

CULTIVATING PROFESSIONAL AGENCY: STORIES OF NOVICE TEACHERS IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KWAZULU-NATAL

by

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A Research Dissertation

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for the degree of

Master of Education

Teacher Development Studies

In the School of Education and Development,
Faculty of Education, Edgewood Campus,
University of KwaZulu-Natal



Supervisor: Professor Daisy Pillay

2018

DECLARATION

I, Mrs Jayshree Thilakdhari (210 517 610), hereby declare that:

- (i) The research reported in this dissertation, except where otherwise indicated, is my own original work (and has been submitted in full fulfilment of the academic requirements for the degree of Master of Education).
- (ii) This dissertation has not been submitted in whole or in part for any degree or examination at any other university.
- (iii) This dissertation does not contain other persons' data, tables, pictures, graphs, or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons by means of a complete reference.
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.....

Signed

ETHICAL CLEARANCE



17 January 2018

Mrs Jayshree Thilakdhar 210517610
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Mrs Thilakdhar

Protocol reference number: HSS/2272/017M
Project Title: Cultivating Professional Agency: Stories of Novice teachers' teaching in public primary schools in KwaZulu Natal

Full Approval – Expedited Application

In response to your application received 5 December 2017, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the aforementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything on the best with your study.

Yours faithfully,

Dr Shamile Naidoo (Deputy Chair)
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

/pm

cc: Supervisor: Professor Daisy Pillay
cc: Academic Leader: Research: Dr Jill Kinnear
cc: School Administration: Ms Tyra Klumbe

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SUPERVISOR'S AUTHORISATION

The Statement by the Supervisor:

In my capacity as the student's supervisor, I, **Professor Daisy Pillay**, agree to the submission of this research dissertation.

.....

Signed

ABSTRACT

This research dissertation entitled ‘Cultivating Professional Agency: Stories of Novice Teachers in Public Primary Schools in KwaZulu-Natal’ presents an understanding of the lived personal and professional experiences of novice teachers and the ways in which they cultivate professional agency in public primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal.

This research study aimed at generating in-depth information in order to explore and understand deeply the novice teachers’ stories of cultivating professional agency. This study was conducted with a specific group of novice teachers. Each of the four research participants are either a male or female; Indian or African; a Foundation Phase, Intermediate Phase or Senior Phase teacher; and are teaching in quintile rank 5 public primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

This qualitative research study is located within the interpretivist paradigm and uses narrative inquiry as the research methodology. This allowed me to understand the lived experiences of the novice teachers from the perspective of the participants as they negotiated their meanings of self. Multiple methods of generating data were used for this research study, which included: collage inquiry, artefact retrieval, metaphor drawing and unstructured interviews. The data generated allowed me to produce rich and thick stories of novice teachers. From the storied narratives, I was able to get glimpses of their lives as novice teachers and understand how they make meaning of self in their public primary schooling context in KwaZulu-Natal. The storied narratives were then analysed and interpreted through storied vignettes and themes.

According to literature, novice teachers possess a weak sense of professional agency. However, the analysis and interpretation of this research study revealed that Luke, Lucy, Diya and Zenzile (pseudonyms) negotiated particular meanings of self, learning practices and relationships in and through which they exercised their professional agency in order to be agentic novice teachers within their public primary schooling contexts in KwaZulu-Natal.

This research dissertation contributes uniquely to the field of education, more specifically adding to the growing body of knowledge on novice teachers and professional agency in public primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

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“Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless.”

Mother Teresa

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DEDICATION

I, Mrs Jayshree Thilakdhari (210 517 610), hereby dedicate my research dissertation to:

Mr Harichans Rampersad and Mrs Shureka Rampersad

My loving parents, I am who I am today because of you both. Dad and Mum, you are my first Gods; my shining stars; and my guiding light. I am truly blessed that you have instilled in me a love of education and hard work. Your support and encouragement have always been with me throughout my life. There are no words adequate to say THANK YOU, so instead I will say I LOVE YOU.

THANKS MOM AND DAD

**I love you Mama and Daddy
You taught me oh so much;
I can't begin to describe all the ways,
That my life you profoundly touched,
You taught me morals and values
You helped me reach my goals
And all the things I learnt from you
Will stay till I am old.
I want to thank you deeply,
For being there for me;
And for being absolutely, without a doubt
The best parents ones could be.
Patricia Neely-Dorsey**



LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BCom	Bachelor of Commerce
BEd	Bachelor of Education
BEd Hons	Bachelor of Education Honours
CPTD	Continuing Professional Teacher Development
DBE	Department of Basic Education
HOD	Head of Department
IT	Identity Theory
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
MEd	Master of Education
NT	Novice Teacher
PA	Professional Agency
PGCE	Post Graduate Certificate in Education
SA	South Africa
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SIT	Social Identity Theory
TIT	Teacher Identity Theory
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	i
ETHICAL CLEARANCE	ii
SUPERVISOR’S AUTHORISATION	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
DEDICATION	vi
LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	viii
LIST OF TABLES	xv
LIST OF FIGURES	xvi
LIST OF APPENDICES	xviii

CHAPTER ONE

NOVICE TEACHERS CULTIVATING PROFESSIONAL AGENCY IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KWAZULU-NATAL

1.1 Rationale of the Research Study	2
1.1.1 My Life as a Novice Teacher	2
1.1.2 Studying Novice Teacher Professional Agency	5
1.1.3 Political Drivers Informing the Professional Development of Novice Teachers	6
1.2 Key Research Questions	7

1.3 Public Primary Schooling Context	8
1.4 Methodological Approach	8
1.5 Definitions of Key Concepts	9
1.5.1 Teacher	9
1.5.2 Novice Teacher	9
1.5.3 Agency	9
1.5.4 Professional Agency	10
1.6 The Organisation of the Dissertation	10
1.7 Conclusion	11

CHAPTER TWO

SCHOLARY CONVERSATIONS ON THE LIVES OF NOVICE TEACHERS

2.1 Introduction	13
2.2 Overview of the Chapter	13

SECTION A

2.3 Novice Teachers Early Experiences	14
2.3.1 Challenges of Novice Teachers within the Schooling Context	14
2.3.2 Support for Novice Teachers in the Schooling Context	15
2.4 Professional Agency of Teachers and Novice Teachers	16
2.4.1 Teacher Agency	16
2.4.2 Novice Teacher Agency	17

SECTION B

2.5 Theoretical Framework and Conceptual Framework	18
----------------------------------------------------------	----

2.5.1 Theoretical Framework	18
2.5.2 Conceptual Framework	19
2.6 Novice Teacher Professional Agency	20
2.7 Conclusion	20

CHAPTER THREE

A METHODOLOGICAL LANDSCAPE

3.1 Introduction	23
3.2 Overview of the Chapter	23

SECTION A

3.3 The Research Methodology and Design	24
3.3.1 The Research Methodology: Narrative Inquiry	24
3.3.2 The Research Process: Qualitative Research Design	25
3.3.3 The Research Paradigm	25
3.3.4 The Research Participants	26
3.3.5 The Research Context	27
3.3.6 A Description of Each Participant	27

SECTION B

3.4 The Research Methods	29
3.4.1 Collage Inquiry	29
3.4.2 Artefact Retrieval	31
3.4.3 Metaphor Drawing	32
3.4.4 Unstructured Interviews	34
3.5 Data Production and Collection Plan	35

SECTION C

3.6 Data Analysis and Interpretation	36
3.6.1 Narrative Analysis – Working with Data	36
3.6.2 Analysis of Narratives – Working with Storied Narratives	37
3.6.3 Storied Vignettes	38
3.6.4 Narrative Thematic Analysis	39
3.6.5 Ethical Issues	39
3.6.6 Trustworthiness	39
3.6.7 Limitations of the Research Study	40
3.6.8 The Role of the Researcher	41
3.7 Conclusion	42

CHAPTER FOUR

STORIED NARRATIVES:

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE LIVES OF NOVICE TEACHERS

4.1 Introduction	44
4.2 Luke	46
4.2.1 Storied Narrative: “Awakens my inside”	46
4.2.2 Poem: “First Year Teacher”	52
4.3 Lucy	53
4.3.1 Storied Narrative: “Born to Teach”	53
4.3.2 Poem: “Inspiring Teacher”	58
4.4 Diya	59
4.4.1 Storied Narrative: “Nostalgia Lane”	59

4.4.2 Poem: “Professional Teacher”	64
4.5 Zenzile	65
4.5.1 Storied Narrative: “Exciting Reflection”	65
4.5.2 Poem: “New Appointed Teacher”	71
4.6 Conclusion	72

CHAPTER FIVE

STORIED VIGNETTES:

NOVICE TEACHERS PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL MEANINGS OF SELF THAT INFORMS PROFESSIONAL AGENCY

5.1 Introduction	74
5.2 Overview of the Chapter	75

SECTION A

5.3 Personal Meanings of Self and Professional Meanings of Self that informs Agency.....	76
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----

5.3.1 Storied Vignette One

“Diligent Boy Child to an Active, Mentor Novice Teacher”	76
----------------------------------------------------------------	----

5.3.2 Storied Vignette Two

“Enthusiastic Girl Child to a Leader Novice Teacher”	81
------------------------------------------------------------	----

5.3.3 Storied Vignette Three

“Compassionate Girl Child to a Care-Giver Novice Teacher”	85
-----------------------------------------------------------------	----

5.3.4 Storied Vignette Four

“Resilient Girl Child to a Self-Directed Learner Novice Teacher”	90
------------------------------------------------------------------------	----

SECTION B

5.4 Personal and Professional Meanings of Self that informs Professional Agency	93
5.5 Conclusion	95

CHAPTER SIX

NOVICE TEACHERS CULTIVATION OF PROFESSIONAL AGENCY IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KWAZULU-NATAL

6.1 Introduction	97
6.2 Overview of the Chapter	98
6.3 Concept Map	99
SECTION A	
6.4 Novice Teacher Cultivating Professional Agency Within the Classroom	100
SECTION B	
6.5 Novice Teacher Cultivating Professional Agency Beyond the Classroom	103
SECTION C	
6.6 Novice Teacher Negotiating a Personal-Professional Self Differently	106
6.7 Conclusion	108

CHAPTER SEVEN

A REFLECTION OF MY RESEARCH JOURNEY

7.1 Introduction	111
7.2 Context of the Research Study	111
7.3 Methodological Reflection: Learning about my Ethical Responsibility as a Narrative Inquirer	112
7.4 Summary of the Findings	113
7.4.1 Particular Experiences and Relationships Shape Meanings of Agency	113
7.4.2 Novice Teachers Cultivate Professional Agency through Learning Spaces and Relationships	116
7.5 Theoretical Reflection	119

7.6 Policy Imperatives	121
7.7 Practice Imperatives	121
7.8 Contributions to Educational Research	122
7.9 Suggestions for Further Research	122
7.10 Final Reflection	123
REFERENCE LIST	124
APPEXDIX 1	135
APPEXDIX 2	136
APPEXDIX 3	137
APPEXDIX 4	138
APPEXDIX 5	139
APPEXDIX 6	141

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1:	Profile of The Research Participants	27
Table 2:	The Research Design	35

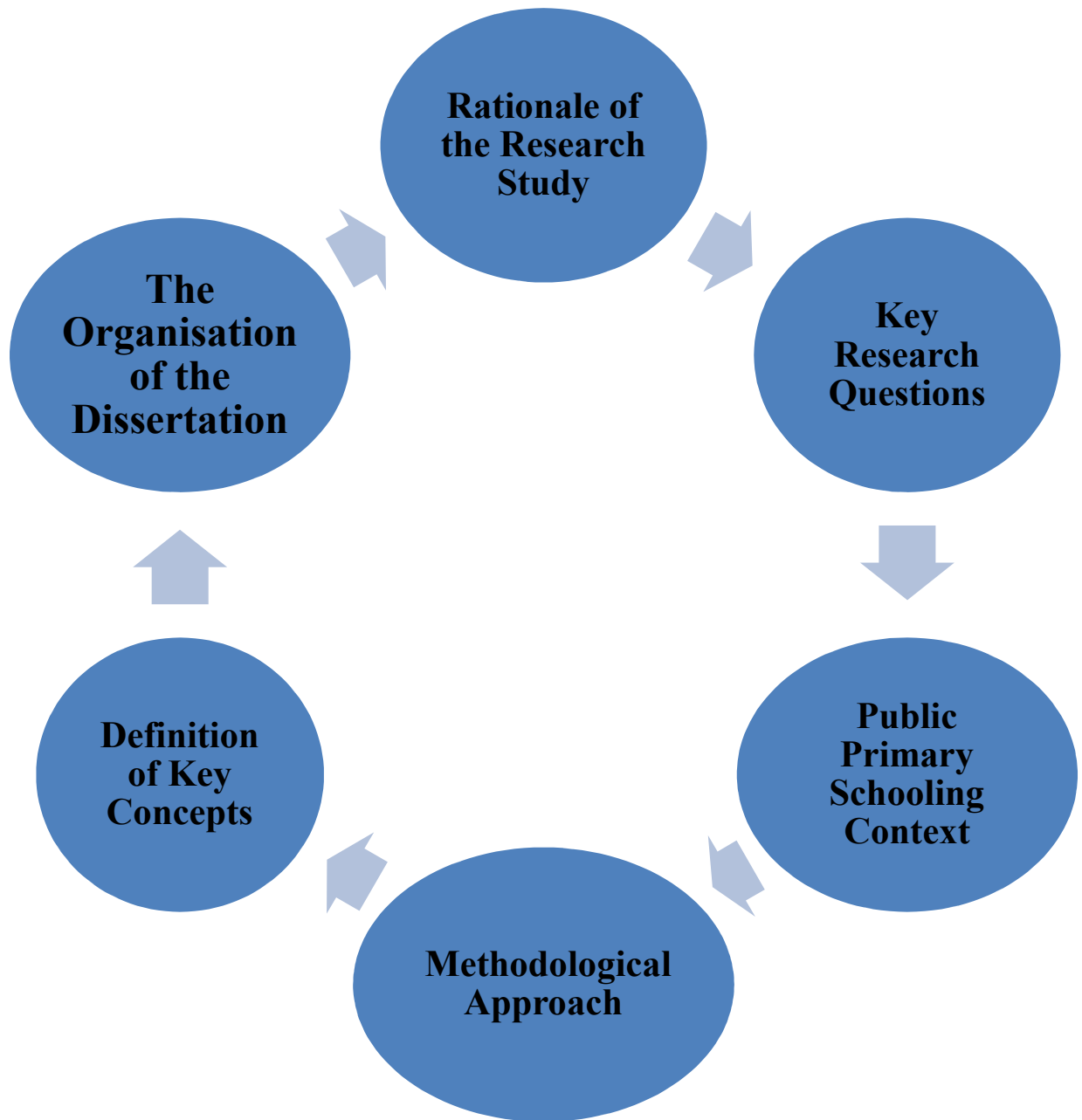
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1:	Ant Visual	2
Figure 2:	Ant Poem	4
Figure 3:	Teacher Identity Theory and Concept of Professional Agency	20
Figure 4:	Example of a Collage	29
Figure 5:	Example of an Artefact	31
Figure 6:	Example of a Metaphor Drawing	32
Figure 7:	Luke's Collage	46
Figure 8:	Luke's Artefact	48
Figure 9:	Luke's Metaphor Drawing	49
Figure 10:	Lucy's Collage	54
Figure 11:	Lucy's Artefact	54
Figure 12:	Lucy's Metaphor Drawing	57
Figure 13:	Diya's Collage	60
Figure 14:	Diya's Artefact	60
Figure 15:	Diya's Metaphor Drawing	61
Figure 16:	Zenzile's Artefact	66
Figure 17:	Zenzile's Collage	67
Figure 18:	Zenzile's Metaphor Drawing	68
Figure 19:	Luke's Collage Portrait	76
Figure 20:	Lucy's Collage Portrait	81
Figure 21:	Diya's Collage Portrait	85

Figure 22:	Zenzile’s Collage Portrait	90
Figure 23:	Initial Concept Map	98
Figure 24:	Refined Concept Map	98
Figure 25:	Luke’s Experiences and Relationships Shape Meanings of Agency	114
Figure 26:	Lucy’s Experiences and Relationships Shape Meanings of Agency	114
Figure 27:	Diya’s Experiences and Relationships Shape Meanings of Agency	115
Figure 28:	Zenzile’s Experiences and Relationships Shape Meanings of Agency	115
Figure 29:	Novice Teachers’ Meanings of Professional Agency	116
Figure 30:	Luke’s Cultivation of Professional Agency	117
Figure 31:	Lucy’s Cultivation of Professional Agency	117
Figure 32:	Diya’s Cultivation of Professional Agency	118
Figure 33:	Zenzile’s Cultivation of Professional Agency	119
Figure 34:	Novice Teacher Professional Agency	120

LIST OF APPENDICIES

APPENDIX 1:	Collage Inquiry	135
APPENDIX 2:	Artefact Retrieval	136
APPENDIX 3:	Metaphor Drawing	137
APPENDIX 4:	Unstructured Interview	138
APPENDIX 5:	Letter to the Principal	139
APPENDIX 6:	Letter to the Research Participant	141



CHAPTER ONE

NOVICE TEACHERS CULTIVATING PROFESSIONAL AGENCY IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KWAZULU-NATAL

“Being a new teacher is like trying to fly an airplane while building it”¹

1.1 Rationale of the Research Study

1.1.1 My Life as a Novice Teacher

The year 2016 marked my second year of being a novice teacher (NT) in a public primary school in the Durban region of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), South Africa (SA). I was also a second year student pursuing my Bachelor of Education Honours (BEd Hons) Degree at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). On 1st June 2016, I was requested in the ‘Personal and Professional Identity in Teaching’ module to respond to the question: ‘Who am I as a teacher?’ I was then requested to sketch a visual or compose a narrative and include critical moments about my life as a NT. This identity question gave me the opportunity to think deeply and reflectively. The only thought that entered my head at that specific moment was a visual of an Ant. I illustrated an image of that ant as a resemblance to my NT self and I jotted down a narrative. Below is the visual of the ant that I sketched.



Figure 1: Ant Visual

¹ Quote by Rick Smith, a teacher trainer, international educational consultant and presenter. He has shared practical teaching strategies to teachers in the United States of America and fourteen other countries, including Ghana, West Africa.

"I clearly reminisce about my early teaching career experience as if it was just a day ago. It was definitely a captivating and meaningful experience, or should I say: an adrenalin roller coaster ride filled with mixed emotions. I was just an 'ant' in such a huge educational world. Teaching is not a simple profession; rather a complex one. And with saying that, I had to take into consideration the CAPS curriculum, management, teachers, learners, policies, parents, my schooling context and the list goes on. My experience of being a student at university did not adequately prepare me for the teaching profession. Teaching was much tougher than I had ever imagined it would be. At my school, I was exposed to negativity and faced with countless challenges in addition I received no support or encouragement from my management. As a method of self-perseverance, I enacted many roles and duties: I was a teacher for English, Mathematics, Life Skills, as well as isiZulu. I was the editor of the school newspaper, dance instructor, and school function coordinator. I was also a 'nurse', 'doctor', 'lawyer', and a role model regardless of my numerous challenges."

Journal Entry (June 2016)

The narrative excerpt above is an extract from my journal. It highlighted the significance of the ant which resembled me as a NT at the very beginning of my teaching journey. My initial thoughts of working as a NT were that of being happy and stress-free, with all focus placed on the learners. However, I did not think for a moment that I would experience as many challenges as I did. Unfortunately, I found the reality of being a NT in a public primary school in KZN less idyllic.

Ants "play an integral role in almost every ecosystem" (Clarke, Fisher & Le Buhn, 2008) and as a NT, I have important duties and responsibilities. This ant that I had sketched represented particular hierarchal position at my place of work; as a post level one teacher. Although ants are tiny and quite insignificant creatures, they are strong-willed and have power to accomplish any given duty (Spirit Animal Totems, 2017). The many legs of this ant represent my daily duties and responsibilities that I undertook without any support or mentoring from senior or experienced managers. As a NT, I was committed to accomplishing my numerous duties and responsibilities; no matter how difficult it seemed for novices. Just as the hard-working and persistent ant, I was not a quitter under any circumstances.

Subsequent to the narrative that I had written, I was encouraged to draw special attention to and identify 4 - 6 words and phrases that I felt were important, in order to create my very own pantoum poem. My pantoum poem assisted me in carving my subject matter for this research study. The title of my pantoum poem is: Ant Poem.

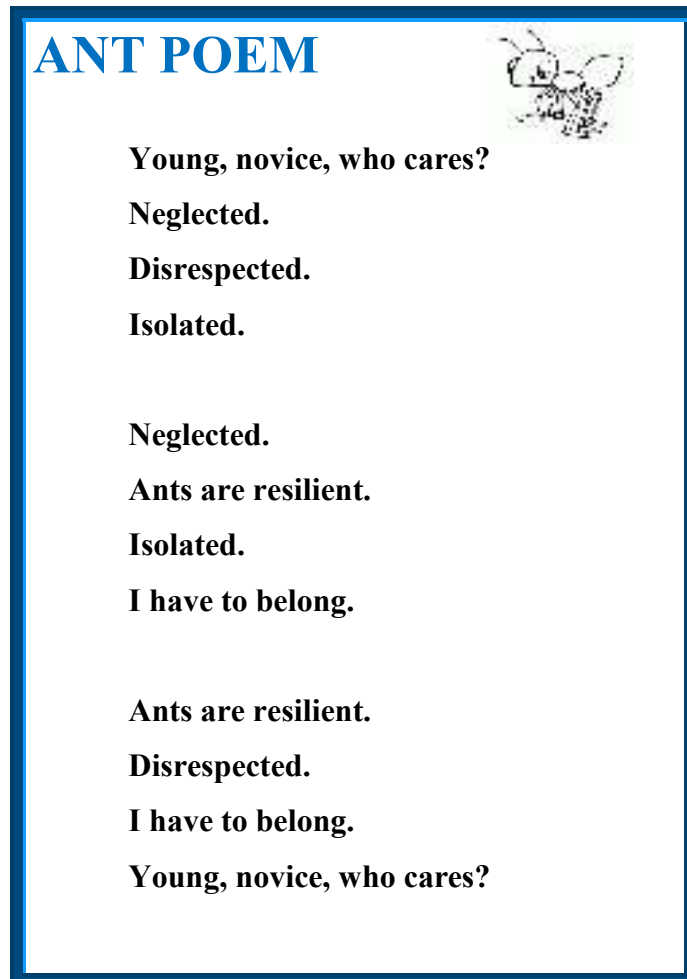


Figure 2: Ant Poem

This poem has been written in response to an assigned task given to me by my lecturer in one of my BEd Hons classes in June 2016.

As a NT, I experienced great disapproval from management and other staff members at my workplace, particularly when I took the opportunity to discover spaces in which I could exercise my voice, visibility and be appreciated for work that I do inside and outside the classroom. In a setting of neglect and lack of respect, NTs have to be resilient in overcoming their schooling complexities and challenges so that they can be the sort of teachers they envision themselves to be. Being a NT, I developed an ambition to improve my knowledge,

skills and overall personal and professional development so that I could be better equipped in my daily duties.

In this research study, I draw from a sociological perspective on identity, for the purpose of understanding NTs as social beings. Fowler (2008, p. 1) defines the sociological perspective as “an approach to understanding human behaviour by placing it within its broader social context.” It supports the development of an “expanded”, “social” and “collective approach to identity”, rather than an “individual” and “psychological” approach (Lawler, 2008, p. 1). Sociology looks at the Social Identity Theory as a social concept. The self and identity of an individual is understood in relation to the society. From this, I undertake a Teacher Identity Theory, which assists me in offering an understanding of NTs lived experiences of cultivating professional agency (PA) within their public primary schooling context in KwaZulu-Natal.

1.1.2 Studying Novice Teacher Professional Agency

As a Master of Education (MEd) student, I focus specifically on exploring and understanding how NTs negotiate their complex schooling contexts and develop themselves personally, socially and professionally. At the beginning of a NTs journey, they encounter tremendous difficulties and challenges in their schooling lives (Dube, 2008). Some of these difficulties include: classroom management and organisation; ill-discipline; innumerable demands from management; insufficient resources; large class sizes and problems with lesson planning (Thomas & Beauchamp, 2011). NTs would recall their first job following graduation as a stressful and overwhelming experience. It is regularly argued that an individual’s university experience prepares them more theoretically, and when faced with practice, it turns into a challenging task (Cox, 2017). NTs have a sense of feeling insignificant, disrespected, invisible and marginalised during their initial years of their teaching careers (Maskit & Orland-Barak, 2011). Maciejewski (2007) noted that NTs have to either ‘swim’ or ‘sink’. Recent studies depict NTs wanting to leave the profession along with a high number of teachers having already left (Edwards & Joiner, 2008). This may stem from, minimal mentoring, insufficient professional development activities, unrealistic assumptions of what a classroom climate is actually like, no formal induction; or a counterproductive atmosphere that leads to dislike and angst amongst stakeholders (Maciejewski, 2007). NTs have to “keep their heads above water” in complicated and challenging situations (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009, p. 814).

The focal point of many research studies is the lack of NT education preparation, lack of induction or mentoring initiatives, attrition of NTs, inadequate professional development, or ineffective school climate. The intention of this research study is to explore and understand the lives of those NTs who negotiate their daily challenges, make a choice ‘to swim’ in this complex educational terrain, and care enough about themselves not only to adjust to the new environment and organisational culture, but learn in their own ways, without guidance from others.

1.1.3 Political Drivers Informing the Professional Development of Novice Teachers

The new Democratic government has earmarked transforming the educational system by providing South African children with quality education. Historically, there have been three main curriculum reforms: The first was Curriculum 2005 promulgated in 1998; the second was the Revised National Curriculum Statement in 2005; and the current reform is the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) introduced in 2012. SA has adopted and developed several policies with core focus on learners; teachers; teaching; learning; development; and formal schooling contexts. These include: The South African Schools Act (1996); The National Education Policy Act (1996); and The Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa (2011). These directives depict teachers as pivotal agents facilitating a good quality education system. These guidelines for teachers affirm the necessary requirements that they must possess so that they may improve themselves. Furthermore, they outline the strategic objectives that are vital for the development of educational schedules, training and principles. The desired outcome of this policy is improving the overall quality of both teachers and teaching. Congruent with the *Norms and Standards for Educators*, there are seven core roles that are required for the successful implementation of the development of education (National Education Policy Act, 1996). These specified roles are an interpretation of what an ideal teacher should be. One of the seven roles emphasizes teachers as leaders. A teacher is motivated to “make decisions appropriate to the level; manage learning in the classroom; carry out classroom administrative duties efficiently and participate in school decision making structures.” (National Education Policy Act, 1996, p.13).

The significance of professional development for teachers is that it covers a wide variety of issues, which include: teacher knowledge; professional skills; teaching; learning and work

identity. However, these policy initiatives neglect to specifically talk to the learning and development of NTs, especially in South Africa where there are on-going changes made to the curriculum. Through this research study, I intend to identify and understand this missing dimension and focus on discovering how NTs cultivate professional agency as they contend their multifaceted educational landscapes. By means of engaging with NTs and unpacking their daily lives, this study explores the lived personal and professional experiences of NTs by uncovering their enabling and constraining factors for cultivating professional agency in their public primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal.

1.2 Key Research Questions

For the purposes of exploring and understanding the lived personal and professional experiences of novice teachers in public primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal, three key research questions were created to inform this research dissertation.

The first key research question that informs this research dissertation is:

Who are novice teachers working in public primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal?

By exploring this question, this research study provides a platform to understand who NTs are and their lived experiences of cultivating professional agency in public primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal through the stories told by them.

The second key research question that informs this research dissertation is:

What personal and professional meanings inform novice teacher self in public primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal?

By exploring this question, this research study provides an opportunity to understand what personal and professional meanings inform NT self. NTs lived experiences are vital in understanding the negotiations they make of self and the meanings of professional agency that they create and recreate within their public primary schooling contexts.

The third key research question that informs this research dissertation is as follows:

How do novice teachers cultivate professional agency in public primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal?

By exploring this question, this research study offers an avenue to understand the manner in which NTs cultivate professional agency within their public primary schools in KwaZulu-

Natal. The unique experiences of NTs are vital in making meaning of professional agency within their public primary schooling context.

1.3 Public Primary Schooling Context

Public primary schools in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa are referred to as government schools which mean that these schools receive funding from the State as opposed to private (independent) schools which rely solely on tuition charges for support. The government schools are categorized according to quintiles ranging from Quintile 1-3 very poor to poor schools, which do not charge fees and are wholly funded by the State, to Quintile 4-5, wealthy schools, partly funded by the State (Dass & Rinquest, 2017). In these schools, learners are educated in three different phases. The first is the foundation phase, which comprises of Grade R - 3 classes. The second is the intermediate phase, which comprises of Grade 4 - 6 classes. The third is the senior phase, which comprises of Grade 7 classes only. In these public primary schools, English is the chosen medium of instruction, and these schools are co-educational; where boys and girls are taught together. In this research study, the crucial features of public and primary schooling play a distinctive and vital role in understanding NTs. I explore the lived experiences of NTs by understanding who they are, what they do and how they negotiate themselves and make meaning of agency in their professional contexts.

1.4 Methodological Approach

This study is a qualitative research study, located within the interpretivist paradigm, and focuses on generating quality and in-depth stories, as well as exploring a deeper and richer understanding of the manner in which individuals create meaning of their lived experiences (Creswell, 2009). In order to best explore NTs lived personal and professional experiences, narrative inquiry as the methodological approach will be used. The main intent of a narrative inquirer is to inquire into experiences and further understand and analyse lived experiences of people in a particular context (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The data collected from the research participants will be in the form of stories which will then be recreated by the researcher into storied narratives. Through these recreated stories, the researcher will make an analysis to understand and give meaning to the research participants' lived experiences of cultivating professional agency in (Andrews, Squire & Tambokou, 2008). The methodological approach is discussed in more detail in Chapter Three.

1.5 Definitions of Key Concepts

In this section, I provide the definitions of four key concepts that are apparent throughout my research study. These include: teacher, novice teacher, agency and professional agency.

1.5.1 Teacher

A teacher refers to a professional being, whose profession is teaching. This individual transfers skills, competences, values and knowledge to others through facilitating a curriculum and through other educational activities (Oxford Dictionary, 2017, p. 1).

1.5.2 Novice Teacher

A NT is defined as a “teacher who is new to the field of education” (Sarpy-Simpson, 2005, p. 9); has obtained an educational qualification; is accredited with a teaching record and holds not more than 3 years of teaching experience in the classroom context (IGI Global, 2017). The classroom teaching experience does not include practise teaching or substitute teaching. Terms such as novice, new, beginner, first-time, or newly qualified teacher are often interchangeably used (IGI Global, 2017). NTs bring their own educational background, motivation, levels of preparation, “experience, attitude, belief, individual capacity and knowledge about subject matter and other domains of teacher knowledge” into their initial educational context (Merseth, Sommer & Dickstein, 2009, p. 90). NTs may use these in order to fit into their teaching and learning communities and experiment with their multiple roles of being a professional. In this research study, the NTs on-going negotiations of their personal and professional self are vital in their stories of cultivating professional agency in public primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal.

1.5.3 Agency

In a broad sense, agency is defined as the “capacity to initiate purposeful action that implies will, autonomy, freedom and choice” (Lipponen & Kumpulainen, 2011, p. 812). Rose (2005) describes agency as the magnitude of an individual’s feeling of control over their actions. Individuals are at liberty to make choices and have the capacity to act upon those choices for particular purposes (Zimmerman & Cleary, 2006).

1.5.4 Professional Agency

Professional agency is a term that refers to “professionals who act intentionally, exercise control, and have an effect on their professional identity, work, working environment, and professional development” (Hokka, Vahasantanen, & Mahlakaarto, 2016, p. 37). In this research study, NTs as professional beings negotiate their professional lives so that they may enact their duties and responsibilities in an agentic fashion within their professional contexts.

1.6 The Organisation of the Dissertation

Chapter One

In this chapter, I provide an overview of this research dissertation. I elucidate the background and rationale as well as the focus, purpose and context of this research study. Thereafter, three key research questions, and the methodological approach are highlighted.

Chapter Two

The focus of this chapter is to foreground the literature landscape relevant to the research study. The literature review highlights ‘scholarly conversations’ (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 136) which bring out key themes, debates and discussions relevant to novice teachers and professional agency. This chapter also incorporates a theoretical framing and conceptual framing for this research study. The Social Identity Theory (SIT), Teacher Identity Theory and the Concept of Professional Agency assist in explaining how NTs negotiate their personal and professional experiences in order to cultivate professional agency within their social contexts.

Chapter Three

The intention of this chapter is to provide an understanding of the research methodology and design of this research study. The research methodology is a narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry was used to assemble the different dimensions of NTs lived experiences. The multiple methods of data production are as follows: collage inquiry, artefact retrieval, metaphor drawing and unstructured interviews. The research process, paradigm, participants, context and data generation methods are presented. In addition to this, the data analysis and interpretation are discussed.

Chapter Four

In this chapter, I present a reconstructed account of the lived personal and professional experiences of NTs in the form of storied narratives. Storied narratives provide an insight into the lived personal and professional experiences of NTs and from this process a glimpse of their multifaceted lives are obtained. This chapter offers a narrative analysis of the first key research question.

Chapter Five

Thereafter, I present a narrative analysis of the second key research question. In this chapter, collage portraits were used as a tool to analyse selected excerpts from the storied narratives and support storied vignettes in order to answer the second key research question.

Chapter Six

Further, I present a narrative analysis of the third key research question. In this chapter, concept mapping was used as a tool to analyse selected excerpts from the storied vignettes and support narrative thematic analysis in order to answer the third key research question.

Chapter Seven

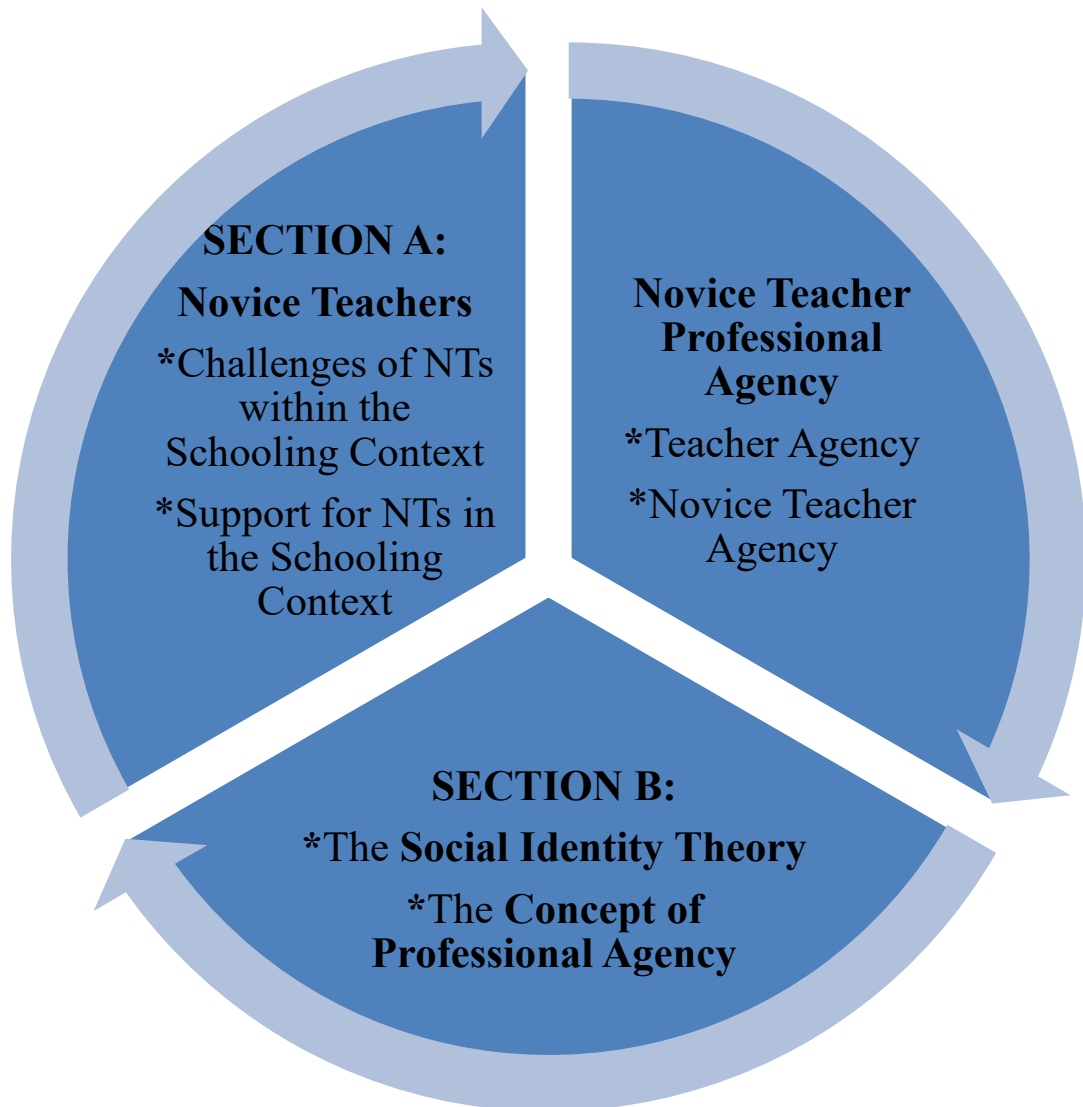
Finally, I foreground the summary of the findings of this research study. In this chapter, a methodological reflection and theoretical reflection are presented as well as policy imperatives and practice imperatives. Thereafter, contributions to educational research and suggestions for further research are presented. The dissertation is concluded with a final reflection.

1.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I provide an overview of the research dissertation. A personal, professional and contextual rationale was discussed. Thereafter, three key research questions that informed my study were explained. In addition, the public primary schooling context was highlighted. An overview of the methodological approach was presented. The definitions of key concepts that are pertinent to this study were presented. Finally, the organisation of the dissertation was outlined. The subsequent chapter, Chapter Two, will present a review of relevant literature focusing on the lived experiences of NTs and which is significant to the research study.

Introduction

- Overview of the Chapter



Conclusion

CHAPTER TWO

SCHOLARY CONVERSATIONS ON THE LIVES OF NOVICE TEACHERS

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter highlighted the rationale, key research questions, the public primary schooling context, definition of key concepts and the methodological approach of this research study. In this chapter, an overview of studies conducted by numerous South African and international academics related to NTs daily lived experiences and their on-going negotiations of who they are and how they may cultivate professional agency within the public primary schooling context is presented. The purpose of this chapter is to elucidate the understanding of who NTs are; their experiences, challenges, support and agency. The research study is underpinned by a theoretical framework and conceptual framework.

2.2 Overview of the Chapter

This chapter is divided into two sections: **Section A** and **Section B**.

- **SECTION A**

In this section, a critical review of what is known in the research literature about novice teachers and agency within the South African and international contexts are provided with specific reference to: NT' experiences, challenges, support and professional agency.

- **SECTION B**

In this section, a theoretical framework and conceptual framework for this research study is provided with specific reference to: Teacher Identity Theory and the concept of Professional Agency.

SECTION A

2.3 Novice Teachers Early Experiences

This section will discuss the challenges faced by NTs and the kinds of support needed for their development.

2.3.1 Challenges of Novice Teachers within the Schooling Context

There is a complex transition from being a student at an educational institution to being a teacher in a real-life classroom (Maskit & Orland-Barak, 2011). This transition is viewed as an alarming and formidable experience in which early career teachers struggle with numerous issues in their initial years of teaching (IGI Global, 2017). Pearce (2011, p 49) indicate that beginner teachers “often experience a mismatch or dissonance between idealism and reality”. As a NT begins their journey of being a teacher, they enter a precarious role. The NT is placed straight into the deep end and either fails or succeeds in their new role. NTs have the ability to construct and reconstruct their personal and professional identities and adapt to a new social environment. Caspersen and Raaen (2014) affirm a distinguishable transitional period in the life of a NT. This transition begins at one institutional setting (the educational context) leading to another setting (the working context), and is usually the first three years of their working careers. During this perplexing period, NTs have a feeling of being invisible due to their low levels of contribution and professional development (Caspersen & Raaen, 2014). Senom, Zakaria, and Shah (2013) state that NTs receive inadequate developmental and supportive initiatives that prepares them for the switch from university to the classroom. Teaching during the initial years of a NTs career is extremely difficult and the transition is traditionally known as the “survival stage” (Katz, 1972; Ryan 1986). It is “a period of struggle that must be gone through in order to learn to be in control of a classroom and before one can get on with becoming an effective teacher” (Clandinin, 1989, p. 21). This transitional phase is more challenging and difficult than the novices expect (Swennen, Shagrir & Cooper, 2009).

NTs experience countless challenges, difficulties, struggles and setbacks as they manage their role of being a new professional in the initial years of their working lives (Tait, 2008). These challenges include: unfamiliar and unfriendly teaching contexts, concerns about learners, “curriculum” issues; organisational guidelines and processing problems, clash of thinking between others in the workplace, assessment requirements, “professional norms” and issues

regarding the greater society (Feiman-Nemser, 2001, p. 1028). It is argued that NTs have the responsibility of managing and handling their job on their own (Caspersen & Raaen, 2014). NTs are expected to undertake full professional duties and responsibilities just as an experienced teacher would from the very first day that they begin work in their schooling environments (Killeavy, 2006). Tait (2008) adds that NTs are also expected to carry full teaching loads and perform other duties just like how an experienced teacher would.

Maskit and Orland-Barak (2011, p. 438) declare “shady corners of teaching” or the aggressive and conflicting side of what it is really like for the NT is current. According to Maskit and Orland-Barak (2011, p. 439), these aspects include the incompatibility of “vision” and “reality” of teaching; “the realisation of the limitations of a teacher’s capacity”; and importantly the struggles that teachers face when they have to reconstruct themselves so that they can function in the educational system. Makhanya (2010) adds that the process of induction and mentoring for NTs are of a weak one; and therefore this leads to more problems. In the absence of specific mentoring and induction programmes, Long, Hall, Conway, and Murphy (2012) distinguish NTs as pressurized individuals and without support they become lost in the field of education during their initial stages of their teaching careers.

According to Ozturk (2008, p. 36) classroom management is referred to as “the monster in first-year teachers’ nightmares”. It is a huge challenge faced by NTs that causes great stress. It is often said that the “inability to manage a class is a sign of weakness” (Ozturk, 2008, p. 37). NTs may learn and improve their competencies which are important for the success in the management of their classroom and assists in developing their professional identities (Swennen, Shagrir & Cooper, 2009). Apart from the challenges faced inside of the classroom, NTs experience challenges outside of the classroom. During this perplexing time, NTs feel lonely, isolated and intimidated in their new schooling contexts. In addition to these feelings, NTs are fearful of asking for support and assistance because they may appear to be incompetent or even un-prepared (Tait, 2008).

2.3.2 Support for Novice Teachers in the Schooling Context

Given the difficulty and challenges faced in the transitioning experience which is referred to as “daunting and demanding” in the life of a NT in transitioning into a professional, many strategies can be employed which may support these NTs and allow them to develop skills and knowledge in order to enable them to cope with their schooling context (Killeavy, 2006, p. 168). These strategies include: orientation, introduction sessions, in-service training,

school based workshops and mentoring programmes (Blasé & Blasé, 2016). NTs that care enough for themselves will frequently utilise these strategies to the greatest of their abilities and ‘swim’ in the multifaceted realities that they are confronted with (Blasé & Blasé, 2016). The *Guide 3 for School Management Teams* (DoE, 2002, p. 31) indicates “a good school should have a carefully planned induction and mentoring programme, which is run at the beginning of the year.” However, this is not prevalent in South African schools (Du Toit and Smith, 2016). Therefore, NTs find difficulty with managing and coping in their initial years of their teaching careers. Supporting NTs through induction and mentoring programmes prove successful as it decreases isolation and loneliness, and increases confidence and professional growth (Hobsen et al, 2009). Mentoring and induction is a process in which a highly experienced and skilled individual serves as a role model, educates, “counsels” and motivates a less experienced and less skilled person for the intention of “promoting the latter’s professional” improvement and development. (Lee, 2006, p. 233). NTs need the adequate and necessary support in order to grow and learn in their new roles as professionals as well as need to be resilient beings (Tait, 2008). NTs become resilient when they cope successfully with their challenges, overcome difficulties and remain optimistic about their teaching profession (Tait, 2008).

2.4 Professional Agency of Teachers and Novice Teachers

This section will discuss the agency of teachers and NTs.

2.4.1 Teacher Agency

Teacher agency is defined as “the capacity of teachers to use their professional discretion in their pedagogical and curricular practices, alongside their accountability to the state which generally maintains the overall authority for educational policy” (Campbell, 2012, p.183). Teachers have the control, influence and “power ... to “actively and purposefully direct their own working lives within structurally determined limits” (Hilferty, 2008, p.167). Teachers have expertise, “dynamic competence” and freedom to skilfully make informed decisions and choices regarding their teaching and learning environment within a framework that guides their practices (Long & Lampen, 2014, p.4). According to Pantić (2014) there are four defining components that allow for teacher agency to exist. These aspects include: a sense of ‘competence’, ‘reflexivity’, ‘moral purpose’, and ‘autonomy’. Long and Lampen (2014) believes that teacher agency is an essential component of teacher’s professional lives in

preparing them to deal with various challenges, changes and struggles as well as the multiple roles that they undertake.

2.4.2 Novice Teacher Agency

Eteläpelto, Vähäsantanen, and Hökkä (2015) recognise that NTs hold a weak sense of professional agency. They are infrequently viewed as being leaders in their professional capacity, and are frequently faced with various challenges and constraints. Lin (2009) confirms that at the onset of a teacher's journey, one commonly feels frustrated, fatigued, overwhelmed, and undoubtedly challenged by difficulties on an on-going basis. NTs are regularly perceived as submissive learners rather than vibrant learners.

Although NTs are perceived to be ineffective individuals, Lin (2009, p. 56) states that, "the traditional story of the passive, tortured new teacher can be taken back and rewritten." This can happen if the NT has the power to believe in themselves and finds strength in overcoming their weaknesses (Green, 2017). NTs are important beings in transferring knowledge to their learners in the classroom and should be provided with greater opportunities to freely and flexibly make decisions regarding their learning and teaching. Therefore, NTs must learn to better negotiate their experiences by shaping and reshaping their identities within their schooling contexts. The NTs that display self-care view their educational concerns as opportunities to develop and grow themselves in a professional manner (Lin, 2009).

Synthesis of SECTION A

This section has discussed the early experiences of NTs, including their challenges and support needed in their schooling contexts. Professional Agency of teachers and NTs were also discussed. In the next section, Section B, the theoretical and conceptual framework will be elucidated.

SECTION B

2.5 Theoretical Framework and Conceptual Framework

This research study focuses on exploring the lived personal and professional experiences of NTs that work in public primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal. The argument is augmented by the notion that the individual self is not in isolation; rather the self works and interacts relationally within the broader social context of a teaching community and allows for multiple selves to exist. This research study is underpinned by a theoretical and conceptual framework. The Teacher Identity Theory as well as the Concept of Professional Agency assists in explaining how the NTs negotiate their personal and professional experiences with the intention to cultivate agency within their public primary schooling environments.

2.5.1 Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework can be defined as a group of interrelated ideas that serve as a guide to support and frame a study (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Researchers do not prove or disprove a theory, rather “they use the principles of a particular theory to broadly inform their study” (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014, p. 118). In this research study, the Social Identity Theory and Teacher Identity Theory are deployed as the theoretical framework which offer a lens to understand who NTs are and how the ‘who they are’ is shaped by what they do; as well as how they negotiate their identities within their social environments, and make meaning of their lives as being NTs and thereby cultivating professional agency within their public primary schooling contexts in KwaZulu-Natal. The storied narratives of the four NT participants (see chapter four) allow for opportunities to find out how they are accessible to construction and reconstruction of their identities (Rodgers & Scott, 2008).

Social Identity Theory elucidates that the “part of a person’s concept of self comes from the groups to which that person belongs” (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). This theory enunciates that an individual desires to associate to a social group because the membership of that particular group provides strengthened reinforcement for the identity of self; and the longing to associate to that particular group derives from the identification with crucial characteristics of the group’s membership. The two groups in which members belong to include: the ‘in-group’ and the ‘out-group’. The ‘in-group’ is referred as the group where an individual wishes to be involved in and the ‘out-group’ is referred as the group where an individual does not wish to be involved in (McLeod, 2008).

Teacher Identity Theory elucidates that individuals, inside social contexts, construct and continually reconstruct understandings of and for themselves. Identity is not fixed, rather fluid and dynamic; multifaceted and “shifts over time under the influence of a range of factors both internal to the individual ... and external to the individual ... in particular contexts” therefore allowing for multiple dimensions of identity to exist (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009, p.177). The identity of an individual is “shaped” and “reshaped” in relation with others in a particular context (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009, p.178), and it “is negotiated through experience” (Sachs, 2005, p.15).

Rodgers and Scott (2008) highlight that the social contexts that individuals find themselves in in powerfully ‘pushes and pulls’ how they desire to be identified and how they derive to be recognised by others. Through the negotiation in different social contexts, the identity of individuals unlocks spaces for them to form “multiple relationships and brings forth multiple aspects of self shaped by the conditions of their work” (Rodgers & Scott, 2008, p.735). Beauchamp and Thomas (2009, p.183) assert that there is an “inextricable link” between the identity of an individual and their strong sense of agency. When NTs acknowledge that their identities are multiple in various contexts, they involve agency in shaping and reshaping their identities (Day et al, 2006).

2.5.2 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework can be defined as a group of concepts or ideas that offer “a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon or phenomena” and assists in guiding the study (Jabareen, 2009). Jansen and Vithal, (cited in Bertram & Christiansen, 2014, p. 26) indicate that a conceptual framework can be differentiated from a theoretical framework “in that it is a less well-developed explanation for events.”

Professional Agency is conceptualised in various means within the educational field. A professional is an individual who is qualified with particular skills and knowledge which are necessary to carry out precise roles and responsibilities, and is a member of a specific profession (Evans, 2008). The professional in this case is the NT. Professional agency embraces the notion that professionals are assertive, proficient and knowledgeable in taking up stances and opportunities with regards to their individual working effort and professional lives. Professional individuals have the power to “act”; “affect matters” and “make decisions”

(Vahasantasen, 2014, p.1). NTs are regularly challenged at the start of their teaching careers (Eteläpelto, Vähäsantanen, & Hökkä, 2015). However, NTs are competent in cultivating professional agency within their professional contexts and are vigorous learners that are proficient in taking decisions regarding their professional work, priorities and perspectives (Lin, 2009). NTs personal interests, work involvements and competencies form part of the community of practices which assist them to cultivate professional agency (Eteläpelto, Vähäsantanen, & Hökkä, 2015). Through the NTs unique stories deriving from their social environments, comprehensive insights on cultivating professional agency is explored and understood. NTs negotiate their professional selves in their public primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal by engaging in opportunities vis-à-vis their duties and responsibilities, in order to make meaning of their NT lives in significant ways.

2.6 Novice Teacher Professional Agency

The Teacher Identity Theory in conjunction with the Concept of Professional Agency offers an avenue to understand NTs: who they are; what they do; what constitutes their identities as well as how they might take the initiative to negotiate their personal experiences and professional experiences of cultivating professional agency with regards to their social contexts.

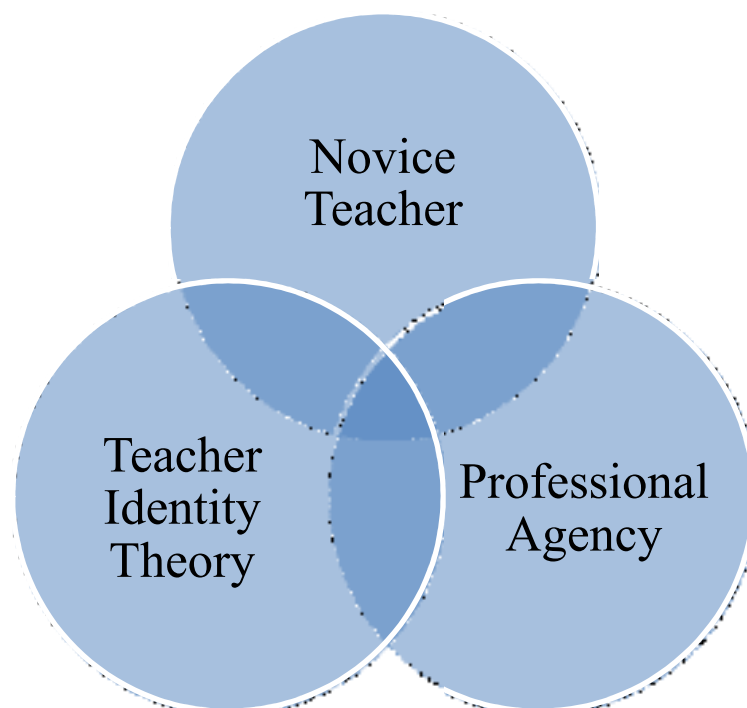


Figure 3: Teacher Identity Theory and Concept of Professional Agency

Being professionals within their public primary schooling context, NTs want to associate with the ‘in-group’ (which is the group that provides positive reinforcement for self-identity), and when combined with professional agency, it allows for NT agency. By using the Social Identity Theory and Concept of Professional Agency, I explore and understand NTs as being professionals within their public primary schooling contexts and the ways in which they negotiate professional agency as it influenced by various forces.

Synthesis of SECTION B

This section has discussed the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that informed this research study.

2.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented key international and South African debates and issues on the lives of NTs, their experiences and professional agency. I drew on the Teacher Identity Theory and the Concept of Professional Agency. The view is that the self is not in isolation; rather the self works relationally to the greater social context and allows for multiple selves to exist. This view is supported by various scholars (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Rodgers & Scott, 2008; Cohen, 2008). The scholarly discussions focuses on the on-going challenges that NTs are faced with during their initial years of their teaching careers, as well as the support that they ‘do’ receive. Nevertheless, NTs can negotiate their lived experiences and cultivate professional agency within their public primary schooling contexts.

In the next chapter, Chapter Three, I present the research methodology and design that was used to produce data for this research study. This includes the rationale for selecting the research methodology and design; the research process; the selection of participants as well as the research context. The data production methods and the role of the researcher is described. Thereafter, the data analysis process, including: ethical issues; trustworthiness and limitations that the study may encounter are elucidated.

Introduction

- Overview of the Chapter

SECTION A

The Research Methodology: Narrative Inquiry

The Research Process: Qualitative Research Design

The Research Paradigm

The Research Participants

The Research Context

A Description of Each Participant

SECTION B

Data Production Methods

Data Production and Collection Plan

SECTION C

Narrative Analysis - Analysis of Narratives

Storied Vignettes

Narrative Thematic Analysis

Ethical Issues

Trustworthiness, Believability and Reliability

Limitations of the Study

Role of the Researcher

Conclusion

- Narrative Inquiry best explores NTs lived experiences.

CHAPTER THREE

A METHODOLOGICAL LANDSCAPE

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented a review of literature on NTs as well as the theoretical and conceptual framing underpinning this research study. Moreover, an exploration and understanding of the lived experiences of NTs cultivating professional agency in public primary schools in KZN through the exploration of their lives is pursued.

In this chapter, the research methodology and design that was used to generate data for this research study is presented. The narrative inquiry approach adopted in this study allows NTs to tell their stories through an understanding of one's personal and professional experiences. In presenting this chapter, the reasons for selecting the research methodology and design, the research process, the research paradigm, the selection of participants, the research context as well as a description of each participant is explained. The data production and methods and tools of generating data are described. These methods provide a lens to explore and understand an insiders' account of the personal and professional lives of the research participants. It was seen as appropriate to evoke and trigger memories and feelings so that deep and rich information of the participants could be obtained. Finally, the data analysis and interpretation process, ethical issues; trustworthiness, limitations of the research study and the role of the researcher is highlighted.

3.2 Overview of the Chapter

This chapter is divided into three sections: **Section A**, **Section B** and **Section C**.

- **SECTION A**

In this section, the aspects of the research methodology and design are discussed.

- **SECTION B**

In this section, the research plan and data production methods and tools employed in this research study is discussed.

- **SECTION C**

In this section, the analytical framing and production of the storied narratives is discussed.

SECTION A

3.3 The Research Methodology and Design

This section will discuss the research methodology and design of the research study.

3.3.1 The Research Methodology: Narrative Inquiry

The research methodology adopted in this research study is narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry is defined as a research strategy in which the researcher studies the lives of individuals through life stories told by them. The researcher then thinks about and explores the significance of those life stories and often shares their experiences (Hamilton, Smith & Wothington, 2008). Narrative inquiry is a technique of inquiring and probing into experiences through “collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p.20). The field texts that are used may include: journal records, conversations, pictures, interview transcriptions, stories, observations, photos, letters, story-telling, audio recordings autobiographies and real life experiences as components to understand why individuals make meaning in their lives as narratives (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p.95-115). The data source will be in the form of stories and from these stories; the lived experiences of NTs are extracted and discovered.

A further definition to describe narrative inquiry is:

Narrative inquiry, the study of experience as story, then, is first and foremost a way of thinking about experience. Narrative inquiry as a methodology entails a view of the phenomenon. To use narrative inquiry methodology is to adopt a particular view of experience as phenomenon under study (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 375).

Cresswell (2007, p. 54) defines a story as “a spoken or written text giving an account of an event/action or series of events/actions that are chronologically connected”. Narrative inquiry draws on understanding the lived experiences of people and therefore “involves retelling stories and attempts at reliving stories” (Connelly and Clandinin (1990, p. 2). “Humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and socially, lead storied lives.” (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990, p. 2). Stories reflect a journey through life (Webster & Mertora, 2007). It has a unique explanatory power (Polkinghorne, 1995). “Narrative is the best way of

representing and understanding experience” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p.19). Through this process, inquiry allows participants to give a special voice to their life experiences so that meaning-making of the lived experiences can be achieved (Andrews, Squire & Tambokou, 2008). ‘Temporality’, ‘sociality’ and ‘place’ commonplaces are distinctive features of narrative inquiry which will assist the researcher in getting into the lives of NTs (Clandinin & Huber, 2010, p. 1). Temporality recognises that people have a past, present and future. Sociality recognises the importance of interaction between the researcher and participant. Place refers to a specific location where inquiry and events take place.

3.3.2 The Research Process: Qualitative Research Design

A qualitative research approach is used in this research study. Nieuwenhuis, (cited in Maree, 2010, p.51) declares that a qualitative research approach “attempts to collect rich descriptive data in respect of a particular phenomenon or context with the intention of developing an understanding of what is being observed or studied”. This approach places importance on the in-depth and quality insight and information as well as how individuals create meaning of their realities. Creswell (2009) indicates that qualitative research studies allow for a richer and deeper understanding of an individual’s lived experience. The collection of data is done through a face-to-face interaction in a timely manner and in a natural setting. This qualitative research approach explores the life: experiences, actions and feelings of an individual and allows for their voices to be heard (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This qualitative and interpretive research study is intended to search for a rich and profound understanding of the ways in which NTs cultivate professional agency in public primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal.

3.3.3 The Research Paradigm

This research study is located within the interpretivist paradigm. Interpretive studies focus on developing and enhancing the understanding of “how people make sense of” the world they live in and “how they make meaning of their particular actions” (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014, p. 26). “All research is interpretive; it is guided by a set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 33). Within this study, the interpretivist paradigm allowed NTs to share their personal and professional experiences of how they cultivate professional agency in their public primary schools in KZN. The interpretive paradigm is used for understanding human experiences (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2001). Research participants share their unique stories and this interpretive paradigm emphasises on the all-inclusive perspective of each research participant

and their lived stories. In this research study, rich and nuanced information through stories is collected and thereafter constructed it into narratives.

3.3.4 The Research Participants

The focus of this small-scale qualitative research study is to understand the lived personal and professional experiences of a specific group of NTs. Narrative inquiry often relies on small sample sizes in order to produce rich data. Purposive sampling was used to hand-pick research participants that are needed for this research study. It means that a sample is selected for a particular purpose (Cohen et al., 2007). As the researcher, I make a choice of specific people to include in the sample, which does not include the wider population (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). The sample is chosen according to the criteria of participants needed and which is relevant to the research question (Maree, 2007). Purposive sampling is “deliberately and unashamedly selective and biased” and the findings are not generalisable but emphasis is placed on acquiring in-depth information from knowledgeable people about the phenomenon being researched (Cohen et al., 2009, p. 115).

In this research study, selected participants had to fit the following criteria:

- They had to be novice teachers (having 0-3 years of teaching experience),
- They had to be teaching in a public primary school in KZN, and
- They had to be teaching in quintile rank 5 schools.

The research participants included four NTs that work in public primary quintile rank 5 schools in KZN and who have less than 3 years of formal experience in the classroom. The research study did not adopt a gender, race, age or teaching phase criterion. However, the research participants included male and female; Indian and African; different ages groups, who were teaching in the Foundation Phase or Intermediate Phase. The participants are specified in Table 1 below. As the researcher, I desired to collect rich information so that I could explore and understand deeply the stories of the NTs and therefore selected four research participants. No individual’s experiences are the exactly the same. The unique stories are of utmost importance to the research study, as they have revealed the personal and professional lives of NTs.

Below is a profile of the research participants at the point in time that the study was conducted. Pseudonyms have been used to safeguard confidentiality and anonymity.

Profile of The Research Participants

Name of Research Participant	Sex	Race	Quintile Rank of School	Age	Years of Experience	Grades Taught	Teaching Phase
Luke	M	Indian	5	24	1	4/5/6/7	Intermediate/ Senior
Lucy	F	Indian	5	26	3	1/2/3	Foundation
Diya	F	Indian	5	29	3	4/5/6	Intermediate
Zenzile	F	African	5	26	3	3	Foundation

Table 1: Profile of The Research Participants

3.3.5 The Research Context

This research study was based at four public primary schools in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Data was collected at various locations convenient to the research participants since collecting data at the NTs place of work would be a challenging task since I did not want to interrupt the teaching and learning or let time become an issue. McMillian and Schumacher (2001) propose that it is important for research sites to be chosen dependent on their suitability and feasibility.

3.3.6 A Description of Each Participant

Every effort was made to guarantee anonymity, confidentiality and well-being in this research study. Hence, pseudonyms were used.



Luke is a 24-year old Indian man. He teaches at an English medium public primary school in Phoenix, Durban. He has one full year of teaching experience and teaches

Mathematics, Social Sciences, Life Orientation and Afrikaans in the intermediate and senior teaching phases.



Lucy is a 26 year old, Indian lady who has been working for 3 years in an English medium public primary school in Newlands West, Durban. She teaches grades 1, 2 and 3 learners in the foundation phase. She teaches English, Mathematics and Life Orientation. She taught isiZulu for a year even though she is Indian and her first language is English.



Diya is a 29-year old Indian teacher. She works in an English medium public primary school in Newlands West, Durban. She teaches Mathematics, Social Sciences, Life Orientation and English in grades 4, 5 and 6 in the intermediate Phase.



Zenzile is a 26-year old African teacher. She is currently working at an English medium public primary school in Newlands West, Durban. She teaches grade 3 learners in the foundation phase. Her learning areas are: Mathematics, English, Life Orientation and IsiZulu.

Synthesis of SECTION A

This section has discussed aspects of the research methodology and design. In the next section, Section B, the research plan and data production methods will be elucidated.

SECTION B

3.4 The Research Methods

Research methods are defined as a range of techniques that are used in “educational research” in order to “gather data which are used as a basis for inference and interpretation, for explanation and prediction” (Cohen et al., 2009, p. 47). The narrative inquiry methodology that is used in this research study allows for NTs to reflect on their lived personal and professional experiences through a variety of data production methods. These data production methods include: collage inquiry, artefact retrieval, metaphor drawing and unstructured interviews. These chosen data production methods were deemed suitable in this research study since it allows for memory-work which is a reflective process to take place. The research participants easily shared their voices, experiences and reflections through the above data production methods and helped me to examine the key research questions.

3.4.1 Collage Inquiry



Figure 4: Example of a Collage

This collage was created by myself on a smartphone app.

Collage Inquiry is defined as the process of cutting visuals, materials or words and pasting them on a smooth surface to portray phenomena (Butler-Kisber, 2007). It is a post-modern genre of art which allows an individual to freely express themselves with the absence of actually saying it in words. Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009) suggest that words may not capture all that participants want to convey. Burns (as cited in Knowles & Cole, 2008) emphasises that “images enable meanings to travel in ways that words cannot”. This data production method is suitable since a collage portrays a story (Butler-Kisber, 2007). It helped me to construct a platform in which the research participants felt free to express their memories and it assisted in making meaning of and understanding their lived experiences.

In this research study, the research participants were given sufficient time and space to visually represent themselves through a collage. Participants were required to individually make and present a collage based on answering the research question: ‘What is your story of being a novice teacher?’ They were provided with magazines, colour pens, A3 chart paper, scissors and glue in order to create their own collages. This creative, arts-based activity was done collaboratively with all four participants in a group and thereafter a group discussion was held to generate a wider range of responses (Cohen et al., 2001). My role as the researcher enabled me to understand that the NTs lived experiences were paramount to their unique stories. Whatever that was portrayed in their collage had great meanings for their stories. I made a collage and shared it with my research participants in order to uphold a good relationship with them.

I initially came across collage inquiry in the *Personal and Professional Identity in Teaching* BEd Hons module which I took up at UKZN in 2016. I was tasked to make and present a collage to my group. The collage was entitled: ‘My life as a new teacher’. This activity was extremely interesting as I was not aware of how powerful a collage could be. I had learnt so much about myself that I did not know before. This creative, arts-based activity was now a symbol that represented me as it evoked many of memories which brought out some emotional experiences of being a NT.

Here is a narrative excerpt that was extracted from my journal in 2016.

My collage is a contents guide, a question and answer activity and a review of my life.

Journal Entry (June 2016)

3.4.2 Artefact Retrieval



Figure 5: Example of an Artefact

This artefact is a picture taken by myself while I was on holiday in Hong Kong.

An artefact is described as an object that reminds one of the past and often tells a story (Cole, 2011, p.227). It is related to recollections of the past that brings out positive or negative emotions. Objects have a way of connecting individuals to feelings and thoughts (Turkle, 2007). Artefacts frequently convey a story about a precise period of time. This data production method is appropriate as it allows participants to reflect on their educational experiences through memory-work, and assists me in understanding and making meaning of the participants lived experiences through objects.

In this research study, research participants were given the platform to visually represent themselves through an object. NTs were individually required to bring along an artefact that reminds them of what it is like to be a NT and share it's significance with the group. This artefact is based on answering the research question: 'How does this object relate to your life as a novice teacher?' After each participant shared their artefact, a discussion was held to generate a wider range of responses (Cohen et al., 2001). My role as the researcher enabled

me to listen meticulously to and appreciate each of the NT participant's unique stories about their artefacts. I allowed for the NTs to feel comfortable and safe by sharing my own artefact with them.

I initially came across artefact retrieval in the *Personal and Professional Identity in Teaching* BEd Hons module which I took up at UKZN in 2016. I was tasked to bring in and share an artefact with my group. My artefact was a picture of my pyjamas. This activity was extremely interesting as a picture of my pyjamas told an important story about my life as a NT.

Here is a narrative excerpt that was extracted from my journal in 2016.

My pyjamas are the most comfortable item of clothing that I could wear just about anywhere.

Journal Entry (June 2016)

3.4.3 Metaphor Drawing



Figure 6: Example of a Metaphor Drawing

This metaphor drawing was created by myself on a smartphone app.

A metaphor drawing is defined as a technique that is used to construct a narrative portrait of the phenomenon which is being studied. Van Laren (2014) note that “metaphor drawings are mediums for thought expression which frequently depict personal experiences and realities.” It is a visual that aids individuals to speak in a manner in which words will not be able to express. This data production method is appropriate since a drawing is visual representation that shares thoughts and feelings. It assists me in gaining insight into the NT participant’s world and creates a platform where they are free to express themselves. It also assists in understanding the meaning of NT participant’s lived experiences.

In this research study, research participants were given the platform to visually represent their thoughts and feelings through a drawing. Participants were required to individually draw and present a drawing based on answering the research question: ‘What does this drawing reveal about your everyday experiences of professional agency?’ They were provided with blank paper, a pencil and coloured pens to create their own images. Research participants’ feelings and experiences are depicted in metaphor drawings (Van Laren, 2014, p.23). This creative, arts-based activity was done collaboratively with all four participants in a group and thereafter a group discussion will be held to generate a wider range of responses (Cohen et al., 2001). My role as the researcher enabled me to gain an understanding of the NT participant’s metaphor drawing through their stories about it and allowed me to sustain a respectable relationship with them. In order to sustain this relationship, I made a metaphor drawing and shared its significance with my research participants. An adequate timeframe and ample space were given for that reason of accomplishing the activity at hand.

I initially came across metaphor drawing in the *Personal and Professional Identity in Teaching* BEd Hons module which I took up at UKZN in 2016. I was tasked to draw and present a metaphor drawing to my group. I drew a picture of an ant. This activity was extremely interesting as the drawing of the ant represented my NT. The drawing of the ant had so much meaning attached to it.

Here is a narrative excerpt that was extracted from my journal in 2016.

I was an ‘ant’ in such a big world.

Journal Entry (June 2016)

3.4.4 Unstructured Interviews

An unstructured interview is referred to a ‘conversation’ between the interviewer (researcher) and interviewee (participant), in which knowledge is passed through this conversation (Cohen et al., 2001). It allowed me to discover the stories of NT participants and ask questions relating to their realities and lives. Research participants may respond to questions in their own words, therefore having greater flexibility and freedom in their responses (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). I was free to prompt, probe and pose questions to clarify answers given. This data production method was appropriate as it allowed me to understand the lived experiences of NTs. According to Cohen et al (2007) an interview permits greater depth than any other data collection methods. Unstructured interviews build a platform in which the NT participants freely express their past experiences and memories, and assists in making meaning of their NT lives.

In this research study, research participants were given the opportunity to share their feelings, memories and experiences through conversations. A list of questions was formulated to use as a guide during the interview process. The unstructured interview was based on answering the research question: ‘What are your everyday experiences as a novice teacher working in a public primary school in KZN that focuses on professional agency?’ The interviews were one hour long and were conducted after school hours in quiet and comfortable spaces. The interview was audio-recorded and transcribed; and offered the opportunity to explore and understand the experiences of NTs.

My role as the researcher enabled me to respect the NT participant’s stories and preserve a good relationship with them. The research participants were given sufficient time to answer questions to the best of their abilities and I paid meticulous attention to their answers. Participants were made to feel valued for their inputs. Prompts, probes and posed questions were used to clarify answers given. This was my first experience of conducting an interview. I was afraid that participants were not willing to speak and share; however a safe and comfortable ambiance was created.

Here is an excerpt that was extracted from my journal in 2018.

An unstructured interview acts as a lens in which it gives a clearer picture of life experiences.
Journal Entry (February 2018)

3.5 Data Production and Collection Plan

The following table is a summary of how the research questions were answered.

Research Question	Narrative Inquiry Method	Context	Research Participants	Data Source
1. Who are NTs working in public primary schools in KZN?	Arts-based method	Public primary schools in Durban, KZN	Four novice teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collage Inquiry • Artefact Retrieval • Metaphor Drawing • Unstructured Interview
2. What personal and professional meanings inform NT self in public primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal?	Memory-Work	Public primary schools in Durban, KZN	Four novice teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collage Inquiry • Artefact Retrieval • Metaphor Drawing • Unstructured Interview
3. How do NTs cultivate professional agency in public primary schools in KZN?	Unstructured Interview	Public primary schools in Durban, KZN	Four novice teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collage Inquiry • Artefact Retrieval • Metaphor Drawing • Unstructured Interview

Table 2: The Research Design

Synthesis of SECTION B

This section has discussed the research plan and data production methods. In the next section, Section C, the analytical framing will be elucidated.

SECTION C

3.6 Data Analysis and Interpretation

Qualitative Data Analysis can be described as the processes and procedures of gathering data and converting it into storied narratives which is then grouped into themes or plots. According to Cohen et al., (2007, p. 461) “qualitative data analysis involves organising, accounting for and making sense of the data in terms of the participants’ definitions of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities.” In this research study, selected data is analysed and interpreted by using two processes. The first is narrative analysis, and the second is the analysis of narratives.

3.6.1 Narrative Analysis – Working with the data

Narrative analysis is a sequence of practices that is essential for the transferring of data that have been gathered into a precise arrangement for the purpose of discovering and understanding the phenomenon under study. Subsequent to the collection of the NTs orally generated stories; these are transcribed and transformed it into written texts. The data collected from the research methods: collage inquiry, artefact retrieval, metaphor drawing and unstructured interviews, enhances the construction of the stories. Four narratives about who novice teachers are and how they might cultivate professional agency were created.

At the commencement of this research study, I invited the research participants to my home for mutual introductions and to create a friendly atmosphere. This meeting proved successful with an ice-breaker activity which allowed the participants to share a brief summary of their lives with the group. It was interesting as all participants had something thought-provoking to say, especially something in common. Thereafter, the NT participants were enlightened of the nature of the research study and their expectations. Participation was purely done on a voluntary basis and participants were free to withdraw at any given point in time. Eventually, informed consent forms were read and signed by each participant, and afterwards a social media group was formed so that common dates for meeting could be arranged.

As the researcher, I chose to conduct all arts-based activities first collaboratively within the group, as this gave me insight into the lives of each participant. Then, I chose to conduct the unstructured interviews individually to acquire a profound understanding of the lived experiences of each participant. The transcriptions of data were commenced immediately after each method of data collection was completed by all participants. My decision to

commence with transcription after each method was completed was based on the high volume of data that was generated. I did not want at any point in time to become overloaded with data. The process of transcription was extremely slow and time-consuming as I had to listen to audio-recordings various times to get clarification and make sense of the data. I followed a process of underlining and colour coding parts of the transcriptions that was considered important in order to select the experiences that were relevant to my research study. I used different coloured highlighters to categorise data. While transcribing data, I stopped every now and then to document thoughts that came into my mind in a journal.

3.6.2 Analysis of Narratives – Working with the Storied Narratives

The development of producing a new story is the analysis of narratives. Polkinghorne (1995) enunciates that once all data is collected, it will be configured by a process called configuration. This configuration process denotes that data will be grouped into ‘themes’ or ‘plots’ (Polkinghorne, 1998). Stories are collected as data which include the characters, settings, and plot (Polkinghorne, 1995). The data production methods assist me in ‘restorying’ the stories using ‘themes’ or ‘plots’ that emerged. My role as the researcher and narrative inquirer was to analyse selected data and interpret the stories in relation to relevant literature, the research question, and theoretical and conceptual frameworks. The main focus of interpretation was to enable the reader to experience the storied narratives as if they were present.

Upon completion of transcribing and transforming the data into written texts, I engaged myself with the data by highlighting the emerging issues that I felt were relevant in answering the key research questions of this research study. I created a storyboard for each research participant. At regular time interval while constructing the storyboard, I made myself conscious of the fact that I was also a NT and my experiences may be different from that of others. While doing the storyboard, I realised that I could relate to specific experiences of others. However, I endeavoured not to let my own experiences of being a NT influence my research participants’ stories of their lived experiences. After I had constructed the storyboards, I went back to the data to see what else I could find out that was initially left out.

The transcriptions from the research participants were used to compile four storied narratives. In the four participant’s storied narratives, I reinforced their lived experiences by putting in a picture of their collage, their artefact and their metaphor drawing. These complemented the data from the unstructured interviews.

I experienced a huge challenge of selecting data judiciously and knew that I needed to overcome this challenge. Initially I wanted to incorporate everything into the research stories, however, through constant reading of the data, I realised that data could be grouped together into themes or plots. It is important for data to be interpreted and represented carefully (Cresswell, 1998). I must confess that I was overwhelmed with large amounts of data collected and often felt afraid because I perchance could incorrectly interpret and represent data. However, I received much advice from my supervisor and MEd cohort group members. Harris (2012) indicates that before data can be analysed, there is no understanding of it; and that data is useless without the skills to analyse it. During the study, I endeavoured to withhold biases, prejudgments and pre-conceptions to determining the findings of my research study.

3.6.3 Storied Vignettes

After creating storied narratives for the four NT participants, I used collage portraits as a tool to analyse selected excerpts from the storied narratives and support storied vignettes in order to make sense of the stories. Gerstenblatt (2013, p. 296) assert that “collage portraits provide the opportunity to include marginalized voices and encourage a range of linguistic and non-linguistic representations to articulate authentic lived experiences.” Gerstenblatt (2013, p. 296) believes that the use of collage portraits as a tool of narrative thematic analysis “has the potential to support and enliven the analysis of otherwise dry and detached interview data, thus producing new knowledge and interpretation.” According to Jenkins et al., (2010, p. 176) vignettes are a qualitative research tool that is used to capture a “snapshot scenario” that unfolds “through a series of stages” in an individual’s life. The aim of this research study is to deepen my understanding of NTs meaning-making of self in a particular situation. Vignettes used in this study prove to be relevant as it describes a “series of stages” that a participant’s goes through and it allows me to provide an interpretation of their different life stages. Vignettes are rich in revealing a particular meanings embedded in individuals, however they are not conclusive and cannot be used to determine something else. Storied Vignettes form the first part of analysis in this research study and assist in foregrounding one of the NTs multiple identities that I had chosen from the data which was generated at a particular moment in time. In chapter five of my research study, I used storied vignettes to deepen my understanding of the NTs meanings of self and in Chapter Six, I explored how those meanings inform their practices in order to cultivate professional agency.

3.6.4 Narrative Thematic Analysis

I used concept mapping as a tool to support narrative thematic analysis in order to analyse and interpret the four NTs storied narratives. Butler-Kisber and Poldma (2010) assert “Concept mapping is a diagrammatic and visual means of expressing ideas held in the mind.” I read the narratives a few times and underlined and highlighted keywords. I then plotted ideas that came to my mind from each narrative into an initial concept map. I then drew a refined concept map where I grouped similar ideas together and slotted it into themes. Narrative Thematic analysis is a research approach which involves the application of coding data (Gibson, 2006). The application of coding data refers to “grouping together of different data under a specific category” so that data can be analysed and interpreted (Gibson, 2006, p.1). Themes were developed in this research study and allow for certain experiences, opinions and ideas to be linked together.

3.6.5 Ethical Issues

Ethics are recognised as the ‘golden rules’ of doing research. It is a “set of responsibilities in human relationships” between the researcher and research participants (Wang & Geale, 2015, p.197). As the researcher, I obtained ethical clearance from the Higher Degrees Committee at UKZN. At the onset, I personally informed research participants of the purpose of my research study, in addition to the statement that participation is voluntary and participants are able to withdraw at any given point in time. All participation in my research study is purely voluntary. The NTs were required to complete informed consent forms in order to become participants in my research study. Cohen et al., (2007) emphasises that the principal of anonymity is the guarantee that the information provided by the research participants does not in any way disclose their identity. In my research study, confidentiality, anonymity, dignity and well-being of participants are guaranteed. Participants were ensured that their identities would be withheld from public knowledge and their names and schools would not be used in my research study. I therefore used pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality and anonymity.

3.6.6 Trustworthiness

As the researcher of a qualitative research study, I engaged in multiple methods of generating data so that I could gain a deeper insight and understand greatly the phenomenon under study. I employed collage inquiry, artefact retrieval, metaphor drawing and unstructured interviews

to produce stories of how NTs cultivate professional agency within their public primary schooling contexts in KwaZulu-Natal. Triangulation of these methods will assist me in strengthening the stories of the NT participants (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Trustworthiness is reinforced by guaranteeing that the narratives clearly capture the research participants' voices. The selected data analysed has been transcribed and reconstructed into storied narratives, and has been handed to the research participants (for member checking) so they can agree or not if the transcriptions are correctly done (Morse, Barrett & Mayan, 2002, p.32). This proved to be valuable to me as it confirms the validity of the research data. Direct quotations of the research participants are used and it supports believability (Patton, 2002). The authenticity of the NTs stories will be supported by the NT participant's collages, artefacts, metaphor drawings and audio-recordings. I endeavoured to create a mutual bond of confidence and trust by sharing my story, poem, collage, artefact and metaphor drawing before the NT participants shared theirs with me. This allowed the participants to be at ease and express themselves freely.

Clandinin (2007) states that "the narrative researcher is in a dual role - in an intimate relationship with the participant and in a professional responsible role in the scholarly community". As a narrative researcher, I am aware of my 'insider-outsider' role (Buckle & Dwyer, 2009). The insider researcher has a subjective perspective and the outsider researcher has an objective perspective. I will not take an 'insider' approach nor will I take an 'outsider' approach; rather I will take an 'insider-outsider' position to eliminate the possibility of overlooking any meanings that are concealed in the selected data that is offered (Olive, 2014). By assuming an insider position, my research participants may be less hesitant to share their lived experiences with me, since I am also a NT. Congruently, by assuming an outsider position, I make every effort to remove my biases and not influence the perspectives of my research participants by constantly reflecting on the research process.

3.6.7 Limitations of the Research Study

Limitations refer to the challenges encountered by the researcher that are beyond his or her control (Limitations and Delimitations, 2017). The main intent of my research study is to explore and understand the ways in which NTs cultivate professional agency. This is a small-scale qualitative study that is restricted to the Durban area in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. This has implications for the generalisation of the findings of this research study. The results of the findings may not be generalised to all NTs in public primary schools in Durban,

KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, or internationally. However, the results of the findings can still raise imperative concerns and may serve as a foundation for similar studies. The research participants could have been hesitant to disclose any information; however, I created a moral and trusting relationship with each participant. At the beginning of my research study, I was apprehensive since a NT participant could withdraw at any particular moment in time; however I remained well-planned and time conscious, therefore limiting their chances of withdrawing from my research study. With using a narrative inquiry methodology and art-based methods, my collection of data was time-consuming; however, it allowed me to produce thick data needed for my research study.

3.6.8 The Role of the Researcher

My role as the researcher enabled me to build a mutual bond of trust and to maintain a respectable relationship with my research participants. Prior to commencing my fieldwork, I was a little anxious about the process since I was novice in the field. However, I received advice from my supervisor and critical friends. I shared my collage, artefact and metaphor drawing with my research participants, and created a space where they felt relaxed and were able to express themselves with freedom. The warm and friendly atmosphere I created contributed to the care and respect that I showed my participants. I spoke to the NTs about their daily lives before I could speak about my research study. I often explained that by the participants sharing their stories with me, it will not only be beneficial to my research study but will contribute to the body of knowledge on NTs.

My data generation methods took a large amount of time to complete as my participants were often busy; however, they made every effort to fit me into their schedules. The meeting times were negotiated on a social media group. The researcher-participant relationship is a significant one as the researcher commences with the “on-going negotiations that are part of engaging in narrative inquiry” (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 47). Collage inquiry, artefact retrieval and metaphor drawing were done individually, but collaboratively within a group. Discussions from each activity took place immediately after and it was a duration of an hour to two hours long. Thereafter, I met participants individually and conducted the unstructured interviews. The interviews were an hour long. All meetings were conducted in afternoons and on the weekends.

My role as the researcher constantly changed during the process of research. At one point I was a facilitator, and thereafter an active listener. I paid attention and care to the research

participant's powerful voices as I was actively involved in the making meaning of their stories. In the arts-based activities, I was a silent listener awaiting a discussion to follow. I enjoyed listening to their inputs in the interviews and was able to formulate questions quickly. I had to be vigilant in my role as researcher as I could have possibly influenced the research process (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). I gave sufficient time and space for research participants to work to complete all activities.

Synthesis of SECTION C

This section has discussed the process of data analysis and interpretation, as well as ethics, trustworthiness, limitations and the role of the researcher.

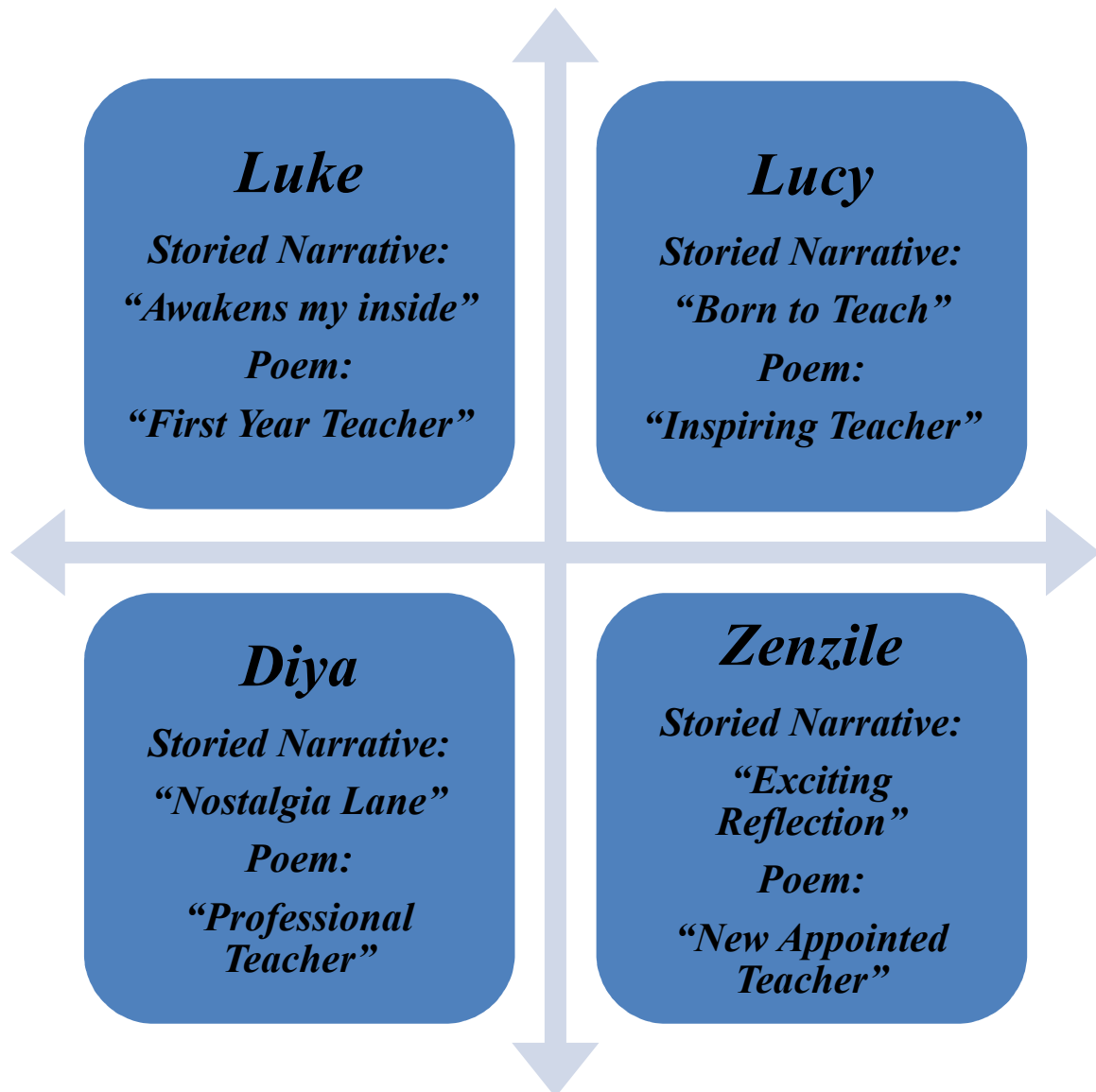
3.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I provided a detailed account of the research design and the instruments that were used to generate the data for my research study. A qualitative research framework within the Interpretivist paradigm was adopted. Narrative inquiry was the research methodology used in my research study. I provided an outline of the context within which this study took place as well as information on the selection of participants. My data sources included: collage inquiry, artefact retrieval, metaphor drawing and unstructured interviews. These were discussed as well as data analysis and interpretation; ethical issues; trustworthiness; limitations of my research study and the role of the researcher.

In the following chapter, Chapter Four, I present the reconstructed stories of the NTs. These stories offer an opportunity to get a glimpse into the lives of the NTs. The various stories of the NTs will assist in making meaning of their lived experiences.

Introduction

- **Storied Narratives and Poems:**



Conclusion

- **First level of analysis and interpretation**

CHAPTER FOUR

STORIED NARRATIVES:

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE LIVES OF NOVICE TEACHERS

4.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter highlighted the research methodology and design that was used to generate data for this research study. The focus of this study is on exploring the lived personal and professional experiences of NTs in public primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal. Therefore, in this chapter I reconstruct the data obtained from the various data collection methods into four stories of the NTs in public primary schools in KZN.

The reconstructed stories within this chapter were composed from a variety of data collection methods, namely: collage inquiry, artefact retrieval, metaphor drawing and unstructured interviews. These methods allow research participants to share their life experiences in creative ways and elicit their memories of the past. The stories told by the participants are interpretations of the way they see themselves. They were at liberty to highlight or exclude critical moments, critical relationships and critical incidences that have impacted on their lives.

The main focus of the reconstructed stories are on the everyday experiences of NTs and it highlights the meanings that they adopt from their personal experiences to enact in their professional lives as NTs working in the public primary schooling context in KZN. In each storied narrative, I endeavoured to allow for the research participant's voice and lived experiences to come through without misinterpreting them. As the researcher, I used "narrative configuration" and "emplotment" as a means of making sense and displaying the significance of the characters, actions, events and happenings by means of a plot at a particular moment in time (Polkinghorne, 1995, p.13). I presented the storied narratives to the NT participants to enrich its accuracy. The NT participants were happy with their stories and made no changes to it. In order to adhere to ethical considerations and to protect the identity and anonymity of my participants, I used the following pseudonyms: Luke, Lucy, Diya and Zenzile for the storied narratives.

The storied narratives are the first level of analysis and answer the first key research question: ***Who are novice teachers working in public primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal?*** Each storied narrative is encapsulated by a pantoum poem. The pantoum poem reflects the lived experiences, feelings and characters of NTs that are working in public primary schools in Durban, KZN.

4.2 Luke

4.2.1 Storied Narrative: “Awakens my Inside”

Luke: It was the start of the new year 2018 and I was reacquainted with a former friend via means of social media. She had requested my assistance as part of her on-going research study. At first glance, I was somewhat intimidated being a fairly inexperienced teacher; however she rested my hesitance by introducing me to what she was doing and how I could be of assistance to her, as a fellow professional. Personally, I was quite intrigued and thought this would be a useful experience I could look back on, as I will be attempting my Independent Research Project for my Bachelor of Education Honours degree next year. So, after much deliberation I had finally accepted the opportunity to be a participant in her study.

I am Luke and this is my story.



Figure 7: Luke's Collage

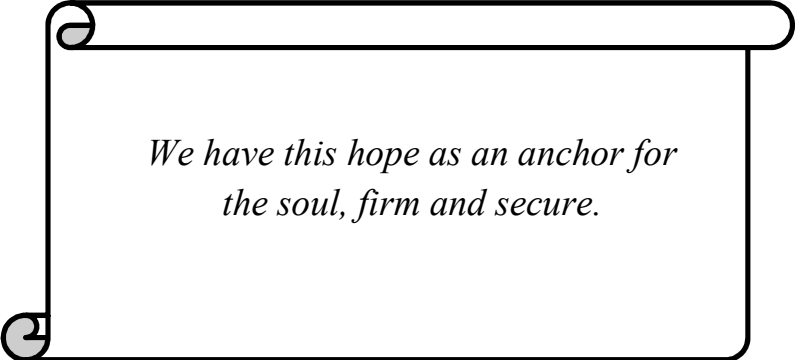
My collage introduces me and is a visual interpretation of my life experiences as being a novice teacher. I am a 24 year old Indian, young man. I teach at an English medium public primary school in the Phoenix area in Durban. I have one full year of teaching experience and teach Mathematics, Social Sciences, Life Orientation and Afrikaans in the intermediate and senior teaching phases.

My Number One Family

On 30 December 1994 I became a born-free baby to a family of three other members who resided in Phoenix, Durban. I come from a close knit family of which I am the second and youngest child. My father is an uneducated but self-employed delivery man and my mother a housewife. I have an older brother and we had a very close relationship whilst growing up. My family is built on strong values and humble beginnings, for which I am extremely grateful. My father always told my brother and I that he wants the best for us and the things he didn't have, he wanted it for us. This is because my father left school at 9 years old to work and support his family and he supported them right up until he got married to my mother who was his neighbour. I give praise to my parents for being my pillars of strength, having supported me throughout my life journey which motivated me to pursue my tertiary education. I have three wonderful nieces, the eldest of which had been diagnosed with Down syndrome. We share a very special bond and I take pride as her mentor. I enjoy teaching her simple skills in life and helping her with homework.

Jesus...My King...My Anchor

The foundation of my family and the reasons behind our peaceful and prosperous life is most definitely our strong faith in Christianity. I believe that in life, one encounters many challenges and the guiding light through it all is God almighty. My tattoo bares incumbent to my right leg and is a testament to my strong faith and belief in God. The caption of a crown and an anchor is accompanied by the words: "Jesus, my King, my anchor, Hebrews 6:19". The deeper essence of my tattoo signifies that one should put all his faith, love and trust in God for he shall overcome and lead us to be victorious in our lives. Hebrews 6:19 is a scripture in the bible which reads:



*We have this hope as an anchor for
the soul, firm and secure.*



Figure 8: Luke's Artefact

Schooling Life

Throughout my primary schooling years, I remembered my teachers and friends describing me as a diligent character. As a Phoenix Pioneer Primary School learner, I was not granted a variety of extra-curricular activities, as the school was an under-resourced one. On the other hand, I do look back upon my time spent being a pleasant experience and positive teaching and learning environment. I did very well in all academics and took part in various competitions.

I began secondary schooling at Phoenix Secondary School and was then unsettled and faced with no real choice in a transfer to Rydal Park Secondary School. My family had moved to a different part of the greater Phoenix area because my mother had a knee problem and my father had heart by-pass surgery. We had to move to a single story house to make it easier for my parents to commute. Initially, I had to go about making new friends and adapt to life in a new community. Steadily, I began enjoying attending school and found myself actively

involved in extra and co-curricular activities, such as debating, class representative, prefectship and blood-donor drives.

Law First

After the completion of my schooling career, I had set my sights on pursuing a tertiary qualification in Law at UKZN, Howard College, with teaching as my secondary option. I soon learnt that I had been accepted for both choices, however I was only granted funding for one choice, which was teaching. My parents could not afford the institution fees therefore I opted for teaching. Looking back, I feel I made a good decision as teaching is my passion and it allows me a comfortable quality of life.

Values that my Parents instilled in me

Punctuality is one of my core values in life and I have and always will take pride in being on time, especially at school. I value my role as a teacher in the South African society and always give my best efforts in helping make a difference to the lives of my learners. My parents have instilled in me good values that I should always pass on to others. In being the first qualified professional in my family, I am proud of how far I have come and will continue to strive to accomplish many more of my life goals. One of which is to be a beacon of positivity to my learners and to inspire my learners to enable themselves to achieve their very own goals. My motivation for this has come not only from my parents but my chalkboard too. I view my chalkboard as an opportunity for learners to expand their knowledge and lead a better life. The red chalk on my chalkboard symbolises the love that I have for the teaching profession.



Figure 9: Luke's Metaphor Drawing

First Year Teacher

I have just gained my first full year of formal teaching experience at a primary school in Phoenix, Durban. This school is a mainstream school but is very different from the ones that I have been to during teaching practice. It offers various extra and co-curricular activities, many of which I am a part of. My teaching phase is Senior Further Education and Training (FET) and focuses on grades 9-12; however due to a shortage of vacancies I was placed into a primary school. My teaching specialisation is Life Orientation, Technology and Business Studies; however I had found myself allocated the Mathematics, Life Orientation, Social Sciences and Afrikaans learning areas to teach. I found this challenging, having minimal prior experience and being allocated to such important leaning areas. Afrikaans, more specifically was a mental obstacle due to myself faring poorly in the subject as a learner. I recently found out that I like teaching Social Sciences because I can relate to it well. Due to my lack of experience in the Mathematics field, I found myself pre-learning my lessons at home to ensure I gave my learners my best efforts. In the first few weeks that I attended school, I felt very uncomfortable and uncertain of how best to fulfil my role as a teacher. I found it difficult integrating with my new peers, even with the younger teachers. There were days when these young teachers passed nasty remarks and laughed at me because of the way I dressed. I felt rather out of place and wanted to leave school immediately; but as time went on these young teachers became my friends. Most of the staff was not helpful at all.

University Shortcomings

Another aspect of difficulty that I was faced with was that university education and preparation were more theoretically based on a scope of content and did not adequately prepare me for the real life teaching environment. Furthermore, I was not physically taught about how to adapt to difficult, but realistic, circumstances such as teaching subjects that you are not accustomed to, in a phase one does not specialise in. However, I made my own decision of finding my own feet.

The Community in which I Teach in

In the greater community of which my school finds itself, there are several underlying societal issues such as drugs and alcohol abuse. Aside from our large scope of curriculum teachers at my school have to tackle these repercussions on a first hand basis. The school has recently initiated a new programme to help improve learner discipline which was derived

from the Boys' Town organisation. Some of the parents in the community 'fight' with teachers. I had an incident where parents approached me about why their children were not doing well in academics.

The learners at my school have difficulty in concentrating for long periods of time, and many of whom do not pay attention at all. They have shown signs of disrespect to their teachers and display no real care to others. There have been several occurrences of learners behaving in an offensive and sexual manner. Personally I feel that this bears accustomed to their upbringing and social background. These children are not the ones in question for I believe that it is the responsibility of parents to ensure their child involvement in school is of benefit to them.

The curricular I found myself teaching was extremely lengthy and could not fathom how other seasoned teachers had gone about completing each and every aspect in a short period of time. It was just too much for me to handle and I received no guidance from my management. In larger classes of 45-50 learners' lack of resources and poor discipline are disadvantaging their work ethic and the teaching and learning environment holistically.

Helpful Luke

During this year, I had taken it upon myself to share my teaching experiences as a mentor to two new voluntary teachers. I was actually mentoring them apart from learning myself. I told them and showed them exactly what is to be done on a daily basis. I explained policy documents to them as well. I became a grade head for Life Orientation in Grade 7, and conducted meetings and lessons with two fellow Life Orientation teachers. My involvement as a teacher is wide-spread so much so that I convened volleyball and soccer events and organised photograph day for my learners. I endeavour to help other new teachers and share my knowledge.

Working towards Gold

My career is something that I can be proud of and enlist as one of my greatest achievements thus far. In my first year I have grown in leaps and bounds as a new teacher and learnt everything that university didn't teach me. I am eternally grateful for all that I have and for the important role I play in the young lives of learners. I am currently studying my BEd (H) Degree at UKZN and I believe that this will allow me to learn and to grow in my career. In all my life, I strive to work towards gold, towards excellence, towards things that will make myself and my family proud.

4.2.2 Poem: “First Year Teacher”

First Year Teacher

Qualified Professional

Humble Beginnings

Difficult Circumstances

Qualified Professional

Real Life

Difficult Circumstances

Strong Faith

Real Life

Strong Values

Strong Faith

Expand Knowledge

Strong Values

Humble Beginnings

Expand Knowledge

First Year Teacher

4.3 Lucy

4.3.1 Storied Narrative: “Born to Teach”

Lucy: I never thought that I would study teaching and become a teacher; but at some point in my life I knew that I was born to teach. Writing on my room walls with chalk and teaching simple concepts to a dog as a young child lead me to becoming a teacher. During the first week of the new academic year, I was asked to be a participant in a research study. I felt excited as I would be going back in time and reliving my past experiences and memories. I am a 26 year old, Indian, young lady who is working for 3 years in an English medium public primary school in Newlands West, Durban. I teach grades 1, 2 and 3 learners in the Foundation phase. My learning areas that I teach are English, Mathematics and Life Orientation. I taught isiZulu for a year even though my first language is English. I am a new teacher and I am currently a MEd student at UKZN, Edgewood campus. ***My name is Lucy and this is my story.***

Growing up Without my Family

I was born in 1992 into a family of four other members, which are my mother, father, and two older sisters. However, as a four month old baby, I lived with my maternal grandmother and aunt for five years in Tongaat, twenty minutes away from my ‘real’ family. In the nineteen-nineties well even now, parents had to be working in order to support a family. My childhood memories in Tongaat include doing absolutely everything, from bathing to eating to watching television (as I recall ‘Days of our lives’ and ‘Murder she wrote’ were my favourite), with my grandmother and aunt. For a while, I felt rather ‘out of place’ when I visited my family on the weekends.

Things I love

I love using Pinterest; a mobile application used to discover information on the World Wide Web. I love exploring pictures and discovering new information about interesting topics, such as travel and teaching. I also love my family; spring cleaning and saving money. The things that I love are represented in my collage below.



Figure 10: Lucy's Collage

In addition to the things mentioned above, I love my Samsung Galaxy A5 Gold Smartphone. I make use of my cellphone on a daily basis to communicate, send emails, manage schedules, take pictures or videos, socialise, browse the internet, gather information, check the weather, find places on Google maps, chat on Edmodo, purchase goods online or search for holidays and it symbolises a screen into the new world. I learn so much from my cellphone and a lot about teaching and how to be a better teacher. I often 'Google' lesson plans and resources as well as integrate media into my daily lessons. Below is a picture of my cellphone.



Figure 11: Lucy's Artefact

My Schooling Career

At age 5, I moved ‘home’ to Phoenix, Durban and started pre-school at Woodview Primary School. It was public school with a lot of amenities including a swimming pool, a computer room, religious education and a sports ground. I remember taking the bus with my sisters and getting to school. I had a lot of good teachers and I remember this one teacher kept on saying: Reading is the key to success. She told us every day before we could start an English lesson. I valued my homework and made it more important than the food I ate. I would do my homework before having my meals when returned home from school. I also spent time playing ‘teacher games’ with the neighbour’s dog; working out sums by writing on my room wall with chalk; and always correcting everyone with correct English. My passion and drive for teaching came from a very young age; however unnoticed.

I entered high school into Woodview Secondary School in 2005. As a high school learner, I enjoyed being at school and was actively involved in the many activities that the school offered. I was the captain of my sports house; captain of the netball team and was always helping teachers by putting information on the schools computer. Teaching and learning was poor and my teachers never motivated us to be anything better than we already are. I remember my English teacher telling me that I have a learning problem; yet he was the one that was not in the classroom most of the time. My accounting teacher was a drunk and we could smell alcohol on him every day.

The Road to Success is always Under Construction

I passed matric with a Bachelor pass and got into university. In 2010 I began a degree I knew nothing about at UKZN, Westville campus. It was Bachelor of Commerce (BCom) Accounting. My first year was very difficult, and as a result I failed three modules. At this point, I decided to change my outlook on life and choose a career I was more passionate about. I was always supported by my family in all my life decisions. In my second year out of school, I transferred to UKZN, Edgewood campus in the hope of becoming an inspiring teacher. It was at this stage of my life where I wanted to make everyone feel like a ‘somebody’. I did not approve of my high school teachers who cared less about me and my future. I wanted to be successful and I knew I was born to teach.

Motivation is what gets you Started. Habit is what keeps you Going.

At the onset, starting at a new place and trying to make something of my life, I made it the utmost goal to do exceptionally well and believed that education is all I have. I believe it is something that no one can take from you. I received merits for doing well and Dean's commendations. This, as well as my lecturers contributed to my motivation. I gained some independence when I received a bursary based on achievement; a scholarship for one year; a few merits for my modules; being elected as class representative for a many modules; passing my degree with a Cum Laude merit pass; buying my first car myself; working part-time as a promoter on weekends while studying full-time; and paying for a holiday to Thailand on my own. I was now confident, independent and optimistic.

Beginner Teacher

I graduated with Bachelor of Education (*cum laude*) with full confidence and enthusiasm and excited to be putting my theories learnt in my undergrad degree into practice. My first year of teaching is a memorable and unforgettable experience. I recall my first day of teaching like it was yesterday when the principal walked me to my classroom. It was definitely a walk that I was waiting for. As I entered my very own classroom as the teacher for the very first time, I was overwhelmed. I saw 45 pairs of eyes of grade 3 learners staring at me in amazement. Noise filled the classroom within minutes. There were disorganised files lying on my table. I greeted the learners and introduced myself. After a while, I tried doing some work but was clueless as to what was to be done. As the term went by, I cried with disappointment and helplessness. It was not because I did not have the ability to work; rather I did not know what was to be done and how. Teachers were often busy and not approachable; neither were the management of the school. I felt as if I was alone and all that I had learnt in undergrad was inadequate for my under resourced schooling context. As a new teacher, I faced many adaption challenges at my school and was exposed to a lot of negativity. I often referred to myself as being an ant in this educational world. I thought that I was just tiny and quite insignificant.



Figure 12: Lucy's Metaphor Drawing

Learn from Yesterday, Live for Today, Hope for Tomorrow

In my first two years of being a teacher; I studied and graduated BEd (Hons *cum laude*) and this motivated me to study further. I am now a MEd student at UKZN. I actively attend cohort group meetings with my supervisor and other students. This allows me to learn from them as well as to share my ideas and knowledge. Still being novice, I have taken every opportunity to learn and develop myself as a teacher in my schooling environment. I have become the chairperson of my union that I belong to in my school, am involved in organising school-related functions, being a choreographer of many dances for special occasions, and being the editor of the school newsletter. I have mentored two student teachers. I have taught them many things that I learnt as being a teacher. I believe that if you work hard, you will reap rewards. I have so many plans for my future and will continue to pursue my career no matter what.

4.3.2 Poem: “Inspiring Teacher”

Inspiring Teacher

Born to Teach

Optimistic

Disappointment

Born To Teach

Negativity

Disappointment

Helplessness

Negativity

Enthusiastic

Helplessness

Memorable Experience

Enthusiastic

Optimistic

Memorable Experience

Inspiring Teacher

4.4 Diya

4.4.1 Storied Narrative: “Nostalgia Lane”

Diya: It was at the beginning of a new academic year, when my friend who teaches foundation phase requested my assistance for being a participant in her research study that she had been working on. Happily I accepted her offer and was excited to give my insight into the life in the day of a novice teacher by unpacking my real life experiences within my teaching context. I am a 30 year old, Indian, novice teacher. I work in an English medium public primary school in Newlands West, Durban. I teach Mathematics, Social Sciences, Life Orientation and English in grades 4, 5 and 6 in the intermediate phase.

I am Diya and this is my story.

My Story

My story began on 11 November in the year 1988 at Westville Hospital, born as a second daughter to my parents who were then residents of Shallcross in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. I have an older sister who is a lawyer and a younger brother who is a dentist. I always took it upon myself to mentor my brother as my sister mentored me. I share a special relationship with both my brother and sister. I attended Savannah Park Primary School where I went on to complete my grade 7. Later, my family relocated to Woodlands, and I then went to Mowat Park Girls High School, in the Montclair area. I had gone on to complete my matric in the year of 2005. Teaching and learning was very good at my school. My teachers were fantastic and played a big role in our lives. I always did well in school to make my parents proud.

Third Degree...Totally Confused

The year of 2006 marked my first year of tertiary education in which I pursued a degree in BCom Accounting at UKZN, Westville campus. I always dreamt of being an accountant as a young girl; however I hadn't had the slightest ideas about what it was all about. Having quickly realised that my passions lied elsewhere, I had opted to change my qualification to one in Business Administration, of which I proudly hold an Honours Degree in. My major is in Human Resource Management. After completing this degree, I knew that I wanted to study something else. At the back of my mind, I knew I wanted to become a teacher. My collage below depicts the confusion that I was faced with; however my passion lied in teaching.



Figure 13: Diya's Collage

Teaching was my one and only true passion and I was definitely encapsulated on a quest to fulfil my true dreams. I studied further and obtained a Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) from UKZN, Edgewood campus. I am qualified in the Senior Phase of General Education and Training and Further Education and Training, and specialise in grades 7-12. Upon date of my graduation, I was very happy to have received a key ring as a small token to commemorate my first graduation in 2010. I hold this trinket very close to my heart, as I am reminiscent of the hard work and dedication put in and formulates thoughts of happiness, fulfilment and success.



Figure 14: Diya's Artefact

Small Girl Problems

Upon completion of my PGCE Teaching Degree in 2014, I began work as an SGB teacher in the following year in a school within the Newlands West area in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. I had fulfilled this temporary position for a period of four months and thereafter I was then promoted to the position of a substitute teacher and eventually I got rolled over to being a permanent teacher. I now found the Department of Education to be my new employer. This public primary school was my first real experience in a school environment as a teacher and to me it felt like a whole new world. Initially, I felt extreme amounts of pressure and expectation and it felt as if someone had flung me into the deep end of an Olympic size pool. My management viewed me purely as a subordinate, as I lacked any real authority or influence within the school itself. My diminutive position and stature, led me to become filled with emotions of fear and distress. I found my colleagues of no real help, as I was too intimidated to approach them in my times of need. My uncertainties extended to menial tasks I would have thought myself of being apt in, such as filing or organising my classroom. My harsh reality of being trained on the theoretical side of the classroom, left me bamboozled when I was tasked with being practical. There was not any index I could refer to at the back of any specific textbook... This was real life. I drew a picture of my day in the life of a novice teacher. I felt tiny and invisible; most of the time overlooked and really afraid of the teaching world. I even drew the learners bigger than myself to show how they looked down upon me. After sometime, I realised that I am much happier and I no longer feel like this.



Figure 15: Diya's Metaphor Drawing

Working Life

My specialisation lies in the Mathematics arena which meant fairly little when tasked with duty of the English, Creative Arts and Social Sciences learning areas for my grades 4, 5 and 6 classes. Personally, I had no real ultimatum as the cards were stacked against me. I decided to make the most of this opportunity by making myself better in the different learning areas for the sake of my learners. I learnt curricular content through the CAPS documents and effective ways in which to teach learners through various books in the school library. In order to do this, I had a very positive mind-set as well as the required patience to enhance my skillset as a new teacher.

Teaching and Learning Context

The context of the school I teach in is a harsh reality of the country we find ourselves left with today. Although my school is blessed with the bare necessities and infrastructure, it still falls far behind the league of what a private school learner would be accustomed to. The surrounding community is one of low income households, where parents are doing their best efforts in making sure their child supersedes their very own livelihood and legacy. At the start of my tenure, I had not contextualised the realities of teaching in such a schooling environment. It took some deep thought, empathy and understanding for me to come into terms with what my learners go through each and every day of their lives. Their homes are deprived of basic infrastructure and utilities which stem reasons for them not having transport to attend school or let alone have a meal to open up to at lunchtime. They find themselves dependent on internal feeding schemes, which for some prove to be their first and last meal daily. The dire circumstances of rural living in the 21st century is most certainly a sour pill for me to swallow, but making a tangible difference in their young lives proves to be a notch more difficult.

The circumstances my learners find themselves facing make the teaching and learning environment a less conducive one. Primary focus on curriculum has been shifted, to allow learners to be disciplined correctly and provided the basic resources for them to make the lesson worthwhile. My school is an English medium school, even though it plays second fiddle for the vast majority of its learners. The majority of learners are not fluent in the English language and have great difficulties in comprehending with the curriculum as a whole. These challenges drove me to sharpen my skills and fine tune my approach even more, such that I can make my lessons more adaptable to the learners it was formulated for.

On the other hand, apart from their teacher, I spend a lot of my time fulfilling the role of mother to them as well, when duty calls.

Hard-work Pays Off

The art of teaching can be tiresome, fulfilling and rewarding all at the same time. The challenges that I am faced with on a daily basis are testament to the character I have become today. It has helped me to grow my confidence, as both an individual and professional simultaneously. I would have not been able to grow, develop and adapt to my school without positive peers. They generate an upbeat attitude which correlates to better overall performance. My peers and I have lengthy but rather interesting discussions on how to improve and develop oneself. Teaching is hard work, and extremely challenging and scary at times. I try to surround myself with positive peers that would have a positive influence on me and motivate me. I am grateful to my Lord Krishna for guiding me through my rough beginnings and allowing me to blossom in my role today. I give thanks to Him for providing me with the drive and encouragement to achieve my goals and make a success of myself. I am grateful each day for my job and give my very best efforts in ensuring I am the best teacher I can be to my learners. I am motivated to extend my involvement in co-curricular activities and look to diminish perceptions of novice teachers being incapable. Further, I will pass on the necessary guidance and experiences to other new starters to make their transitions from being a student to a teacher smoother than that of my own.

4.4.2 Poem: “Professional Teacher”

Professional Teacher

Whole New World

Harsh Reality

Real Experience

Whole New World

True Passion

Real Experience

Tiny and Invisible

True Passion

Deep End

Tiny and Invisible

Challenging

Deep End

Harsh Reality

Challenging

Professional Teacher

4.5 Zenzile

4.5.1 Storied Narrative: “Exciting Reflection”

Zenzile: I found myself caught in the storm of a rather hectic week of the first term. A colleague of mine strolling past my classroom noticed my flustered demeanour. She enquired as to the reasons behind my frustrations and I replied: Management! She told me briefly about her BEd Master of Education research study that she was doing and asked me if I wanted to be a participant in her research study. I explained to her that I was travelling a long distance to work and was not prepared to meet her at odd times. She clarified that everything would be convenient to me and I then decided to be a participant in her research study. ***My name is Zenzile and this is my story.***

I am a 26 year old African, young teacher. I am working at an English medium school in the Newlands West area, Durban. I teach Mathematics, English, Life Orientation and IsiZulu in the foundation phase. I have 45 grade 3 learners in my classroom. I travel a long distance to work; 80km to be exact, but I am grateful for my job.

My Family

I was born on the 10 March 1992 in a small town called Empangeni which is situated in Northern KwaZulu-Natal, to a 15 year old mother. Throughout my childhood, I was cared for and raised by my grandparents, great grandparents and extended family. Most of my life I spent with my family and I share a close knit bond with my uncles, aunties and cousins. My father was married to another woman and he did not play a big role in my life.

My Mother...My Motivation

My mother is the most important person in my life. I did not get to spend much time with her when I was a baby because she was still a learner at school; however, we share a very special relationship. Looking back at pictures, I noticed that I was shifted to stay with my grandparents and great grandparents. I believe that my mother made several sacrifices for me, to allow me the opportunities that she never had. My mum is my number one hero and is my source of motivation to achieve all my life goals. She is a great inspiration to me and my seventeen year old half-sister. My half-sister and I share a close bond. I help her with her homework; take her as well as fetch her from school and after school classes; and I even take

it upon myself to go to her school and check on her progress when my mother is busy. I keep the picture of my mother below close to my heart as it is a constant reminder that anything is possible.

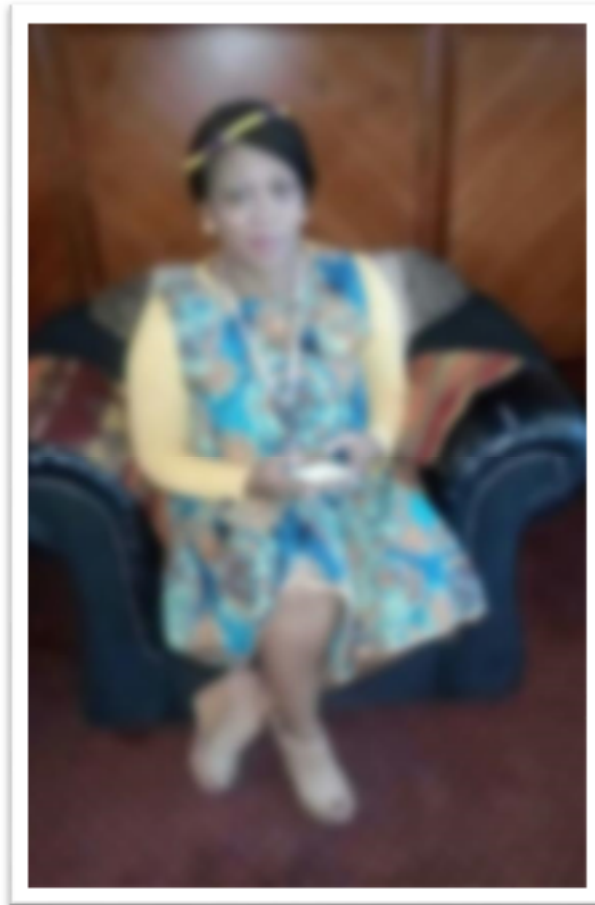


Figure 16: Zenzile's Artefact

My Schooling Years

I began schooling in 1996 and was fortunate enough to attend Saint Catherine's Pre-Primary school in Empangeni. It was a private school and well equipped with various extra and co-curricular activities. A few years later, I moved to Durban and then I attended Kenwood School. It was a private school in Virginia, Durban. At this school, my mum was advised that I had learning barrier deficiencies. My mother made a decision to send me to Livingstone Primary School, which is a special school. At this school, I was on Ritalin which is a medication used to treat ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder) and ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder). I stayed at this school for a year and a half and then I was told that I was now ready for mainstream school. In grade 5, I attended Glenwood Junior Primary which is a semi-private school and I completed grade 7 there.

During my transition from primary school to high school, my mother taught it would be befitting for me to attend a boarding school. It was Sarel Cilliers High School, a public school and different to what I was used to. I was so used to being in a class that was dominated by white people so I was shocked to see only black people. I was doing poorly at academics, failed grade 9 and became suicidal because of all this.

My mother shifted me off to Pinetown Girls High School, which was a semi-private school but now a public school. While I was here, I had problems with my step father and I was told to leave home. I went to live in Empangeni with my grandparents, and I completed my matric at John Ross College which is a public school in Richards Bay. It is the first English Home Language only school in Richards Bay and is a multicultural school since 1994. Being in so many schools has definitely made me aware of the differences of being in each school.

Baby-Steps

I was cautious and calculated in taking each step one by one to becoming a teacher and reaching my goals. I have put in a lot of dedication and hard work to make my dreams a reality. My collage below is a representation of myself taking baby-steps to be where I am today. Without these little steps, I would not be where I am today.



Figure 17: Zenzile's Collage

Teaching Experience

I was offered a job as a School Governing Body (SGB) teacher in my current school, and I gladly accepted this offer with a mind of wanting to make a difference in the lives of children; but it has been extremely difficult. After a few months, I served as a substitute teacher and thereafter, I got a permanent post. Management and teachers at my school have not supported me in any way. I was put straight into a deep end. There was no one that came to check if I was doing okay at school and no one that actually sat down with me and showed me what was to be done.

Drowning in the Deep End

Adapting to life as a new appointed teacher was very challenging. I find my management to be more reactive than proactive in their dealings of the way in which the school is run. Their demeanour is one of belittlement and subordination and look to identify more problems than enacting viable solutions. In my metaphor drawing which is a drawing of a typical day at my school. I drew a picture of management smiling while standing in the shade on a hill top watching me shout for help while I'm drowning inside a pool. The management at my school are not helpful at all and would rather look for ways to put me down instead.

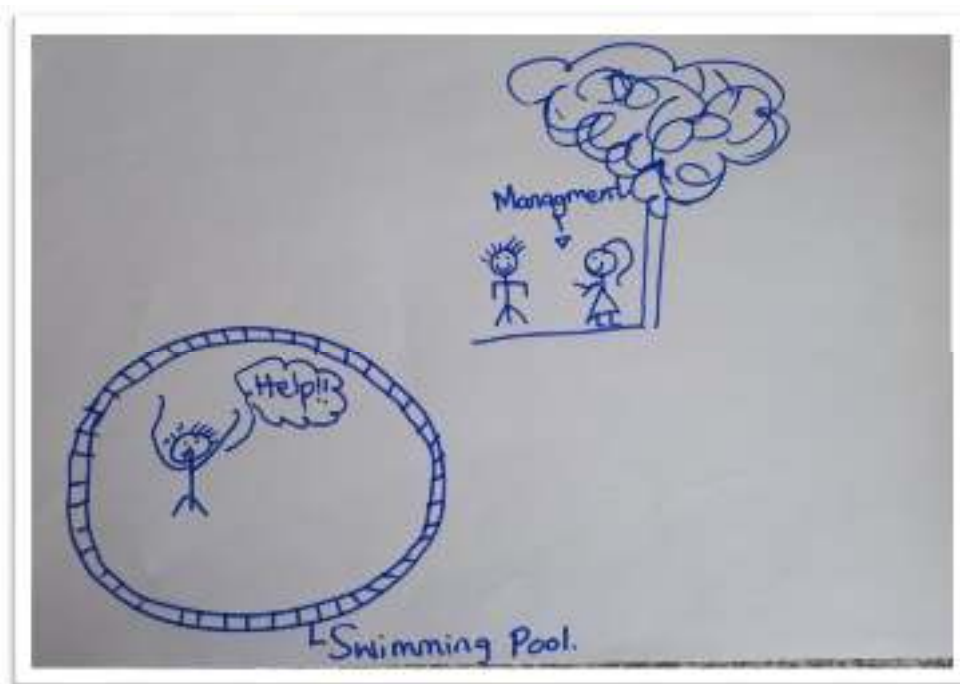


Figure 18: Zenzile's Metaphor Drawing

There were many times that I asked my management for assistance, however, I was not given any assistance. I found myself being called up to the office three different times because of a specific Head of Department (HOD). She would walk pass my classroom and then walk inside and complain about how I am doing things wrong. I thought to myself that she is my senior and will be ready to help me fight my battles. Rather she would 'run and tell' the principal what I was doing wrong. When I was called up to the office, I was faced with the principal, deputy principal and two foundation phase HOD's. Whenever I try to explain my situation, I am told that I am here for a few months and I should know what is happening; I am a professional and qualified for this job so nothing should be a problem. It made me feel like a fool and doubt my place.

I teach 4 subjects in a day and find it very difficult to cover everything in a short period of time. When I walk pass other classes, I notice that other teachers are 'flying' with work and this makes me very nervous and I get frantic about my heavy work load. When I try and explain content in IsiZulu which are the learners' first language, I get into trouble because a management person walks pass and assumes that I do not speak in English and that I teach in isiZulu all the time. However, as time passed by, I learnt to differentiate my instruction and work with learners in groups to achieve my goals. I adjusted well to the rules of the school and adapted easily to the learners by using various teaching strategies so learning becomes productive and conducive. I took on other responsibilities such as teaching physical education and conducting sporting activities.

Experimental Teacher in the Classroom

As a new teacher with many challenges; I enjoy experimenting with different teaching methods and approaches in order to grow and develop myself as a teacher. I find it more important for my learners to understand actual concepts before moving on to other work in the curriculum. I use a learner-centred approach to learning; differentiate my classroom instruction and use exciting ways to teach, such as role-playing. My dream of being a teacher began from the time I was a young girl. I have the utmost passion for young learners and I feel that I would be fulfilling my true purpose if I could make a difference in the lives of others. I strive to better learn as a teacher each and every day because this will help me to help my learners in the classroom. I learn from reading school policies; provincial policies; national policies; CAPS policies; online articles on classroom management, organisation, practices as well as books on how to be a better teacher. I have a strong interest in growing

and developing myself in the teaching and learning field. My watch is arguably my most valuable accessory in the classroom because everything depends on time; of which we have so little of. I find it crucial to be punctual as a teacher to ensure the completion of all the tasks and activities. Even after school hours, I make time to sit at my desk and complete everything that is required of me.

4.5.2 Poem: “New Appointed Teacher”

New Appointed Teacher

Baby Steps

Drowning in the Deep End

Don't Panic – Be Calm

Baby Steps

Experiment

Don't Panic – Be Calm

My Dream

Experiment

No Support

My Dream

My Passion

No Support

Drowning in the Deep End

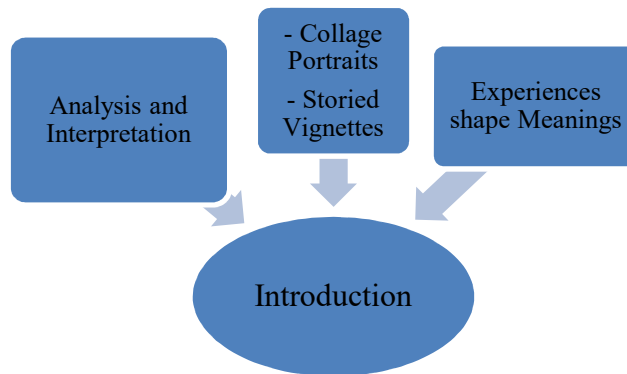
My Passion

New Appointed Teacher

4.6 Conclusion

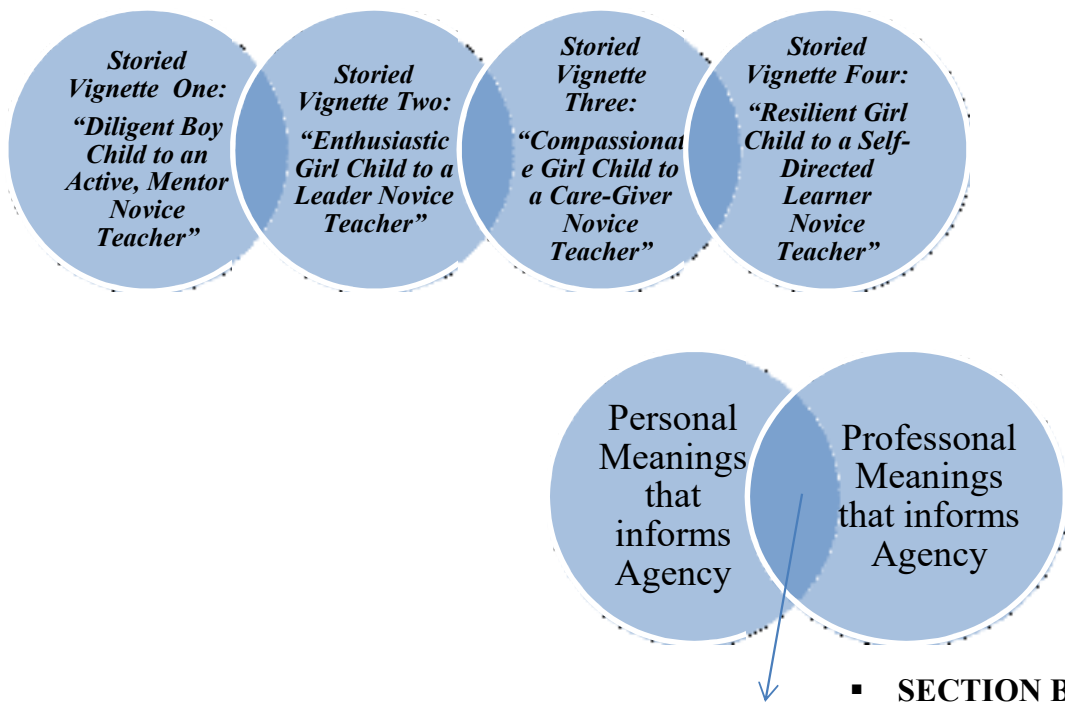
This chapter presented the storied narratives of four NT participants which formed the first level of analysis in this research study. The participants' storied narratives act as a lens to get a glimpse of who they are as NTs working in public primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal. These narratives reveal that an individual's professional life is largely dependent of their personal life; hence the two cannot be separated. There are other scholars working with teachers' stories, however the focus of my research study is on exploring the lived personal and professional experiences of NTs, and how they might cultivate professional agency in public primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal. When working with other NTs stories, it becomes a difficult task for me as the researcher and fellow NT. However, I have learnt in the re-storying process that an individual's life is multifaceted, fascinating and unique. As the four NT participants take up certain meanings, I gain a deeper understanding of how their personal meaning of self informs their professional practices and how they might cultivate professional agency. The storied narratives were encapsulated by pantoum poems. Each pantoum poem reflects the lived experiences, feelings and characters of NTs that are working in public primary schools in Durban, KZN.

In the succeeding chapter, Chapter Five, I present an analysis of the storied narratives and answer the second key research question: "*What personal and professional meanings inform novice teacher self in public primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal?*" Through the exploration of this question, I am able to understand NTs personal and professional meanings of agency in public primary schools in KZN. The analysis within this chapter will be presented in the form of collage portraits and storied vignettes. The collage portraits 'support' and 'enliven' the storied narratives (Gerstenblatt, 2013); and the storied vignettes highlight the personal and professional meanings that they adopt to inform who they are and what they do as NTs (Jenkins et al., 2010).

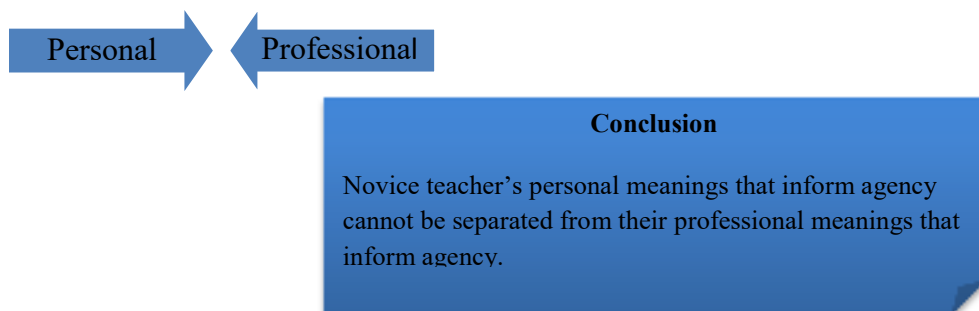


▪ SECTION A

Personal Meanings of Self and Professional Meanings of Self that informs Agency



Personal and Professional Meanings of Self that informs Professional Agency



CHAPTER FIVE

STORIED VIGNETTES:

NOVICE TEACHERS PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL MEANINGS OF SELF THAT INFORMS PROFESSIONAL AGENCY

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter represented four storied narratives composed from the following data collection methods: collage inquiry, artefact retrieval, metaphor drawing and unstructured interviews, for Luke, Lucy, Diya and Zenzile. Through the storied narratives, I acquired glimpses of their lived experiences as individuals being NTs working in public primary schools in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal.

In this chapter, I present an analysis and interpretation of the storied narratives and answer the second key research question: *What personal and professional meanings inform novice teacher self in public primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal?* In analysing and interpreting this question, I adopt a Teacher Identity Theory perspective to frame the explanation and analysis of the storied data. Rodgers and Scott (2008) assert that identity evolves and transforms over time. “Identity is dependent upon and formed within multiple contexts”; “is formed in relationship with others and involves emotion”; “is shifting, unstable, and multiple” and “involves the construction and reconstruction of meaning through stories over time” (Rodgers and Scott, 2008, p. 733). Personal Identity is the ‘who am I?’ about one self. The ‘who am I?’ is shaped by one’s history, society and culture (Florio-Ruane and Williams, 2008). On the other hand, Professional Identity is the ‘who am I as a teacher’. It pertains to ideas of how to “be”, “act” and “understand” as being a teacher during ones teaching career (Sachs, as cited in Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009, p. 178). Drawing on NTs lived experiences to explore their meanings enables me to understand what and how they think about themselves as NTs working in public primary schools in KZN. Through the reshaping of their identities against dominant discourses around NTs, I illuminate their meanings that are formulated for agency.

Within this chapter, I analyse and interpret selected data from the storied narratives in the form of collage portraits which will assist in supporting narrative thematic analysis and thereafter present storied vignettes in a textual form. The collage portraits “include marginalised voices and encourage a range of linguistic and non-linguistic representations to

articulate authentic lived experiences” and therefore ‘support’ and ‘enliven’ the storied vignettes (Gerstenblatt, 2013, p. 12). The storied vignettes are ‘snapshots’ of the everyday experiences of NTs and it highlights the personal and professional meanings that NTs adopt to inform who they are and what they do as NTs (Jenkins et al., 2010).

These qualitative data analysis methods focus on how NTs lived experiences assist in forming meanings of agency. The main purpose of presenting collage portraits and storied vignettes is to deepen my insight into NTs personal and professional meaning making of agency. The meanings that are formed and reformed by NTs are vital to the adoption of certain beliefs that inform what teachers do inside of the classroom and outside the classroom (Sutherland et al., 2010). Within the collage portraits and storied vignettes, I used direct quotations of the NT participants from the storied narratives to strengthen believability (Patton, 2002); and it is presented in italics.

5.2 Overview of the Chapter

This chapter is divided into two sections: **Section A** and **Section B**.

▪ SECTION A

I present four collage portraits and storied vignettes. Each storied vignette firstly, highlights the NTs personal meanings of self that informs agency; secondly, it highlights their professional meanings of self that informs agency; and lastly, it elucidates to open up spaces of resistance to potential spaces for agency.

The titles of the storied vignettes are as follows:

Storied Vignette One: “Diligent Boy Child to an Active, Mentor Novice Teacher”

Storied Vignette Two: “Enthusiastic Girl Child to a Leader Novice Teacher”

Storied Vignette Three: “Compassionate Girl Child to a Care-Giver Novice Teacher”

Storied Vignette Four: “Resilient Girl Child to a Self-Directed Learner Novice Teacher”

▪ SECTION B

I synthesise this chapter by highlighting how the NTs personal and professional lived experiences shape their meanings of self that informs professional agency.

SECTION A

5.3 Personal Meanings of Self and Professional Meanings of Self that informs Agency

5.3.1 Storied Vignette One

“Diligent Boy Child to an Active, Mentor Novice Teacher”



Figure 19: Luke's Collage Portrait

“From being a Diligent Boy Child to a Hard-Working Learner”

Displaying Care and Compassion

Luke was born in the early nineteen nineties as the *youngest child* in to a family of three other members who resided in Phoenix, Durban. He comes from a *close-knit family* that is built on strong values and humble beginnings. He shares very close relationships with his family members, including his: mother, father and brother as well as his nieces. Luke has three nieces; one of whom *had been diagnosed with Down syndrome*. Luke displays care and compassion when he chooses to help his *Down syndrome niece with her homework* and

teaches her *simple skills in life*. Luke has the capacity to attend to his niece's educational needs (James, 2012).

Luke says:

I have three wonderful nieces, the eldest of which had been diagnosed with Down syndrome. We share a very special bond and I take pride as her mentor. I enjoy teaching her simple skills in life and helping her with homework.

Easily Adapting as a Learner to a Different Schooling Space

As a young learner at high school, Luke had *no real choice* when he had to move to a different residential area and transfer schools. Both his parents suffered in poor health and he had to find a way to adapt to his new environment. Luke becomes *actively involved* in his new school.

Luke says:

Initially, I had to go about making new friends and adapt to life in a new community. Steadily, I began enjoying attending school and found myself actively involved in extra and co-curricular activities, such as debating, class representative, prefect-ship and blood-donor drives.

Luke initiates 'purposeful action' by reshaping his learner identity within his new social context (Lipponen & Kumpulainen, 2001, p. 812). Luke embraced his new environment by being a friendly and active learner who has good interpersonal skills in his schooling life and displays control over his actions (Rose, 2005).

Initiating an Alternate Career Trajectory

Luke set his sights on pursuing a tertiary qualification in Law at UKZN, Howard College, with teaching as his second choice. After being accepted for both choices, Luke had *only been granted funding for teaching*. Since his parents *could not afford the institution fees* to university, Luke had to decide on which career path to follow. Deciding on a career path to follow is "often linked to one's moral obligations" (Cross & Ndofirepi, 2013, p. 8). After a long thought, Luke decided himself that it would be best to take the funding that he had been granted for teaching and begin his teaching career.

Luke reflects:

Looking back, I feel I made a good decision as teaching is my passion and it allows me a comfortable quality of life.

Luke's sense of self is one that is open-minded and practical. He adapts well to his challenges and is in control of his personal self in life (Rose, 2005).

In analysing the selected excerpts above, I was able to highlight Luke's personal lived experiences in which he has taken pride in caring for and mentoring his niece; being a friendly and adaptable learner and being actively involved in negotiating his career path. Luke's personal lived experiences shape meanings that inform agency.

“From being a Hard-Working Learner to an Active, Mentor Novice Teacher”

Adjusting to the Realities of Schooling

Luke is qualified as a high school teacher and can teach learners in *grades 9-12*. *Due to a shortage of vacancies* at various high schools in Durban; Luke was placed into a primary school. Although he specialised in teaching *Life Orientation, Technology and Business Studies*, he had found himself *allocated the Mathematics, Life Orientation, Social Sciences and Afrikaans* leaning areas to teach. During Luke's first year of formal teaching at a public primary school in Phoenix, Durban; he *found it challenging* in teaching the given learning areas because he was unqualified to teach them and had *minimal prior experience*.

Luke recalls:

Afrikaans, more specifically was a mental obstacle due to myself faring poorly in the subject as a learner. I recently found out that I like teaching Social Sciences because I can relate to it well. Due to my lack of experience in the Mathematics field, I found myself pre-learning my lessons to ensure I gave my learners my best efforts.

Due to Luke's challenges and his inexperience in the teaching field, he adopted the role of teacher “to be linked to being a learner” (Swart & Oswald, 2008), and to better learn and develop himself as a professional in his schooling context. Guskey (2002, p. 382) “defines professional development as efforts to bring about change in the classroom practice of teachers and for most of them becoming a better teacher means enhancing student learning outcomes”. Similarly, Luke was taking the responsibility of learning himself in order to teach

his learners. He shows much enthusiasm and passion for his learners and the teaching career as a whole, and is flexible in making good decisions regarding his teaching and learning practices (Rose, 2005).

Negotiating New Relationships with Peers

Luke in the *first few weeks* of attending school, *felt very uncomfortable and uncertain of how best to fulfil his role as a teacher*. He *found it difficult* to integrate with his new peers as they often *passed nasty remarks and laughed at him because of the way he dressed*. He *felt rather out of place and wanted to leave school immediately*; but as time went on Luke says that he befriended his new peers.

Luke negotiated his self and his relationships within his professional environment and eventually embraced his new peers. Identity is not fixed and is negotiated through experience (Sachs, 2005). This act of embracing his new peers brought a new meaning to Luke's role as a fellow teacher.

Sharing Information to Enhance the Development of Other New Teachers

Throughout Luke's first year of formal teaching, he *received no guidance* from his management and had to learn and develop on his own. He took *it upon himself to share his teaching experiences as a mentor to two new voluntary teachers*. Luke also *became a grade head for Life Orientation in Grade 7, and conducted meetings and lessons with two fellow Life Orientation teachers*. His *involvement as a teacher is wide-spread so much so that he convened volleyball and soccer events and organised photograph day for the learners at his school*.

Luke displays care towards other new teachers. He says:

I endeavour to help other new teachers and share my knowledge.

Luke's active, caring and helpful nature enables him to go beyond his role of just teaching learners. He helps to teach and develop other new teachers. Luke's teaching experience as a NT is challenged by Caspersen and Raaen (2014) when they mention that NTs have low participation levels. Luke, in his teaching environment is actively involved.

Engaging with New Knowledge to Improve the Quality of his Future as a Teacher

It is extremely important to learn and to grow as a teacher, as well as to engage with new knowledge and improve one's qualification. Luke acknowledges that he plays an important role as a teacher in the lives of young learners. He has chosen to study BEd (H) at UKZN as he believes *that this will allow him to learn and to grow in his career.*

Luke acknowledges his important role as a new teacher and to develop professionally. It is evident that Luke endeavours to purposively direct his working life (Rose, 2005).

In analysing the selected excerpts above, I was able to highlight Luke's professional lived experiences in which he learns in order to teach; negotiates new relationships; shares information to enhance the development of other new teachers and engages with new knowledge. These spaces offer potential and opportunities for Luke to exercise his agency as a NT.

Synthesis of Storied Vignette One

Luke's storied vignette reveals that his personal lived experiences and professional lived experiences shape meanings of agency. In all aspects of Luke's self, he is active in developing himself physically, emotionally and academically; and shares information as a mentor. These meanings provide him with a basis to cultivate professional agency as a NT in a public primary school in KwaZulu-Natal.

5.3.2 Storied Vignette Two

“Enthusiastic Girl Child to a Leader Novice Teacher”



Figure 20: Lucy's Collage Portrait

“From being an Enthusiastic Girl Child to a Dynamic Learner”

Exhibiting Interest in Schooling Activities

Lucy was born into an Indian, middle class family twenty-six years ago in Phoenix, Durban. As a young child, she was *actively involved in the many activities that her school offered*. She was extremely helpful and was seen as a leader.

Lucy reflects:

I was the captain of my sports house; captain of the netball team and was always helping teachers by putting information on the schools computer.

Lucy's sense of self is one that is actively involved and helpful. She has a positive aura about her life and is in control of the things she does (Rose, 2005).

Creating a New Approach to Learning

Lucy acknowledges that *teaching and learning was poor* in her high school *and* that her *teachers never motivated her to be anything better than she already was*.

Lucy remembers:

I remember my English teacher telling me that I have a learning problem; yet he was the one that was not in the classroom most of the time. My accounting teacher was a drunk and we could smell alcohol on him every day.

Despite having teachers who cared less; Lucy endeavoured to do well in her schooling career. She *passed matric with a Bachelor pass and got into university*, and now she is studying Master of Education at UKZN. Lucy is in control of her life and is competent in what she does (Rose, 2005).

Initiating a New Career Choice

After Lucy completed school in 2009, the following year she *began an accounting degree she knew nothing about at UKZN, Westville campus*. Her first year was extremely *difficult and as a result she failed three modules*. *At this point, Lucy decided to change her outlook on life and choose a career that she was more passionate about*. After much deliberation, Lucy transferred to UKZN, Edgewood campus *in the hope of becoming an inspiring teacher as she was disappointed with her high school teachers who cared less about her and her future*.

Lucy makes on-going negotiations about her career choice. "Identity formation is conceived as an on-going process that involves the interpretation and reinterpretation of experiences as one lives through them" (Beijaard et al, 2000). It is evident that Lucy's identity is shifting, unstable and multiple (Rodgers and Scott, 2008). She cares for herself and her future, and she is passionate about taking a hold of her life.

Lucy says:

At the onset, starting at a new place and trying to make something of my life, I made it the utmost goal to do exceptionally well and believed that education is all I have. I believe it is something that no one can take from you. I received merits for doing well

and Dean's commendations. This, as well as my lecturers contributed to my motivation. I gained some independence when I received a bursary based on achievement; a scholarship for one year; a few merits for my modules; being elected as class representative for a many modules; passing my degree with a Cum Laude merit pass; buying my first car myself; working part-time as a promoter on weekends while studying full-time; and paying for a holiday to Thailand on my own. I was now confident, independent and optimistic.

In analysing the selected excerpts above, I was able to highlight Lucy's personal lived experiences in which she has used exhibits increasing interest in her schooling activities; creates a new approach to learning and initiates a new career choice. Lucy's personal lived experiences shape meanings that inform agency.

"From being a Dynamic Learner to a Leader Novice Teacher"

Using Media as an Alternate Method of Improving Teaching Skills

Lucy is now a *public primary school teacher in Newlands West, Durban*. She is a very enthusiastic learner and teacher, and loves to *discover new information on the World Wide Web, about interesting topics, such as travel and teaching*. She uses her *Samsung Galaxy A5 Gold Smartphone* to do this.

Lucy says:

I learn so much from my cellphone and a lot about teaching and how to be a better teacher.

Lucy resorts to using media as an alternative method of improving and enhancing her teaching skills. She often looks for ideas about how to be a better teacher and teach in a manner that is conducive to her schooling context.

Initiating Activities to Learn and Develop as a Leader

Lucy was rather *overwhelmed* and *clueless* about teaching. She remembers the *disappointment and helplessness* she faced as a new teacher. She was *exposed to a lot of negativity and many adaption challenges at her school*. Lucy also felt as if there was a mismatch in what she had learnt at university because it was *inadequate for her under resourced schooling context*. Lucy received inadequate support from her management

(Senom, Zakaria, & Shah, 2013). Lin (2009, p.48), affirms that at the beginning of a NTs career, they feel “overwhelmed, exhausted, frustrated and certainly challenged by difficult problems on a daily basis”. However, as time went by Lucy focused on developing herself and involving herself in schooling activities to learn and develop.

Lucy says:

In my first two years of being a teacher, I studied and graduated BEd (Hons cum laude) and this motivated me to study further. I am now a MEd student at UKZN. Still being novice, I have taken every opportunity to learn and develop myself as a teacher in my schooling environment. I have become the chairperson of my union that I belong to in my school; am involved in organising school-related functions; being a choreographer of many dances for special occasions; and being the editor of the school newsletter. I have mentored two student teachers. I have taught them many things that I learnt as being a teacher. I believe that if you work hard, you will reap rewards. I have so many plans for my future and will continue to pursue my career no matter what.

NTs possess a weak sense of agency (Eteläpelto, Vähäsantanen, & Hökkä, 2015) but for Lucy in just a few years, she takes control of her working life within structured limits and cares enough for herself to grow and develop professionally (Lin, 2009).

In analysing the selected excerpts above, I was able to highlight Lucy’s professional lived experiences in which she uses media as an alternate method of improving teaching and learning and initiates activities to learn and develop as a leader NT. These spaces offer potential and opportunities for Lucy to exercise her agency as a NT.

Synthesis of Storied Vignette Two

Lucy’s storied vignette reveals that her personal lived experiences and professional lived experiences shape meanings of agency. In all aspects of Lucy’s self, she is actively involved and responsible for her actions. She takes a keen interest in caring for herself and learning and developing as a leader NT. These meanings provide her with a basis to cultivate professional agency as a NT in a public primary school in KwaZulu-Natal.

5.3.3 Storied Vignette Three

“Compassionate Girl Child to a Care-Giver Novice Teacher”



Figure 21: Diya's Collage Portrait

“From being a Compassionate Girl Child to a Passionate Learner”

Mentoring as a Form of Care and Compassion

Diya was born on 11 November in the year 1988 at Westville Hospital, as a second daughter to her parents who were then residents of the Shallcross area in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. She shares close relationships with both her older sister and younger brother. At the same time as her sister was mentor to her; she was mentor to her younger brother.

Diya says:

I have an older sister who is a lawyer and a younger brother who is a dentist. I always took it upon myself to mentor my brother as my sister mentored me.

This illustrates the importance love and mentoring as a form of care and compassion. Diya displays care for her younger brother by being interested in his educational needs (James, 2012).

Constant Passion for Teaching

The year of 2006 marked Diya's first year out of school. She pursued a degree in BCom Accounting at UKZN, Westville campus. She had always dreamt of being an accountant as a young girl; however she hadn't had the slightest ideas about what it was all about. Diya quickly realised that her passions lied elsewhere and she opted to change her qualification to Business Administration. Today she proudly holds an Honours Degree in it. However, after completing this degree, she knew that she wanted to study teaching. She notes that she was confused about which career path to follow; but teaching was the one that outshined the rest.

Diya says:

Teaching was my one and only true passion and I was definitely encapsulated on a quest to fulfil my true dreams. I studied further and obtained a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) from UKZN, Edgewood campus. I am qualified in the Senior Phase of General Education and Training and Further Education and Training, and specialise in grades 7-12.

Diya's identity is not fixed; rather it is dynamic and negotiated through lived experience overtime (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009).

In analysing the selected excerpts above, I was able to highlight Diya's personal lived experiences in which she mentors and cares for her brother as well as have constant passion for teaching. Diya's personal lived experiences shape meanings that inform agency.

“From being a Passionate Learner to a Care-Giver Novice Teacher”

Creating an Alternative Professional Space

During Diya's first and second teaching year at her school in Newlands West, she was faced with various challenges and adapting changes, however after sometime she negotiated herself in her schooling context.

Diya reflects:

Initially, I felt extreme amounts of pressure and expectation and it felt as if someone had flung me into the deep end of an Olympic size pool. My management viewed me purely as a subordinate, as I lacked any real authority or influence within the school itself. My diminutive position and stature, led me to become filled with emotions of fear and distress. I found my colleagues of no real help, as I was too intimidated to approach them in my times of need. My uncertainties extended to menial tasks I would have thought myself of being apt in, such as filing or organising my classroom. My harsh reality of being trained on the theoretical side of the classroom, left me bamboozled when I was tasked with being practical. There was not any index I could refer to at the back of any specific textbook... This was real life... I felt tiny and invisible; most of the time overlooked and really afraid of the teaching world. I even drew the learners bigger than myself to show how they looked down upon me. After sometime, I realised that I am much happier and I no longer feel like this.

It is evident that Diya is faced with various challenges; however, she endeavours to overcome them. Diya negotiates her identity within her social context, which is the public primary school in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal.

Initiating Different Methods to Enhance Teaching and Learning

Diya is qualified in the Senior Phase of General Education and Training and Further Education and Training Teaching, which specialises in teaching grades 7-12. Her specialisation lies in the Mathematics arena; however this meant fairly little when tasked with duty of the English, Creative Arts and Social Sciences learning areas for her grade 4, 5 and 6 classes. Diya was experiencing difficulty in teaching in the wrong phase and teaching learning areas that she was not qualified to teach in and had no real experience.

Diya says:

Personally, I had no real ultimatum as the cards were stacked against me. I decided to make the most of the opportunity, in making myself better in the different learning areas for the sake of my learners. This transition came from a very positive mind-set, along with the required patience to enhance my skillset as a new teacher.

Diya has confidence in herself to shape her experiences and look for strength in overcoming her weaknesses (Green, 2017). She saw these challenges as opportunities to grow and develop herself holistically and professionally (Lin, 2009). Lin (2009, p. 56) theorizes that, “the traditional story of the passive, tortured new teacher can be taken back and rewritten.” That statement is in line with what Diya is doing as a new teacher.

Creating a Positive Teaching and Learning Context

The teaching and learning context in which Diya finds herself in is different from what she thought it would be and very challenging. She notes that it is *a less conducive one*. There are many contributing factors to this; one being a poor socio-economic background and the other being ill-discipline. Much attention is given to disciplining learners and providing *basic resources for them to make the lessons worthwhile*. Although she belongs to *an English medium school, majority of the learners are not fluent in the English language and have great difficulties in comprehending with the curriculum as a whole*. Diya however negotiates herself within the new context.

Diya says:

These challenges drove me to sharpen my skills and fine tune my approach even more, such that I can make my lessons more adaptable to the learners it was formulated for. On the other hand, apart from their teacher, I spend a lot of my time fulfilling the role of mother to them as well, when duty calls.

It is paramount that Diya goes beyond her duties as a teacher; she fulfils the role of mother to her learners.

After a while, Diya feels that *teaching is scary, challenging tiresome, fulfilling and rewarding all at the same time*.

Diya notes:

The challenges I am faced with on a daily basis are testament to the character I have become today. It has helped me to grow my confidence, as both an individual and professional simultaneously... I am motivated to extend my involvement in co-curricular activities and look to diminish perceptions of novice teachers being incapable. Further, I will pass on the necessary guidance and experiences to other

new starters to make their transitions from being a student to a teacher smoother than that of my own.

Through the various challenges that Diya is faced with; she is committed and *motivated* to overcome her weaknesses and build her strengths (Lin, 2009).

In analysing the selected excerpts above, I was able to highlight Diya's professional lived experiences in which she creates an alternative professional space; initiates different methods to enhance teaching and learning and creates a positive teaching and learning context. These spaces offer potential and opportunities for Diya to exercise her agency as a NT.

Synthesis of Storied Vignette Three

Diya's storied vignette reveals that her personal lived experiences and professional lived experiences shape meanings of agency. In all aspects of Diya's self, she is caring, passionate and enthusiastic to negotiate her teaching and learning environment. These meanings provide her with a basis to cultivate professional agency as a NT in a public primary school in KwaZulu-Natal.

5.3.4 Storied Vignette Four

“Resilient Girl Child to a Self-Directed Learner Novice Teacher”



Figure 22: Zenzile's Collage Portrait

“From being a Resilient Girl Child to a Helpful Learner”

Initiating Loving and Caring Relationships

Zenzile was born on 10th of March twenty-six years ago in a small town called Empangeni which is situated in Northern KwaZulu-Natal, to a 15 year old mother. Throughout her childhood, she was cared for and raised by her grandparents, great grandparents and extended family members. Her father had his own family as he was married to another woman and therefore did not play a big role in her life. Her mother however is the most important person in her life. Although Zenzile did not get to spend much time with her mother when she was a baby due to her mother being a grade 9 learner at school; they now share a very special relationship. Zenzile believes that her mother is a great inspiration to

her and her seventeen year old half-sister. Zenzile shares a close bond with her sister and displays care towards her.

Zenzile says:

I help her with her homework; take her as well as fetch her from school and after school classes; and I even take it upon myself to go to her school and check on her progress when my mother is busy.

Zenzile shows us that she has the capacity to initiate purposeful action on her younger sister such as caring to her schooling needs (Lipponen & Kumpulainen, 2011).

Overcoming Learning Barrier Deficiencies

Zenzile began her schooling career in 1996 and since then has been to seven absolutely different schools. As a young child, Zenzile attended Kenwood School. It was a private school in Virginia, Durban. At this school, her mum was advised that she had learning barrier deficiencies. Her mother then sent her to Livingstone Primary School, which is a special school. At this school, she was on Ritalin which is a medication used to treat ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder) and ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder). She stayed at this school for a year and a half and then was told that she was now ready for mainstream school. As young as Zenzile was at the time, she shaped her learning experiences and had overcome her learning barrier deficiencies (Lin, 2009).

In analysing the selected excerpts above, I was able to highlight Zenzile's personal lived experiences in which she initiates loving and caring relationships and overcomes her learning barrier deficiencies. Zenzile's personal lived experiences shape meanings that inform agency.

“From being a Helpful Learner to a Self-Directed Learner Novice Teacher”

Using Different Teaching Methods for Learners to Develop

As a new teacher, Zenzile takes pride in experimenting with different teaching methods and approaches in her foundation phase classroom. She finds it more important for her learners to understand actual concepts before moving on to other work in the curriculum, and as a result creates a conducive climate in which learners have a positive attitude towards learning.

Zenzile recalls:

My dreams on envisaging myself as a teacher began from the time I was a young girl. I feel that I would be fulfilling my true purpose if I could make a difference in the lives of others. I strive to be that world's best teacher because this has always been a passion of mine... Adapting to life as a new appointed teacher was very challenging... However, as time passed by, I learnt to differentiate my instruction and work with learners in groups to achieve my goals. I adjusted well to the rules of the school and adapted easily to the learners by using various teaching strategies so learning becomes productive and conducive.

It is evident that Zenzile created a conducive and “affirming climate in the classroom whereby teachers work hard to strengthen their knowledge and ability in the classroom” Nieto (2003, p.11). Zenzile displays care and shows us that she has the power to dynamically direct her working life (Hilferty, 2008).

Working After Hours to Enhance Teacher Performance

Zenzile finds peace in ensuring *the completion of all her tasks and activities* before she leaves school to go home on a daily basis. She takes it upon herself to *make time, sit at her desk and complete everything that is required of her* before leaving to go home.

In doing this, Zenzile shows her commitment to the betterment of her learners and is competent in directing her working life. She is capable of directing her own learning and is flexible in making good decisions regarding teaching and learning (Rose, 2005).

In analysing the selected excerpts above, I was able to highlight Zenzile’s professional lived experiences in which she uses different teaching methods for learners to develop and work after hours to enhance her teaching performance in the classroom. These spaces offer potential and opportunities for Zenzile to exercise her agency as a NT.

Synthesis of Storied Vignette Four

Zenzile’s storied vignette reveals that her personal lived experiences and professional lived experiences shape meanings of agency. In all aspects of Zenzile’s self, she is strong-willed; enthusiastic about her job and ready to improve her teaching and learning environment on her own. These meanings provide her with a basis to cultivate professional agency as a NT in a public primary school in KwaZulu-Natal.

SECTION B

5.4 Personal and Professional Meanings of Self that informs Professional Agency

The development of a NTs professional identity is largely dependent on their personal identity. Therefore NTs professional meanings of self that informs agency are largely dependent on their personal meanings of self that informs agency. Hence the two cannot be separated.

Teachers' professional identities include "who they are", "their self-image", "their working lives", the meanings that they attach to themselves to, and the "meanings that are attributed to them by others". These are then associated with "both the subject they teach, their roles, and the connection between these, their values and their lives outside school" (Day and Gu, 2010, p.34). NTs throughout the world were not born with any kind of professional identities or professional meanings of self that informs agency; rather their professional identities and professional meanings of self that informs agency were created. NTs professional identities and professional meanings of agency often stem from their own personal identities and personal meanings of agency, and are shaped and reshaped in interaction with others and in their professional context, in this case is the public primary schooling context in KwaZulu-Natal (Beauchamp and Thomas, 2009). The identity and meaning development involves an understanding of self and an idea of that self within an outside context (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). NTs then reflect on themselves, so they can become more in tune with their sense of self and with a deeper understanding of how this self fits into the bigger picture (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Beauchamp & Thomas (2009) state "Reflection is a factor in the shaping of identity" and creating meaning of agency.

Drawing from the Social Identity Theory, I was able to discover and understand the complex and multifaceted lives of the four NT participants as they negotiated their personal and professional selves in relation to their social contexts, and the unique relationships they developed inside and outside the school to make meaning of their lives as teachers in meaningful ways. The SIT also allowed me to explore and understand how NTs shape and reshape their identities in order to make meanings of self that informs agency within their social contexts. Within the NTs public primary schooling context, their identities were not fixed but rather dynamic and fluid. NTs personal meanings of self and agency inform their professional meanings of self and agency. Through the collage portraits and storied vignettes, I was able to creatively and authentically understand the NTs personal and professional

constructions and reconstructions of self within their social contexts. This chapter has revealed that an individual's personal life cannot be separated from their professional life, and that their personal meanings of self that informs agency cannot be separated from their professional meanings of self that inform agency. NTs are faced with various challenges and issues in their public primary schooling contexts. However, NTs working in the schooling system can overcome their challenges and develop themselves. NTs develop by: increasing skills and strategies; responding to various social issues; working collaboratively with others; teaching across a broad curriculum; integrating theory learnt into practice; and creating a learning climate conducive to learners (Graham, 2003). When a NT enters their classroom, they negotiate what will be taken in, and this reflects their professional identity. Carson (as cited in Graham, 2003) articulates "taking up teaching as part of one's personal identity involves gaining experience while negotiating a multiplicity of authoritative discourses of teaching."

In Section A, we saw Luke, Lucy, Diya and Zenzile's personal meanings of self that informs agency and their professional meanings of self that informs agency. These cannot be separated from each other. Within this section, we explored and came to understand how Luke, Lucy, Diya and Zenzile negotiated their identities within their social contexts and created meanings of self that informs agency. It is revealed that Luke, Lucy, Diya and Zenzile all are in control and actively involved in their personal and professional lives. The four NTs make on-going negotiations of self within their social contexts and create meanings of self that informs agency, as well as are competent in doing so.

5.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I offered an analysis and interpretation of the storied narratives in response to the second key research question. Collage portraits and storied vignettes presented in this chapter highlighted the personal meanings of self and the professional meanings of self that informs NT agency; as well as displays how the NT participants negotiate their personal identities and professional identities in relation to their various social contexts.

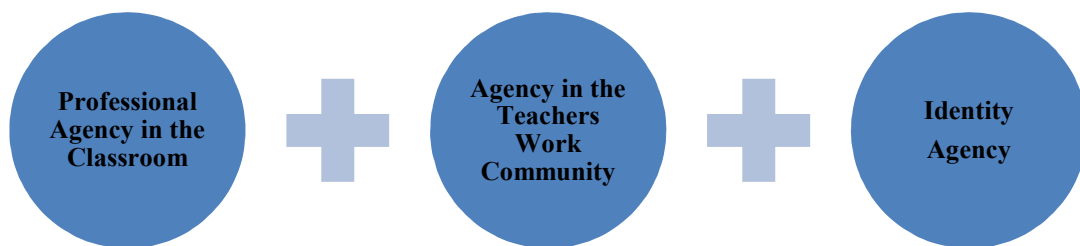
In the next chapter, Chapter Six, I present the third level of analysis in response to the third key research question: *How do novice teachers' cultivate professional agency in public primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal?* Through the exploration of this question, I analyse thematically to understand how NTs cultivate professional agency in public primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal. The analysis and interpretation of this chapter will be facilitated through the use of concept mapping and key themes. These methods of analysis aim to 'enliven' the storied vignettes (Gerstenblatt, 2013); as well as develop key themes to understand how NTs cultivate professional agency in public primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal.

Introduction

- How do NTs cultivate professional agency in public primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal?



Conceptual Tools:



The conceptual tools assist in interpreting and analysing how Luke, Lucy, Diya and Zenzile contribute towards cultivating professional agency in public primary schools in KZN.

SECTION A	SECTION B	SECTION C
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Novice Teacher Cultivating Professional Agency Within the Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Novice Teacher Cultivating Professional Agency Beyond the Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Novice Teacher Negotiating a Personal-Professional Self Differently

Conclusion

- NTs cultivate professional agency by developing capacity and using competence in taking opportunities regarding their professional selves.

CHAPTER SIX

NOVICE TEACHERS CULTIVATION OF PROFESSIONAL AGENCY IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KWAZULU-NATAL

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter represented four storied vignettes of the lived personal and professional experiences of Luke, Lucy, Diya and Zenzile. Through the storied vignettes, I gained a deeper understanding of the personal and professional meanings of self that each NT adopted to inform professional agency in their public primary schools in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal.

In this chapter, I present an analysis and interpretation of the storied narratives and answer the third key research question: *How do novice teachers' cultivate professional agency in public primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal?* In analysing and interpreting this question, I created an analytical and conceptual framework. Professional agency is understood as when professional individuals “exert influence” and make decisions which affects “their work and/or their professional identities” (Eteläpelto, Vähäsantanen, & Hökkä, 2015, p.662). Eteläpelto, Vähäsantanen, and Hökkä, (2015) assert that there are salient components of professional agency among NTs. I used these salient components of professional agency as conceptual tools to frame the interpretation and analysis of the storied narratives. The conceptual tools according to Eteläpelto, Vähäsantanen, and Hökkä (2015) are professional agency in the classroom context; agency in the teachers work community and identity agency. These three conceptual tools assist me in interpreting and analysing how NTs cultivate professional agency in public primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal.

Within this chapter, I analysed and interpreted the selected data from the storied narratives and developed a concept map to assist in developing narrative thematic analysis. “Concept mapping is a diagrammatic and visual means of expressing ideas held in the mind” (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010, p.6). Initially, I identified recurring patterns across the four data sets and sketched common ideas that came to my mind. Thereafter, I grouped the ideas into themes and drew a more refined concept map. This process allowed me to write down key words and phrases as well as link ideas as they emerge. Then, I developed and presented three themes in a textual form to illustrate how Luke, Lucy, Diya and Zenzile cultivate professional agency in their public primary schools in KZN. The interpretation and analysis of the findings are represented in three sections: **Section A**, **Section B** and **Section C**.

6.2 Concept Map



Figure 23: Initial Concept Map

The figure above displays the “initial thoughts and ideas” of how Luke, Lucy, Diya and Zenzile make meaning of professional agency in public primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010, p.10). In this diagram, the conceptual tools assist in interpreting and analysing how the four NTs develop capacity and competence regarding their professional selves and by doing this, contribute towards cultivating professional agency. Themes begin to emerge.



Figure 24: Refined Concept Map

The figure above displays a more refined version of the initial concept map. In this diagram, the capacity and competence that NTs developed contributes towards cultivating professional agency in public primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010, p.10). In this chapter, the three themes are supported and developed with selected data.

6.3 Overview of the Chapter

This chapter presents the following three sections:

SECTION A: *Novice Teacher Cultivating Professional Agency Within the Classroom*



Pre-learning lessons as a new teacher



Enhancing learning in the classroom through media



Improving self in curricular



Experimenting with different teaching and learning approaches

SECTION B: *Novice Teacher Cultivating Professional Agency Beyond the Classroom*



Novice teacher as being an events convenor and grade head



Increased interest in various schooling activities



Novice teacher as being a 'Mother'



Novice teacher responsible for extra-curricular activities

SECTION C: *Novice Teacher Negotiating a Personal-Professional Self Differently*



Novice teacher as a mentor and post graduate



Novice teacher as a researcher



Novice teacher collaborating with positive peers



Novice teacher as a learner

SECTION A

6.4 Novice Teacher Cultivating Professional Agency Within the Classroom

NTs play a significant role in the lives of young learners. They assume various duties and responsibilities within the classroom. The classroom is referred to as the “professional educational setting” (Lampert, Ghouseini & Beasley, 2015, p.358). Classroom teaching is the main duty and responsibility of a new teacher. Being a new teacher is not an easy task as teaching comes with its own challenges. However, those NTs that care enough for themselves and their learners negotiate their classroom experiences in order to cultivate professional agency in their public primary schools in KZN (Lin, 2009).

Pre-Learning Lessons as a New Teacher

According to Lampert, Ghouseini & Beasley (2015) settings in which NTs learn teaching or pre-learn lessons allow them to develop their own knowledge and practice, and ultimately become a “productive agent” of their own practice. Shulman (1987) articulate that pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) is made up of one’s subject knowledge and pedagogy, and in order to successfully meet educational demands, NTs PCK need to be strengthened.

Luke is qualified with BEd in the *Senior Further Education and Training (FET) teaching phase* (Grades 9-12) and specialised in *teaching Life Orientation, Technology and Business Studies*. Due to a *shortage of teaching vacancies* in high schools in KZN, Luke was *placed into a primary school* and in a phase that he was not qualified to teach in. He was *allocated the Mathematics, Life Orientation, Social Sciences and Afrikaans learning areas to teach*. With *minimal experience* of teaching he *found* it extremely *challenging*.

Luke expresses:

Due to my lack of experience in the Mathematics field, I found myself pre-learning my lessons at home to ensure I gave my learners my best efforts.

As a first year teacher, Luke discovered that pre-learning his lessons happened in terms of him learning his PCK. He was capable of *pre-learning his lessons to ensure* that he not only fulfils his role as being a teacher but also betters himself as being a NT. An individual’s own interest plays an important role in learning in order to teach and to eventually overcome the various challenges that they are faced with (Cortese, 2005). Luke has demonstrated capacity

and competence in strengthening his PCK in mathematics in order to teach a subject that he was not familiar with and meet educational demands (Shulman, 1987).

Enhancing Learning in the Classroom through Media

As a new teacher, Lucy focused on incorporating media into her daily lessons in order to enhance the quality of learning. She expresses:

I often 'Google' lesson plans and resources as well as integrate media into my daily lessons.

According to Kuo (1991) “the use of media really helps both teachers and students in teaching-learning process”. Lucy uses her *Samsung Galaxy A5 Gold Smartphone* to help her acquire lesson plans and resources conducive for her learners in her public primary schooling context. She is competent and capable of improving herself through media and enhancing the quality of learning for her learners (Caspersen & Raaen, 2014).

Improving Self in Curricular

Diya completed her *PGCE Teaching Degree in 2014* and specialised in the *Mathematics* field. When she began teaching in a public primary school in Durban, she was given *the English, Creative Arts and Social Sciences learning areas* to teach in *grades 4, 5 and 6*.

Feelings of *extreme amounts of pressure and expectation* overcame her. She reflects:

Personally, I had no real ultimatum as the cards were stacked against me. I decided to make the most of this opportunity by making myself better in the different learning areas for the sake of my learners. I learnt curricular content through the CAPS documents and effective ways in which to teach learners through various books in the school library. In order to do this, I had a very positive mind-set as well as the required patience to enhance my skillset as a new teacher.

Diya was capable of using ‘self-efficacy’ to improving herself in different learning areas for the betterment of her *learners* (Caspersen & Raaen, 2014). She *learnt* the CAPS *curricular* and read *books* that were beneficial to her teaching and learning. She remains optimistic about her teaching and learning and has a positive mind-set as a new teacher willing to learn and develop herself (Tait, 2008). With a positive mind-set Diya is able to create positive learning experiences for her learners.

Experimenting with Different Teaching and Learning Approaches

As a NT, Zenzile found it difficult to adapt to a new life as a professional in her public primary school in KZN. She often found herself *drowning* with no one to assist or support her. However, Zenzile enjoys experimenting with *different teaching approaches* and gives importance to *learners understanding concepts well before moving on to other work in the curriculum*.

Zenzile says:

... I feel that I would be fulfilling my true purpose if I could make a difference in the lives of others... I use a learner-centred approach to learning; differentiate my classroom instruction and use exciting ways to teach, such as role-playing.

This excerpt shows us that Zenzile gives priority to her learners' learning and it highlights how she incorporates different and interesting teaching approaches in to benefit her learners (Khan, 2006).

Synthesis of SECTION A

NTs new role of being a professional individual comes with “daunting and demanding” experiences (Killeavy, 2006, p. 168). It may be difficult for the NT to undertake many duties and responsibilities. In interpreting and analysing the selected excerpts above, I was able to highlight the ways in which Luke, Lucy, Diya and Zenzile made on-going negotiations regarding their experiences of their working lives within their classrooms. Section A revealed that the four NTs developed and utilised capacity and competence regarding their professional selves, identities and growth. As a result they have cultivated professional agency in their public primary schooling context in KZN.

SECTION B

6.5 Novice Teacher Cultivating Professional Agency Beyond the Classroom

Classroom teaching is not the only duty and responsibility of the NT. NTs take up many other aspects, such as: administrative, educational and disciplinary duties and responsibilities. It may not be an easy task to take on other aspects since being a new teacher comes with challenges of its own (Caspersen & Raaen, 2014). NTs are faced with complex and exponentially difficult experiences, especially during their initial years of their teaching careers. However, those NTs that care enough for their personal and professional development negotiate their identities outside of their classrooms in order to cultivate professional agency in their public primary schools in KZN (Lin, 2009).

Novice Teacher as being an Events Convenor and Grade Head

Luke's *involvement* as a new teacher in his public primary schooling context is extensive. He is competent and capable of taking up various responsibilities outside of the classroom. Although he is new and inexperienced, Luke becomes *a grade head for Life Orientation in Grade 7 and convenes* important school calendar events. He displays 'dynamic competence' regarding his teaching and learning environment (Long & Lampen, 2014, p.4).

Luke says:

During this year ... I became a grade head for Life Orientation in Grade 7, and conducted meetings and lessons with two fellow Life Orientation teachers. My involvement as a teacher is wide-spread so much so that I convened volleyball and soccer events and organised photograph day for my learners.

Increased Interest in various Schooling Activities

Lucy is a beginner teaching and an inexperienced one. However, this does not stop her to become actively involved in various schooling activities. She is confident and competent in taking advantage of schooling activities apart from her core duty of teaching. Her interest in schooling activities increase and therefore her professional skills improve (Poom-Valickis, 2013).

Lucy expresses:

I have become the chairperson of my union that I belong to in my school; am involved in organising school-related functions; being a choreographer of many dances for special occasions; and being the editor of the school newsletter. I have mentored two student teachers. I have taught them many things that I learnt as being a teacher.

Novice Teacher as being a ‘Mother’

Although Diya is still new in her public primary school, she is capable of extending her *involvement* in schooling activities just like other veteran teachers. Poom-Valickis (2013) assert that certain school practices have a positive impact on novice teacher’s abilities. In addition to being a new teacher in a *whole new world*, Diya takes on other responsibilities. She becomes a mother figure that displays love, care and affection for the learners in her classroom. Diranian (2015) state that “the meaning of being a mother is virtually endless... “A mother is a selfless, loving human” that protects, disciplines and makes sacrifices for the benefit of their children; above all a mother is a “friend”.

Diya declares:

I am motivated to extend my involvement in co-curricular activities and look to diminish perceptions of novice teachers being incapable... On the other hand, apart from their teacher, I spend a lot of my time fulfilling the role of mother to them as well, when duty calls.

Novice Teacher Responsible for Extra-Curricular Activities

Zenzile is a new and inexperienced teacher; however, she is capable of taking on *other responsibilities* apart from her core teaching duty. Zenzile displays ‘self-efficacy’ when she takes on other responsibilities (Caspersen & Raaen, 2014). Zenzile demonstrates high levels of resilience when *teaching physical education and conducting sporting activities*.

Zenzile says:

I took on other responsibilities such as teaching physical education and conducting sporting activities.

Synthesis of SECTION B

Not only is it difficult for the NT to undertake many duties and responsibilities inside of the classroom but it is difficult for the NT to undertake many duties and responsibilities outside of the classroom. In interpreting and analysing the selected excerpts above, I was able to highlight the ways in which Luke, Lucy, Diya and Zenzile made on-going negotiations regarding their experiences of their working lives beyond their classrooms. Section B revealed that the four NTs developed and utilised capacity and competence regarding their professional selves, identities and growth. As a result they have cultivated professional agency in their public primary schooling context in KZN.

SECTION C

6.6 Novice Teacher Negotiating a Personal-Professional Self Differently

During the early years of a NTs profession, they bring with them their own educational background; experiences; beliefs; attitudes; motivation; ideas; knowledge; skills and capacity into their new professional context (Merseth, Sommer & Dickstein, 2009, p. 90). NTs utilise and improve these aspects in order to make on-going negotiations regarding their identities in their professional context and for the advancement of cultivating professional agency in their public primary schools in KZN.

Novice Teacher as a Mentor and a Post-Graduate

As an active teacher, Luke says:

During this year, I had taken it upon myself to share my teaching experiences as a mentor to two new voluntary teachers. I was actually mentoring them apart from learning myself. I told them and showed them exactly what is to be done on a daily basis. I explained policy documents to them as well ... I endeavour to help other new teachers and share my knowledge ... I am currently studying my B.Ed (H) Degree at UKZN and I believe that this will allow me to learn and to grow in my career.

Luke makes on-going negotiations regarding his professional self. His involvement in his public primary schooling context is widespread. He displays plentiful enthusiasm and love for learning, as well as takes it upon himself to share his *teaching experiences* and *becomes a mentor to new voluntary teachers*. As new as Luke is, he is competent in mentoring others. Luke believes that through learning, he is able to grow and develop himself professionally (Caspersen & Raaen, 2014).

Novice Teacher as a Researcher

As a new researcher, Lucy says:

In my first two years of being a teacher; I studied and graduated BEd (Hons cum laude) and this motivated me to study further. I am now a MEd student at UKZN. I actively attend cohort group meetings with my supervisor and other students. This allows me to learn from them as well as to share my ideas and knowledge. Still being

novice, I have taken every opportunity to learn and develop myself as a teacher in my schooling environment.

Lucy is an enthusiastic individual that endeavours to take *every opportunity to learn* in order to *develop* herself holistically. While being a new teacher, she studied and *graduated* at UKZN with her *Bachelor of Education (Honours)* Degree and passed with *Cum Laude*. She then began studying her Master of Education Degree at UKZN and has become a researcher. Lucy is competent and capable of learning new skills and sharing knowledge as part of a continuing with teaching experience (Caspersen and Raaen, 2014).

Novice Teacher Collaborating with Positive Peers

Diya often collaborates with positive peers. She says:

I would have not been able to grow, develop and adapt to my school without positive peers. They generate an upbeat attitude which correlates to better overall performance. My peers and I have lengthy but rather interesting discussions on how to improve and develop oneself. Teaching is hard work, and extremely challenging and scary at times. I try to surround myself with positive peers that would have a positive influence on me and motivate me.

Diya believes that *teaching is hard work ...extremely challenging and scary at times*. She is often faced with challenges in her public primary school. However, as a new teacher, she is able to overcome her many challenges by drawing on positivity from her peers. Her positive peers contribute towards helping her to overcome her challenges and *grow her confidence, as both an individual and professional*.

Novice Teacher as a Learner

Being a new teacher and learner, Zenzile says:

Zenzile says:

I learn from reading school policies; provincial policies; national policies; CAPS policies; online articles on classroom management, organisation, practices as well as books on how to be a better teacher. I have a strong interest in growing and developing myself in the teaching and learning field.

Zenzile displays that through acquiring knowledge of policy documents and reading interesting articles, she has been able to grow and develop herself *in the teaching and learning field*. Her constant passion for teaching and learning has led her to overcome various challenges.

Synthesis of SECTION C

At the start of a NTs career, they bring their own personal and professional attributes. During the initial stages of their careers they are challenged with difficult situations. However, they develop the power and capacity to make on-going negotiations regarding their working lives. In interpreting and analysing the selected excerpts above, I was able to highlight Luke is an active new teachers; Lucy is a researcher; Diya collaborates well with her positive peers and Zenzile learns from policy documents. Section C revealed that Luke, Lucy, Diya and Zenzile negotiated their professional identities differently and thereby contributed towards cultivating professional agency in their public primary schooling context in KZN (Lin, 2009).

6.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I offered an analysis and interpretation of selected excerpts from the storied narratives in response to the third key research question. Themes that were presented in this chapter highlighted the ways in which the four novice teachers contributed towards cultivating professional agency in their public primary schools in KZN.

Luke, Lucy, Diya and Zenzile continuously negotiated their personal and professional identities within their public primary schooling context in KZN (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). This chapter revealed that these four novice teachers became agentic when they negotiated their experiences and overcame their challenges that they were faced with during their initial years as being new teachers. Their meanings of cultivating professional agency were created and recreated as they negotiated their professional selves within their respective social context and “through experience” (Sachs, 2005, p.15).

Professional agency of a NT is not dependent on any formal induction and mentoring programmes. The NTs in this study have self-directed their learning and formed particular relationships as a method of developing oneself differently. According to Knowles (1975, p. 18) ‘self-directed learning’ is described as “a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes.” Luke, Lucy, Diya and

Zenzile became active and in control of their own working lives, and have taken the initiative to enhance their skills in order to develop as teachers (Knowles, 1975). Their quest to develop themselves holistically as NTs propelled them to find ways in which to negotiate their experiences and therefore cultivate professional agency within their public primary schooling context in KZN.

In the final chapter, Chapter Seven, I reflect on my research journey and conclude this research dissertation by providing a synthesis of findings in response to the three key research questions of my research study. I also include the context of the research study; methodological reflection; theoretical reflection; policy imperatives; practice imperatives; contributions to educational research; suggestions for further research and a final reflection.



Introduction

**Context of the
Research Study**

**Methodological
Reflection**

**Particular
Experiences and
Relationships Shape
Meanings of Agency**

**NTs Cultivate
Professional Agency
through Learning
Spaces and
Relationships**

**Theoretical
Reflection**

**Policy
Imperatives**

**Practice
Imperatives**

**Contributions to
Educational
Research**

**Suggestions for
Further Research**

**Final
Reflection**

CHAPTER SEVEN

A REFLECTION OF MY RESEARCH JOURNEY

7.1 Introduction

As a NT working in a public primary school in Durban, KZN for the past four years; I began my research journey by being extremely curious about the lived personal and professional experiences of other NTs in a similar teaching context. NTs professional experiences are largely dependent on their personal experiences (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). This research dissertation deepens my understanding of the lived personal and professional experiences of other NTs working in public primary schools in KZN. As the researcher, my responsibility was to make sure that I represented the NT's stories authentically and respectfully. By documenting their stories, I was able to understand the ways in which NTs negotiated their identities, personally and professionally within their social contexts and exercise professional agency in the choices they made in their everyday lives. NTs make on-going negotiations of their multiple selves within their social contexts. During the initial years of a NTs career, they are faced with various challenges but are capable of developing their personal ideas and interests as spaces for cultivating professional agency in their schooling contexts. Luke, Lucy, Diya and Zenzile enacted particular practices and formed particular relationships in particular learning spaces that enabled them to be agentic individuals. In this research study, I provided glimpses into the lives of four NTs and exhibited what they did in order to cultivate professional agency within their public primary schools in KZN.

7.2 Context of the Research Study

This research dissertation presents my understanding of four NTs and their meanings of self as agentic beings with the capacity to make choices regarding their working lives in public primary schools in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The NT participants make on-going negotiations of their multiple selves within their social contexts, and shape and reshape their identity through their personal and professional experiences (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Through narrative inquiry, I documented the stories of the four NT participants and in doing so I was able to prudently represent what their professional lives are like.

NTs have important duties and responsibilities to carry out in the South African educational context, which is governed by various policies and educational bodies. However, scholars

such as Maskit and Orland-Barak (2011); Tait (2008); Ozturk (2008) and Makhanya (2010) highlight the various challenges that NTs have in the implementation of their various duties and responsibilities in the initial years of their teaching careers. There are multitudinous variations of developmental, learning and supportive initiatives that are needed in order carry out their duties and responsibilities effectively. Due to the lack of these developmental, learning and supportive initiatives, my research study shows that NTs can self-direct their own learning; develop through the formation of particular relationships; and find spaces to voice their ideas and interests, thus cultivating professional agency within their public primary schooling context in KZN.

7.3 Methodological Reflection: Learning about my Ethical Responsibility as a Narrative Inquirer

Narrative Inquiry deepened my understanding of the lived personal and professional experiences of four NTs working in public primary schools in KZN. This methodological approach afforded me the opportunity to get glimpses of their diverse and multifaceted lives. This qualitative research study which is located within the interpretivist paradigm, focused on the process of storytelling, which is an essential component in narrative inquiry. The best way of understanding and exploring the meanings of NTs lived experiences was through collecting and generating in-depth, nuanced stories (Creswell, 2009). Through stories which is the armature of narrative inquiry provided a window' into the process of identity construction and reconstruction (Riessman, 2008). Clandinin (2006, p. 45) states that "As human beings, we tend to recall our past lives by means of narrating and retelling our stories, thus helping others imagine, recall and live through our experiences with us while we begin to find meanings and make sense of our lives". As the researcher, I explored the meanings that Luke, Lucy, Diya and Zenzile constructed and reconstructed in their social contexts and understood that their identities are fluid and multiple.

Narrative as an arts-based inquiry allowed me to use the following data production methods: collage inquiry, artefact retrieval, metaphor drawing and unstructured interviews. These chosen data production methods were suitable to my research study since I was able to obtain rich, descriptive data, and it evoked and reflected NTs critical moments, incidences, significant relationships and feelings. These data production methods allowed me to show ethical care to the NT participants by providing them with creative activities that they could actively engage in, and allowing for their voices and experiences to be brought out in

meaningful ways. The collage inquiry process allowed for active engagement and participation, where the NT participants' agency is foregrounded in their choice of visuals to use or where they should paste their visuals. This process itself tells a story that they wanted to tell. In the data production methods, I showed ethical care by actively listening to what the NT participants had to say.

For the purpose of the analysis and interpretation, collage portraits, storied vignettes and concept mapping was used support narrative thematic analysis. I found the NTs meanings of self and how they negotiated their lived personal and professional experiences in order to cultivate professional agency within their social contexts (Andrews, Squire & Tambokou, 2008). As a fellow NT and researcher, I had to constantly be aware of my 'dual role' (Clandinin, 2007) as I could have possibly influenced the research process (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). My role changed continuously during the research process and at times, I remained subjective or objective, and had to deal with my own prejudices, preconceptions or bias.

7.4 Summary of the Findings

The summary of the findings are based on the analysis and interpretation of selected data, and elucidates the learning from this research study. The summary of the findings will be presented under the following headings: Particular Experiences and Relationships Shape Meanings of Agency; and Novice Teachers Cultivate Professional Agency through Learning Spaces and Relationships.

7.4.1 Particular Experiences and Relationships Shape Meanings of Agency

NTs personal and professional meanings of self that informs professional agency framed by a sociological understanding of identity assisted in exploring the multifaceted and shifting identities of four NTs: Luke, Lucy, Diya and Zenzile. Identity is fluid, multiple and open to construction and reconstruction relational to different social contexts (Rodgers & Scott, 2008). NT identity opened up opportunities for personal meanings of self and agency to infuse and influence professional meanings of self and agency. The four NT participants continually negotiated who they are and what they wanted to be through the actions and activities they took up inside and outside of the classroom. The personal meanings of self and agency shape the professional meanings of self and agency. The meanings of self and agency of each of the NT participants are shown in the figures below.

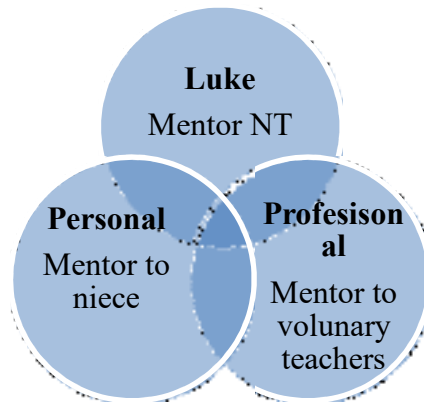


Figure 25: Luke's Experiences and Relationships Shape Meanings of Agency

Luke’s experience of acting as a mentor to his niece in his personal life developed in him the capacity to serve as a mentor to two new voluntary teachers at his public primary school in KZN. The figure above shows that particular experiences in Luke’s personal life shapes his professional life, and allows him to be a Mentor NT.

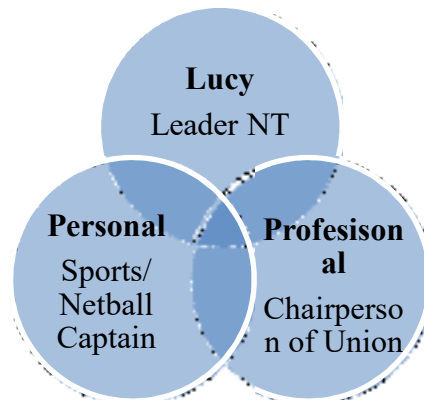


Figure 26: Lucy's Experiences and Relationships Shape Meanings of Agency

Lucy’s personal experience of being the captain of the sports and netball team at her school allowed her to develop leadership qualities. Her leadership qualities are now displayed as a NT in her union as she is the chairperson of her union for her school. The figure above shows that particular experiences in Lucy’s personal life shapes her professional life, and allows her to be leader NT.

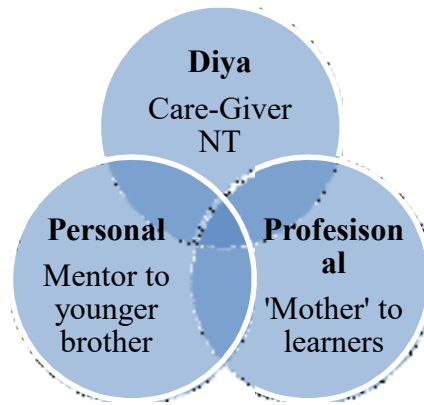


Figure 27: Diya's Experiences and Relationships Shape Meanings of Agency

Diya's experience of acting as a mentor to her younger brother in her personal life developed in her the capacity to serve as 'mother' and care-giver to learners at her school. The figure above shows that particular experiences in Diya's personal life shapes her professional life, and allows her to be a care-giver NT.

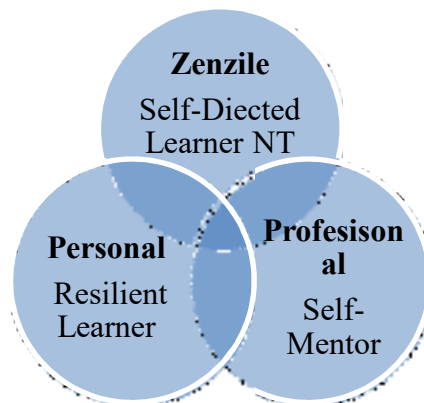


Figure 28: Zenzile's Experiences and Relationships Shape Meanings of Agency

Zenzile's experiences of moving from school to school as a young child developed in her the capacity to display flexibility and resilience. These aspects are displayed in her professional life when she becomes a mentor to herself. The figure above shows that particular experiences in Zenzile's personal life shapes her professional life, and allows her to be a self-directed learner NT.

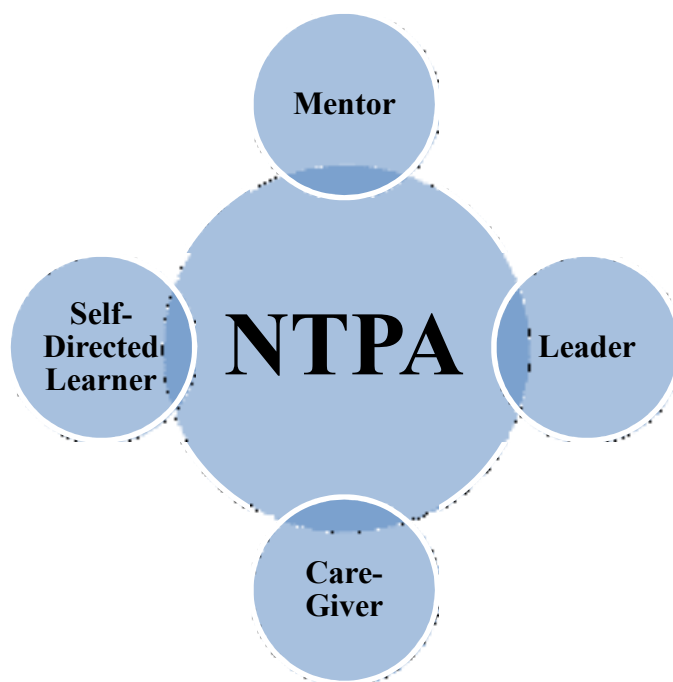


Figure 29: Novice Teachers’ Meanings of Professional Agency

The key to NT professional agency is the inextricable link between the personal and professional. Particular experiences in the NTs personal life develop the capacity in them to cultivate professional agency in their professional work place. Through the cultivation of professional agency, NTs identity is formed and is shown in the figure above.

7.4.2 Novice Teachers Cultivate Professional Agency through Learning Spaces and Relationships

NTs negotiate their personal and professional selves within their professional contexts and enact certain kind of practices inside and outside of their classrooms. They also engage in a range of learning spaces so that they are able to generate new ideas and perspectives in their practices and situations. Cultivating professional agency in the absence of any regularised mentoring and induction programmes at their respective schooling contexts, through particular professional initiatives provided a meaningful way to be in control of their working lives. The ways in which each NT cultivates professional agency are shown in the figures below.

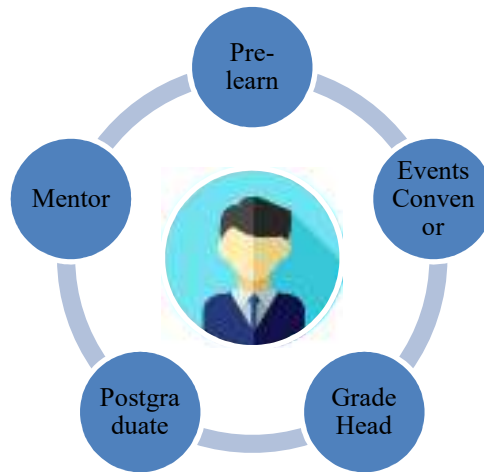


Figure 30: Luke's Cultivation of Professional Agency

The figure above displays the ways in which Luke cultivates professional agency. As an active and mentor NT, Luke is dynamic in negotiating his NT identity in order to cultivate professional agency. He does this by focusing on his career development; enhancing his pedagogical content knowledge to meet educational demands; becomes a grade head and by being hands on with various schooling activities. Luke establishes good relationships with two new voluntary teachers and becomes a mentor. His professional agency is enhanced by the certain practices, relationships and initiatives he chooses to take up in order to learn and develop as a NT.

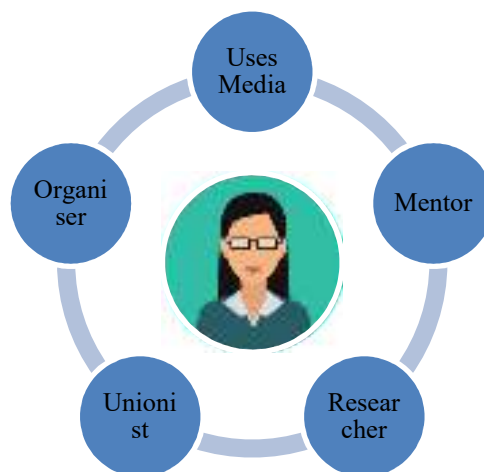


Figure 31: Lucy's Cultivation of Professional Agency

The figure above displays the ways in which Lucy cultivates professional agency. As a leader NT, Lucy uses every opportunity to learn and develop herself holistically. Within her social context, she negotiates her experiences so that she can cultivate professional agency. Lucy does this by using online media to better herself as a teacher. She forms good working relationships with others as being a unionist and takes responsibility in mentoring two student teachers. Lucy has the ability to bring together school-related functions. Union activities offer a great space for Lucy, as she uses this position of being the chairperson of her union to voice her concerns and support others with issues relating to the schooling context.

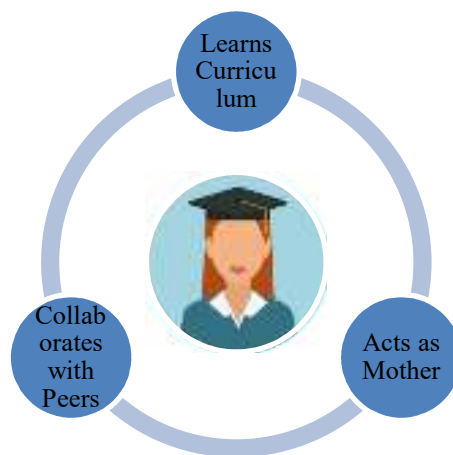


Figure 32: Diya's Cultivation of Professional Agency

The figure above displays the ways in which Diya cultivates professional agency. As a caregiver NT, Diya goes beyond the call of duty. She acts as a 'Mother' to her learners. Diya improves herself in curriculum content and socially collaborates with her positive peers. These practices that are enacted by Diya allow her the will to self-direct her own learning and cultivate professional agency.

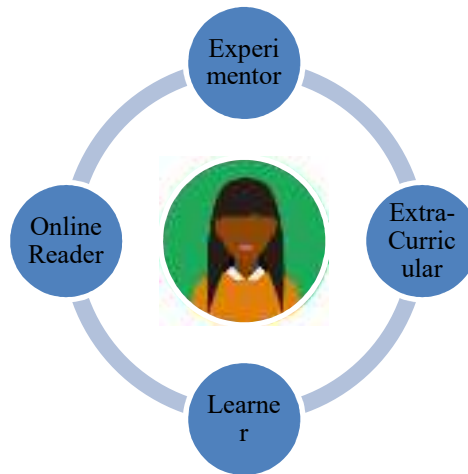


Figure 33: Zenzile’s Cultivation of Professional Agency

The figure above displays the ways in which Zenzile cultivates professional agency. As a self-directed learner NT, Zenzile realizes that she must make on-going negotiations regarding her identity and practice. She resiliently experiments with different teaching and learning approaches; and uses exciting ways to teach. Zenzile becomes a learner and believes that by reading policy documents, her teaching knowledge is enhanced.

Across the four NT participants, the active, mentor NT (Luke); the leader NT (Lucy); the care-giver NT (Diya) and the self-directed learner NT (Zenzile) we learn that they cultivated professional agency differently and in unique ways, within the classroom and beyond the classroom, within structured limits. The NTs were able to be in control and purposively self-direct their learning and working lives and form relationships in their own unique and agentic ways.

7.5 Theoretical Reflection

This research study framed by the Social Identity Theory, offer lenses to understand how NTs negotiate their selves and make meaning of professional agency in public primary schools in KZN. NTs are faced with various challenges and struggles in their beginning years and how they cultivate professional agency is informed by their personal and professional meaning-making. In this research study, we understand how Luke, Lucy, Diya and Zenzile negotiated their personal and professional experiences, and constructed and reconstructed their personal and professional meanings of self in order to cultivate professional agency.

The theoretical frameworks advocate an inextricable link between identity and agency (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). It is noted that NTs have a sense of agency and are capable of negotiating their selves within their social contexts (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). This research study found that NTs are agentic individuals and are capable of making on-going negotiations of who they are and what they want to be in public primary schools in KZN irrespective of their challenges. NTs take it upon themselves to engage in self-directed learning spaces and relationships as possibilities for meaningful working lives.

The following diagram shows that particular meanings of self, learning spaces and personal and professional relationships contribute to NT professional agency. NTs cultivate professional agency inside and outside the classroom in meaningful ways for their personal and professional development.

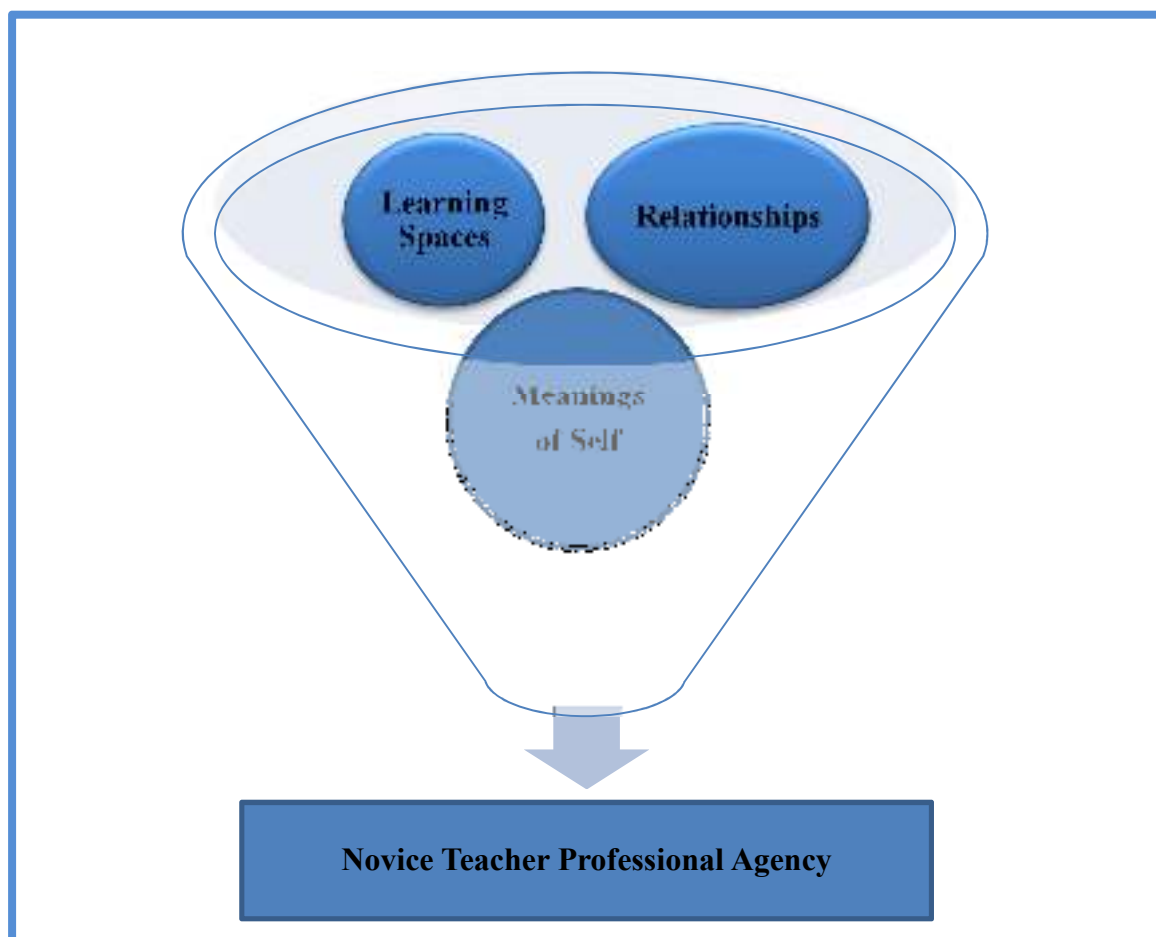


Figure 34: Novice Teacher Professional Agency

7.6 Policy Imperatives

Post-Apartheid in South Africa brought about a transformation of a new education system. There are various policies drawn up which offered a perspective of what the ideal teacher should be like. I make reference to the policy on the minimum requirements for teacher education qualifications. Teachers have seven roles for their practice. These include “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; learning area/subject discipline/phase specialist; assessor; and a community, citizenship and pastoral role” (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2011, p. 49). As the NT and researcher, I have realised that it is difficult for myself and other NTs to negotiate these ideal roles. It is imperative that policy makers consider that NTs are not only professional beings but have a personal life as well. Their experiences and contexts need to be taken into account in order to actively engage in the seven roles.

The South African Department of Basic Education (DBE), with the South African Council for Educators (SACE) implemented a Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) Management System for teachers in 2015. This CPTD Management System is used to recognise all developmental activities and programmes in order to assist teachers in growing their skills and knowledge professionally. It is a top-down mandatory approach that is applied to all teachers within the South African educational context. Individual teacher experiences, interests and concerns are not taken into account; and the DBE and SACE do not specifically look at the professional development for NTs. Therefore, policy makers must recognise that there is a need to cater for all teachers, and it is imperative that supportive developmental activities and programmes are to be executed for NTs.

7.7 Practice Imperatives

It is recognised that NTs undergo challenges as they negotiate their selves and manage their new role of being professionals in their teaching contexts (Caspersen and Raaen, 2014). Within the South African educational context, NTs are expected to carry out different roles and responsibilities. However, NTs are not supported fully and therefore find difficulty in implementing their new roles and responsibilities. Professional, developmental and supportive initiatives such as mentoring and induction need to be implemented for the growth and development of NTs. Learning spaces need to be created as well as professional

relationships need to be formed in order for NTs to learn and develop. As a result, NTs will find their own voices, learn, reflect and work effectively within their schools.

7.8 Contributions to Educational Research

This research study contributes to educational research in relation to the field of narrative inquiry, and adds to the growing body of knowledge on NTs. It assists in deepening our understanding of how NTs negotiate their lived personal and professional experiences in order to cultivate professional agency. The findings of this research study can assist in addressing the issues raised by NTs and in policy implementation. The findings should be of benefit to NTs, teachers, HOD's, principals, university lecturers within the faculty of education, educational institutions, South African Department of Education officials and policy-makers who are concerned with the professional development of NTs. This research study leads to establishing further research into NTs experiences as they negotiate who they are within their schooling context.

7.9 Suggestions for Further Research

This research study focused on exploring and understanding how NTs negotiated their personal and professional experiences in order to make meaning of their selves and agency in public primary schools in KZN, and the ways in which they cultivated professional agency. This research study is limited to four NTs; public primary schools; and the area of KZN. Therefore, it would be interesting to know more about the personal and professional experiences of other NTs, and the ways in which they learn and develop within and beyond public primary schools in KZN.

The research questions that can be generated for further research are as follows:

- What learning spaces do NTs engage in for professional development?
- What kinds of relationships contribute to NT professional development?

7.10 Final Reflection

This research study highlighted the lived personal and professional experiences of NTs that are working in public primary schools in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. In researching the lives of NTs, I have come to understand that they live complex lives and their identities are constantly shifting in their different social contexts. As the researcher, I described and narrated their lives by collecting and telling stories of who they are, what they do and how they negotiate themselves as NTs within this particular career trajectory; and make meaning of their lives. My research study confirms that particular meanings of self, learning spaces and relationships are critical for cultivating professional agency and contributes in a meaningful way to NT professional development within the educational context.

Whilst being a MEd student and researcher, I had to negotiate my other identities of being a wife and NT. I was determined to find creative ways of negotiating my own learning and developmental experiences. My experience of doing this research was an exciting but rather complex one. I experienced many challenges along the way; however I was determined to negotiate my experiences and overcome my very own challenges. As a NT researcher, I acknowledge through this study how negotiating the personal-professional relational to the social contexts opens up possibilities for individuals to exercise one's self as agentic beings. In moving forward in my life, I continue to keep on learning and developing myself personally and professionally.

I conclude my research dissertation with a quote:

*“Without commitment you’ll never start.
But more importantly, without consistency you’ll never finish.”
Denzel Washington.*

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APPENDIX 1

COLLAGE INQUIRY

To generate data, I will use *collage inquiry*.

The collage prompt question is: **“What is your story of being a novice teacher?”**

Research participants will be asked to make a collage that exemplifies them as a novice teacher and share its significance with the group.

The research participants will be provided with the following prompts when undertaking the collage:

- How does this activity make you feel?
- Please explain the meanings of your collage.
- Which words or pictures signify critical moments that have occurred in your personal and professional life?
- Are there any pictures or words that stand out from the rest of your collage? Please explain.
- Which parts of your collage represent you as a person and you as a professional?
- Did you learn anything about yourself from this activity?

APPENDIX 2

ARTEFACT RETRIEVAL

To generate data, I will use *artefact retrieval*.

The artefact prompt question is: **“How does this object relate to your life as a novice teacher?”**

Research participants will be asked to bring an artefact that exemplifies them as a novice teacher and share its significance with the group.

The research participants will be provided with the following prompts when undertaking the artefact:

- What is your artefact?
- What does your artefact signify?
- Please explain why you chose your artefact?
- In which era did you first come across your artefact?
- Does your artefact represent or symbolise anything specific about your teaching?
- Does your artefact remind you of an individual? If yes, does this individual have any influence on your thinking or actions?
- Express an emotion that your artefact brings forth to you.

APPENDIX 3

METAPHOR DRAWING

To generate data, I will use *metaphor drawing*.

The metaphor drawing prompt question is: **“What does this drawing reveal about your everyday experiences of cultivating professional agency?”**

Research participants will be asked to make a drawing that exemplifies them as a novice teacher and share its significance with the group.

The research participants will be provided with the following prompts when undertaking the metaphor drawing:

- What is your drawing about?
- Why did you feel like drawing this?
- Express an emotion that your drawing brings forth to you.
- How did you feel before and after drawing this?
- Please explain the meanings of your drawing.
- Does your drawing represent or symbolise anything specific about your life as a novice teacher in a public primary school in KwaZulu-Natal?

APPENDIX 4

UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW

To generate data, I will use an *unstructured interview*.

The unstructured interview prompt question is: **“What are your everyday experiences as a novice teacher working in a public primary school in KwaZulu-Natal that focuses on cultivating professional agency?”**

Research participants will be asked to share their story and experience of working as a novice teacher in a public primary school in KwaZulu-Natal.

The research participants will be provided with the following prompts when undertaking the unstructured interview:

Personal	Professional
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Biographical Life• Family Life• Community Life• Schooling Life• University Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teaching and Learning• Role as a novice teacher in a public primary school in KZN• Teaching Experiences

APPENDIX 5

LETTER TO THE PRINCIPAL

DEAR: PRINCIPAL

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

My name is Mrs Jayshree Thilakdhari and I am a Master of Education (Teacher Development Studies) student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood Campus. I hereby request your permission to conduct research at your school. The title of my research dissertation is: *Cultivating Professional Agency: Stories of Novice Teachers in Public Primary Schools in KwaZulu-Natal*

The main purpose of this research study is to:

- Explore and understand the lived experiences of NTs in public primary schools in KZN.

I know that confidentiality is very important to you. All information that is gathered will be used for the purpose of the research study and will be kept in a safe place at UKZN for a period of five years. Thereafter, the documents containing the research data will be destroyed. The findings of the research study will enhance the existing knowledge of novice teachers' experiences and their involvement in cultivating professional agency. The research study requires data collection activities and I will meet with the participant for 1-2 hours per day for four days upon commencement of the data collection process.

The research study is supervised by Professor Daisy Pillay who is a senior lecturer at the School of Education, UKZN. Professor Daisy Pillay can be contacted telephonically on 031 260 7598. If you have any questions relating to the rights of research participants, you can contact Mr Premlall Mohun who is a senior administrative officer at UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Office on 031 260 4557. If you require any other information about this research study upon its completion, kindly contact the researcher on 083 825 3590. Thank you for your assistance.

Yours Sincerely,

Mrs Jayshree Thilakdhari

PRINCIPAL DECLARATION

The title of the research dissertation: Cultivating Professional Agency: Stories of Novice Teachers in Public Primary Schools in KwaZulu-Natal

I, _____ (Full name/s of Principal) hereby grant permission to the researcher to conduct research at my school. I understand that the participant has willingly agreed to participate in this research study and that she/he are at liberty to withdraw from the research study at any time, so should they desire. I also understand that the name of the school, name of the participant and their responses will be kept confidential.

I give permission for the use of the following record devices during the group sessions and data production process:

	Willing	Not willing
Audio recording		
Photographic equipment		

Signature of Principal

Date

APPENDIX 6

LETTER TO THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

DEAR: RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

1. Nature of the Research Study

My name is Mrs Jayshree Thilakdhari and I am a Master of Education (Teacher Development Studies) student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood Campus. I hereby request you to be a research participant in my research study. The title of my research dissertation is: *Cultivating Professional Agency: Stories of Novice Teachers in Public Primary Schools in KwaZulu-Natal*

The main purpose of this research study is to:

- Explore and understand the lived experiences of NTs in public primary schools in KZN.

I know that confidentiality is very important to you. All information that is gathered will be used for the purpose of the research study and will be kept in a safe place at UKZN, Edgewood campus, for a period of five years. Thereafter, the documents containing the research data will be destroyed. Your confidentiality and anonymity are guaranteed. At any given point in time, you can withdraw from the research study and will not be penalized for taking such action. Your involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved. As a research participant, you are invited to engage in the following activities as part of the data generation: arts-based methods making reference to collage inquiry, artefact retrieval and metaphor drawing, and unstructured interviews. The data collection sessions will take place at a convenient place and time. It will not disrupt your day-to-day functioning at your school and will be conducted out of your instructional time.

As a research participant, you may contact the researcher or supervisor.

The details are below:

Researcher	<p>Name: Mrs Jayshree Thilakdhari</p> <p>Qualification: Master of Education (Teacher Development Studies)</p> <p>Contact Number: 083 825 3590</p> <p>Email Address: arusha12@gmail.com</p>
Supervisor	<p>Name: Professor Daisy Pillay</p> <p>Qualification: Doctor of Philosophy</p> <p>Contact Number: 031 260 7598</p> <p>Email Address: pillaygv@ukzn.ac.za</p>

If you have any questions relating to the rights of the research participant, you can contact Mr Premlall Mohun who is a senior administrative officer at UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Office on 031 260 4557.

2. Requirements of the Participant

The main requirements of the participant are as follows:

- Participation will be voluntary and subject to informed consent.
- A research participant is free to withdraw from the research study at any given point in time.
- The rights of a research participant will be safeguarded in relation to the preservation of confidentiality, access to research information and findings, and misleading promises regarding the benefits of the research.
- Anonymity and Confidentiality will be ensured through a coding system to avoid the inclusion of personal identifiers. The research participant will not be identifiable when the researcher presents her findings. Confidentiality will be maintained in storing and disposing of the research findings.
- Any information given by you cannot be used against you. The data collected will be used for the purposes of this research study only.
- Each session may take up to 2 hours and may be split depending on your preference.

Yours Sincerely,

Mrs Jayshree Thilakdhari

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT DECLARATION

The title of the research dissertation: Cultivating Professional Agency: Stories of Novice Teachers in Public Primary Schools in KwaZulu-Natal

I, _____ (Full name/s of research participant) hereby voluntarily agree to participate in this research study. I confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research study. I have been briefed about the nature of the research study by the researcher in advance. I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the research study at any time, so should I desire. I also understand that the results of this research study will be used for the purpose of the study only, and that my identity will be kept confidential.

I give permission for the use of the following record devices during the group sessions and data production process:

	Willing	Not willing
Audio recording:		
Collage Inquiry - and transcribed data		
Artefact Retrieval - and transcribed data		
Metaphor Drawing - and transcribed data		
Unstructured Interview - and transcribed data		

Signature of Research Participant

Date