on-one interviews took place on various set dates; because of the global coronavirus pandemic, the researcher needed to consider the recommendations and practices for data production put together by IDinsight⁸ operating amidst COVID-19. The recommendations by IDinsight (2020) included the following:

⁸ IDinsight is a global advisory, data analytics, and research organization that helps development leaders maximize their social impact

- **Encourage hygienic behaviour** (Encourage people to wash hands as they come into the debrief space. Provide a handwashing station with high-quality soap and enough water to support 20 seconds of handwashing by each person).
- **Practice social distancing during in-person meetings** (Change greeting practices: Remind them (interviewees) to maintain a physical distance of at least two arm-lengths when greeting each other, including hand-over-heart, namaste (folded hands), salaam/adab, or a team-specific gesture that you generate).
- **Find healthy indoor spaces:** (Find a well-ventilated area and allow people to sit or stand at least 6ft/2m apart. Actively encourage this personal distancing in the room (for example, arranging the chairs) to promote distancing).

3.3.7 Reason for choosing one-on-one interviews

Kvale (1996, cited in Pather, 2015) states that the qualitative researcher regards interviews as a construction site for knowledge. She adds that “an interview is an interchange of views between two people conversing, about a theme of mutual interest” (Kvale, 1996:14). Thus, in considering my research questions, I opted to conduct in-depth interviews to collect rich data from the participants to understand the phenomenon under investigation better. Firstly, I had a motive for having a one-on-one interview with the teaching practice coordinator based on the beforehand knowledge that he has been working within the position at the university for six years and three years within his current portfolio. I wanted to know from the TP Coordinator about the construction of the work-in-learning process and evaluation principles used by evaluators to assess the preparedness of Intermediate Phase student teachers. The purpose of selecting two sets of primary school managers for one-on-one interviews was to increase the comparability of responses relating to employing NQTs from this one initial teachers' university. The interview with the two principals was conducted in their offices, interviews with the TP coordinator took place at his house, and interviews with the newly qualified teachers took place in their classrooms. The participants were comfortable being interviewed in an environment with which they were familiar.

3.3.8 Focus group interviews

In this current study, a webinar focus-group interview was employed after analysing the questionnaires which were distributed to all newly qualified teachers. One-on-one interviews, including lesson presentations, took place at the respective schools. All teachers chosen for the focus group were purposefully selected based on their status as newly qualified teachers and having graduated from the same initial teacher education institution.

One of the advantages asserted by Mertens (2010:370) is the “additional insights gained from the interaction of ideas among the group participants”. With this added information within this sort of interview, the interviewee will realise that all participants do not share common experiences (Kelly, 2006:304). Denscombe (2017:178) gives detail on dynamics that contribute to focus-group interviews. She explains that this gathering consists of small groups of people who are brought together by a “moderator (the researcher) to explore attributes and perceptions, feelings and ideas about a specific topic”. I aimed to gather a group of individuals who could not only reflect on

their experiences gained over the four years at the initial teacher education institution but also simultaneously render recommendations (if any) on suitable principles in the preparedness of newly qualified teachers to manage and teach in the Intermediate Phase.

According to Nieuwenhuis (2007), cited in Nkosi (2012), an interview is seen as a two-way conversation. The interviewer asks particular questions to collect data and learn about participants' ideas, beliefs, views, opinions and behaviour.

Using interviewing allowed me as the investigator to observe what the participant had to say and how it was told. As a data-production method, interviewing helped collect personal information, attitudes, perceptions, or beliefs by probing for additional information. This method also attempts to develop rapport between the interviewer and the participant. This data production method allowed the participant to be comfortable and allowed the interviewer to extract not directly observable data. This technique ultimately benefitted the study as the research objectives were accomplished without difficulty.

Like other data collecting methods, the interview method has strengths and weaknesses. The failure of the researcher to obtain consistent, reliable and appropriate data will influence the strengths of the technique. It was noted 49 years ago already (at the time of writing) by Skager and Weinberg (1971) that the strengths and weaknesses of this method are dependent upon the establishment of a relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee. Only when the participant feels comfortable and free will they express their true beliefs and opinions. Ultimately, my objective with this method was to ensure that I conducted a good or a strong interview so that, as stated by Bogdan and Biklen (1982:145), "It can produce rich data filled with words that reveal respondents' perspectives". This was evident throughout the data production and will be described in much more detail in the 'Results section'.

The weakness of using interviewing as a means of collecting data for my research is that it can be time-consuming. Denscombe (2017) stipulates that data analysis can be difficult and time-consuming. Data preparation and analysis are 'end-loaded' compared with, for instance, pre-coded questionnaires and where data are ready for analysis once they have been collected. Also, the transcribing and coding of interview data is a significant task for the researcher, occurring after the collection of data. I was cognisant of the disadvantages attached to this form of data-production method. I focused on creating a suitable time frame which I rigidly adhered to, to enable me to complete the analysis of my data timeously. An oversight observed in a study conducted by Brown (2016: 81) wherein the researcher did not inform the interviewees beforehand to speak in a language that was suitable for them made me aware of the importance of stating to all participants that they may communicate in Afrikaans (my first language). Consequently, before I started each interview (one-on-one and webinar), it was clearly stated that the participants might speak in a language most fitting to them. Only some individuals used Afrikaans during the interview.

3.3.9 Reason for choosing focus group interviews

The reason for selecting six teachers for the webinar focus group interview was for comparison and the manageability of such a group. As stated before, the research used purposive sampling, wherein the six selected newly qualified teachers were those who experienced the transition from first-year student teacher to final-year student teacher, and now newly qualified teachers graduate from the same initial teacher university.

Vijayalakshmi and Sivapragasam (2008) assert that a focus group interview is a group discussion of 6-12 persons guided by a facilitator during which the group participants talk freely and spontaneously. The researcher had 8 participants present for the webinar.

Participants were given the freedom to respond in an unrestricted manner, and therefore I used semi-structured open-ended questions. I wanted to find out not only the experiences of the NQTs during their teacher training but also their coping mechanism relating to teaching and managing Intermediate phase classes. Also, a review of the school's educational conditions was considered (reference to the environment in which learning occurs, staffing, resources and facilities) and the introductory process to their new roles as teachers at the school post-graduation. The webinar focus group interview was electronically recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

The study explored the preparedness of newly qualified teachers to manage and teach learners in the Intermediate Phase. Bell (1993) holds the view that a skilful interviewer can follow up on ideas, probe responses, and investigate motives and feelings. Therefore, I believe that people's perceptions are reflected in the answers given when they were interviewed.

3.3.10 ISSUING OF QUESTIONNAIRES TO ALL NEWLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS

I intended to have a sample of categories of people that would yield the type of data necessary for my study. The stakeholders I approached at the school comprised only people who could contribute to my research. The stakeholders yielded the information I required in the study (Lewis-Beck, Bryman and Liao, 2004). To complete the questionnaire, I targeted all 8 newly qualified teachers from the initial teacher university. From the questionnaire, I established one webinar focus group of 8 teachers. The sample does not have to be huge in numbers to produce rich data. Shenton (2004) suggests that a tactic should be used to help ensure honesty in informants when contributing to data, especially when using questionnaires. Each approached person should be allowed to refuse to participate in the project to ensure that the data production sessions involve only those genuinely willing to take part and prepared to offer data freely.

3.3.11 Reason for choosing questionnaires as a data-production method

The advantage of using the questionnaire data-production method is to receive straightforward answers regarding your stipulated questions. Depending on how you state a question, it can be perceived as getting a fact- or opinion-based response.

However, the disadvantage of this data production method is the poor response rate, the incomplete or poorly completed answers, the limited and shaped nature of answers and the inability to check the truth of answers (Denscombe, 2017). This form of data production opens itself to pitfalls whereby interviewees do not give in-depth responses to questions posed due to the language used within the questionnaire. To safeguard against this specific shortfall, I used layman terms and close-ended questions.

3.3.12 USING DOCUMENTATION AS A DATA-PRODUCTION METHOD

My motive for including documentation as a data-production method is owing to sentiments expressed by the Teaching Practice Coordinator on the overall trajectory of development for the course Teaching Practice from year 1 to year 4. The TP Coordinator listed various literature (*MRTEQ 2015* and *White Paper 6, 2001*) that has been considered for the designing of the work-integrated learning framework; hence the researcher considered the teaching practice evaluation sheets a data-production method. I was interested in confirming whether what was aforementioned by TP evaluators was evident in my observation during my one-on-one lesson presentation with the newly qualified teacher. The documents reviewed for the six newly qualified teachers were 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 ("***Form for evaluating an individual lesson rubric***").

3.3.13 Reason for using documentation as a data-production method

Semi-structured interviews remained the primary data-production method in this research project. However, documentation assisted me in gaining an understanding of the trajectory of experiences a student teacher may encounter over the four-year in-service training period at an initial teacher education institution.

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS

According to Denscombe (2017), most experts in the field of qualitative research would recognise five stages involved in the analysis of qualitative data. These are in sequence:

1. Preparation of the data
2. Familiarity with the data
3. Interpreting the data (*developing codes, categories and concepts*);
4. Verifying the data; and
5. Representing the data.

1. Preparation of the data

Initially, I ensured that the editing of the transcriptions of the one-on-one interviews and focus group interviews were done verbatim, and the editor included sentiments rendered in Afrikaans and isiXhosa.

2. Familiarity with the data

Subsequently, when the dictations were received, I spent a great deal of time familiarizing myself with the stipulated research questions posed within the interviews and aligning this with the verbatim response obtained from the interviewees. Countless hours were utilised to study the transcriptions obtained from the editor, which were aligned with the notes made whilst the interviews took place.

3. *Interpreting the data (developing codes, categories, and themes)*

Interpreting the data was the most vital step in the entire data analysing process. I used various colouring codes whilst reading through the verbatim transcriptions and was very detailed in issuing an appropriate category based on the 'themes' derived from the interviews. Also, I had to incessantly refer back to the audio recordings of the discussions to authenticate how the interviewees relayed their responses. Several "themes" were derived from all the data obtained through interviews, which added to the depth of this study.

4. *Verifying the data*

The verification process occurred subsequent to creating themes and was discussed with all the participants involved in this study. My aim here was to ensure that the transcriber had captured the participants' responses correctly and that she did not misinterpret their views and opinions raised within the interviews.

5. *Representing the data*

The data is represented in various themes within this thesis and is delineated in **Chapter 4**.

The study adopted the methodological stance of a subjectivism approach through the data collected and made use of Interpretive Narrative Data Analysis, also known as Qualitative Thematic Data Analysis (QTDA). According to Robson (2011, cited in Tiba, 2012), data analysis is the breaking up of something complex into smaller parts and giving a clear explanation of the relationship between each part. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) describe data analysis as systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials the researcher collected to assist the researcher in coming up with findings. Therefore, the data analysis would transform the raw data into answering my research questions.

As a researcher, one must be chiefly aware of your 'position' within the context of your study. Reflexivity is a term that best describes the act of examining the research process in the "context of one's position", and this includes the "self-scrutiny" from the perspective of the person who is undertaking a research process and the relationship with "the other" (Bourke, 2014: 2). Bourke (2014) clarifies that researchers must be cognisant of their position to avoid coming to terms with "reticent" individuals - who might be a potential threat to the study, especially when collecting rich data. I will keep this in mind throughout the research.

Van Manen (2007) states that interpretive phenomenology (also referred to as 'hermeneutics') aims to "describe, understand and interpret participants' experiences", as opposed to descriptive phenomenology (also called 'eidetic'

phenomenology), which seeks to describe the general characteristics of a phenomenon, rather than the understandings of individuals (Tuohy, Cooney, Dowling, Murphy & Sixsmith, 2013). There is a significant difference between descriptive phenomenology and interpretive phenomenology in that descriptive phenomenology focuses on the experience alone and does not take into account the time, space and context in which the experiences of the individual take place, aspects which are significant in interpretive phenomenology (Tuohy et al., 2013). This study, therefore, used the interpretive paradigm as its methodological design framework.

3.5 DATA VERIFICATION PROCESSES

3.5.1 Validity

Qualitative validity, also known as trustworthiness, is described by Creswell (2003) as the strength of qualitative research and is used to regulate whether the research findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant, or the readers of an account (i.e. consumers of the research). Scholars in the field of qualitative data gathering distinguish two forms of validity: the first form is internal and the second form is of external validity, according to Miles and Huberman (1994) and Niemann (2000).

As Niemann (2000) described, internal validity was observed in the current study. It is concerned with how study results are credible, authentic, sensible or congruent to reality (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Trochim, 2006). Myers (2000) expands on the importance of external validity, which lends itself to the extent to which study results are applicable, transferable, fitting and generalizable to other contexts or settings. This type of validity is further enhanced by collecting electronic recordings from the focus group interviews and transcribing data; these are safeguards I endeavoured to use in my research.

To ensure that the results of my study can be trusted, I 'triangulated' four different methods such as one-on-one and focus-group interviews, documentation, observation and researcher journal narratives. I then asked my interviewees to cross-check my transcripts for accuracy. Shenton (2004) stated that triangulation might involve using various methods, especially: documentation, observations, focus groups and individual interviews, which form the primary data production strategies for much qualitative research. Each technique on its own has its distinct characteristics and also results in unique strengths.

3.5.2 Reliability

Reliability, also known in qualitative research as dependability, is described by Shenton (2004: 63) as follows:

In addressing the issue of reliability, the positivist employs techniques to show that, if the work were repeated in the same context, with the same methods, and with the same participants, similar results would be obtained.

Repeatability is not an objective in this type of qualitative case study research. All the same, efforts were made to ensure dependability.

McMillan and Schumacher (2006), Maxwell (2005) and Richards (2005) describe triangulation as a way of collecting research data from different sources and settings and analysing the same data by applying various analytical techniques. My four data-collecting instruments used in the research were satisfactory for creating themes to support the dependability of my data.

3.5.3 Letters of permission

I obtained written permission from school stakeholders comprising WCED (for permission to conduct research in the school), the University Ethics Committee, the school principal and deputy principal, newly qualified teachers and the Teaching Practice Coordinator.

The letters appear in the Appendices section in the following order:

Appendix A: Newly Qualified Teachers' Consent Letter; **Appendix B:** Letter to Principal Requesting One-On-One Interviews; **Appendix C:** Letter to WCED Requesting Research to Be Conducted; **Appendix D:** Acceptance Letter From WCED; **Appendix E:** Acceptance Letter From CPUT Ethical Committee; **Appendix F:** One-On-One Interview Schedule: Intermediate Phase Teaching Practice Coordinator; **Appendix G:** One-On-One Interview Schedule: Newly Qualified Teacher; **Appendix H:** One-On-One Interview Schedule: Primary School Principal; **Appendix I:** Focus Group Interview Schedule: Newly Qualified Teachers; **Appendix J:** Lesson Observation Schedule: Newly Qualified Teacher; **Appendix K:** Document Analysis: Teaching Practice Evaluation Sheet; **Appendix L:** Questionnaire Schedule: All Newly Qualified Teachers; **Appendix M:** Copy Of Evaluation Form For Individual Lesson; **Appendix N:** Bachelor Of Education: General Education & Training: Intermediate Phase First-Year Academic Programme; and **Appendix O:** Declaration of Editing.

3.5.4 Ethical considerations

Silverman (2011) states that ethical considerations have become one of the contemporary propensities in qualitative research, diverting attention from knowledge production to social justice. Ethical considerations should be sustained during the entire research process (Kvale, 1996), from the start of the investigation to the final writing up of the study. Heckman (2008) believes that, when conducting research in an academic or professional setting, you need to be fully aware of the ethics behind your research activity. I kept this in mind when I carried out this research.

After the Education Faculty Ethics Committee (EFEC) of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology granted ethical clearance for my research to be conducted, I asked permission from various stakeholders before conducting interviews and obtaining data. Firstly, the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) was contacted to grant permission to carry out the study at several of their schools. Secondly, the person in charge of the school, namely the principal, was approached to obtain permission. Thirdly, the Intermediate Phase Teaching Practice Coordinator at the one initial teacher university was contacted, and the research project was discussed. Informed consent was sought from all the participants. Participants selected for the one-on-one and focus-group interviews were given a written consent form to sign. Before the prospective participants signed the consent form, the following explanation and description, adapted from Cohen et al. (2007) and Lewis-Beck, Bryman and Liao (2004), were used to inform

prospective participants of the procedures of the research study so that they could make an informed choice as to whether they wanted to participate in the study or not:

- The purpose, aims and procedures of the research were outlined to the prospective participants.
- They were assured that no risk, discomfort or negative outcomes would result from their participation.
- Their participation would be voluntary.
- They were free to decline to answer any questions.
- They could withdraw from the interview at any time.

It should be noted that I handed my consent form to the principal first for approval before conducting interviews with staff members. Correspondence with all participants took place via the emailing platform, and follow-up calls took place. I used pseudonyms and not participants' real names, to protect their identities.

Figure 2 below summarises the sample and methods used to collect data.

Figure 2. Diagram representing segmentation of research methods:

Design Approach	Methods	Sample	Participants
Qualitative research. ↓	Case study: 1 Initial teacher education institution of Technology ↓		
Report on experiences. ↓	One-on-one interview. →	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One IP Teaching Practice Coordinator • One principal and one deputy principal of two primary schools. • Six newly qualified IP teachers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 IP TP Coordinator • 1 Primary School Principal & 1 Deputy Principal • 6 Newly Qualified Teachers ↓
Multiple methods/ Triangulation	Focus group interview. →	Selected newly qualified teachers who have experienced the four-year IP degree programme (maximum six members).	6 Newly Qualified Teachers. ↓
	Questionnaire. →	All six newly qualified teachers.	Teachers (NQTs). ↓

	Observation. →	Non-participatory.	
	Documentation analysis. →		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2016, 2017, 2018 & 2019 “<i>Form for evaluating an individual lesson rubric</i>” of 6 NQTs

3.6 Summary of the chapter

The study's research methodology was explained in this chapter, and the research methods were detailed. The chapter was divided into three sections: the first section described the philosophical perspectives of the study; the second section outlined the use of the case study as a research strategy of enquiry; and the final section clarified the research design, which consisted of qualitative data production methods and analysis. Finally, this chapter concluded with a discussion of the study's trustworthiness by providing a brief outline of the reliability and validity techniques used in the study. In the next chapter, the analysis of the quantitative findings is discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

“There’s no discovery without a search, and there’s no rediscovery without a research. Every discovery man ever made has always been concealed. It takes searchers and researchers to unveil them; that’s what makes an insightful leader”. Benjamin Suulola⁹

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the research design and methods used in this study. Chapter 4, which explains the data analysis, consists of two sections.

Part One begins with highlighting the world views of NQTs and their understanding of the official expectations of the formal curriculum concerning preparedness. Part Two of the analysis gives an account of the NQT's reflections on whether they live up to the expectations of the official curriculum. Part Three of the analysis reviews an evolving set of students' lesson presentation rubrics over four years. An analysis will be made comparing the official understanding, the reflective understanding of NQTs about their preparedness and the enacted preparedness over time.

Section Two of Chapter 4 will focus on the interpretation of other stakeholders (Intermediate Phase Teaching Practice Coordinator, School Principal & Deputy School Principal) of these NQTs' levels of preparedness as they engaged in the early stages of teaching practicum and entry into the profession as qualified teachers.

It is noted that Chapter 4 is strongly driven by the data as assembled from the field work (a data-driven analytical approach). The next chapter, Chapter 5, will attend to aligning the thematic issues of official, espoused and enacted views of teacher preparedness with the original theoretical framework (a theory-driven analytical approach) set up earlier in this study (Chapter 2). The data-driven and theory-driven analytical stance constitute two means of exploring the phenomenon of the study focused on teacher-preparedness.

Furthermore, the chapter seeks to address the research questions posed in this research, which are:

Main Research Question: What does teacher preparedness mean for Newly Qualified Intermediate Phase teachers?

The three sub-research questions are as follows:

⁹ Suulola, B. s.a. Research methodology quotes. Available online: <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/6763716-there-s-no-discovery-without-a-search-and-there-s-no-rediscovery> [Accessed 7 March 2023]

- **Sub-question 1:** What are the newly qualified teachers' understandings of their preparedness? (reflective understanding)
- **Sub-question 2:** How does newly qualified teachers' preparedness reflect in their practice? (enacted understanding)
- **Sub-question 3:** What are the perceptions of stakeholders (IP TP Coordinator & School Management) regarding what constitutes the readiness of NQTs?

In answering these questions, the identified purposefully selected participants (one Intermediate Phase Teaching Practice Coordinator based within the one teacher university of Technology, one Primary School Principal, one Deputy Primary School Principal, and six Newly Qualified Teachers who graduated from the initial teacher university of Technology) aided the research through the interviews. The Teaching Practice Coordinator, Principal, Deputy Principal, and all teachers have been given pseudonyms for ethical reasons and confidentiality.

The study adopted the methodological stance of the subjectivism approach and so made use of Interpretive Narrative Data Analysis, also known as Qualitative Thematic Data Analysis (QTDA). The deployment of an interpretive inquiry guided the thematic analysis of the data by reviewing concepts used in Experiential Learning Theory. The theory enabled me to observe key variables through its lens based on learning in a formal context. The views and opinions of the Teaching Practice Coordinator on what constitutes preparedness for the real-life South African classroom, based on the designed Intermediate Phase Teaching Practice Model, were necessary. Furthermore, the experiences of each NQT and the perspectives of the Senior Management Team Members of the school (Principal and Deputy Principal) added to the richness of the data within this study.

4.1.1 Qualitative thematic data analysis

The qualitative thematic data analysis method proposed by Thomas and Harden (2008) was adopted and guided data production within this study. Thomas and Harden (2008: 1) argue that "Thematic data analysis is often used to analyse data in primary qualitative research". Researchers Huberman & Miles (2002) and Holliday (2007) explain that when deploying a qualitative thematic data analysis within research, the researcher is situated to analyse the corpus of data because they collected the data first-hand. A qualitative thematic data analysis offered the most effective means to determine how participants made meaning of their experiences regarding their preparedness to manage and teach learners within the Intermediate Phase. The School Management, University Teaching Practice Coordinator and Newly Qualified Teachers' views and opinions were analysed to approximate their reality. Thematic analysis was an appropriate analytical tool for the qualitative data of this study (Alhojailan, 2012; Lee & Chiang, 2021) because of the following:

- its (**data analysis strategy**) capacity to discover and identify factors that influence any issue generated by the participants;
- its (**data analysis strategy**) flexibility which allowed the use of both inductive and deductive methodologies; and

- its (***data analysis strategy***) rendered deep insight which provided the opportunity to code and categorise data into themes, thus noting patterns and different levels of themes.

In this study, Kolb's Theory of Experiential Learning (1984) informed the qualitative thematic data analysis, which guided the four different conceptual tools in producing codes that consequentially converged to present themes that emerged from isolated and bilateral experiences among participants. Each participant's data set was explored and positioned with the experiences gained within this initial teacher degree programme. The role that each purposefully selected participant plays within this research study influenced the carefully picked themes. New themes and sub-themes that emerged were acknowledged and reported on. The qualitative data included one-on-one interviews with the school principal, deputy school principal, Intermediate Phase Teaching Practice Coordinator, Newly Qualified Teachers, one focus group interview, questionnaires, documentation analysis and observation. The first step entailed transcribing interviews and providing pseudonyms to all participants in preparation for the data reduction process.

Phase 1: While reciting the transcriptions sheets for a second time, I began documenting general thoughts about the data, made brief notes in the margins of the transcription sheets, and highlighted (using colouring khoki pens) passages that were of significance to me. Careful notice was directed to the tone utilized by the participants to enable me to make connections between the participants' thoughts and ideas. This allowed me to reflect on the data production experience on the day of the meeting with the participant and allowed me to value the complete picture of the data collected.

Phase 2: The data reduction involved me carefully highlighting sentences from each participant's transcript appropriate to the research. While going through the transcript, I was continuously mindful of the research questions and conceptual framework (See Chapter 1 & Chapter 2 of this thesis). I continued highlighting extracts from the participants' full text that could contribute significantly to the study by keeping this in mind.

Phase 3: This phase involved examining the highlighted sentences/paragraphs and dismantling them into smaller divisions. These divisions became my first set of themes from the data. Once again, I read through the full text of each participant to evaluate, compare, and seek information that appeared to be absent in the first level of themes. While doing this procedure, I kept the following questions in mind: How is ***this*** text different from the next? Was there a deeper meaning in one response to the question ***compared*** with another? My data under the first level of themes started developing by doing this. Before shifting to the coding, I ensured that the first set of themes represented the whole text. Thus, the validity of the themes was the subsequent crucial step in my data analysis.

Phase 4: The researchers Miles and Huberman (1994) postulate that authenticating themes, better termed 'validating themes', in the early stage of data analysis, is critical. I considered it appropriate to have a post-interview with the participants to authenticate what they meant in their discussions and additionally asked outside reviewers, namely colleagues and experts in the field, to assess and confirm that the first set of themes was compatible with

the whole text. The primary purpose was to build reliability in the theme's analysis coding, thus providing accurate and reliable themes.

Phase 5: The last phase of this process involved extracting relevant data and verifying the data. The data-drawing and conclusion steps included identifying the relevance of similar or contrasting statements; emergent patterns; interrelations among factors and variables; and, finally, exploring the validity of the findings by building conceptual coherence and consistency (Alhojailan, 2012) so that they fit the conceptual framework of the study.

Qualitative thematic data analysis supports the researcher in analysing the data. Qualitative thematic data analysis assisted me in interpreting participants' lived experiences from their years as undergraduate students within the initial teacher education programme to the undertaking of their first teaching position after graduating from the initial teacher education university. The participants were able to engage with me first-hand about their professional development and transition from pre-service student teacher to newly qualified teacher. All this took place during the one-on-one interviews and focus group interviews.

Moreover, there was a comprehensive discussion of the data in the literature review (Chapter 2). The findings of the various data sources discussed under separate themes are presented herein. The overall aim of the data presentation was to describe how participants' responses aided me in answering the guiding research questions in section 3.2 above.

SECTION ONE: DATA ANALYSIS

DATA ANALYSIS STAGE ONE: OFFICIAL UNDERSTANDING OF NQT PREPAREDNESS

4.2 RESULTS OF ONE-ON-ONE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH NEWLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS

An semi-structured interview with six purposefully selected newly qualified teachers was analysed according to reductive analysis and presented in detail according to the categories elicited by me. This chapter segment presents the findings and discussion surrounding the data produced to answer the main research question and sub-research questions on the Newly Qualified Teachers. The main research question is:

What does teacher preparedness mean for Newly Qualified Intermediate Phase teachers?

The two research questions below pertain to the NQTs:

- 1. What are the newly qualified teachers' understandings of their preparedness?***
- 2. How does newly qualified teachers' preparedness reflect in their practice?***

Table 8 provides a summary of themes and categories as identified from the transcribed one-on-one interviews and the field notes recorded during the research. The findings are discussed and interpreted according to the table.

Table 4.1 Schematic summary of identified themes and categories

4.2	THEME 1: NEWLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDING OF THEIR PREPAREDNESS
4.2.1	The importance of Teaching Practice
4.2.2	Ranked subjects contributing to becoming a teacher
4.2.3	Irrelevant content taught
4.2.4	Incorporating Information and Communications Technology (ITC)
4.3	THEME 2: NEWLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS' REFLECTIONS OF THEIR PREPAREDNESS IN PRACTICE
4.3.1	Underexposure to real-life administrative tasks
4.3.2	Outdated classroom knowledge of lecturers
4.3.3	Underpreparedness of certain lecturing staff
4.3.4	Recommendations made for future student teachers

4.2.1 Theme 1: Newly qualified teachers' understanding of their preparedness

When I posed my first question to all the newly qualified teachers: "Describe your last teaching practice experience as a final year student teacher," I set out to create an atmosphere that was relaxing and filled with candidness. I intended to create a sense of deep-seated interest in the lived experiences of the NQTs who, only a few months before, were final-year students. From the interviews with teachers, I discovered that many felt at ease sharing their lived experiences and were eager to engage in dialogue relating to their transitioning from student teacher to NQT. I identified four categories in this theme. The four categories give insight into what are NQTs' understandings of their preparedness to manage and teach within the Intermediate Phase. These teachers shared discerning internal and external aspects that contributed to their development to become a teacher.

4.2.2 The importance of Teaching Practice

Teaching Practice is widely considered instrumental in exposing student teachers to the required employability skills to function effectively in their chosen profession. From the data analysis, it became evident that all NQTs' TP experiences were reasonable due to their initial teacher programme that allows student teachers to experience life in the classroom first hand only a few months into the degree programme. Ms Little, who is now based in a suburban school within the area of Mitchell's Plain, refers to her final TP experience: "So, I, had a very good experience even at my previous teaching practice as well. Very good experience. I feel like it is up to standard because of the previous years that built up to that". The comment raised by the NQT indicates that the years of in-service training culminated in her view of her being adequately prepared for the world of work. Mrs Flowers posits acknowledging

her professional development to the collaborative partnership between the TP Coordinator Mr Brand and the placement schools. Mrs Flowers explained:

They [Mentor-Teachers] help you as a school as well. They help you; they guide you along with the [name of university] and, Mr Brand's got a good uhm communication with the schools. So, ja [yes] I cannot fault anything, where that [TP experience] is concerned.

Concerning being prepared to manage and teach within the Intermediate Phase, Mrs Bezuidenhout put forward that her TP placements over the four years afforded her the ideal opportunity to experience different schooling sites that contributed to her development. She added: "My experience last year, was a very nice experience because I had come from schools where they had a lack of resources, whereas this (school) was a nice surprise". From this one question posed to all six NQTs, I discovered that NQTs regard TP as a fundamental module contributor in their development towards becoming professional teachers. NQTs believe that TP placements in diverse contexts over the four-year degree period can potentially disrupt¹⁰ their views and understanding of what 'being prepared' means in different settings.

4.2.3 Ranked subjects contributing to becoming a teacher

The type of pedagogical and didactical subjects that student teachers are exposed to whilst learning to become a teacher greatly influences their knowledge capacity regarding their selected career. The common subjects amongst all six NQTs are listed below, including the reasoning behind the responses.

Subject Most Fitting	Reasoning
1 st & 2 nd Year Mathematics	<i>"Many students left this subject after the second year". "Can see in their current teaching how it is helping them now". – Mrs Flowers</i>
Mathematics Literacy	<i>"Show them how to work with dean blocks and how to teach fractions to the learners". – Ms Little</i>
Life Skills	<i>"Showed how to do role-play as well as how to take it from one point to the next". – Ms Little</i>
English Additional Language	<i>"Taught them methodology and to make the lesson learner-centred". – Ms Little</i>
Natural Sciences	<i>"Showed them how to make things [practical] and showed many demonstrations". – Mr Madikizela</i>
Inclusive Education (all NQT agreed on this subject)	<i>"Showed them how to identify learners with learning barriers within their current classes". – Mrs Bezuidenhout "Inclusive Education theoretically prepares you for what you're about to see ... learner acting in a certain type of way in your classroom". – Ms Watergate "With Inclusive Education, there are things that you don't really think how it applies at the time". – Mrs Flowers "They do Inclusive Education, so we can identify how this child is, it's because it's from that and that". – Ms Little</i>

¹⁰ My conception of disruption connotes a positive widening of the possibilities for learning opportunities.

	<p><i>"You can just notice from the learner's performance that there is no monitoring at home, you see, and one other thing is that almost all the schools have mentally challenged or maybe entirely impact children". – Mr Madikizela</i></p> <p><i>"I quite enjoyed Inclusive Education, so I think that plays a part now definitely uhm just looking at the ways that learners learn. So, if you're looking and the Bronfenbrenner's Theory and also the learning disabilities that we went over last year, that's also quite helpful now, should a learner like that like come into my classrooms". – Ms White</i></p>
Teaching Practice	<p><i>"All the previous TP years lead up to a standard built up to that good TP experiences in the final year". – Mrs Flowers</i></p>
Professional Studies	<p><i>"Last year of professional studies regards to the Personnel Administration Measures (PAM) and Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS)". – Ms Watergate</i></p>

The NQTs could differentiate between the types of subjects lectured to them over the four-year degree period by carefully reflecting on their *present* understanding of the initial teacher education programme. Knowledge of their varied subject content in the ITE programme constituted an accumulative resource for learning.

4.2.4 Irrelevant content taught

Content relevance within an initial teacher education programme is pivotal in the preparatory process of student teachers towards becoming NQTs. A collaborative consensus between the NQTs was evident regarding the taught curriculum experienced. Mr Madikizela, now working within a township school, viewed the subjects Literacy (Reading) and Entrepreneurship as pointless modules within the ITE programme for learners within the primary school. He said: "We don't need it; it was quite unnecessary because there are not even posts for Economic Management Sciences (EMS)". Also, Ms Watergate raised concerns about the methodology segment taught in all classes. She similarly thought that Life Skills [consisting of Art, Drama & Music) was a waste of time because not everyone goes into those specific fields within the real-life classroom. Ms Watergate posited the following sentiments:

Maybe the methodologies could be combined into one because each Methodology class taught the exact same thing. I think in the first and second year definitely, uhm, the Life Skills, the Art, Drama and Music because not everyone goes into that field.

By the same token, Ms White outlined that languages taught within the ITE programme were not helpful to her development. She added: "Uhm, okay, I think the languages, like if I do touch on that, it wasn't helpful at all. The module that I got was not good, so, ja [yes] the lecturers were not really good at that". In contrast, Mrs Flowers advocates that nothing was a waste of time but suggests that additional subjects should be added and not removed from the curriculum. She said: "I don't think there was any. No, no, I just think that, uhm, what, what is needed should be added, but I don't think that what it is should currently be taken away". Ms Little agreed but referred to *how* the curriculum was taught to student teachers instead of what content was taught. Ms Little added: "No, because it was not unnecessary, it is just sometimes just maybe the way they taught it, yes. So, it was not

unnecessary, everything came in, it was, it was helpful". Contrasting views from NQTs regarding their preparedness for the real-life classroom were pointed out in their experiences with learnt subjects within their initial teacher education programme.

4.2.5 Incorporating Information and Communications Technology (ITC)

There is an expectation from the policy MRTEQ for newly qualified teachers to integrate technology into their pedagogical practice. Due to the diverse student teachers hailing from various parts of the country and the rest of the world in this initial teacher education programme, it is essential for all to be exposed to Information and Communications Technology (ITC). Five of the six NQTs answered with an unequivocal yes regarding their training to use ITC within their learning spaces.

Certain participants indicated that they were 'self-taught' and pointed out that certain things are general knowledge. Of the six NQTs, only five can be described as digital natives. Unfortunately, it was the responsibility of the NQT during their student teacher years to gain insight into technology on their own. No technological empowerment came from the university that contributed to their preparedness or knowledge. Some commentary is as follows:

I trained myself, so I'm young so those types of things I didn't quite grow up with like the new generation have. I'm quite a quick learner regarding that Information and Communications Technology [ICT] so, I do think that I'm trained in my own sense, but there could have been more assistance in, in college [meant university] and I think ja [yes] useful teaching aids too, to use in the classroom regarding technology (Ms White).

I think we figured it out ourselves uhm at high school as well; they made it compulsory to do a certain subject which prepared us and then at [name of institution] in the first two years we did the computer course. Uhm, it benefitted us with regards to doing research, how to go to the library and how to find journal articles etc. but how that helps us in a classroom, there's not much of it (Ms Watergate).

Regrettably, the NQT, Mr Madikizela, completed his primary and high school years within under-resourced township schools within Cape Town and was not exposed to any Information and Communications Technology (ICT). He stated: "In fact, I went to University without any knowledge of technology". Fortunately, the ITE programme equipped the NQT for the world of work by exposing him to ICT for over two years. He stated: "Definitely, yes, I am prepared in this [ICT] because we had lecturers who were good in technology. Some of the things I didn't know". In addition, Mr Madikizela pointed out that his eagerness to learn about technology prompted him to disrupt his thinking at the university level by seeking out those who could aid in his development within e-learning tools. In his current state of employment, he stated that "even my colleagues, some of them also know nothing about technology, and that's where I come in, so I'd say I am well prepared in that aspect". It can be concluded that NQTs noticeably observe the kinds of resources made available in different schooling contexts and understand that various learning resources can aid their classroom pedagogy.

DATA ANALYSIS STAGE TWO: REFLECTIVE UNDERSTANDING OF NQT PREPAREDNESS

4.3 Theme 2: Newly qualified teachers' reflections on their preparedness in practice

When I posed question 4 to all the newly qualified teachers: "What did you expect for your B.Ed. course to teach you in preparation for the real-world classroom situation?", I was of the idea that this specific question in the one-on-one interview schedule would allow the participants to 'think back (reflecting) critically' about their developmental journey to becoming a professional teacher. Reflecting helps individuals develop their skills and review their effectiveness, rather than carry on doing things as they have always done them. The disconnect between teacher preparedness, expectations, support, leadership, and lived experiences are concerns that will influence student teachers and newly qualified teachers' confidence and beliefs with implications for career decisions if unresolved over an extended period.

I identified four categories in this theme. The four categories give an understanding of what the expectations of the NQTs were concerning learning to become a teacher within the initial teacher education programme and what hampered their development within this journey.

4.3.1 Underexposure to real-life administrative tasks

An essential curriculum ingredient missing from the initial teacher education programme was content relating to efficiently and effectively performing administrative duties and responsibilities. Collectively the responses from the six NQTs were as follows:

Okay, we know that answer, now, it [initial teacher education programme] doesn't really prepare you. I, I feel like I was prepared here with my Teaching Practice and I came, days that I was off, I was here [referring to her current place of employment] (Ms Little).

It [initial teacher education programme] does not prepare us at all. We focus solely on content, content that is not even at an Intermediate Phase level and we are told that we need to hand in assignments and all those things (Ms Watergate).

Not quite, as I've said when it comes to the schedules [work] and stuff [administrative tasks]. I don't want to lie, I'm still not [ready]. Admin, it's a big problem; if the University could focus on that, [then it] would be quite nice, ja (Mr Madikizela).

They [designers of the initial teacher education programme] don't really, they don't really, it's the one thing that I feel they are lacking (Mrs Flowers).

I don't think it [initial teacher education programme] prepared me at all. All they really supplied was the basics of each aspect so IQMS was covered (Ms White).

Look, we knew that there was going to be admin, but we didn't know to what level, to what extent. So, there wasn't much focus on the admin, I think (Mrs Bezuidenhout).

The NQTs recommended that an adjusted curriculum should be considered and that the reworked ITE curriculum focuses on administrative tasks such as:

- “Show their student teachers how to compile reports”- Mr Madikizela
- “Assistance with the classroom register” – Mr Madikizela
- “Point out what an intervention file entails”- Mrs Bezuidenhout
- “Keeping assessment files up to date”- Ms Little

4.3.2 Outdated classroom knowledge of lecturers

As professional academics within the biggest teacher education provider university in the Western Cape, with students from all over the country, it would seem likely that lectures would stay impressively up to date with the world of work. Regrettably, as reflected in the dialogical engagement with the NQTs, particular lecturers were misinformed about the real-life South African classroom. Ms Watergate reckoned that lecturers should be sent into schools to view first-hand the current challenges that student teachers are confronted with. She makes the point by stating:

I think the best way that they could teach the student teachers now and I say this with a lot of respect, I think that they should go to a classroom. They should sit in a classroom for about a week and maybe do it at different schools, every Monday go to a different school. Because the learners that we are teaching now are completely different to the learners that they taught and that was always our argument when coming back from Teaching Practice.

In the same vein, Mrs Flowers postulated that lecturers should consider making their lecturing sessions with student teachers “much more interactive”. However, she acknowledged that each lecturer had their specific teaching style, and it would be incorrect of her to expect all lecturers to perform the same way. A further concern is the disconnect of information shared with student teachers whilst lecturers were preparing them for the world of work. Here Mrs Bezuidenhout stated: “A lot of them [lecturers] will teach you not to use the PowerPoint or not read from the PowerPoint, but that's exactly how they lecture”. In essence, the NQTs exposed the rhetoric in the behaviour of the lecturers who do not heed their own advice.

4.3.3 Underpreparedness of certain lecturing staff

In their reflections about their preparedness to manage and teach within the Intermediate Phase post-formal certification, the NQTs reported that specific lecturing staff were ill-prepared to steer them into readiness. Notably,

a detailed vignette¹¹ shared with me stems from the dialogical engagement with Ms White, who majored in Mathematics, Sciences and English Home Language. She stated:

I think come prepared. I had a lecturer who would come to class and ask me what we did previously, what are we going to do today and had no preparation whatsoever, regarding what she's supposed to be teaching. And that was the Language, so you think, well, this is quite an important subject to carry across but you're not actually supplying me the information and the knowledge I need. Also, with the assignment setting, uhm, it was silly assignments. It was, oh, I need a mark for you now, let me just come up with something and it was assessed. It wasn't ever prepared properly, and it came across in quite an unprofessional way.

It is of paramount importance that lecturing staff define what constitutes preparedness. This behaviour should be modelled as a means of professional development for all student teachers to see and hope to emulate.

4.3.4 Overview of one-on-one interviews with the 6 Newly Qualified Teachers

The data from the study revealed that student teachers measured their preparedness through their Teaching Practice experiences. Whilst being formally trained on-campus in lecture halls, it became apparent to these participants that certain subjects within the programme had more weight (importance) than other taught subjects. Therefore, the NQTs could apply their on-campus experience and in-school experience by confirming that certain content within the programme was irrelevant and disconnected from what is expected within the real-life classroom. Similarly, these NQTs were able to see the benefits that ITC holds within the 21st century South African classroom. The data further revealed that NQTs deemed themselves, to a certain degree, underprepared for the world of work because of internal university factors such as the curriculum not focusing on real-life administrative tasks, the outdated classroom knowledge of lecturers, coupled with the under-preparedness of lecturing staff for lectures and, as such, these participants could draw on their lived experiences and render recommendations to future student teachers intending on enrolling for a Bachelor of Education degree within the Intermediate Phase department at this one initial teacher education university.

A concluding remark made by Ms White reflects a clear-cut honest disposition regarding her formal professional learning within the initial teacher education programme. She put forward:

I think they [first-year student teachers] should come prepared to be disappointed at this present moment unless the curriculum changes. I think that I wasn't prepared enough, so I feel that they also should spend as much time as you can at a school or tutoring. So, having

¹¹ Vignettes may be used for three main purposes in social research: to allow actions in context to be explored; to clarify people's judgements; and to provide a less personal and therefore less threatening way of exploring sensitive topics (Barter & Reynold, 1999: 1).

as much engagement with learners as possible because the theory does not weigh like... the theory does not relate properly to the actual practice of our actual degree. So, I think spend as much time at a school and ask questions of the teaching, the teachers that are with you.

The NQTs' view is critical for all stakeholders involved in the initial teacher education programme to ensure quality teachers are produced for the South African classroom. The disconnect between teacher preparation and lived experiences are concerns that will influence student teachers and beginning teachers' confidence and beliefs with implications for career decisions if unresolved over an extended period.

4.4 Overview of a focus group interview with the 6 Newly Qualified Teachers

From the focus group discussions with newly qualified teachers and their open-ended questionnaires (Appendix I), it became apparent that two themes about the preparedness of NQTs for the real-life classroom were evident and are elaborated below. As the lead researcher of this research study, I conducted the focus group interview and they were moderated by me. The platform used to conduct the focus-group interview was WhatsApp instead of a face-to-face meeting to avoid direct contact with the participants during the COVID-19 pandemic. WhatsApp is accessible on almost all smartphones, and the participants collectively suggested that this communication tool would be ideal for the proposed focus-group interview. The researcher assumed that WhatsApp is a popular teaching and learning app used by most teachers and can positively contribute to the success of this research study. However, instead of audio recording the interview, the researcher used video recording for this one interview. The recordings are available upon request.

Notably, Mrs Flowers could not participate in the focus-group interview because her immediate family had contracted the coronavirus disease. Mr Madikizela experienced connectivity challenges and was unavailable for the online focus group discussion. The following themes became apparent from the recording that links with the main research question: What does teacher preparedness mean for Newly Qualified Intermediate Phase teachers? The themes are as follows:

- Theme 1: Significance of classroom management techniques
- Theme 2: Extended Teaching Practice sessions (over assessment period)

4.4.1 Significance of classroom management techniques

According to the four newly qualified teachers present for the focus-group interview, the learning to create an orderly classroom environment to facilitate learners' emotional, social, and academic growth was absent from the initial teacher education programme. Therefore, it can be said that the NQTs were underprepared to manage their classes. In contrast, a robust classroom management coursework within the curriculum could contribute to smooth running and without disruptive behaviour from learners within the Intermediate Phase to ensure that there is no compromising on the delivery of instruction. A comment to support this theme is in the words of Ms White: "There was not enough content on how to manage our classes... or how to deal with kids ... that content was missing".

4.4.2 Extended Teaching Practice sessions (over assessment period)

The data revealed that NQTs would have valued spending more extended periods within schools to gain development in areas that are not explicitly taught within the ITE programme. Although more extended period placements in schools would have benefited these NQTs, a much more acute focus would be to place student teachers within schools during 'assessment periods'. These NQTs would have valued being placed within schools over periods when learners are engaged in formal assessments, then observing first-hand the process attached to setting up question papers, designing rubrics and specific subject tasks, and conducting the examination process. Mrs Bezuidenhout was vocal in her view and stated the following:

I had no cooking clue what was happening with the admin [during examinations] until I had needed to do it. A longer period of time on TP over an assessment session would have exposed us to things like moderation, scheduling, and work on schedules. Instead, we were taught a hundred and one million other things that would end up in a box somewhere. Being there once or twice during assessments would have been invaluable.

From the dialogical engagement with the focus-group members, the researcher deduced that there was insufficient preparedness regarding managing administrative duties, coupled with the administration role that the NQT will conduct.

4.5 Analysis of lesson observations of the 6 Newly Qualified Teachers

The researcher's purpose for wanting to include commentary on the observations of one-on-one lessons as a data-production method for this study relates to the observational growth (if any) of the NQTs through their development over the past four years within the ITE programme. The researcher aimed to review the previous comments made by TP Evaluators and was keen to view first-hand whether the errors made whilst being a student teacher were still evident now that the NQT is formally certified. Regrettably, owing to the COVID-19 National Lockdown Regulations within the country, it was not possible for me to obtain consent from all school managers and teachers relating to classroom visitation owing to an attempt to avoid or curb the spread of the coronavirus. Only two of the six NQTs were observed, and below is a breakdown of commentary as per Appendix J: Lesson Observation Schedule.

Figure 3: Screenshot of Mrs Flowers' Lesson Observation Rubric

APPENDIX J: LESSON OBSERVATION SCHEDULE: NEWLY QUALIFIED TEACHER		
Location: [School named removed] – Mrs Flowers		
Date: Wednesday 17 th June 2020		
Time: 9 am till 10:30		
Site visited	Time observed.	Commentary
Observe the state of classrooms. <i>Including the Library, Camimaths Laboratory, Media Centre and Computer Room.</i>	10 minutes of walking around the vicinity	<p>*The teacher's class is well maintained.</p> <p>*Posters in 3 different languages displayed on the back of classroom wall (English, Afrikaans and IsiXhosa)</p> <p>*A spacious library, computer lab and gymnasium exist at the school.</p> <p>*The general state of the school and all venues is neat and tidy.</p>
Observe the content being taught by the teacher. Give detail of the content taught and how this was taught.	20 minutes	<p>*A Natural Sciences & Technology lesson was presented: Topic of the lesson: Circuits and resistors.</p> <p>*The lesson was presented to a Grade 4 group of learners.</p> <p>*A total of 17 learners were present.</p> <p>* The planning shows clear awareness of the need for constructive alignment. The pathway set out links the lived experience of the learners, the cognitive demand, and the selected content. Mrs Flowers is deliberate and explicit in the way in which she sets out both activities and the sequencing thereof. She is utterly comfortable with both the lesson content and its associated concepts. This, in a concept rich learning area ensures that ambiguity is avoided – as her use of these concepts is explicit. The various activities allow for the reinforcing of these concepts in a variety of ways. Her use of resources (flash cards/ buzzers etc) made for an exciting explorative space. Learners enthusiasm and participation reflected this too.</p>

Observe the classroom management style used by the teacher.	10 minutes	*An authoritative classroom management approach is utilised throughout the lesson presentation.
Inspect available resources/teaching equipment. <i>Including Interactive smartboards, decorative walls with posters, Reading Areas, Blackboards and Administration areas.</i>	10 minutes	*The school is well-resourced and the site itself is of ex-model C nature. *An array of teaching and educational resources can be found within the classroom and also in spaces outside of the classroom.
Type of learning taking place? 1) disciplinary, 2) pedagogical, 3) practical, 4) fundamental and 5) situational	Duration of the lesson (30 min)	*For this lesson, the NQT focused on a disciplinary and practical lesson focused approach. * Overall, a very well-structured learning pathway. Showing awareness of the sequencing and scaffolding needed. * Pace was at time a bit fast and greater awareness should be shown to also cater for the slow learners.

Comments made by Mrs Stacey Botha (Lead Researcher)



Figure 4: Screenshot of Mrs Little's Lesson Observation Rubric

APPENDIX J: LESSON OBSERVATION SCHEDULE: NEWLY QUALIFIED TEACHER

Location: [School named removed] – Ms Little

Date: Friday 19th June 2020

Time: 9 am till 10:30

Site visited	Time observed.	Commentary
Observe the state of classrooms. <i>Including the Library, Camimaths Laboratory, Media Centre and Computer Room.</i>	10 minutes of walking around the vicinity	<p>*The teacher's class is well maintained.</p> <p>*Posters on the classroom wall favours Afrikaans as the language of choice within the class.</p> <p>*At the back of the classroom it is evident that English flashcards appear.</p> <p>*The school has a feeding scheme room, a sick-bay, a small-hall (classroom converted to hall)</p> <p>*The general state of the school and all venues is neat and tidy.</p>
Observe the content being taught by the teacher. Give detail of the content taught and how this was taught.	20 minutes	<p>*A History lesson was presented with a focus on Transportation through time.</p> <p>*The lesson was presented to a Grade 4 group of learners.</p> <p>*A total of 20 learners were present.</p> <p>* Planning is neat, complete, and specific.</p> <p>*The knowledge required for this lesson is explicitly unpacked in meaningful and sequenced activities.</p> <p>* Ms Little guides the learners comfortably and effectively – from within the frame of the lesson. She trusts the frame and uses it to move the learners along the learning pathway.</p> <p>*Her presentation is slick and specific to the original question – she does not deviate from it.</p> <p>*She provides learners with printed notes which serves as scaffolding for her presentation. This proves to be most useful as learners, if needs be, are able to glance at their own notes after the presentation. Frequent questions throughout shows that learners are interested and involved.</p>

Observe the classroom management style used by the teacher.	10 minutes	*An authoritative classroom management approach was evident within the classroom with a 'sandwich method' used to speak to learners in Afrikaans and English.
Inspect available resources/teaching equipment. <i>Including</i> Interactive smartboards, decorative walls with posters, Reading Areas, Blackboards and Administration areas.	15 minutes	*The school is situated on the Cape Flats (Mitchell's Plain) and can be regarded as a Quintile 1 school. *There are basic educational resources evident on the premises of the school. *The school is in need of a paint to brighten the walls of the institution.
Type of learning taking place? 1) disciplinary, 2) pedagogical, 3) practical, 4) fundamental and 5) situational	Duration of the lesson (25 min)	*For this lesson, the NQT focused on a disciplinary and practical lesson focused approach. *The assessment is aligned to the lesson. It allows learners to apply the knowledge gained. This is a purposefully structured, neatly designed tool which shows that Ms Little is fully aware of the link between teaching and assessment. I like how she ensures, through her questions that the content relate to the lived experience of the learners.

Comments made by Mrs Stacey Botha (Lead Researcher)

Botha

DATA ANALYSIS STAGE THREE: ENACTED UNDERSTANDING OF NQT PREPAREDNESS

Figure 5 below stems from the documentation analysis of student teachers lesson evaluation rubrics over a historical period of four years. An analysis is made by comparing the official understanding, the reflective understanding of NQTs about their preparedness, and the enacted preparedness over time through the data set below. Two data sets of Mr Madikizela and Ms Little were not found by the administrator responsible for Teaching Practice within the Intermediate Phase department.

Figure 5: Documentation analysis of student teachers' lesson evaluation rubrics

Name of Newly Qualified Teacher: Mrs Bezuidenhout Documentation for the academic years 2016, 2017 & 2018 Teaching Practice Year 1, Year 2 & Year 3 Commentary raised by the appointed Teaching Practice Evaluator	
2016	2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lively and interactive introduction - learners are allowed to be too exuberant. • Try to set limits • Lesson plan of satisfactory standard and contains all necessary elements • Additional resources could have been used • From the start, efforts were made • To relate content to real-life experiences. • Effective communication could slow down the pace of delivery, somewhat • The class participated freely and enthusiastically. • Do try and involve quietly withdrawn learners as well. • Colourful advertisement could have been utilized to enhance interest among learners • Question and answers are reasonably well applied • Generally, student teacher performed at the required level. • Nature of activities contributed toward cooperative learning • See the comment at the top of the page • Not much done in this aspect – assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Teacher is neatly dressed. • Presents professionally • Shows understanding of CAPS document • Your lessons show planning, but too much depends on research. • Try to balance teaching with practical investigation worksheets suitable for the grade, but flashcards and demonstrations are what the child remembers • Meaningful integration - writing skills • Groups given specific tasks • Good projection of voice used • Good pronunciation and a command of the English language. • The teaching environment needs to be controlled and try to incorporate all learners when asking individual questions • Reading, writing, and oral skills are used, but investigation elements are missing. • The introduction could have led to practical ways of using batteries to produce noise, light etc. (sources of stored energy).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General overview: A satisfactory performance. • NB more time and effort could have been devoted to the integration of media, e.g. colourful pictures/posters, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In doing group work (co-operative learning), learners are taught to do their own research but always try to do a measure of teaching before, especially when a concept is abstract. • Set the time limit before you set them to work. Try to have a countdown per minute. • General overview: Your lesson was prepared, but there must be an element of teaching and investigation while group work is good. • The use of suitable teaching aids would have enhanced your lesson.
2018	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very well dressed and confident. • Lesson plans are CAPS orientated. • The lesson is well structured, and resources are well incorporated. • More teaching aids should have been used for the lesson. • Newly integrated lessons. • Good voice projection and excellent command of English. • Engages well with the learners and creates a good learning environment. • She stimulates interest within learners by giving more examples and letting them be involved in the lesson. • Good lesson presentation. • And learners interact well with the lesson topics. • The lesson was well researched. • Her teaching skills are increasing with the practice experience. • Effective assessment technique used. • She knows how to handle the class. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When the needs arise, Mrs Bezuidenhout can adapt to the learners. • General overview: She is improving her teaching skills every day and is eager to learn about class management. • She tries to maintain the classroom and instil rules for the learners. 	
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Name of Newly Qualified Teacher: Ms White

Documentation for the academic years 2018 & 2019

Teaching Practice Year 3 & Year 4

Commentary raised by the appointed Teaching Practice Evaluator

2018	2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The introduction is lively, interactive, and a great way of wedging the intro. • Learners enjoyed the interaction. • Senses were clearly tested. • Pertinent questioning and instruction led to the next moment. • Use of PowerPoint to emphasise the five senses. • Again, likening the introduction of the poem to geography was good. • Synonyms for the smell were a good way of increasing responding vocabulary. • Reading poems with expression was good, correcting and encouraging learners impressive. • Questions on the composition of the poem are suitable and to the point. • Student teacher has a good command of the English language. • She projects her voice very well and tone well. • Good control of the class. • Good visual contact and knows learners by heart. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An excellent lesson plan that leads to a well-structured lesson. • Beautifully designed and logical PowerPoint presentation that adds to learning. • Good choice of fun video and well placed within the structure of the lesson. • Very good presentation skills and friendly interaction with learners lead to good facilitation. • Constantly engages learners and makes them part of the learning process. • Consider using concrete examples on more examples in the pp presentation. • Very good slide in which all three processes are shown. • Consider revising definitions here in a comparative way. • The group Assessment activity worked well. • Well thought through, a worksheet that summed up content and answered that it is something different. • Not sure all learners were ready to do the assessment just from remembering to consider some supportive strategy.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always encouraging leading questions demands thinking and the encouragement to answer in full question and detail. • Moving through the poem and touching on the aspects, e.g. rhyme stanzas, was good. • The poem was dealt with by stanza and in very much detail. • Again, learners were questioned on new words, and the teacher drew out most of the answers. • Her explanation of these words 'pictured' in their minds the true meaning. • The lesson flowed with ease, and learners enjoyed the poem/lesson. • Worksheet well planned and illustrated. • Questions are listed. Covered the poem dealt with very well. • Discussion of the poem with the class's input made every learner part of the lesson. Thus, answering the questions was easy. • Again, the teacher moved around, corrected, answered questions, and encouraged in her own subtle way. • Learners enjoyed the poem because most of the smells were familiar to them. • The choice of the poem was spot on and well done. 	
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Name of Newly Qualified Teacher: Mrs Flowers Documentation for the academic years 2017, 2018 & 2019 Teaching Practice Year 2, Year 3 & Year 4 Commentary raised by the appointed Teaching Practice Evaluator	
2017	2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher greets the learners and acknowledges their earlier participation in an assembly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your introduction certainly made use of maxing from the known to the unknown,

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She rewards them positively and encourages them always to attempt to participate. • This she follows up with flashcards having been placed on the board. • These cards reflect the topic of the lesson. • She uses these cards to elicit the association they make with it from the class. • The response to the cards is immediate and eager: the learners respond, allowing them to go through different kinds of bullying. • She specifies the different kinds and the associated with each. • She then transitions to the textbook, where learners read the characteristics of each type of bullying - she asks the learners for personal experiences with bullying, and the learners do give accounts. These personal anecdotes allow her to determine their attitude towards bullying. • I like that she skilfully uses these narratives to get them to seek solutions. • Their suggestion reflects a willingness to encourage and consider the class a safe enough space to give of themselves. • This proves to be an opportunity where class members are affirmed. • She provides each learner with a comprehensive table in which the different types of bullying are explained. • This is pasted in the books of the learners. The teacher then transitions to activity: the class is divided into groups, giving a task to each. She allows them to choose between making a poster or doing a drama that reflects the day's topic. • The learners were eager to do a drama and presented their classmates' skits, reflecting the day's topic. 	<p>and you certainly exploited their reservoir of knowledge. Well done.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What became apparent is the fact that you have built up excellent rapport with your learners. Good! This certainly helped you to maintain an excellent level of discipline. At the same time, you allow them the freedom to answer spontaneously. • They thoroughly enjoyed this. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall. • 1. excellent degree of learner participation throughout the lesson. • 2. Your enthusiasm certainly rubs off on your learners. Well done. • 3. Same exciting stories all around; a prominent woman you choose to talk about for your lesson does certainly hold your learners spellbound. • 4. I like your scaffolding approach to your content. Explain different words and phrases and elicit responses from your learners. Good focus and participation throughout the phase. • 5. Lesson notes are well planned to give clear direction for where you are going with your lesson. • 6. Teaching file is well planned and organised.
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would encourage the teacher always to ensure that learners are completely aware of their expectations to ensure success. • They have to be able to recognise the demands so that they can realise them. • This speaks to instructions given by the teacher: ensure that they are clear and concise. • No ambiguity - speak to the whole class - not to a portion/ part thereof. • The class was characterised by lots of energy from the teacher, which spilled over into the learners' attitude. The lesson was creative with lots of participation and eager responses by the learners. I would like to see a written application of their acquired knowledge. • She connects with the class on an affective level. • This is important when teaching a subject like life skills, and she used strong relational bonds to ensure effective movement along the learning pathway. 	
2019	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have amazing energy when you touch; you really sweep these children up with you on this amazing journey called education. • This is truly the work you were born to do. • Excellent resources that encourage learner participation and critical thinking • I loved the way that you set up the entire working process. It makes it all very clear and logical for the children, and it was a very real experience. BEYOND EXCELLENT. • Lovely shift between the two children, leaving it up to the voting. • Mrs Flowers already has a well-established energetic teacher thinking. • You obviously care deeply about your work and your children. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent content knowledge, a deep sense of fun in learning, and YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE. • I am very proud of you, and the school has already offered you a post – this from the principal, wow! • I have no advice for you – it would be redundant! Thank you for having me here today. I loved every minute. 	
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Name of Newly Qualified Teacher: Ms Watergate

Documentation for the academic years 2017, 2018 & 2019

Teaching Practice Year 2, Year 3 & Year 4

Commentary raised by the appointed Teaching Practice Evaluator

2017	2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lovely start to the lesson, very good evidence of resources and planning. I like the flashcards and the quality of the productions. • Good questions and great responses from learners. Try to give others the same time to order their thoughts when posing a question. Do not rush in too quickly. You tend to want to tell, but you have much to show. • Very good PowerPoint with relevant information and definitions. Lots of facts. What about asking the class how they felt about living from 1948 – to 1994? • Try to involve the learners more. • Watch the balance between teacher and learner talk. • Excellent evidence of preparation and planning, what about asking the class what they know about the pictures? • Try to motivate them more and connect to their prior knowledge. I would like to hear what sense they make of the past. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your instruction was good, and you asked some very good questions that required critical thinking from the children. • You have a natural warm way of working with your learners, and they respond to you very well indeed. • They are prepared to ask thoughtful questions in your lessons, only because they feel safe with you. • This is very good to see. • You use your voice very well, creating a focused and scholarly but enjoyable atmosphere in the room. • I love the way that you base your lesson entirely on questions. • The learners are participating fully and are fascinated by your lesson content. • As for content, you are demonstrating thorough and easy knowledge. • The children's questions are answered with ease, and I love the way you gently correct their incorrect assumptions.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very good readers in the class. What about creating your own text that was taken from the textbooks? • Lovely links to democracy in SA and Democracy in years. • I like the links to rules and responsibilities and good links to school rules, but again you give facts and information; you must try to balance teacher and learner talks. • Good questioning and involvement of learners. They are here to please and participate, with no issues with discipline. • The lesson plan needs to be more than a summary of your actions and needs to include more detail in terms of how you will teach, what questions you will ask, etc. • Very good evidence of content knowledge, lots of additional information included. • Careful, the conclusion is not about you concluding. These should be more focused on the objective of the lesson. What do they know after the lesson? • Good, I like the open questions and interesting points raised. What about allowing/ encouraging them to debate from different perspectives? You encourage and accept learner feedback. Glad that you questioned their thinking, but again you give your summaries; you need to listen more • I loved to ride. It brings back lots of memories for me also. We were so hopeful and sad to hear children in the class talk about corruption. • The conclusion of the lesson must involve the learning outcomes. We want to hear from them and what did they learn today. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is done at a level beyond the third year, well done. • Your resources are effective and relevant and contribute beautifully to the richness of your lesson. • Your room is arranged with meaningful images, and words, and your choice of words is spot on. Your learners are fascinated. • You are professionally dressed and have a very professional approach to the lesson. • It is clear that your lesson is CAPS compliant, and you are very well prepared. • You can bring relevance to the facts and remind the children that those events have directly impacted their own lives • Your behaviour management is excellent, and this lesson proves that if children are completely absorbed in all lessons, behaviour is never a problem! • This is so good to see! You are beautifully teaching, Ms Watergate. I am so proud of you! You are teaching beyond the third-year level - way beyond! • The ONE thing that I can suggest to you is that you could perhaps have brought current events into your lesson - on Thursday, there is the vote of no confidence against Zuma. On Wednesday it is Women's Day. • These are both important events that you did not mention. • These would really have brought relevance to the children. • Thank you so much for having me here today. I thoroughly enjoyed this lesson along with the children • Well Done.
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The homework task was relevant and interesting. It is a pity it could not be part of the lesson. I would have loved to hear their thoughts. Time Constraint. • Very good management of time and instruction. A lovely lesson, very interesting. I really like the commitment from the learners; he asked if he could interview his grandparents about apartheid and his experience. • What a lovely lesson. Interesting, relevant, and informative. I would suggest that you work on the presentation involving learners more actively in the co-construction of knowledge 	
2019	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An excellent introduction to the lesson. • Electrical circuits through questions to determine prior knowledge. • Excellent practical demonstration. • Good interactive presentation skills. • Very clear instructions and impressing the importance of safety. • Practical building a circuit - clear instructions saw poster for the rules - excellent. • Excellent class management maybe move more to the back of the class to engage with the learners. • Involve the learners by letting them read. • Informative questioning through oral questions. • Excellent recapping of the critical parts through questions. • Formative assessment throughout the day, the practice actually good classroom atmosphere, learners enjoy the activity. • Fascinating lesson. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thanks, Ms Watergate. I really enjoyed the lesson. Your mark is 78%; keep growing as a teacher. 	
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4.6 Analysis of questionnaire (6 Newly Qualified Teachers)

I issued all six newly qualified teachers with a questionnaire. The questionnaire in Appendix L named: 'Questionnaire schedule: All Newly Qualified Teachers' was designed to make it uncomplicated for me to identify key themes that NQTs experienced within the B.Ed. Intermediate Phase teacher qualification programme. This self-created questionnaire was disseminated to the purposefully selected 6 NQTs and is intended to understand better the phenomenon (*preparedness of NQTs*) under investigation. My research focused on reviewing the preparedness (in managing and teaching in the IP phase) of everyone's experience spanning over the four-year (2016-2019) degree programme.

The questionnaire was divided into three sections as follows:

- **Section A:** The researcher was able to gather biographical information.
- **Section B:** The focus was on establishing a reflective review of the newly qualified teachers' ability to teach within the Intermediate Phase classroom.
- **Section C:** The aim was to probe the abilities of NQTs in managing the classroom environment with the *diverse educational needs* of their learners.

I identified one vignette for each one of the participants that spoke directly to their limited exposure to special needs training. The completed questionnaire of each participant gives insight into the kinds of special needs support that NQTs require to better prepare them for the real-life South African Intermediate Phase classroom. The table below represents the kinds of challenges concerning special needs that NQTs are experiencing within the real-life context post-certification. The keyword, being either 'special needs' or 'inclusive education', including 'barrier to learning or learning barrier', is highlighted within the vignette.

Table 8: An outline of the challenges NQTs are currently experiencing within the World of Work (WOW)

Mr Madikizela	Mrs Flowers	Mrs Bezuidenhout	Ms Little	Ms Watergate	Ms White
"Yes, [name of university] did prepare us for such challenges as we went for teaching practice from the first year of our study. In our third study year, we went to	"I generally seek guidance from my family members as I come from a family of teachers. When referring to theory, I would refer to my past	"For each lesson, I try to engage my learners' senses, and I allow them to experience self-discovery and research and explore topics they show	"Classes like Inclusive Education expose you to many different barriers and disabilities to learning. In my opinion, it helps a lot, at	"I found the Inclusive Education module very informative, and the practical (learning support) assignment of having to help a learner with	"Yes, I was taught to set different levels of questioning for the strong, middle and weak learners.

<p>special needs schools to get more insight and experience teaching learners with different learning needs. The lesson planning of both the mainstream and special need schools always catered to learners with special needs and those experiences have proven vital now, as we get more children with special needs.”</p>	<p>lecture notes. It's been a crazy year to start teaching, so I am thankful for the experiences gained, advice sought, and books read to guide me on the journey. I would often use real-life experiences, and inclusive education notes received in my third year at university. I would often use Lev Vygotsky (outside, in) and Piaget's cognitive development in my teaching methods or approaches.”</p>	<p>interest in. There is one learner in my class who was an alcohol syndrome baby. He has had learning barriers for most of his schooling. He participates in the lesson, but he also needs one-on-one attention when other kids are engaged with individual activities.”</p>	<p>least by making you aware that you might find it in your classroom. The most effective approach would be to learn through demonstration and allow them to do the demonstrations as well. The other approach is to take them from the known to the unknown.”</p>	<p>learning barriers allowed me to gain exposure. It has made me aware of all the areas I need to focus on to ensure that each learner is catered to. During my fourth year of teaching practice, the school allowed me to assist and observe more than the required time, allowing me to see the various learning behaviours and academic struggles I might encounter.”</p>	<p>However, I have not been able to do this effectively as there is not enough time to prepare for work at all these different levels. I find that when I do set extra work for the strong learners, they finish it just as quickly and are still awaiting the weaker learners or learners with barriers. I have also attempted to send home extra questions for the weaker learners, but these come back to school incomplete and, thus, ineffective.”</p>
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4.6.1 The importance of being knowledgeable about special needs education

The analysis of data on the questionnaire indicates that NQTs were underprepared for the myriad of challenges associated with special needs schooling even though the initial teacher education programme provided them with a brief stint (3 weeks within the TP programme in their third year) to experience life inside a special needs school. The mainstream schools where each of the NQTs is currently employed are permeated with learners who require special attention. Still, due to the limited knowledge and skills gained during the years of being within this ITE programme, the NQTs cannot fully cater to their learners. The NQTs indicated that a more prolonged course on inclusive education would be beneficial in their preparation for becoming a teacher. Mr Madikizela succinctly stated, "Those experiences [TP within a special needs school] have proven vital now, as we get more children with special needs”.

SECTION 2: DATA ANALYSIS

STAKEHOLDERS' INTERPRETATIONS OF NQT LEVELS OF PREPAREDNESS

4.7 RESULTS OF SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW WITH THE INTERMEDIATE PHASE TEACHING PRACTICE COORDINATOR

A semi-structured interview with the Intermediate Phase Teaching Practice Coordinator (IPTPC) was analysed according to reductive analysis and presented in detail according to the categories elicited by me. The emerging themes which emanated from the interview with the IPTPC are as follows:

- The importance of the module Teaching Practice within the B.Ed. degree programme including Professional Studies and Education
- The reluctance of schools to accept student teachers
- Becoming acquainted with diversity during Teaching Practice
- The added time needed to complete Teaching Practice
- Teaching Practice is performance based and not development based
- The importance of the policy MRTEQ and using common sense
- Changes envisaged by the teaching Coordinator

4.7.1 The importance of the module Teaching Practice within the B.Ed. degree programme including Professional Studies and Education

Higher education institutions offering teacher education programmes in South Africa are required in terms of education policies to ensure that their students are placed in schools where they can interact with the realities of classroom teaching and the broader school environment. This activity where student teachers are placed in schools is called Teaching Practice (TP). TP is a compulsory module offered to all pre-service teachers within any teaching degree programme. The terms of reference for TP are outlined in the Student Teacher and Mentor Teacher Manual that is issued to all students registering for the module and explained by the IPTPC, who takes his directive from governmental policies (Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa, 2011 – 2015; Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications, 2011; Department of Basic Education and Training, 2011; Department of Higher Education and Training, 2011). For an NQT to obtain their formal qualification, they need to ensure that they passed four years of Teaching Practice within the degree programme from year one to year four. The module on Teaching Practice can be considered the most crucial module within the degree programme because the practical experience is the culmination of an infused basket of knowledge obtained from all the modules within the initial teacher programme and, consequently, the execution process of what was learned takes place during the Teaching Practice experience. Teaching practice cannot be looked at in isolation but goes hand in hand with the modules titled 'Professional Studies' and 'Education' which are also considered vital subjects within the teaching career of any teacher. The IPTP relates the following:

There are two specific subjects that align themselves with Teaching Practice because Teaching Practice is the practical aspect of teaching within the classroom. So, before you can go into a classroom to teach, you will need to know what professionalism is, which comes

from the course Professional Studies. Also, you need to know what education in its entirety entails, the theory of what constitutes education, so, therefore, the two specific courses that align themselves with Teaching Practice are Professional Studies, which is a course that is done from year one to year four, and Education, which is done from year one to year four as well.

In addition to the abovementioned statement about the added two courses of importance within the degree programme, the IPTPC considers that Teaching Practice incorporates the courses Professional Studies and Education because those two mainly influence the pre-service teacher's character whilst being out in a school. Professionalism stemming from the course Professional Studies affects the quality of behaviour of pre-service teachers in how they behave with learners and fellow teaching staff in the schooling environment. The course Education makes the pre-service students aware of the different lenses that influence teaching spaces by studying educational policies, educational theories and theorists involved in education. The IPTPC had the following to add:

In [the] first year, we looked at them being trained at a foundational level of professionalism within the classroom. We look at Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory of child development; Introduced to the list of NQT's competencies [MRTEQ].

According to the Teaching Practice Coordinator, he categorised Teaching Practice as one of the initial primary teacher education courses that students are most excited and eager about and look forward to experiencing since the idea of being placed within a school and acting as a teacher (albeit non-qualified) is appealing to pre-service teachers. He also encourages caution in the placement of student teachers in certain schools due to the developmental impact of the assigned Mentor-Teacher at the specific site. He relates the following comment:

We must be careful with uhm where we place our students; who the mentor-teachers are; uhm the evaluators that are sent out to the students, you know. We want to see [the] growth taking place.

4.7.2 The reluctance of schools to accept student teachers

For NQT to gain practical experience within the four years of their studies, they should complete their practicals at a primary school within a classroom setting. The profound difficulty that the IPTPC annually find himself in, is obtaining willing schools to place student teachers to gain the necessary practical knowledge needed to pass teaching practice. He said: "[I], the biggest issue, the biggest issue pertaining to Teaching Practice is schools that are not willing to take on student teachers".

According to the IPTPC, the initial teacher education institution is the biggest teacher education provider within the Western Cape, South Africa. The student teachers who register and are accepted into the degree programme come from all over the country. The TP department requires schools to accommodate their student teachers because Teaching Practice is a compulsory practical component. The challenge experienced by the Coordinator is the large number of student teachers that require school placement and the limited TP staff members that are

available to evaluate these large numbers of student teachers. He relays his dilemma in placing students and says the following:

To have, say, 680 students under your wing and having to place them within various schools and having a limited number of colleagues within the department going to these students to assess them is problematic. And also, not having enough uhm funding to employ uhm outside evaluators makes my job a bit difficult. The major one [problem] is neighbouring universities that have a teacher training programme [that requires placement].

From the abovementioned conversation with the IPTPC, he reveals that a supplementary issue in the reluctance of schools accepting student teachers for TP placement relates to the limited number of schools, which is due to competing neighbouring higher educational institutions such as the University of the Western Cape, University of Cape Town and University of Stellenbosch whose student teachers also require TP placements.

4.7.3 Becoming acquainted with diversity during Teaching Practice

The IPTPC, Mr Brand, explained that the South African schooling system uses the Quintile Ranking System's poverty index. Schools receive a grading or ranking between 1 and 5, with the schools in the lowest quintiles receiving the more significant government subsidy per child. Quintiles 1 to 3 schools are classified as no-fee schools and are by law not permitted to charge school fees. However, Quintiles 4 and 5 schools have the autonomy to decide fees and undertake initiatives to raise their own financial resources for them to maintain quality and standards of educational provisioning. The distinct features of the quintile schooling grouping are often broadcast through the availability of resources in the school, utilizing physical and human resources. The quality of the on-site experience for students relies on the schools in which they are placed. Mr Brand relayed that student teachers need to attend different quintile schools within their four-year programme that will expose them to a diverse schooling experience within a democratic nation based on respect and appreciation for all kinds of people (learners and teachers) regardless of racial differences, social class, gender, and religious variations. Mr Brand added the following:

You see, not all our student teachers will be placed with ex-model C schools when they get their degrees. Nor will they all go to affluent quintile 5 schools. No, some or rather most, the majority of our students, they have come from disadvantaged communities and they are going to end up teaching within those disadvantaged communities. So, you need to prepare yourself to work in a quintile 1 school where there are not enough resources. The same goes for your quintile 5 [school], you know, where you have an abundance of resources. So, you get your degree in your final year and you, you were not taught how to design resources so it, it's, ja, they need to be exposed to uhm different quintile [schools].

Furthermore, Mr Brand believes that Teaching Practice is vital to student teachers because the programme exposes them to the everyday functions of their role within the school and develops and prepares the pre-service teachers for the real-life challenges within the South African schooling context. He further explained that the

Intermediate Phase initial teacher programme provides all the necessary theory of **a)** how to do it, **b)** what to do, **c)** when to do it and **d)** reasons for doing something, but Teaching Practice allows the student teacher to merge all theory into the practicum. The initial teacher training university must prepare teachers for a designated South African classroom that lacks educational and human resources, is overcrowded, and presents the reality of working with learners in mainstream schools with various learning barriers.

4.7.4 More time needed for teaching practice

The IPTPC, Mr Brand, gave a detailed description of his reasons for asserting that more time should be allocated to the teaching practice programme within this one initial teacher education institution. Firstly, he argues that the idea of providing more extended TP placement in schools is supported by current research on teaching practice models nationally and internally. Secondly, the IPTPC commented that it is always in conversation with various stakeholders of work-integrated learning for undergraduate student teachers. He refers to these stakeholders: seasoned teachers, school and senior management teams, including his involvement with district school-based colleagues. Mr Brand went further and expressed that:

I would like to see more time offered to Teaching Practice. The student teacher would go out to a school in the morning, spend their time there and then come back for a number of hours to the university to be trained. They go out and they go and practice what was given to them the day before. So, for me, it is just that the real-life classroom situation is important so that when they get their degree at the end of their fourth year, being fully-fledged and be completely competent and to be able to execute their job as an NQT effortlessly, they have gained more than enough real-life classroom experience.

Mr Brand stated that the current teaching practice programme lends itself to pitfalls in the preparedness of student teachers because of the short period (8 weeks per annum) wherein the student teachers are placed within schools. He said: "Teaching Practice is being perceived as this sort of, it's like a, it is sort of a film playing out or a movie wherein everyone is acting beautifully during that time".

4.7.5 Teaching Practice is performance-based and not developmentally based

As mentioned above by Mr Brand, he states that pre-service teachers should be required to spend more extended periods in schools to develop teaching skills, gain experience of participating in the 'life of the school' and prepare students to manage their **own** classrooms. Unfortunately, the TP experience lends itself not to represent the real-life classroom experience, especially when TP evaluators are scheduled to assess student teachers. The following incidents relayed by Mr Brand dictate how the TP practical experience can be flawed:

It's [Teaching Practice evaluation session]; it's more like it's not real. Learners are now behaving because the lecturer is evaluating the lesson. Then also the teacher would, would,

then the mentor teacher would then tell the learners 'You better behave during this process because uh Mr Alexander is being evaluated by Ms Uhm Dr Phillips', you know.

In addition to the performance that is rendered to the TP Evaluators is the ignorant mindset of the pre-service teacher to acutely focus on the obtained percentage for the lesson presented instead of awaiting critique from the experienced professional assigned to them. From their mentality, it can be judged that the perceived pass mark is more important than the verbal analysis shared with them to develop them into fully-fledged competent teachers. The IPTPC expressed how pre-service teachers would concentrate on their achieved percentage: "So, Mr Brand, how much did I get for the lesson that I showed you?"

4.7.6 The importance of the policy MRTEQ and using common sense

According to the IPTPC, Mr Brand, the policy on the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications gives explicit guidelines to the interpretations of what constitutes a professional teacher. Unfortunately, not adequate time is spent annually reviewing the policy. It should be noted that policy is interpreted and reinterpreted by stakeholders (IP TP Evaluators, School Senior Management Staff, Mentor-Teachers) in education, who all have different expectations of a well-groomed, newly qualified teacher and will therefore interpret the policy according to their context. However, a distinctive quality in many student teachers who are enrolled within this initial teacher education institution is, in Mr Brand's opinion, their lack of common sense. Mr Brand says:

There are 11 competencies as outlined by the MRTEQ. I, I don't see in the MRTEQ a simple aspect that a teacher needs or ought to have, which is common knowledge. When I say common knowledge, it is for you to take, take the situation, put it into context, and come up with an intervention.

4.7.7 Change envisaged by the teaching practice coordinator

There are specific attributes within the initial teacher education programme that the IPTPC would want to see within its faculty to produce better qualified and competent newly qualified teachers. As aforementioned, additional time would be fundamental in pre-service teachers' preparedness for the real-life South African classroom with an enactment of a mental shift from the student teachers. Student teachers should note that the emphasis is not on performance - only on presenting a lesson. Still, the focus is on their development (incorporating their learning and experiences) into the execution of their teaching skills. Mr Brand expressed the following sentiments:

I would like to ask management to give us more time or the students more time for Teaching Practice and also a more rigid programme. Furthermore, uhm, being given, when students apply to become teachers, a rigid process of interrogating and interviewing the prospective student teachers: "Why do you want to become a teacher?"

In addition, the IPTPC went further to explain further changes which he would recommend concerning the current initial teacher education teaching practice programme:

- A more stringent application process for student teachers who enrol within the programme.
- We also need more schools - the best practising schools to accept our students.
- We need better mentor teachers who do not see student teachers coming into the classroom as a break from teaching to take off and simply stay away from the school because there's a student teacher who is now placed in their classroom.
- We need lecturers within the department to be more informed about what is happening in the real-life South African classroom to ensure that their advice to student teachers is not elusive but precise to the context.
- We must prepare student teachers for the 4th industrial revolution, where everything is becoming digital, and everything is on digital platforms.

4.7.8 Overview of a one-on-one interview with the Intermediate Phase Teaching Practice Coordinator

The IPTPC expresses that you need to be knowledgeable about all the challenges within a work-integrated learning programme, especially when the focus is on rendering a real-life teaching practice experience. His being placed in the middle of the students' learning, the department's policy at the initial teacher education institution, the policy which derives from the department of higher education training and the schooling climate make the coordination of his portfolio extremely complex.

The South African schooling context is still complicated, twenty-eight years since abolishing a racially segregated system. Education to date is characterised by a myriad of challenges that impede a teacher's learning experience in training. So, take all of that into context, and you try your best to take on a student and help them become a fully-fledged competent teacher who can deal with issues within the South African context.

4.8 RESULTS OF SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW WITH THE PRINCIPAL

A semi-structured interview with the principal was analysed according to reductive analysis and presented in detail according to the categories elicited by me. The emerging themes which emanated from the interview with the principal are as follows:

- Social problems
- Teacher as the disciplinarian
- Soft and hard skills needed in the teaching profession
- Collaborative partnering with seasoned teachers
- Overview of a one-on-one interview with the principal

4.8.1 Social problems

Giving a response to the school's setting and context, the principal stated that it is of utmost importance for the NQTs to know where the school is situated even before they consider applying for any vacant teaching position. The principal, named Mrs Lite, has been working in the teaching profession for 20 years. During the last ten years, she has been in a managerial position at the primary school situated in the area of Lotus River (in the Western Cape). According to the principal, hardship is prevalent within this previously disadvantaged community and could therefore contribute to the increase in the negative attitude towards the academics and poor behaviour of learners. The principal, Mrs Lite, gave detail on how the lack of basic needs impacts the conduct of the learners under the care of the teaching staff. She said the following: "Coz [Because] for instance our community where learners are coming from, if you are unable to manage them it will be difficult for you to be able to teach them".

If possible, these NQTs should set out to research the intended community wherein the school is advertising the vacant teaching position so that when they take up employment in the school, they are not taken by surprise when being confronted with learners stemming from a community that is declared as previously disadvantaged. Knowing the school's environment is vital because, if they are aware of the surroundings, they will understand the type of learner they will be dealing with daily. As described by the principal, many learners experience an array of social problems, and he cautions NQTs by encouraging them to manage their assigned learners. Suppose the NQT ignores setting disciplinary measures within their learning space (classroom) and does not adhere to the stipulated self-created rules. In that case, there will be chaos and it leads to significant classroom disruption, affecting learning in the class. The goal is effective learning and teaching in every school and within every classroom.

4.8.2 Teacher as the disciplinarian

Reflecting on her years of working within the teaching profession, Mrs Lite, the principal at the primary school, wanted me to have a clear-cut understanding of her view on what she regards as the readiness of NQTs for the teaching profession. The principal went ahead to relay the following information about her working career by stating that she spent nine years as a teacher, five years as the Head of the Intermediate Phase Department, five years as the Deputy Principal of the school, and before that, intermittently as the Acting Deputy Principal and this was her first year as principal. Sharing the information mentioned above gave me the impression that Mrs Lite wanted me to recognise the great value of her response because of her lived experience within the teaching profession. One leading quality that Mrs Lite believes an NQT should own is that of one who is authoritarian within their classroom environment. She rendered the following response:

You need to be proactive. You need to be innovative. Also, you need to be able to be a disciplinarian. If you have correct class management, actually background and understanding, then with that management that you are coming with, maybe if you are coming because you do classroom management and then, but in real terms when it comes to the classroom, how you deal with it. And also, for instance in our communities mostly you will find that there are overcrowded classes and how to deal with that as well.

As mentioned above, it is evident that if an NQT is not confident in their approach to executing their role and lacks formal training on the required disciplinary measures and policies on education (within the South African context), they will not cope. NQTs must possess an austere approach towards their learners, especially those hailing from challenging socio-economic backgrounds.

4.8.3 Soft and hard skills needed in the teaching profession

The principal expressed her view on the skills necessary to demonstrate competence as an NQT, especially during the interviewing process for hiring new teaching staff. The proven competence of a beginner teacher will be evident in:

A person who is accessible and also, like I'm saying, you need to be innovative, creative; also your, your colleagues, how you would relate to them. So interpersonal relationships are important ... uhm for, for one to be able to because you need to speak to people.

As depicted in the above verbatim extract of the one-on-one interview with Mrs Lite, she highlighted how beginner teachers should have the necessary soft skills (*sometimes using the word "qualities"*) that include interpersonal (people) skills and placing the emphasis on communication. When an NQT can communicate effectively, they will automatically be in a position to become a team player (another soft skill) within the staffing because they can then easily *"raise your opinion and raise your ideas just for us to maybe test and see how wide yours [knowledge] is. You need [to] find help, you need to share, you know"*. In addition, NQTs must be aware that a first impression is vital when arriving for a job interview. This was crystal clear in the sentiment raised by the principal, who said: *"Someone when we recruit, for instance when they go to an interview, we look at how he presents himself."*

The hard skills (teachable abilities or skill sets) which was alluded to within the dialogue shared with the principal derived from phrases being used, such as:

Someone who embraces the teaching profession through subject matter and general questions of knowledge of education. Do you know about corporal punishment? How well do you understand it? How well do you know conflict, someone who will manage conflict because of conflict between colleagues and conflict in the classroom, which we should all pro-manage?

From my one-on-one engagement with the principal, I could construct from her argument that the hard skills are those emerging from content taught during the NQTs' initial teacher programme within the initial teacher education institution. The conceptual training experienced by the NQT is reviewed.

Mrs Lite was able to share with me the common teacher interview questions that are deployed during the interviewing process for NQTs, which took into account the **a)** certified degree qualification, **b)** the initial teacher

university that the potential candidate attended, **c)** the kinds of experiences they have gained during TP within the phase for which they are being considered, **d)** the interpersonal skills of the individual and **e)** how the potential candidate portrays himself in the attire and **f)** structured manner of responding to the questions.

4.8.4 Collaborative partnering with seasoned teachers

The principal expressed how it has become imperative to support NQTs who exit initial teacher education institutions. The following question posed to the principal was: *"Is there any support for newly qualified teachers when they come into your school?"* Mrs Lite's indicated that an assigned Mentor Teacher who is regarded as being experienced (seasoned) is allocated to guiding the new staff member at her school. She went further to expand on the available support rendered by stating:

So, there is a programme that we doing of, of mentoring them, you know, so also uhm with the subjects we might be sharing the subject so then the person who's more experienced in the subject needs to give guidance to the teacher.

The principal relayed the above sentiment intending to declare that if NQTs came prepared from the initial teacher education university, there would not be a need for such a collaborative partnering with a seasoned teacher programme; hence she provided a further contribution to the perceived content that should be inculcated within the initial teacher degree curriculum. This section is outlined below under the sub-heading: Principal's view regarding the qualities of a Newly Qualified Teacher.

4.8.5 Overview of a one-on-one interview with the Principal

One theme was identified, which clarifies one of the sub-questions underpinning the study: **Sub question 3:** What are the perceptions of stakeholders (IP TP Coordinator & School Management) regarding what constitutes the readiness of NQTs? The theme reflected the principal's view regarding the qualities of a Newly Qualified Teacher. The finding is discussed and interpreted accordingly.

4.8.5.1 Principal's view regarding the qualities of a Newly Qualified Teacher

By the time I posed question number 8 of the interview schedule to Mrs Lite, which reads as follows: *"What problems do you experience first-hand with newly qualified teachers?"*, the principal was decisive and frank with her responses. Unequivocally she responded with a steadfast, clear-cut answer; the principal said, "As a newly qualified teacher, you must be consistent". She expressed the following sentiments:

They [NQTs] will come in and go do everything, everything, the minute they become permanent, all that fading [fades] away. Of which for me might then be to say, but this person was a certain way, doing the right things, now suddenly, yes, I'm permanent now I'll, I'll relax, I'm free now. So those, those, those kinds of problems, I think.

The principal considers that if your passion is teaching, then your qualities will be unwavering in respect to the conversion of your temporary/contract status to permanent.

In addition to the change in the approach to the work ethic of NQTs upon shifting from contract to permanency, the principal rendered an opinion on the kinds of content that should be focused on within the initial teacher programme for future NQTs. The principal provided the following suggestions for initial teacher education institutions:

- Disciplining techniques for the real-life classroom
- Classroom management techniques for beginner teachers
- Handling politics within the schooling context
- A diverse TP experience (placing students of a specific race in a different racial schooling context)
- Incorporative inclusive education studies in the mainstream schooling setting.

4.9 RESULTS OF SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW WITH THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

A semi-structured interview with the deputy principal was scrutinised according to reductive analysis and presented in detail according to the categories elicited by me. The emerging themes which arose from the interview with the deputy principal are as follows:

- The professional public profile of a teacher
- Reviewing the initial teacher training curriculum
- Reintroducing aspects of Teacher Training Colleges
- Overview of a one-on-one interview with the Deputy Principal

4.9.1 The professional public profile of a teacher

Drawing on his personal experience as a member of the recruitment panel for new staff members, Deputy Principal Mr White gives first-hand insight into a segment of preparedness of NQTs for the world of work that is unknown to many prospective newly qualified teachers. Mr White stated that the WCED would instruct the school management team on the criteria that the prospective applicant should adhere to for the vacant teaching position. The brief from the WCED might indicate “that the person should be a bursary holder”. However, the schooling selection panel will also generate their criteria which sets a standard of the kind of teacher they hope to bring on board the staff complement at the specific school. The Deputy Principal added:

We look at people’s all rounds skills... we look at their Teaching Practice ... what they did in Practice Teaching... we look at community involvement... where are they perhaps in NGOs... perhaps involved in churches... and then we look at sports.

Mr White went further to explain that the professional public profile of a prospective applicant is interrogated through the usage of social media platforms in an attempt to gain insightful information regarding their schooling culture fit. The Deputy Principal pointed out that “we haven’t employed people here because we’ve done our research on

people and their social media uhm profile was not that of what the school requires". One explicit feature mentioned was the posing with a glass [contents being an alcoholic drink] can give a negative impression as to the professionalism of the prospective employee. He stated that "the one thing that students [NQTs] need to realise is that because of the era that we live in, it is expected that they need to keep clean social media profiles".

4.9.2 Reviewing the initial teacher training curriculum

The 29 years of employment in the teaching profession, coupled with the teacher training that the Deputy Principal experienced, put him in the ideal position to critique the setup aspects of the initial teacher programme whence newly qualified teachers originate.

The Deputy Principal was of the view that much of their professional development occurred during the teaching practicum section of the programme as it offered pre-service teachers the space to implement what they had learnt, test different teaching approaches, manage a classroom, and deal with various issues that arose in the school. He said: *"I don't know how long you are teaching, but I taught every single Monday. I was assigned to a school 'coz I came through a teacher training college"*. The statement described the Deputy Principal's trust in the benefits of TP in the professional development of pre-service teachers into becoming fully-fledged professional teachers who are prepared for the world of work.

Drawing on his observation of student teachers who are placed within his school to complete TP, the Deputy Principal has discerned the degree of preparedness that student teachers and NQTs from this teacher education university exude concerning other institutions. He says:

I look after all the student teachers as we know, right. I find the ones that are Practice Teaching from the first year are normally those ones who are a bit more settled from the start. For the university graduates that do PGCE, there's a lot more support needed when they start, so their mentorship program is a lot more intense. I find [name of institution] and Varsity College ... they [are] better equipped to hit the ground running.

4.9.3 Reintroducing aspects of Teacher Training Colleges

The Deputy Principal, Mr White,¹² reported that he firmly believed that the Department of Higher Education and Training should reconsider introducing certain aspects of Teacher Training Colleges, especially TP. He thought that due to eradicating these teacher colleges, the essence of being and becoming a teacher has since been abandoned since university training was implemented. In his view, he does not afford prospective teachers a holistic initial teacher training programme. Mr White asserted the following commentary relating to Teacher Training Colleges:

¹² Mr White is a pseudonym adopted for the purposes of this study.

Get the Wesley Training Colleges, get the Hewatt Training Colleges. Get Teacher Training Colleges . . . don't let it¹³ be a sidestep of a course that you [are] offering. I came through a teacher training college, and I think the country dropped the ball when they stopped. The courses¹⁴ should be more focused, and I think that these people [Pre-Service Teachers] should spend longer times at school.

The Deputy Principal believes that the TP experience which he received during his time in a teacher's college was much more advantageous in his development towards becoming a primary school teacher for the reason that he engaged with in-service teacher training throughout the academic year, as opposed to the blocked TP sessions (two four-week sessions per annum) that student teachers are afforded within the university's initial teacher education programme. His advice to stakeholders within the initial teacher education programme within the university is to place student teachers within the real-life classroom "for an entire term, between second and third term; you will root out all the ones who don't really want to teach immediately". Mr White further suggests that by re-examining the TP programme, student teachers who will become NQTs will have no choice but to have their learning to become teachers disrupted. He added:

They'll [student teachers] be involved with the full aspect of teaching. They'll escape nothing. They'll do sport. They will do extra-mural activities; they'll do co-curricular. They'll do the development, send them out and let them go and train at the schools. Give them that responsibility, and that's how you learn.

4.9.4 Overview of a one-on-one interview with the Deputy Principal

One theme was identified that gives lucidity to Sub-question 3, one of the sub-questions underpinning the study: What are the perceptions of stakeholders (IP TP Coordinator & School Management) regarding what constitutes the readiness of NQTs? The theme reflected the deputy principal's view regarding the qualities of a Newly Qualified Teacher. The finding is discussed and interpreted accordingly.

4.9.5 Deputy Principal's view regarding the attributes of a Newly Qualified Teacher

In the view of the Deputy Principal, a disruption to the learning of student teachers should take place in the initial few months of being enrolled for the teaching degree. The disruption should be evident within the reviewed Teaching Practicum programme, which he suggests should be similar to the previous Teaching Training Colleges. He puts forward creative suggestions that will aid the initial teacher education university and schools acquire prospective teachers who will fit a criterion that encapsulates commitment and is responsible for their development. He outright declares that "books do not prepare you for anything", and the development of becoming a teacher occurs within the confines of the schooling environment.

¹³ Presumably, professional development of teachers.

¹⁴ The university initial teacher training programme.

Furthermore, a most insightful and contributing factor raised within the dialogue with Mr White was the unspoken rule that future employers undertake in the recruitment process. He wishes to make NQTs aware that they (prospective employers) are acutely examining their lifestyle and character via social media platforms and sum up whether they will be a fit for the specific school or not. He stated that “you are at all times an example as a teacher”.

4.10 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter discussed key themes and issues that emerged from the findings. Section one highlighted the world views of newly qualified teachers’ understanding of the official expectations of the formal curriculum concerning their readiness for the world of work. The second section of the data interpreted focused on the lived experience through reflective accounts of whether these NQTs lived up to the expectations of the official curriculum. A third stage of the analysis delved into an in-depth review of the individual lesson presentation rubrics completed by Teaching Practice Evaluators concerning the development of the then student teachers whilst enrolled within the initial teacher education programme. I then interpreted the produced data by comparing the official understanding, the reflective understanding of NQTs about their preparedness and the enacted preparedness over time.

Lastly, this Chapter 4 included section 2 that takes into account the research question 3: ***What are the perceptions of stakeholders (IP TP Coordinator & School Management) regarding what constitutes the readiness of NQTs?*** It focuses on the stakeholder’s interpretations of these NQTs’ levels of preparedness as they engaged in the early stages of TP and entry into the teaching profession as qualified beginner teachers.

Based on the results in this chapter, the discussion, recommendations, and conclusion on the preparedness of newly qualified teachers to manage and teach in the Intermediate Phase will be presented in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

"Without data, you're just another person with an opinion."- W. Edwards Deming¹⁵.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 5 provides summarised findings that answer the research questions underpinning the study. The chapter also highlights the study's limitations and presents recommendations for future research. It is important to note that findings have already been discussed in the previous chapter (Chapter 4). The findings of this study provided insights into the preparedness of newly qualified teachers to manage and teach within the Intermediate Phase after exiting one initial teacher education programme. Coupled with the experiences of NQTs regarding their formal education degree programme is exclusive first-hand insight from stakeholders (IP Teaching Practice Coordinator, 1 School Primary School Principal and 1 Deputy Principal) as to what exactly, in their view, makes for a well-prepared NQT within the context of a post-apartheid South African schooling context.

5.2 FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Analysed through the lens of Kolb's experiential learning theory cycle, one-on-one and focus group interviews took place with newly qualified teachers, the Teaching Practice Coordinator, a Primary School Principal and Deputy Primary School Principal based on their experiences, including their views and opinions about what constitutes preparedness. Experiential learning (EL) is a process of learning through doing, while experiential education incorporates the pedagogies and structures that support this process (Jamison, Fuher, Wang and Huang-Saad, 2022). Various enabling and constraining themes emerged from the analysed qualitative data that entailed reading many transcripts, looking for similarities or differences, and subsequently finding themes and developing categories that speak to the link between EL as a conceptual framework underpinning this research study.

As previously stated in Chapter Two of this study under the heading Section B: Conceptual Framework, experiential learning is a meaning-making process within the development of pre-service teachers in becoming newly qualified (and certified) professional teachers that can be viewed through the four-step experiential learning model (ELM) lens as set forth by Kolb (1984). Even though Kolb's 'Experiential Learning Theory' focuses on the principal participants' 'formal learning' process on which this study is focused (newly qualified teachers), what became evident was the role that the outside experience of formal learning contributes to their development. I am referring to the world of work, which brings in the practical, experiential component of learning to become a teacher whilst on site and gaining first-hand involvement in the challenges and possibilities of what it means to be a teacher within the South African context. The 'outside experience' when engaging with Teaching Practice (in a schooling setting) cannot be planned for within any formal curriculum. Student teachers within any formal learning space must be willing to adapt to the enabling and constraining factors they will experience whilst learning to become a

¹⁵ Kolasa, K., Goettsch, W., Petrova, G. and Berler, A., 2020. Without data, you're just another person with an opinion. Expert Review of Pharmacoeconomics & Outcomes Research, 20(2), pp.147-154.

professional teacher. From the conceptual framework placed in conjunction with the analysed data, the following questions became evident in attempting to answer two critical questions: *What are newly qualified teachers' understanding of their preparedness?* and *How does newly qualified teachers' preparedness reflect in their practice?*

5.2.1 What is newly qualified teachers' understanding of their preparedness?

Each purposefully selected NQT had distinctive views regarding their journey to becoming a teacher whilst enrolled within one initial teacher education university. Respectively each participant is unique, and therefore each experience over the four years will be different. The developmental journey into becoming a teacher through the set formal curriculum within the Intermediate Phase department, coupled with the internal and external influences of various stakeholders (lecturers for each course and mentor teachers within schools during Teaching Practice), all contribute to the growth of the pre-service student teacher into becoming a professional degree-certified teacher. Newly qualified teachers from this ITE university base their understanding of being prepared on their first-hand experience in school placement during their first year within the degree programme and executing lessons presented to the assigned Teaching Practice Evaluator. The literature reviewed indicates that teaching practice for the twenty first century is plagued by challenges that affect the programme's success (Leke-ateh, Assan & Debeila, 2013). However, data collected within this research study indicates the student teachers are appeased with the experiences gained through the teaching practice programme that places them into schools and that the support from mentor teachers is impactful within their growth in becoming teacher professionals. The findings are synonymous with Robinson's (2016: 1) results that "the identification of schools that can work closely with universities to mentor student teachers is one way in which teacher education can contribute to an improved education system".

The same NQTs regard themselves as being prepared for the real-life South African classroom when they have received sufficient content knowledge in the various subjects (or modules) undertaken within the degree programme. The researchers Nkomo and Charamba (2022: 1) remind initial teacher education institutions that "many classrooms in South Africa are very diverse in terms of culture, gender, language, and intellectual ability" hence the content knowledge and assessment practices of teachers should be carefully designed to fit the context of the classroom. Notably, these learning difficulties are exacerbated often by gaps in the content knowledge and pedagogy of teachers, and the researchers state that traditional assessment practices like examinations, tests, and essays, which dominate many classrooms, have proven to be unable to capture the range and nature of the diverse learning outcomes sought from courses. Hence, ITE programmes should be carefully designed to strengthen the content knowledge of beginner teachers to be inclusive in the way they plan for teaching and learning (Nkomo & Charamba, 2022).

NQTs also saw themselves prepared for the world of work when they can utilise ITC resources within their classroom unhindered. Tiba (2018: 169) points out that during the "data generation process of her study, she became aware that the teachers were not aware of the e-Education policy embodying the ITC vision for the

country". Whether the NQTs within this study were made aware of an e-Education policy outlined by the WCED was not substantiated. She further outlines that various enabling and disabling factors can either encourage or discourage NQTs from using technology in their teaching. She also advises how ITC can be beneficial pedagogically to learners' education. Tiba (2018: 170) states:

NQTs used technology to gain learners' attention, to make lessons exciting and fun, and improve their understanding of complex concepts; to involve learners in collaborative learning, using creative strategies to increase learners' self-confidence; and to teach learners how to search for credible and authentic information using the Internet.

The list mentioned above of educational benefits outlined by Tiba (2018) is the same as the experiences outlined by the NQTs within this research study. Mr Madikizela declared that ITC exposure over the two years within this one ITE programme was able to bridge his lack of computer knowledge owing to the non-exposure thereto during his years in primary and high schooling whilst growing up in the township. The experience of Mr Madikizela is synonymous with Tunjera (2019: 193), who declares:

The designing of pre-service teacher preparation programmes that model and instil the skill of teaching with technology will ensure that, over time, challenges such as technologically challenged students will not be a deterrent to effective technology integration.

It has been commonly reported that South Africa's basic education is in crisis (McKeever, 2017; Kubow, 2018; Essack & Hindle, 2019). The overall impression I obtained from the interviews held with the six newly qualified teachers was that they hold themselves accountable for their learning and development to remedy the South African education crisis. Also, in their view of preparedness, this means comparing themselves with fellow student teachers emanating from other higher education institutions. Although these novice student teachers create an unspoken or unstated comparison between what constitutes preparedness, these NQTs conceive that they are at the forefront of being prepared to manage and teach learners within the Intermediate Phase within the context of South Africa.

5.2.2 How does newly qualified teachers' preparedness reflect in their practice?

The NQTs were only a few months into their beginner teaching positions when I was able to dialogue with them about their experiences gained from the ITE programme. The NQTs were able to critically reflect on what explains why they consider themselves 'under-prepared' in certain areas within the teaching profession based on their transition from student teacher to newly qualified teacher. MRTEQ's (2015) policy declares that teachers are expected to do more than teach. Van Heerden (2019) points out that the objective of initial teacher education is to prepare teachers to teach effectively in schools. She cites Feiman-Nemser (2001), who mentions that the quality of schools in a country depends on the quality of teachers. As outlined in Chapter 4, the analysed data reveals that being **underexposed to real-life administrative tasks** can contribute to a low level of quality of work being

delivered by the teacher. 'Heavy administration required by the department' is not a unique theme raised in my study. The same theme was identified by Van Heerden (2019) in the study titled: "Newly qualified teachers' 'classroom practices as supported by initial teacher education".

Outdated classroom knowledge of lecturers and **under-preparedness of specific lecturing staff** are added themes raised by the NQTs within this study. Said (2018) put forward that a voice should be given to higher education students to develop a deeper understanding of the teaching qualities of effective lecturers that students desire, students' assessment preferences, and preferred learning environments. It is vital to learn to engage with student teachers on what constitutes effective learning. She points out that students "expect teaching qualities, students expect approachable and understanding lecturers who provide concrete industrial examples" (Said, 2018: 43). Said (2018) had four critical questions that required answering. Only question 2, which was: "*What are the students' perceptions of effective vocational teaching in terms of lecturers' behaviour and knowledge?*", applies to this closing theme. The findings of Said (2018) indicate that "pedagogic research is of utmost importance to develop lecturers within both higher education and vocational education".

Most importantly, the NQTs reflected on the extensive benefits of an **inclusive education programme** in their ITE curriculum. The data revealed a strong commitment to diversity and inclusive education, but a remarkable absence exists within the ITE programme of exposing student teachers to these learnings (Sayed, Carrim, Badroodien, McDonald, & Singh, 2018). Chris (2012) asserts that an excellent initial teacher training (ITT) programme equips teachers with the information, resources, and tools to help children and young people enjoy learning and fulfil their potential. However, the researcher also points out that it can be challenging to find the time to teach student teachers about the range of issues they might experience during their teaching career. Undoubtedly, the view of all 6 NQTs was that an extensive, critical, and in-depth inclusive education programme would be invaluable within their career development to cater for a diverse range of learners with an array of learning barriers.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

This section presents the proposed recommendations provided by the newly qualified teachers, Teaching Practice Coordinator, Principal and Deputy Principal, based on their experiences, including their views and opinions about what constitutes preparedness. The recommendations are targeted at initial teacher education programme developers, pre-service student teachers, and government stakeholders within the South African educational system. I will outline the suggestions given by the various interviewed people according to their position within this study.

The Newly Qualified Teachers recommended the following for future student teachers:

From the one-on-one interview sessions with the six newly qualified teachers stemming from this one initial teacher education faculty, I deduced an overall positive experience, although it was conflicting. During their journey to becoming NQTs, these participants often compare their challenges with those of student teachers from other learning institutions and would conclude that they might be overreacting. Ms Little observed: 'It [the institution] is

better than if I compare me to my cousin and I feel the people here [current placement of employment] like from *Charlton University¹⁶ compare us. We are better prepared for the classes. So, I would encourage them to go there [the institution]. Some tips shared especially for prospective student teachers intending to join this one initial teacher education programme are as follows:

- Take your studies seriously;
- Be overprepared for Teaching Practice sessions;
- Become involved in different areas (extra-curricular activities, academic programmes, sports, etc.) whilst on TP;
- During lectures, be vocal, be outspoken and think outside the box; and
- Utilise the faculty resources such as the library and computer rooms.

The Intermediate Phase Teaching Practice Coordinator recommended the following for future student teachers:

- Focus on the critique emerging from the TP Evaluator and not the lesson percentage assigned;
- Use your common sense when completing Teaching Practice; and
- Become familiar with and incorporate Information and Communications Technology (ICT) resources into your classroom teaching.

Sayed et al. (2018) posit recommendations to student teachers in initial teacher education learning to teach in post-apartheid twenty first century South Africa. The researchers Sayed et al. (2018) propose that:

- A review is required of student teachers' experiences within ITE programmes;
- ITE programmes should make provision for time to examine the beliefs of student teachers and their classroom practices: notably a distinction between the student teacher's general beliefs and student teachers' pedagogical beliefs; and
- More exposure to Teaching Practice with a stronger collaborative partnership between university supervisors and school-based mentors.

The Primary School Principal recommended the following for future student teachers:

- You need to be proactive in your classroom;
- You need to be innovative in your classroom;
- You need to be able to be a disciplinarian within your classroom; and
- Correct your class management technique.

The emerging consensus is that the education system in South Africa is in crisis, and teachers are expected to act as the saviours in rescuing this failing system (Amnesty International, 2020; Spaull, 2013a). It is therefore imperative that teachers take their roles and responsibilities seriously; otherwise, poor school performance will

¹⁶ Charlton University is a pseudonym created to hide the identity of the original name shared with me.

continue to exist in South Africa and will reinforce social inequality and lead to a situation where children inherit the social station of their parents, irrespective of their motivation or ability (Spaull, 2013a: 9).

The Deputy Primary School Principal recommended the following for future student teachers:

- Protect your professional public profile on social media platforms; and
- Relish the TP experience.

The recommendations made by the Deputy Primary School Principal can only be described as provocative. He was able to share first-hand classified information regarding internal schooling criteria created to zoom into the lives of prospective staff members. The dialogical engagement with this managerial member of staff afforded me to contribute to a gap within higher education studies research literature concerning the preparedness of newly qualified teachers for the world of work.

In the context of a technologically saturated environment, and the role of social media in presenting and consolidating the profile of individuals, the school management in this study has revealed that they equally rely on interpretations of the potential of the newly qualified graduates by examining their social media statuses. Qualifications and certificates constitute only a baseline foundational requirement for selecting a candidate for a vacant staffing position. Interview panels for prospective teachers can potentially delve into the images, practices, and relationships concerning professional conduct that newly qualified graduates reflect via their social media platforms. Kimmons (2016: 1) highlights this by observing, “within the current technology ecosystem, the opportunity for teachers to lead a personal life separate from their professional life has almost disappeared” and that the standards to which teachers are held “might mean different things to different people.” It is, therefore, best to ensure that you safeguard your social media accounts.

5.4 LIMITATIONS, CHALLENGES, AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Even though this research was restricted to six newly qualified teachers exiting from this one initial teacher education university, one TP Coordinator responsible for overseeing the teaching practicum programme, one principal and one deputy school principal that yearly allowed student teachers from this university to be placed within their school for their Teaching Practice in-service training, questions have arisen that may lead to further research. Some of these limitations of the study and suggestions for further research are given below.

5.5 Limitations and challenges

The research study was initially proposed to include six newly qualified teachers. Respectively, the two NQTs who were a part of the B. Ed. IP Year 4 cohort at the end of the 2019 academic year declined the invitation to contribute to this research project. The justifications were **1)** the IP graduate took up a vacancy within the Foundation Phase (Grade R to 3) and thought that her contribution to this study would be insignificant, and **2)** the NQT felt

overwhelmed with his newly appointed teaching position and did not have the time to contribute to this research study. Hence, six purposefully selected and consenting NQTs contributed to this study. Notably, the added voices of the Intermediate Phase Teaching Practice Coordinator and two managerial school staff members (Principal and Deputy Principal) supplemented the data. Therefore, this study considers the views and experiences of one initial teacher education university TP Coordinator and two primary school managerial staff members within the Western Cape. Consequently, the research results may not be generalised but could be used to validate findings from similar studies elsewhere.

It was not difficult for the newly qualified teachers to be convinced of the research objective. However, the schedule for producing data was continuously interrupted due to the lockdown levels implemented within the country by the President in an effort to curb the spread of the coronavirus. Each of the participants in this research study can be applauded for their deep-seated interest in wanting to transform initial teacher education programmes within higher education. This group of newly qualified teachers can be commended on their teaching management under complex circumstances within a global pandemic.

Two limitations were found to be a potential threat to the study. These were:

5.5.1 Conducting research during a global pandemic

I received ethical clearance for this research study from the CPUT Ethical Committee on 28th April 2020 and similarly from the Western Cape Education Department on the 29th of May 2020. Regrettably, on 18th March 2020, the President of South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa, declared all schools closed. The decision to implement such a stringent measure at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic was to create an intervention to social and physical distancing measures. This meant that, as a researcher, I was to tread carefully around my participants and their managers to gain access to them to produce data through the various data production tools established for this research study. Near the end of the research, a collaborative decision was undertaken by the newly qualified teachers to utilize WhatsApp Group Messenger to conduct the final focus-group interview. Two respective NQTs were unable to join due to **1)** Mrs Flowers and her family having contracted coronavirus and her father passing on and **2)** Mr Madikizela experiencing intermittent connectivity issues.

5.5.2 Participants experiencing intermittent connectivity issues

An added challenge to data production was one newly qualified teacher who experienced relentless connectivity issues and was unable to engage in dialogue regarding his views, experiences and reflections on his preparedness toward becoming a teacher. Mr Madikizela failed to add information to *Appendix I: Focus Group Interview Schedule: Newly Qualified Teachers* because of where he was located at the time of the interview session. The NQT lives within a township area within Strand (Western Cape), and his place of residence experienced power outages that caused him to not be able to connect to the final focus-group interview.

5.6 Suggestions for further study

This research study concerned itself with the preparedness of six newly qualified teachers to manage and teach within the Intermediate Phase, coupled with the multiple stakeholders' perspectives on what constitutes teachers' preparedness, hailing from one of the largest teacher training institutions within the Western Cape, South Africa. Implicitly the study focused on the lived experiences - which include the transitional period of student teacher over a four-year degree period to now being a newly qualified teacher, right into the first few months of employment. The results obtained through this study show that challenges were experienced, and through these challenges, proposed topics for further research were identified. The following are some of the suggested topics for further research:

- The enabling and constraining external factors within ITE programmes;
- The challenges beginner teachers experience in developing an inclusive learning space; and
- The efficacy of a sound collaborative schooling partnership for Teaching Practice.

5.7 CONCLUSION

The main objective of this study was to report on and interpret self-reported experiences regarding the preparedness of newly qualified teachers to manage and teach in the Intermediate Phase. The study utilized a qualitative case study methodology to realise its purpose. The researcher used purposeful sampling to select six newly qualified teachers from one initial teacher education university. From this one initial teacher education university, six newly qualified Intermediate Phase teachers and one Intermediate Phase Teaching Practice Coordinator were extensively interviewed. One primary school principal and one deputy school principal were also interviewed on their views and experiences regarding the preparedness of NQTs for the world of work. Semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, observation and document analysis were triangulated to collect and enrich the data. This ensured the reliability, validity and trustworthiness of the study findings. The collected data were qualitatively analysed through Qualitative Thematic Data Analysis (QTDA) techniques. The study revealed that the newly qualified teachers emanating from this one initial teacher education university underwent contrasting experiences in their development towards becoming teacher professionals. Notably, all NQTs were in agreement that they believed that the ITE programme was sufficiently designed to prepare them for the real-world South African classroom where they would be able to manage and teach within the Intermediate Phase classroom.

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APPENDIX A: NEWLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS' CONSENT LETTER



**Highbury Road
Mowbray
7700
May2020**

Dear Teacher

PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

I am currently a Master's student at the institution mentioned above. My thesis is titled Preparedness of newly qualified teachers to manage and teach in the Intermediate Phase. This study explores the preparedness of newly qualified teachers (NQTs) to teach and manage within the context of the real-life classroom only a few months after obtaining their B.Ed. degree from a university of technology. Your insight on this topic will be highly valued as you could provide first-hand information regarding how to better prepare for a career as a teacher.

With your permission, a digital recording device will be used to facilitate data production and analysis. Strict measures will be taken to protect your anonymity and confidentiality. I will ensure the anonymity of the participants and their schools by omitting the use of their names and the schools' names. Each interview will be digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim by myself as the researcher. You will be allowed to read the transcripts and check them for accuracy.

Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary, and as a participant, you are under no obligation to participate in the study. As a participant, you reserve the right to withdraw consent at any stage during the research process, should you wish to do so. A summary of the research findings will be available to you on request.

Should you agree, you hereby give consent to participate in the research.

Signed at _____ on the _____ day 2020.

.....

APPENDIX B: LETTER TO PRINCIPAL REQUESTING ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS



Highbury Road
Mowbray
7700
May 2020

Dear Principal

REQUEST FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN A ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEW FOR RESEARCH

I am currently a Master of Education student at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Mowbray. The working title of my research is the *Preparedness of newly qualified teachers to manage and teach in the Intermediate Phase*.

My research explores the experiences of newly qualified teachers from the university named above. For this reason, I request to interview principals at primary schools to establish factors relating to the kind of teacher sought after for employment. It would be greatly appreciated and valued if you volunteered to be part of this research by participating in a one-on-one interview.

With your permission, a digital recording device will be used to facilitate data analysis. Strict measures will be taken to protect your anonymity as a participant by omitting the use of your name.

Should you agree, you hereby give consent to be digitally recorded in the research project.

Signed at _____ on the day of _____ 2020

.....

APPENDIX C: LETTER TO WCED REQUESTING RESEARCH TO BE CONDUCTED



Highbury Road
Mowbray
7700
May 2020

Western Cape Education Department
Private Bag X 9114
Cape Town
8000

Dear Sir/Madam

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT CASE STUDY RESEARCH

I am currently a Master of Education student at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Mowbray. The working title of my research is *the Preparedness of newly qualified teachers to manage and teach in the Intermediate Phase*.

My research explores the experiences of newly qualified teachers from the university named above. I request permission to interview NQTs and principals at primary schools, to establish factors relating to the kind of teacher sought after for employment. The participants will be teachers and principals from WCED schools in Western Cape- Cape Town. The intended case study will occur during the first three terms (January to September) and will be conducted during the non-contact time. The research approach employed will be based on one primary data production method, namely one-on-one interviews.

You are kindly requested to grant permission for this research.

I am thanking you in anticipation.

Mrs S. Botha (student number 209032936)

.....

APPENDIX D: ACCEPTANCE LETTER FROM WCED



Directorate: Research

Audrey.wyngaard@westerncape.gov.za
tel: +27 021 467 9272
Fax: 0865902282
Private Bag x9114, Cape Town, 8000
wc.ed.wcape.gov.za

REFERENCE: 20200528-6272
ENQUIRIES: Dr A T Wyngaard

Mrs Stacey Botha
10 Derby Close
Rondevelei
Mitchell's Plain
7785

Dear Mrs Stacey Botha

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: PREPAREDNESS OF NEWLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS TO MANAGE AND TEACH IN THE INTERMEDIATE PHASE

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from **01 June 2020 till 19 September 2021**
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr A.T Wyngaard at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number?
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:
**The Director: Research Services
Western Cape Education Department
Private Bag X9114
CAPE TOWN
8000**

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.
Signed: Dr Audrey T Wyngaard
Directorate: Research
DATE: 29 May 2020

Lower Parliament Street, Cape Town, 8001
tel: +27 21 467 9272 fax: 0865902282
Safe Schools: 0800 45 46 47

Private Bag X9114, Cape Town, 8000
Employment and salary enquiries: 0861 92 33 22
www.westerncape.gov.za

APPENDIX E: ACCEPTANCE LETTER FROM CPUT ETHICAL COMMITTEE



***For office use only	
Date submitted	28-2-2020
Meeting date	6-4-2020
Approval	P/Y/N
Ethical Clearance number	EFEC 10-2/2020

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

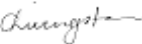
RESEARCH ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

This certificate is issued by the Education Faculty Ethics Committee (EFEC) at Cape Peninsula University of Technology to the applicant/s whose details appear below.

1. Applicant and project details (Applicant to complete this section of the certificate and submit with application as a Word document)

Name(s) of applicant(s):	Mrs Stacey Botha	
Project/study Title:	Preparedness of newly qualified teachers to manage and teach in the Intermediate Phase	
Is this a staff research project, i.e. not for degree purposes?	No, this is not a staff research project.	
If for degree purposes the degree is indicated:	Master's degree in Education	
If for degree purposes, the proposal has been approved by the FRC	Yes	
Funding sources:	None	

2. Remarks by Education Faculty Ethics Committee:

The EFEC unconditionally grants extension of the ethical clearance for this study. This certificate is valid until 31 st December 2024.		
Approved: X	Referred back:	Approved subject to adaptations:
Chairperson Name: Dr Candice Livingston		Date: 28-4-2020
Chairperson Signature: 		
Approval Certificate/Reference: EFEC 10-2/2020		

APPENDIX F: ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: INTERMEDIATE PHASE TEACHING PRACTICE COORDINATOR

1. How long have you been in the teaching profession?
2. How long have you been in the Intermediate Phase Teaching Practice Coordinator position?
3. Who was responsible for the design of the student teacher lesson evaluation rubric?
4. Which subject or course aligns itself with the course known as Teaching Practice?
5. How would you best describe the course Teaching Practice?
6. Give detail to the levels of knowledge that each student teacher must obtain in their four years of Teaching Practice?
7. Have you received any complaints from Mentor-Teachers at schools about a final-year student being unable to perform? If yes, please elaborate.
8. What issues are you facing in properly executing your job as the Teaching Practice Coordinator?
9. Do you first-hand believe that the Teaching Practice course prepares student teachers for the real-life classroom situation? Please elaborate.
10. What would you regard as the main competencies any newly qualified teacher should possess at the end of the degree programme?
11. Is there any advice you would like to give the managers in the higher educational institution relating to Teaching Practice?

APPENDIX G: ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: NEWLY QUALIFIED TEACHER

1. Describe your last teaching practice experience as a final year student teacher. <i>(Reference to school, staff members, learners, parents of learners, resources, TP evaluations)</i>
2. Which class taught at university is most fitting for the real-world teaching experience and why?
3. Which classes taught at university do you feel are unnecessary? Please elaborate.
4. What did you expect your B.Ed. course to teach you in preparation for the real-world classroom situation?
5. Was or is this subject (refer to Q4) offered within your course? (Were your expectations as stated in Q4 above satisfied in your B.Ed. programme? Please elaborate.
6. How would other aspects (those which weren't taught) prepare you better for life as an educator?
7. Are you well trained in using technology within the classroom? Please elaborate.
8. How does the B.Ed. programme prepare you in terms of fulfilling administrative duties?
9. What could lecturers do to improve the teaching abilities of their students?
10. What recommendations would you give prospective students who are interested in pursuing training for a career in education at this institution?

APPENDIX H: ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: PRIMARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

1. How long have you been in the teaching profession?
2. How long have you been in a senior management position?
3. How long have you been the principal of this specific school?
4. What would you say are pertinent qualities which newly qualified teachers should possess?
5. What criteria are used in the recruitment of newly qualified teachers at your school?
6. Have you observed a difference in the ability of NQTs depending on which higher educational institution they received their qualification from?
7. How would you best describe a newly qualified teacher who is competent in teaching?
8. What sort of qualities make for a great teacher?
9. What problems do you experience first-hand with newly qualified teachers?
10. Is there any support for newly qualified teachers when they come to your school? Please, elaborate.
11. What advice would you like to give higher education institutions in preparing newly qualified teachers?

APPENDIX I: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: NEWLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS

<p>1. We are here to discuss how universities can continue to or better prepare newly qualified teachers.</p> <p>a) Would you describe yourself as being thoroughly prepared for the classroom? Yes, or no? Explain</p>
<p>2. What are the typical issues which you are currently experiencing in the classroom, and you have no idea to solve?</p>
<p>3. Concerning issues at school, what aspects would you have liked better preparation for? For example, administrative duties, classroom management, etc.</p>
<p>4. What real-life issues were you exposed to at the university level which would have made you aware of the real-life situations within the South African classroom?</p>
<p>5. To what extent did you receive training in the use of technology to prepare your learners for the 4th industrial revolution?</p>
<p>6. Finally, what sort of advice would you give to the student teacher programme's university curriculum designers? Added, is there anything other than the already discussed questions you would like to discuss?</p>

APPENDIX J: LESSON OBSERVATION SCHEDULE: NEWLY QUALIFIED TEACHER

After all the interviews, a checklist of all the available resources will be established to verify statements made by all members.

Location: Name of school.

Date:

Time: 08:00 until 13:00

	The time they were observed.
Observe the state of classrooms. <i>Including</i> the Library, Camimaths Laboratory, Media Centre and Computer Room.	<i>Duration of the lesson.</i>
Observe the content being taught by the teacher. Give detail of the content taught and how this was taught.	<i>Duration of the lesson.</i>
Observe the classroom management style used by the teacher.	<i>Duration of the lesson.</i>
Inspect available resources/teaching equipment. <i>Including</i> Interactive smartboards, decorative walls with posters, Reading Areas, Blackboards and Administration areas.	<i>Duration of the lesson.</i>
Type of learning taking place? 1) disciplinary, 2) pedagogical, 3) practical, 4) fundamental and 5) situational	<i>Duration of the lesson</i>

APPENDIX K: DOCUMENT ANALYSIS: TEACHING PRACTICE EVALUATION SHEET

Comment on the general similarities of each newly qualified teacher's evaluation sheet from year 1 to year 4 of the degree course programme.

Assessment Criteria:
Acts professionally:
Curriculates meaningfully:
Plans intelligently:
Uses suitable teaching aids/media:
Integrates meaningfully:
Communicates effectively:
Rapport with learners:
Sets the scene effectively:
Presents lessons according to didactic subject requirements:
Displays subject expertise:
Level of expertise concerning the degree of experience:
Promotes effective learning:
Maintains effective discipline:
Additional attributes that enhance the learning experience:

APPENDIX L: QUESTIONNAIRE SCHEDULE: ALL NEWLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS

QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is to be completed by the newly qualified teachers of the Intermediate Phase

This questionnaire is divided into **Section A**, **Section B**, and **Section C**.

In **Section A**, please provide your biographical information (personal information: e.g. age, years of experience, etc.).

In **Section B**, please provide a reflective review of your ability to teach within the Intermediate Phase.

In **Section C**, you are requested to provide your views about your abilities in managing the classroom environment with the diverse educational needs of the learners in your class.

.....

Respond to the following questions by making a tick sign with an X in the box next to the question.

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHIC DATA

A1. Gender:

CATEGORIES	CODES	TICK
Female	A101	
Male	A102	
Others	A103	

A2. Highest professional qualification

CATEGORIES	CODES	TICK
NPDE	A201	
Grade	A202	
B.Ed.	A203	

A3. Location of the school

CATEGORIES	CODES	TICK
Rural Area	A301	
Township	A302	

Suburb	A303	
Informal settlement	A304	

A4. Years of experience in teaching in the Intermediate Phase after attaining your degree?

CATEGORIES	CODES	TICK
One year	A401	
Two years	A402	
Three years	A403	
Four years	A404	
Five years and above	A405	

A5. Your home language or language with which you feel most comfortable communicating?

LANGUAGE	CODES	TICK
ENGLISH	A501	
AFRIKAANS	A502	
ISIXHOSA	A503	
ISIZULU	A504	
OTHER:	A505	

SECTION B: SELF-REFLECTION QUESTIONS

B1. Use the scale below to rate your competence in teaching within the Intermediate Phase

CODES	CATEGORIES	TICK
B101	Weak	
B102	Satisfactory	
B103	Good	

B104	Very good	
B105	Excellent	

B2. Indicate by a tick in the box next to the area or areas that you think need special attention in your knowledge of the Intermediate Phase

CODES	CATEGORIES	TICK
B201	Knowledge of different barriers to learning grade 4, 5 or 6 curricula	
B202	Knowledge of ways to diagnose or identify learning barriers in IP	
B203	Knowledge of organising teaching activities for diverse learning styles in IP	
B204	Knowledge of teaching strategies to address differentiated learning styles in IP	
B205	Knowledge of engaging learners with diverse behavioural patterns in meaningful learning in the IP	

B3: Which of the following cognitive barriers have you experienced in your IP learning environment?

CODES	CATEGORIES	TICK
B301	the problem of paying attention (attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder)	
B302	poor coordination	
B303	hyperactivity and impulsivity	
B304	problems of organising and interpreting visual and auditory information	
B305	disorders of thinking and memory	
B306	difficulties in computation skills and problem-solving	
B307	passive attitude to learning	
B308	language/communication and poor word recognition	

B4. Which of the following behavioural patterns have you experienced in your IP class environment?

CODES	CATEGORIES	TICK
--------------	-------------------	-------------

B4100	Behavioural patterns	
B4101	Problems with inattention, examples are:	
B4001	A. Makes careless mistakes and does not give close attention;	
B4002	B. Does not follow through on instructions and fails to finish schoolwork	
B4003	C. Avoids/dislikes and is reluctant to participate in learning activities)	
B4200	Problems with impulse control, examples are:	
B4201	A. often blurts out answers before questions have been completed	
B4202	B. has trouble waiting their turn;	
B4203	C. often interrupts or intrudes on others in games or conversations	
B4300	Hyperactivity: examples	
B4301	Often fidgets with hands or feet or squirms in seat;	
B4302	Often gets up from seats when remaining seated is expected;	
B4303	Often runs about or climbs excessively in situations in which it is inappropriate	
B4304	Often has difficulty playing or engaging in leisure activities quietly;	
B4305	Often talks excessively;	
B4306	Often acts up if driven by motor and cannot remain still	

B5: What kinds of barriers to learning do your learners experience in your class?

Codes	Categories	Tick
B501	Language barrier (monolingualism)	
B502	Health impairments (e.g. seizure disorder, vision impairment)	
B503	Intellectual disabilities (e.g. performance that is below average intelligence, failure to perform simple and basic learning skills)	
B504	Deaf	
B505	Autism (communication and verbal challenges)	

B6: Which approaches to managing learners with behavioural and emotional problems do you apply in your class?

Codes	Categories	Tick
B601	Communicate expectations clearly in writing	
B602	Ask parents to sign a copy of the classroom rules	

B603	Post rules and consequences in class	
B604	Give learners extra work to do during recess or break time	
B605	Structure teaching and learning activities according to learners' levels of abilities and learning need and monitor the groups.	
B606	Offer choice to do work in class or at home with guidelines to assist parents or guardians.	

SECTION C

This section consists of open-ended questions. You are requested to provide your views about your abilities in managing the classroom environment with the diverse educational needs of the learners in your class.

Codes	Questions	YES	NO
C100	Is there any theoretical knowledge that you rely on to understand the nature of the needs you are experiencing in your practice of teaching the Intermediate Phase?		

C101. Could you please explain how the theory describes the classroom environment with diverse learning needs if your option is yes?

C102. Explain the usefulness of the theoretical knowledge in your practice of teaching IP in a classroom environment with diverse learning needs briefly.

C103 If the option is NO, how do you differentiate the nature of learners' needs in your class?

C104. In your view, is your approach informed by your common sense and creativity?

Codes	Questions	YES	NO
C200	Do you have learners who fail to master simple and basic concepts and skills, for instance pronunciation, word recognition, counting and number recognition, etc., in your class		

C201 If the option is **yes**, explain how you address diverse learners' learning needs and impairments to learning in your lessons?

C202 If the option is NO, what learning difficulties are experienced by the learners in your class and how do you ensure that their challenges are addressed in your teaching.

Codes	Questions	YES	NO
C203	Did your education and training expose you to any approaches to planning and organising IP lessons for the classroom environment with diverse learning needs and impairments?		

C204 If the option is **yes**, which approaches have you found helpful in planning and organising teaching and learning activities for different abilities?

C205 If **No**, provide your views on how you address different levels of abilities in planning and organising teaching and learning activities.

Code	Question	Yes	No
C206	Will you recommend your approach to other teachers and students based on a different Quintile?		

C207: If the option is yes, could you explain its value or usefulness

C208: If the option is No, please give the reasons and what should be done to enable teachers who are based in a different Quintile School to teach in an Intermediate Phase classroom with diverse learners:

(a) Cognitive impairments (attention disorders, speech disorder)

(b) Behavioural patterns (disruptive disorders, mood disorders, hyperactivity and impulse control)

(c) Health impairments such as (spasticity, cerebral palsy, partial deafness and partial blindness)

APPENDIX M: COPY OF EVALUATION FORM FOR INDIVIDUAL LESSON

REMOVED UNIVERSITY LOGO

Faculty of Education
Teaching Practice on the Mowbray Campus
Intermediate Phase
 Form for evaluating an individual lesson

Student Year group: Date of evaluation School Grade Subject: The topic of the lesson:

GUIDELINES

ASPECT EVALUATED	FAIL		PASS			
PLANNING	U S	p	S	V G	E	COMMENTS
Aims and objectives clearly indicated, CAPS compliant						
Logical flow, content sufficient, appropriate to the level						
Content accurate, activities flow smoothly						
Demonstrates a clear understanding of methodology & strategies						
Appropriate and accurate use of resources						

Evidence of planning oral questioning to facilitate learning						

*

ASPECT EVALUATED	FAIL		PASS			
TEACHING APPROACH	U S	p	S	V G	E	COMMENTS
Clear/audible voice, good voice projection; instructions short & simple						
Visual & tactile communication is used when required						
Constant portrayal of professional image						
Teaching methods appropriate and effective for the topic or skill						
The teaching method encourages optimal learner participation						
Content accurate, appropriate to the level						
Teaching is done in logical, manageable bits						
Demonstrates good knowledge of progressions and planning						

Uses teaching equipment & resources optimally and effectively						
Maximum practice time is allotted, realistic and specific to the topic/skill						

ASPECT EVALUATED	FAIL		PASS			COMMENTS
ASSESSMENT	U S	p	S	V G	E	
Frequently assesses learners' progress formatively						
Understands and demonstrates principles of assessment						
Recognizes the need for and provides immediate, specific and constructive feedback						
Varies assessment approach as needed for greater success						
Identifies which skill(s) error(s) need(s) to be corrected first						
Uses a variety of corrective techniques and breaks down skills when correcting						

OVERALL ACHIEVEMENT/PERFORMANCE

- ✓ **Excellent** The lessons showed a clear understanding of learning principles, technical knowledge and a high level of teaching ability
- ✓ **Very Good** Some evaluated sections demonstrated a high level of teaching ability, focus on improving areas as indicated
- ✓ **Good** Sections met the evaluation criteria. Improvement is still needed, as indicated
- ✓ **Poor** Some evaluated sections did not meet practice teach criteria. See the TP coordinator for assistance
- ✓ **Unsatisfactory** Lesson did not meet practice teach criteria. See the TP coordinator for assistance

Circle one percentage below:

Percentage: _____

EXCELLENT	Very good	Good	Poor	Unsatisfactory
75+ %	66 – 74%	50 - 65	45 -49%	0 – 44%

NAME AND SURNAME OF EVALUATOR: _____

.....

**APPENDIX N: BACHELOR OF EDUCATION: GENERAL EDUCATION & TRAINING:
INTERMEDIATE PHASE FIRST-YEAR ACADEMIC PROGRAMME**

Period of Study	Year/Sem Subject	Subject Code	Subject Name	Compulsory or Elective
1	Year	XAI101S	Language X: Afrikaans 1	E
1	Year	XEI101S	Language X: English 1	E
1	Year	XXI101S	Language X: Xhosa 1	E
1	Year	YAI101S	Language Y: Afrikaans 1	E
1	Year	YEI101S	Language Y: English 1	E
1	Year	YXI101S	Language Y: Xhosa 1	E
1	Year	EDA101S	Education 1	C
1	Year	PGS101S	General Professional Studies 1	C
1	Year	PRT101S	Teaching Practice 1	C
1	Year	CUR100S	Curriculum Studies 1	C
1	Year	ITB100S	Natural Sciences 1	C
1	Year	IOE100S	Economic & Man.t Sciences 1	C
1	Year	IOG100S	Social Sciences (2nd Sem.) 1	C
1	Year	IOM100S	Mathematics 1	E
1	Year	ION100S	Mathematics Education 1	E
1	Year	IOT100S	Technology 1	C
1	Year	IOA100S	Arts and Culture 1	C
1	Year	IOH100S	Life Orientation 1	C

Anne Kruger Language Practice

✉ 19 Nooitverwacht, 105 Main Street, Paarl 7646

✉ tel 072 374 6272 or 021 863 2315

✉ annekruger25@gmail.com

To whom it may concern

DECLARATION OF LANGUAGE EDITING

I, Elsje Anne Kruger, hereby declare that I have personally read through the dissertation of Stacey Botha. I have highlighted language errors and checked references. The track changes function was used and the author was responsible for accepting the editor's changes. I did no structural rewriting of the content.

Yours sincerely

Date

5 May 2022

