Novice teachers' perceptions and experiences of the Practical Learning Module and their preparedness to teach in the Foundation phase of schooling

A thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Magister Educationis in the Faculty of Education at the University of the Western Cape, South Africa

By

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my two beautiful and charismatic daughters, Wania and Afiyah Williams. I am grateful and thank them for the sacrifices they made for me to complete this thesis and achieve my dreams, despite working full time and being a mother and wife throughout their infancy and early years of childhood. I would like this thesis to serve as a motivation to them that a young girl with a dream becomes a woman who realises it through faith, perseverance, determination and hard work.

I would like to make you proud every day of my life. Always have the courage to be a light in the lives of others, no matter the circumstances. Empower yourself while empowering others and your ultimate reward is with Allah (God).

I love you.

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ABSTRACT

This study explored novice teachers' perceptions and experiences of a Practical Learning Module. It addresses the problem of novice teacher efficacy, working from the premise that teacher quality affects education quality. Theoretically, it is underpinned by Bandura's Self-efficacy theory. The study delved into the experiences and perspectives of the unit of analysis, which are novice teachers, by recognising the importance of self-efficacy, as a crucial component of effective teaching and learning.

This qualitative interpretive study adopted a single case study methodology, employing document analysis, semi-structured individual interviews, and focus group interviews for data collection. Through the analysis of the data, several key themes emerged, including a misalignment between the official/intended curriculum and its actual implementation, the theory-practice divide, the transformative experience of navigating two distinct pedagogical environments (termed "reality shock"), the cultivation of self-efficacy through the agency of student teachers, and the influence of triadic relationships on novice teacher readiness to teach. This study attempts to offer valuable insights for the implementation of a more practical module, which would enhance student-teacher engagement and foster deeper learning experiences.

KEYWORDS/PHRASES

Case study research

Foundation Phase schooling

Novice teacher

Practical Learning

Teacher efficacy

Teacher preparedness

Teaching practice

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ATPs:	Annual Teaching Plans
B.Ed:	Bachelor in Education
CAPS:	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
CITE:	Centre for International Teacher Education
COVID-19:	Coronavirus Disease-2019
CPD:	Continuing Professional Development
CTLI:	Cape Teaching and Leadership Institute
DBE:	Department of Basic Education
DHET:	Department of Higher Education and Training
DOE:	Department of Education
DVC:	Deputy Vice-Chancellor
ECD:	Early Childhood Development
ECE:	Early Childhood Education
EDUHD:	Education of Higher Degrees Committee
EGRA:	Early Graded Reading Assessment
EU:	European Union
FP:	Foundation Phase
HEIs:	Higher Education Institutions
HL:	Home Language
HOD:	Head of Department
HSSREC:	Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee
ICT:	Information and Communication Technology

ITE:	Initial Teacher Education
LITNUM:	Literacy and Numeracy
LoLT:	Language of Learning and Teaching
LTSM:	Learning and Teaching Support Material
M.Ed:	Master of Education
MRTEQ:	Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications
NPFTED:	National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development
NQF:	National Qualifications Framework
NQT:	Newly Qualified Teacher
NT:	Novice Teacher
PGCE:	Postgraduate Certificate in Education
PLM:	Practical Learning Module
POPI Act:	Protection of Personal Information
QMS:	Quality Management System
RSA:	Republic of South Africa
SA:	South Africa
SACE:	South African Council of Educators
SAJCE:	South African Journal of Childhood Education
SBA:	School-Based Assessment
SBST:	School-Based Support Team
SCT:	Social Cognitive Theory
SFPTEP:	Strengthening Foundation Phase Teacher Education Programme
SHD:	Senate for Higher Degrees

SIAS:	Screening Identification Assessment and Support
SNA:	Support Needs Assessment
TAPS:	Teaching and Assessment Plans
TCiA:	Teachers Choice in Action
TRD:	Triadic Reciprocal Determinism
USA:	United States of America
UWC:	University of the Western Cape
WCED:	Western Cape Education Department
WIL:	Work Integrated Learning

DECLARATION

I, Zureenah Williams declare that this thesis **Novice teachers' perceptions and experiences of the Practical Learning Module and their preparedness to teach the Foundation Phase of schooling'** contains my own work. It has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university or for another qualification. All the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

November 2023

Signed 

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CHAPTER ONE

THE SCOPE AND THE NATURE OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The opening chapter of this study serves as an introduction providing the scope and the nature of the study to establish the background and justification for the research. It aims to contextualise the study by presenting the problem statement, followed by the research questions and aims. It highlights the significance of the study and provides definitions of key terms. The chapter concludes with an overview of the subsequent chapters that will be covered in the study.

1.2 Background and rationale

Initial Teacher Education (ITE) can be described as the entry point into the profession of education and its organisation it plays a crucial role in determining the quality of teachers. According to Musset (2010), Initial Teacher Education programmes comprise courses in content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, practical school experience, knowledge in child development, research skills, and skills in cognitive, behavioural and social sciences. Initial teacher education programmes aim to equip student teachers with adequate knowledge to provide high-quality education (Sayed, Carrim, Badroodien, McDonald & Singh, 2018). Hence, the most effective way of raising education quality is to transform teacher education (Musset, 2010).

Teacher education is of great importance and is often prioritised on political agendas in many countries (Ingvarson, Beavis & Kleinhenz, 2007). According to Rowe and Skourdoumbis (2019), there is noteworthy public concern over the quality of Initial Teacher Education. For example in Australia, many initial teacher education programmes have prioritised addressing the gap of knowing what to teach and how to teach it by proposing school and university partnerships to address the issues graduates are faced with (Department of Education and Training, 2017; Yeigh & Lynch, 2017). In addition, Bales (2015), found that there is a need to address the quality of teacher instruction in the United States of America (USA). Some of the reasons for the concern of initial teacher education programmes are that principals are dissatisfied with the preparedness of graduates, education faculties do not have enough resources, and universities are finding difficulty in providing quality practicum experiences for students and linking theory to experiences (Ingvarson et al., 2007). Moreover, Bales (2015) has

reviewed policies related to teacher education in the United States of America, as calls for quality teachers have escalated. The review of the policies indicated that there are implications for future research in teacher education as teacher educators have very little input in the policies drawn up for initial teacher education programmes. A teacher requires initial teacher education that provides knowledge and assists teachers in accessing it and reflecting on their practice, thus learning from practice and for practice (Caena, 2014).

It should be noted that ITE is of global concern. In Spain, when there is a change in the government, the new Ministry of Education usually proposes educational reform, which leads to Initial Teacher Education being continuously under criticism and discussion (Sancho-Gil, Sánchez-Valero & Domingo-Coscollola (2017). Farrell (2009) shares that the dominant model of practice in Ireland is school-university co-operation, i.e. student teachers gain their practical experience in schools and aspects of theory at universities. Furthermore, an emerging concept in Norway is the 'university school', which puts emphasis on collaboration between schools and universities and allows for the improvement of practicum, and the development of more competent teachers and teacher educators.

Similarly, in the United Kingdom, as a result of the move towards a school-based model in ITE, more focus was placed on accountability of effectiveness, quality of education and training and the quality of leadership and management (Clapham, Richards, Lonsdale & la Velle, 2023). For Werler and Tahirsylaj (2022) teacher education should be viewed as a policy issue highlighting the relationship between performance of learners and teacher education. They explain that policy in Europe aims to increase student teachers' knowledge of subject matter and pedagogical content with less emphasis being placed on the development of the pedagogical competence of future teachers.

Akyeampong, Lussier, Pryor and Westbrook (2013) conducted a study of teacher preparation for early primary grades in six African countries, namely, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Senegal, Tanzania and Uganda, which yielded interesting results. Here the focus was mainly on teaching practicum (teaching practice). They found that the length of practicum differed across the countries. Student teachers in Ghana and Mali spent a year doing teacher practicum, while in Kenya and Tanzania, the practicum will be in block sessions at the end of each year of the assigned degree. In Senegal and Uganda, two out of three teaching practice sessions were at the end of the year. Furthermore, Kenya and Senegal student teachers were specifically instructed to teach the lower three grades during practicum, but in Tanzania doing practicum

with grade 1 and 2 learners was not allowed because they were perceived as being inadequately prepared by teacher training colleges (Akyeampong et al., 2013).

Education experts and reformers have been highlighting the difficulties faced by novice teachers when they first start teaching in schools for many years (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Research on what is taught in teacher training programs is needed, as has been noted (Sayed et al., 2018). According to Baxen and Botha (2016, p.1), there is a lack of research into teaching and initial teacher education practices related to the Foundation Phase. They go on to say that since the South African Journal of Childhood Education (SAJCE) was founded in 2010, just 16 publications on subjects pertaining to ITE for Foundation Phase teachers have been published. In addition, the papers released up till 2016 included developments in ITE research, analysis of Foundation Phase teacher preparation, and components of curriculum development.

In addition, in South Africa concern over Foundation Phase teacher preparation has spurred national initiatives such as the Strengthening Foundation Phase Teacher Education Programme (SFPTEP), which was established by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and was funded by the European Union (Baxen & Botha, 2016). Baxen and Botha (2016) note that Foundation Phase Teacher Education research is the focus of this programme and it aimed at establishing new initial teacher education programmes for teachers of Foundation Phase children. Furthermore, the Department of Higher Education and Training's Annual Report 2011/12 (DHET, 2012), has discussed noteworthy progress that has been made in the SFTEP. Since 2009, 13 universities have been involved in Foundation Phase Teacher Education, but that number has grown to 20 universities in only two years of the SFPTEP's implementation.

Sayed and Ahmed (2015), are of the view that a focus on teachers, teaching, and teacher education can make a difference in the provision of quality teaching. Sayed et al. (2018, p.4) state that national and international policies reinforce the notion that it is high-quality teacher preparation that makes a difference in teacher quality. Increasingly, tertiary institutions, researchers, policymakers, and practitioners are focusing on the promotion of quality teacher preparation programmes. Darling-Hammond, Chung and Frelow (2002), however, note that teacher education has been questioned in recent years as to whether and how it makes a difference in the practice and efficacy of teachers. It is widely recognised that graduate teachers are underprepared for the teaching profession, as a result of the disparity between their tertiary education and classroom experience (Green, Eady & Anderson, 2018). Defining the sufficient

comprehension of quality teacher preparation is acknowledged as a challenging endeavour due to its complexity. Moreover, quality programmes have demonstrated an amalgamation of theory and practice, establishing a significant correlation between what novice teachers ought to comprehend and accomplish as they embark on their classroom practice (Green, Eady & Anderson, 2018). It was noted in the 2012 NEEDU National Report that the majority of Foundation Phase teachers in South Africa lack a sufficient subject knowledge base to effectively impart a comprehensive understanding of the foundational disciplines to their learners. Institutions that offer teacher training to prospective teachers are imparting theoretical and practical knowledge and skills in the teaching of different subjects (Azeem, 2011), which is a necessity in ITE.

There have been initiatives to improve the provision of quality education in South Africa by investing in teacher training. Two initiatives are worth mentioning: The National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development (NPFTED) and the Policy on Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (MRTEQ). The NPFTED suggests that teacher education programmes must integrate situational and contextual elements in teacher training that assist teachers in developing competences to enable them to deal with diversity and transformation (DOE, 2006). The MRTEQ policy explains that Foundation Phase programmes must train and prepare students to teach from Grade R-3 by acquiring extensive and specialised knowledge of reading, writing, and numeracy, and addressing and identifying barriers to learning and curriculum differentiation (DOE, 2015).

Researchers have reached consensus that ITE plays a crucial role in the preparation of teachers. Darling-Hammond et al. (2002), have found that teacher education programmes differ in the quality of preparation they provide based on a study of novice teachers' perceptions of teacher preparedness. Du Plessis et al. (2019), found that newly qualified teachers agreed that the formal training they received was disconnected from the realities they faced in the field. This then leads to reflection on what and how student teachers learn to become Foundation Phase teachers. Valuable questions are: What should teachers teach and how? On what aspects of their teaching should their training be focussed and why? (Sayed & Ahmed, 2015).

According to Sayed and Ahmed (2015), the existing research does not offer a definitive understanding of the crucial aspects of effective teaching. Bridging this knowledge gap requires a comprehensive and contextualised understanding of the pedagogical processes that facilitate high-quality learning and how teachers can actively incorporate them. Improving teacher

education programmes to encourage teacher educators to help students understand the unique set of skills, experiences, and beliefs that students bring to the course, which will lead them to make better professional judgements within the classroom, is needed.

Ingvarson et al. (2007) found that teachers who were granted opportunities to learn during their initial teacher education courses felt adequately prepared to carry out their duties in their first year of teaching. Furthermore, they established that initial teacher education courses that focused on the following content features were reported as developing their students into well-prepared novice teachers: a) learning content-specific teaching methods; b) Learning how to present content that builds on learners' existing knowledge; c) Learning how to probe learning by focusing on their prior knowledge; d) Linking content and pedagogy, as well as theoretical and practical aspects of teaching; e) Developing a comprehensive understanding of how students learn; and f) Gaining a deeper understanding of content knowledge to be taught (Ingvarson et. al., 2007).

Teaching practice appears to be a key component to developing competent and professional teachers. Thus, pre-service training. which includes teaching practice often enhances the students' abilities to derive maximum benefits from their experiences in the classroom (Nkambule & Mukeredzi, 2017). According to Ingvarson et al. (2007), the number of days that students spent at schools, the number of days spent teaching, periods of block or extended time, and working with fellow students all played a significant role in shaping them during teacher practice. La Velle (2022) reiterates that extensive, connected practicum experiences in classrooms are of great importance. Importantly, students revealed that integrating theory and practice remained a noteworthy concern in teacher practice. Riech, Kim, Robinson, Roy and Thompson (2018) explain that:

> Currently, teacher candidates primarily learn in two spaces: Socratic seminar rooms in education schools (or lecture-heavy workshops for in-service professional development) and practicum classrooms. The former affords discussion and the latter affords immersion into the challenges of teaching, but a third space--a practice space--is needed that combines the authenticity of the practicum classroom with the scaffolding of the graduate school seminar room (Riech et al., 2018, p.1).

The Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa was an effort from the Department of Basic Education and Higher Education and Training to strengthen the teaching practice component of teacher education programmes through the development of Teaching Schools and Professional Practice Schools (Gravett &

Ramsaroop, 2015). These schools were aimed at strengthening teacher education by being places where students could learn from best practices while observing and teaching alongside trained mentors. The proposal was that the schools would be close to institutions that offer teaching programmes for students to engage in work-integrated learning. However, all stakeholders would have to deliberate on the purpose and means of this endeavour before establishing these schools in which student teachers could do professional practice in model classrooms to create ideal practical learning opportunities (Gravett & Ramsaroop, 2015).

It is evident from the literature that the studies reviewed by Lawson, Cakmak, Gündüz and Busher et al. (2015) can be conceptualised to mainly focus on pre-service teachers' beliefs, experiences, challenges and efficacy of teaching practicum. In addition, Lee et al. (2012) found that conducting research on pre-service teachers' perceptions of preparedness has allowed them to establish the benefits of student teaching experiences while also identifying more questions that warrant research. Brown, Lee and Collins (2015) conducted a study to investigate how student teaching experiences impact self-efficacy and feelings of preparedness as they found that there is a lack of research on whether pre-service teachers' perceptions of preparedness lead to preparedness in the classroom. For them, teaching is a complex and multidimensional process that requires deep knowledge and understanding in a wide range of areas. In addition, they explain that it requires the ability of the teacher to synthesise, integrate, and apply knowledge and understanding in different situations.

Petersen (2017), found that all the novice teachers described their transition from university to the school environment as 'overwhelming' and 'unsettling'. Jacobs and Gravett (1998) revealed that many students graduate from universities with passive knowledge instead of active knowledge, which leads to novice teachers struggling in relevant situations within the school domain. Conversely, in a study conducted on teacher preparedness, first-year teachers identified themselves as being proficient in preparedness, based on their teacher education programme (Wright, 2017). Nevertheless, novice teachers generally find difficulty in integrating the university component of theory and what they teach during teaching practice.

The quality of the school-based supervising teacher and the modelling of good teaching practice also impacts novice teacher efficacy. In addition, universities will experience the dilemma of having to shift from traditional teaching practice and remodel practicum to provide a planned series of school experiences for practicing theoretical course components with class-

based informed feedback to encourage more meaningful practicum. However, the focus must not shift from quality teaching and learning (Ingvarson et al., 2007).

Adoniou (2013) points out that effectiveness in teacher education in the university context is primarily measured through student evaluations of how the students experienced the programme. She further goes on to say that it is important to note that these are measures of student satisfaction with their university experience, rather than measures of their preparedness to teach in classrooms. A resolution for providing quality teacher education is that teacher educators must be better informed about the transition from the university to the classroom to better prepare teachers to teach effectively (Helfrich & Bean, 2011). However, Arends and Phurutse (2009) defend teacher education by arguing that novice teachers possess unique and legitimate needs that cannot be fully understood or addressed beforehand or outside the actual context of teaching. The development of teaching competence relies on hands-on experience within a classroom setting. No university course can adequately teach a new teacher how to effectively combine knowledge of individual learners and subject matter to make informed decisions about classroom practices.

Teachers' feelings of preparedness are also an important aspect of teacher quality and efficacy. Both self-efficacy and feelings of preparedness are important indicators of whether a teacher will be able to meet the challenges of the profession and ultimately be successful in teaching (Brown et al., 2015). Teacher beliefs may be responsible for why teachers adopt particular practices, their purposes, aims, and ideas about what learning is and how it happens. In addition, teacher professionalism, participation in professional development, and preparation are also elements that build teaching efficacy in the classroom. The Department of Education and Training (2017) describes teacher wellbeing and engagement as essential pre-conditions that enhance self-efficacy for teachers to teach their classes effectively and sustainably.

1.3 Problem statement

For decades, education researchers and reformers have called attention to the challenges encountered by newcomers to school teaching (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). The preparation of teachers has become a priority with an increased emphasis on quality teaching and learning in the 21st century (Sayed et al., 2018). Baxen and Botha (2016, p.1) explain that there is a lack of research into Foundation Phase teaching and initial teacher education practices. It is thus highlighted that there is a need for research on what is taught in teacher training programmes (Sayed et al., 2018).

Notably, the literature on teacher preparation programmes indicates that different teacher preparation programmes vary in the learning experiences they offer to student teachers and how well-prepared graduates feel (Darling-Hammond et al., 2002). Recent literature has revealed that novice teachers have been the focus of many studies as the first year has many challenges (Boakye & Ampiah, 2017). However, specifically related to practicum, Lawson et al. (2015, p.397) stated that most practical studies are focused on pre-service teachers rather than novice teachers. Even though we know that novice teachers experience many challenges; practicum studies are mostly conducted with pre-service teachers, and there is a lack of research in the Foundation Phase of initial teacher education, Sayed et al. (2018) note not much is known about how teachers are trained, how they experience such training and how investment for improving teacher quality for quality education should be done (Sayed et al., 2018, p. 4). Furthermore, there is a lack of research about the experiences and perceptions of the Practical Learning component of Foundation Phase initial teacher education programmes.

Most of the literature is primarily focused on pre-service teachers' perceptions, experiences and efficacy of teaching practice rather than those of novice teachers. Thus, the perceptions and experiences of novice teachers regarding the Practical Learning Module and their preparedness to teach in the Foundation Phase appear under-researched. Therefore, this study seeks to explore novice teachers' perceptions and experiences of the Practical Learning Module and their preparedness to teach in the Foundation Phase of schooling. From the literature, it is evident that there are many gaps in research specifically related to Foundation Phase teacher preparedness.

1.4 Main research question

The main research question that this study aimed to address is: What are novice teachers' perceptions and experiences of the Practical Learning Module and their preparedness to teach in the Foundation Phase of schooling?

Subsequently, the following questions assisted in addressing the main research question stated above.

- What is the nature of the Practical Learning Module and how does it prepare novice teachers to teach in the Foundation Phase of schooling?
- What are the challenges novice teachers face and how much of these can be attributed to their perceptions and experiences of the Practical Learning Module?

- What changes should be made to the Practical Learning Module to better prepare future Foundation Phase teachers?

1.5 The aim of the study

The overall aim of this study was to explore novice teachers' perceptions and experiences of the Practical Learning Module and their preparedness to teach in the Foundation Phase of schooling.

The objectives of this study are:

- To determine the nature of the Practical Learning Module and how it prepares novice teachers to teach in the Foundation Phase of schooling.
- To explore the challenges novice teachers, face and how much of these can be attributed to their perceptions and experiences of the Practical Learning Module.
- To discover what changes should be made to the Practical Learning Module to better prepare future Foundation Phase teachers.

1.6 The significance of the study

The impact of teacher preparation programmes on teacher education has been extensively studied and documented. The impact of practical learning on the preparation of novice Foundation Phase teachers and teacher training remains understudied in both South Africa and beyond. The present thesis aims to contribute to the expanding corpus of literature on teacher education in South Africa by providing an in-depth analysis of novice teachers' and student teachers' perspectives on practical learning and teacher preparedness. Most prior research has mostly concentrated on student teachers' perspectives and experiences. Moreover, by situating teacher preparation within a South African context, the thesis contributes to the body of research already available on the subject.

1.7 Methodological approach

A single case study research design was used in this qualitative interpretive study. A qualitative approach was adopted to understand this social phenomenon in a natural setting, to determine why it is happening, and then to emphasise the meanings, experiences, and views of the participants in their own words (Meadows, 2003). Carl and Strydom (2017, p.4) note that case studies provide a unique example of people in real situations enabling readers a better understanding of ideas. McMillan and Schumacher (2014, p.370) further state that a case study

is an in-depth analysis of a single entity. The single entity or unit of analysis in this case are novice teachers (teachers in their first three years of teaching). Data was collected using multiple data sources, namely: semi-structured individual interviews, focus group interviews and document sources. A more detailed discussion of the methodological considerations of this study will be provided in Chapter Three of this thesis.

1.8 Definitions of key terms

- **Teacher Preparedness** originates from teacher education and involves the specific programme which helps the teacher develop quality and effective strategies in the teaching and learning process. Kiamba and Mutua (2017) explain that teacher preparedness comprises teacher training; mastery of subject matter; lesson planning; schemes of work; and evaluation and assessment records.
- **Teaching Practice** is a well-designed programme at a higher institution which aims to provide aspiring teachers with an opportunity to develop in an actual classroom within school settings and evaluate the student teachers' competence (Aglazor, 2017). **Teaching Practice** is also known as **Practicum** which is a specialised educational course designed to train teacher clinicians. It involves supervised; hands-on application of theoretical knowledge acquired beforehand (Mahato & Behera, 2018).
- **Practical Learning:** The Policy on Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications [Department of Education (DOE), 2015)] states:

> Practical learning involves learning from and in practice. Learning from practice includes the study of practice, using discursive resources to analyse different practices across a variety of contexts, and drawing from case studies, video records, lesson observations, etc., to theorise practice and form a basis for learning in practice. Learning in practice involves teaching in authentic and simulated classroom environments. Work-integrated Learning (WIL) takes place in the workplace and can include aspects of learning from practice (e.g. observing and reflecting on lessons taught by others), as well as learning in practice (e.g. preparing, teaching and reflecting on lessons presented by oneself). Practical learning is an important condition for the development of tacit knowledge, which is an essential component of learning to teach. (DOE, 2015, p.12).

The labels "teacher knowledge" or "teacher practical knowledge" are used to indicate the knowledge and insights that cause teachers' actions in practice (Verloop, Van Driel & Meijer, 2001, p.446).

- **Novice Teachers** are defined as teachers as those who completed their teacher-education programme (including the practicum) and have just commenced teaching in an educational institution (Farrell, 2009, p.182). Novice teachers are also referred to as beginner teachers who have less than four years of teaching experience (Arends & Phurutse, 2009).
- **Foundation Phase** is the phase specialisation in which the teacher teaches Grades R – 3 learners (+/- 5 to 9-year-old children).

1.9 Structure of the thesis

The study consists of six chapters. This chapter provides the scope of the study by explaining the background and rationale for why this study was considered necessary. Research questions and objectives pertinent to this study are presented. It also includes the significance of a study, a section defining key concepts relating to the study and concludes with the structure of the thesis. Chapter Two is devoted to the literature review and a discussion of the theoretical framework that underpinned this study. Chapter Three provides a detailed account of the methodological considerations for this study. It offers justification for situating this study within an interpretivist paradigm using a qualitative case study research design.

In Chapter Four, I present the data and the key findings derived from the data analysis process described in Chapter Three. This is followed by Chapter Five, the analytical chapter where I offer an analysis and discussion of the key findings that were derived from the previous data presentation chapter. Chapter Six, the concluding chapter provides an overview of the thesis, addresses whether the research questions were answered and offers recommendations for further academic enquiry.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter, Chapter One sketched the context of the study. In this chapter, Chapter Two, I provide an in-depth literature review and theoretical framework that contribute to a better comprehension of the research topic. Chapter Two is therefore divided into two main sections. The first section provides an overview of the relevant literature pertaining to FP schooling in South Africa. It explores the conceptualisation of the term teacher preparedness, examines perceptions of teacher preparedness, discusses novice teachers' transition into the teaching profession, and explores novice teachers' perceptions and experiences of Practical Learning Modules. In the second section of this chapter, I offer the theoretical framework namely, Bandura's self-efficacy theory (1997) that underpinned my study.

2.2 Review of the literature

The upcoming section will encompass the relevant literature for this study. It will commence with an exploration of Foundation Phase education in South Africa. Subsequently, the literature will delve into the conceptualisation of teacher preparedness, the transition of novice teachers into the teaching profession, and the perceptions and experiences of novice teachers regarding Practical Learning Modules.

2.2.1 An overview of Foundation Phase schooling in SA

Historically, teacher training colleges in South Africa were responsible for the training of teachers. Wolhuter (2006) explains in 1994 the education system shifted when a new constitution came into operation and to address the inequalities in the provisioning of education and differences in teachers' qualifications, a new education policy was formulated. From 1999 to 2000, it was declared that all teacher training colleges would be incorporated into universities and teachers would be trained according to the norms and standards set out in the National Education Policy Act (Act 27 of 1996) (Wolhuter, 2006, pp.132-133). In addition, a key factor in the decrease in colleges was that in 1995 a national audit considered many colleges as being too small in size, and with the absence of lecture venues, not cost-effective (Robinson & Chisholm, 2022, p.48). Moreover, Robinson and Chisholm (2022) identified that by the early 2000s, teaching colleges had either closed, merged to form new configurations within Higher

Education or been repurposed ultimately resulting in 26 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) being responsible for teacher education.

The historical context in South Africa particularly within the Foundation Phase had a problem of teacher supply and demand in this phase of schooling (Sayed & McDonald, 2017). Green, Parker, Deacon and Hall (2011) who monitored the enrolments of teacher education, found that the demand for teachers in the Foundation Phase exceeds the supply of teachers especially teachers to teach in the primary language of the learners. Petersen and Gravett (2014) also emphasised the concern over the state of Foundation Phase (FP) teachers in South Africa (SA). For them, the FP is seen as the lowest in the hierarchy of teachers in black schools as many high-achieving school leavers consider it the least likely professional choice to study as a teacher.

Green et al. (2011) also reiterate that the Departments of Basic Education (DBE) and Higher Education and Training (DHET) have identified a serious gap in the number of FP teachers, particularly with regard to teachers able to teach in African languages. To address this shortage, the DHET obtained funding from the European Union (EU) to increase the number of institutions offering the B.Ed (Foundation Phase Teaching) degree to 18 because at the time only 13 out of the 21 universities offered a FP degree (Green et al., 2011). Green et al. (2011) used a multivariate model to estimate a negative gap of between 15 220 and 42 135 by 2020 accumulating over only six years.

From a policy perspective, it is evident that qualifications must be formally certified for individuals to be qualified to teach in the FP of schooling. Regarding the qualifications, DOE (2015) states:

> Qualifications are 'the formal recognition and certification of learning achievement awarded by an accredited institution [Republic of South Africa (RSA), 2013a, p.44]. A qualification therefore certifies that a planned and systematic programme of learning was followed and successfully completed through formal or informal learning and work experience. The volume of learning required for a particular qualification is measured in notional study hours, specified in terms of the number of credits. It is important to note that some programmes (such as the B.Ed degree and some Advanced Diplomas in education) may require credit loads above the minimum (RSA, 2013a, p.48) (DOE, 2015, p.14).

Furthermore, (DBE, 2015) explains the qualifications for Initial Teacher Education (ITE) are a Bachelor of Education degree (National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Level 7), and a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (NQF Level 7). The Diploma in Grade R Teaching (NQF

Level 6) is the required qualification for Grade R Teaching. It's important to note that this qualification is distinct and separate from the teaching qualifications for ITE and Continuing Professional Development (CPD). This is because Grade R Teaching is specialised and centres on a specific grade within the Foundation Phase (FP). Moving forward, individuals can progress from Grade R teaching to FP teaching, for which the minimum qualification is a B.Ed in FP Teaching.

The B.Ed (Foundation Phase Teaching) programme requires a specific combination of knowledge areas. This includes disciplinary, pedagogical, and practical learning to effectively teach students from Grade R to Grade 3 (DOE, 2015). The emphasis is on preparing Grade R students for formal education through play-based learning, physical development, and language proficiency. Foundation Phase teachers must also be proficient in teaching four subjects (Home Language, First Additional Language, Mathematics, and Life Skills) in Grades 1 to 3. They need a broad base of general knowledge to effectively implement the national curriculum. Specialised knowledge in early childhood learning is crucial for teaching reading, writing, and numeracy, as well as establishing fundamental concepts for future learning phases. Additionally, all Foundation Phase students are required to specialise in teaching Home Language in one of the official languages, along with teaching English as a First Additional Language (DOE, 2015).

Certain Universities also offer a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) in FP teaching, which is designed to equip students to teach Grades R to 3. The programme's knowledge components should encompass pedagogical and practical learning, enabling graduates to effectively engage with Grade R students, the same as the B.Ed FP degree. As mentioned before, Grade R education focuses on play-based learning, physical development, language proficiency, and fundamental concepts crucial for future literacy and numeracy skills which is also important in the PGCE. Providers of this programme must ensure that the prior qualifications of students encompass an appropriate mix of knowledge to support high-quality FP teaching (DOE, 2015).

2.2.2 Conceptualising the term teacher preparedness

Teacher preparedness stems from teacher education, which primarily pertains to the specialised programme that assists teachers in cultivating high-quality and efficient approaches in the teaching and learning process (Hagger & McIntyre, 2000). Kiamba and Mutua (2017) explain that there have been many changes regarding teacher preparation programmes in a global

context, but teachers need to be well-grounded with all the skills needed to prepare for teaching. Teacher preparedness refers to the state of readiness or level of readiness a teacher has attained for an impending change or situation. It signifies how well a teacher has already been equipped or made ready for what lies ahead (Hay, Smit & Paulsen, 2001). In addition, teacher preparedness comprises teacher training; mastery of subject matter; lesson planning; schemes of work; and evaluation and assessment records (Kiamba & Mutua, 2017). DeStefano (2023) explains that teacher preparedness is referred to as a novice teacher's competence to perform the duties required by professional standards of teaching.

Teacher readiness and teacher preparedness are also used interchangeably in the literature. Mohamed, Valcke and Wever (2016, p.153) as cited in Manasia, Ianos and Chicioreanu (2019) define readiness for teaching as the extent to which student teachers are ready for the teaching profession. Straková (2015) describes preparedness as the feeling of being ready for the job as a comprehensive consideration of all the aspects and elements that contributed to that sense of readiness during pre-service training. To Park, Dimitrov, Patterson and Park (2017), knowledge, attitudes, and interests were identified as distinct components of teaching readiness.

Manasia et al. (2019) proposed a more targeted approach to readiness, which would entail achieving an optimal level of professional competence development. This level of competence would enable future teachers to effectively assume their job responsibilities. Then, Fan, Leung, Leung, Hon and Fan (2019) refined the conception of teaching readiness and highlighted knowledge of a specific subject matter and attitudes as the key components for teacher readiness. For Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001), evaluated instruction, management and engagement are three factors that contribute to teacher readiness.

Teachers' feelings of preparedness and teacher quality are important in teacher efficacy. Teacher preparedness impacts their ability to perform teaching tasks well and to meet the challenges they face in the teaching profession. There is a lack of research indicating if perceptions of preparedness lead to actual preparedness in the classroom. In a study based on pre-service teachers' sense of preparedness and efficacy, it was found that both feelings of preparedness and teaching efficacy are important indicators of whether teachers will be successful in their teaching careers or not (Brown et al., 2015). Kiamba and Mutua (2017) thus posit that student teachers who undergo training have one goal and that is to get the basics and preparedness to essentially create classrooms that will help them relieve any fear as teachers.

Teacher preparedness is necessary, and it assists teachers in acquiring the basic knowledge and competencies to be effective in the classroom and to transition into the teaching profession.

2.2.3 Novice teachers and their transition into the teaching profession

Both international and national ITE programmes aim to equip students with sufficient knowledge and skills for them to provide education of high quality in the Foundation Phase. However, Turner, Jones, Davies and Ramsey (2004) claimed that many graduates find the transition from university to the workplace particularly difficult and disappointing. In addition, too many novice teachers are overwhelmed by this transition and find that the workplace does not live up to expectations.

It is of utmost importance that a teacher enters the workforce with adequate skills and abilities suitable to the teaching profession and to which universities are expected to make an important contribution. However, there are reports within the literature that show that teaching graduates are not meeting the requirements of employers. Turner et al. (2004) further explained that employers do not feel that graduates possess the necessary skills and abilities to be effective teachers. Boakye and Ampiah (2017) thus stated that many studies have focused on newly qualified teachers over the years. The reason for this is that teaching is additionally complex for beginning teachers as they face many challenges (Schoffner, 2011; Onafowora, 2004).

Onafowora's (2004) study, found that many of the challenges that novice teachers face stem from class management issues that include discipline and handling difficult students. Boakye and Ampiah (2017) agreed that class management issues are challenging, but also added that challenges can be peculiar to the school, subjects, and the individual. The literature on the challenges of newly graduated teachers revealed that novice teachers experienced the following challenges: (a) prevented from implementing many innovative classroom practices, (b) inadequate knowledge and skills, (c) decreased self-efficacy and increased stress, (d) early attrition, (e) newcomers' role and position in a work community, and (f) importance of workplace learning (g) curriculum, lesson planning, assessment, time management, assessment, and school culture pressures, (h) lack of administrative support, (i) inadequate teaching materials and lack of resources, (j) lack of parental involvement, and (k) the difficulty of balancing their teaching responsibilities and their personal lives (Boakye & Ampiah, 2017; Fantilli & McDougall, 2009).

Some beginner teachers communicated that the theoretical grounding that they learned in their teacher preparation programmes did not equip them sufficiently for the demands of daily classroom life as much learning takes place upon completion of the teacher training programme (Boakye and Ampiah, 2017). This sentiment was supported by Confait (2015), who found that beginner teachers have great challenges in accessing and exploring possibilities to embrace diverse teaching strategies. He found that beginning teachers are not recognised as still being learners either.

Criticisms of teacher education programmes have been widespread in the field of education and universities have been criticized as ineffective in preparing teachers to deliver engaging instruction, in classroom management skills, unresponsive to the changing demographics of the country, and barriers to the recruitment of the most capable students into the teaching profession (Carter & Cowan, 2019). There is a growing body of evidence that indicates that student teachers who are prepared in strong programmes are more equipped to manage the challenges of the first year of teaching (Carter & Cowan, 2019). Mayer et al. (2017) explained that despite the frequent criticism of ITE, teacher education practitioners and researchers have not voiced a response regarding the effectiveness of their programmes.

Grossman, Hammernessand and McDonald (2009) suggested that teacher educators must be able to provide credible evidence of the effectiveness of their practice in preparing teachers to effectively respond to these critics. They pointed out that it is clear that researching the effectiveness of teacher education is not straightforward. In addition, reviews of teacher education research have concluded that the research is characterised by isolated, often unrelated, and small-scale investigations. However, acknowledging the findings from the many small-scale studies of teacher education has informed local teacher education practice in useful ways (Mayer et al., 2017).

Gravett (2012) highlighted that delegates at the Teacher Development Summit in 2009 voiced their opinion that universities do not adequately prepare teachers for the schooling system and reality, as a result of the ‘academic bias’ of their teacher education programmes. Foundation Phase teachers should not be educated at universities, where the focus is on abstract theory, because Foundation Phase teachers should acquire skills rooted in pragmatic practice (Gravett, 2012). Chisholm (2010) expounds that university education for the Foundation Phase is too theoretical and abstract and mentions that previously colleges provided student teachers with hands-on training and practical education by providing experienced teachers with opportunities

to participate in training future teachers. Gravett, Petersen and Petker (2014) explain that student teachers must be taught conceptual knowledge, but learning to become a teacher should be in the foreground of training and learning about teaching should be entrenched in experiential learning. It is important in Foundation Phase ITE programmes that student teachers experience multiple opportunities to practice making educational judgements and transform into a person who can make wise educational decisions after reflection. Hence, the focus of the Foundation Phase teaching ITE programmes should not only be on what teachers know but also on what they do (Murris & Verbeek, 2014).

DeStefano (2023, p.13) posits that there are layers of complexities in the concept of an adequately prepared preservice or beginning teacher. DeStefano explains the current body of literature on the adequate preparation of beginning teachers is limited in scope. Existing research studies tend to focus on specific milestones within the teacher preparation process, rather than providing a comprehensive assessment of entire programmes. Some attempts have been made to evaluate the effectiveness of preparation programmes by measuring teacher performance once they are in the classroom. She suggests that by analysing how novice educators in Nebraska perceive their preparedness in relation to professional teaching standards, policymakers and administrators can gain a deeper understanding of their needs. This understanding can provide valuable insights for local teacher preparation programmes as they navigate accreditation processes.

2.2.4 Novice teachers' perceptions and experiences of practical learning opportunities

Novice teachers' perceptions and experiences of practical learning opportunities could vary according to the ITE programme on offer at the university. According to policy, (DOE, 2015) practical learning has two components, namely 'learning from practice' and 'learning in practice'. The latter consists of teaching practice or school-based Work-integrated learning (WIL). As explained in the policy:

> Practical learning involves learning from and in practice. Learning from practice includes the study of practice, using discursive resources to analyse different practices across a variety of contexts, drawing from case studies, video records, lesson observations, etc., to theorise practice and form a basis for learning in practice. Learning in practice involves teaching in authentic and simulated classroom environments. Work-integrated learning (WIL) takes place in the workplace and can include aspects of learning from practice (e.g. observing and reflecting on lessons taught by others), as well as learning in practice (e.g. preparing, teaching and reflecting on lessons presented by oneself). Practical learning is an important condition for the

> development of tacit knowledge, which is an essential component of learning to teach. (DOE, 2015, p.12).

School-based WIL, according to the policy, (DOE, 2015, p.23) including supervised and assessed teaching practice, forms an essential part of the B.Ed programme. The policy also stipulates that over the four-year degree students must spend a minimum of 20 weeks to a maximum of 32 weeks in school-based practice. In a given year this could amount to a maximum of 12 weeks, at least three of these could be consecutive (DOE, 2015, p.23). Danielson (2014) defines teaching practice as an essential aspect of being prepared for teaching, and she identifies four domains that are closely related to teaching practice: planning and preparation (domain 1), classroom environment (domain 2), instruction (domain 3), and professional responsibility (domain 4). Student teachers are required to document their practical learning experiences in portfolios and reflect on their practical learning as part of an evaluation meeting. In addition to formal practical learning approaches, student teachers also enjoy opportunities for enactment and experimentation through using approximations of practice (Grossman et al., 2009, p.2076).

Aglazor (2017) provides some benefits associated with the teaching practice component of practical learning: (a) it bridges theory and practice, (b) exposes student teachers to realistic experiences while being supervised by professional teachers, (c) enables student teachers to translate educational theories into practice, (d) allows student teachers to discover their strengths and weakness in classroom teaching, (e) affords student teachers an opportunity to acquire professional skills and competencies: and (f) awards students an opportunity to familiarise themselves with the real school environment. The question is does it (more exposure to school-based WIL or teaching practice) lead to students being better prepared to teach?

Sayed et al.'s (2018) study revealed that Foundation Phase student teachers had mixed views about their preparedness for teaching and learning. Student teachers may feel comfortable knowing what to do, how to do it and why they do it, but their experience of knowing how to teach is situation-specific (Sayed et al., 2018). Given the increasing desire for more hands-on experience expressed by pre-service teachers and the ongoing challenge of bridging the gap between theory and practice, it seems crucial to explore fresh and meaningful practical experiences (Resch, Chrittesser & Knapp, 2022).

Lawson et al. (2015) conducted a systematic review of research studies into school practicum from different educational settings which include: Australia, Hong Kong, the UK, the

Netherlands, the USA, New Zealand, etc. Their purpose was to identify the main issues in school practicum and to provide a present picture of teaching practicum. The research involved studies that had mentors, teacher educators, and pre-service teachers as the participants. However, the findings of their systematic review generally reflected pre-service teachers' beliefs, views, perceptions, applications, problems and needs because most of the studies focused on pre-service teachers. An important finding from their study revealed that the quality of student teaching has positive effects on teaching outcomes rather than the duration of student teaching (Lawson, et. al., 2015, p.400).

WIL or teaching practice model differs from one university to the next. Chisholm (2010) explains that the South African government has been considering different models to expand teacher education provision and training for Foundation Phase teachers. Richter (2016) expounds that graduates should be as employable as they possibly can and suggests that a school-based training model would provide students with the teaching skills and practical experience that they need. The training model entails that Baccalaureus Educationist (B.Ed) students who are in their third and fourth year are placed in schools as teaching assistants while they are still studying. The benefits are that they gain invaluable practical experience and integrate theory and practice while students are being supervised by experienced mentor teachers (Richter, 2016). Conversely, Richter (2016) also explains that there are challenges related to this model, which are that the academic loads of students are too heavy, and some schools cannot afford to pay the students as teaching assistants.

Despite the length of time spent in schools during teaching practice over the four-year degree novice teachers still have varying perceptions about their preparedness to teach. Pendergast, Garvis and Keogh (2011) conducted a study with pre-service teachers as participants and found that there are periods of both fluctuation and stability from the teacher preparation phase to the beginner teacher phase. In addition, Petersen (2017) found that a new primary school teacher's experience in the transition period is a time of immense adaptation and adjustment despite being prepared for four years at the university level. She indicated that they have to apply what they have learned about the young child-in-learning from university coursework in practice in a school classroom.

Petersen (2017) pointed out that newly qualified teachers experience "shock" as they encounter large numbers of young children in a typical South African first-grade classroom. Newly qualified teachers have to function in formal school environments while delivering a

demanding curriculum. Teaching graduates may be adequately prepared, but a range of factors can affect their preparedness to teach. These factors include the challenge of moving from university to the school setting, blaming teacher education, as well as the absence of proper orientation and assistance from schools, alongside the administrative challenge of monitoring and documenting children's progress (Petersen, 2017).

In brief, the objective of this section was to present a literature review that is relevant to the study. It delved into FP schooling in South Africa, the conceptualisation of teacher preparedness and how novice teachers transition into the teaching profession. Additionally, the novice teachers' perceptions and experiences regarding teaching practice, which form part of Practical Learning are also discussed. In the next section of this chapter, I explain the theoretical framework that underpinned my study and assisted in framing the research questions.

2.3 Theoretical framework

2.3.1 Introducing the theoretical framework

The theoretical framework that underpinned my study is Bandura's Self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1997). This theory stems from Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (SCT). This theory is used in this study as a lens to understand how novice teachers learn and develop self-efficacy through personal agency and how it influences their perceptions of the Practical Learning Module. Bandura's SCT, the construct of triadic reciprocal determinants and his Self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1997) will be discussed in this section. In addition, the critique of his theory and the reasons I chose to use this theory will be explored in the following sections to follow.

2.3.2 Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)

Within Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), the embracing of values, standards, and characteristics is influenced by a broader and more dynamic social environment (Bandura, 1989a, p.72). According to Stajkovic and Luthans (2002):

> Social cognitive theory is based upon but more comprehensive than social learning and/or the behavioural approach to human action. For example, SCT includes motivational and self-regulatory mechanisms, which extend beyond learning and/or modifying behaviour through reinforcing consequences. Moreover, in SCT learning is viewed as knowledge acquisition through cognitive processes of information. In other words, in SCT, the "social" part

> acknowledges the environmental origins of much of human thought and action, whereas the "cognitive" portion recognizes the influential contribution of cognitive processes to human motivation and action (Stajkovic & Luthans, 2002, p.127).

Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986a) centres on people not being automatically shaped and driven by inner forces or controlled by external stimuli, rather adaptation and change come about through an agentic perspective in human development. Bandura's definition of agency is that the agency is the authority to initiate actions for given purposes. As Bandura (2002) clarifies, this theory introduces three modes of agency: personal agency, proxy agency, and collective agency. Notably, personal agency plays a crucial role in self-efficacy beliefs. It involves individuals exerting their influence directly on themselves and their surroundings to manage their lives. Proxy agency, on the other hand, relies on others acting on one's behalf to achieve desired outcomes. Collective agency is exercised through group action. Successful functioning necessitates a skilful integration of these diverse modes of agency. Many of the sought-after outcomes in life require independent effort within a social context, which lends itself to the triadic reciprocal determinism which now follows.

2.3.3 Triadic Reciprocal Determinism (TRD)

Triadic Reciprocal Determinism (TRD) is frequently employed as a conceptual and analytical framework in research utilising Social Cognitive Theory (SCT). It illustrates the two-way interactions between an individual's behaviour, personal attributes, and the surrounding environment. TRD elucidates how a person adapts their actions in response to shifting environmental conditions to achieve desired results (Schiavo, Prinari, Saito, Shoji & Benight, 2019). Hence, human behaviour is shaped by a dynamic interplay of actions, cognitive functions, personal characteristics, and external factors, all of which interact and influence each other in a process known as triadic reciprocation (Bandura, 1986b).

Moreover, Bandura (1989b) further explains that the SCT model of causation involving triadic reciprocal determinism is a model in which behaviour, cognition other personal factors, and environmental influences all operate as interacting determinants that influence each other bi-directionally as opposed to one way only. Importantly, the sources of influence are not equal in strength and all three of the reciprocal influences do not occur simultaneously. Furthermore, Stajkovic and Luthans, (2002) reiterate in more detail that the interacting determinants in the triadic reciprocal determinism process in SCT involve a person (personal characteristics, such as ability that is unique to each person), the environment (consequences from the organisational

environment) and behaviour (performances based on previous successful or unsuccessful experiences) (see Figure 2.1).

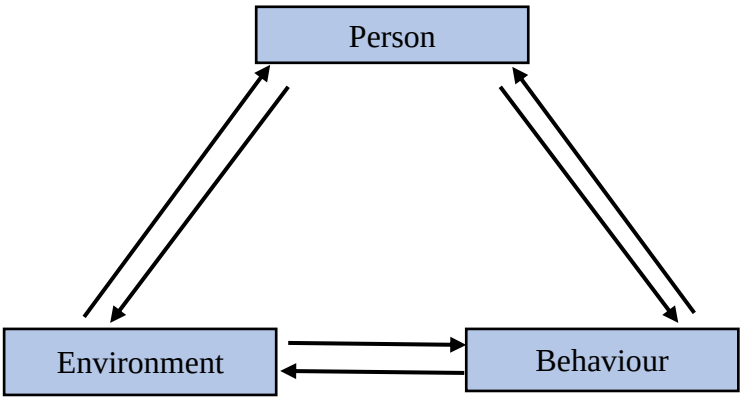

Figure 2.1: Triadic Influence in Social Cognitive Theory (Adapted from Bandura (1986a)

It will be interesting to explore how novice teachers' factors, beliefs and attitudes (their self-efficacy beliefs) shape and are being shaped by the environmental factors which stem from their engagement with the Practical learning module in the university space and how this, in turn, influences their behaviour or preparedness to teach in the school space.

2.3.4 Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory

According to Bandura (1994, p.2), Self-efficacy is defined as people's beliefs about their abilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives. Self-efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave. People's beliefs about their capabilities to exercise control over events in their lives are the central focus of personal agency (Bandura, 1989a). Humans require different knowledge and skill sets because human competencies are developed and manifested in different forms. As such, self-efficacy theory acknowledges that human capabilities are diverse. Efficacy refers to the innate ability to efficiently coordinate cognitive, social, emotional, and behavioural skills for various objectives. Consequently, beliefs in one's efficacy play a pivotal role in determining human proficiency (Bandura, 1997).

Bandura has identified four major categories that consist of experiences and sources of information that have a direct impact on self-efficacy beliefs. Following is a diagrammatical representation (Figure 2.2) which depicts the sources of self-efficacy.

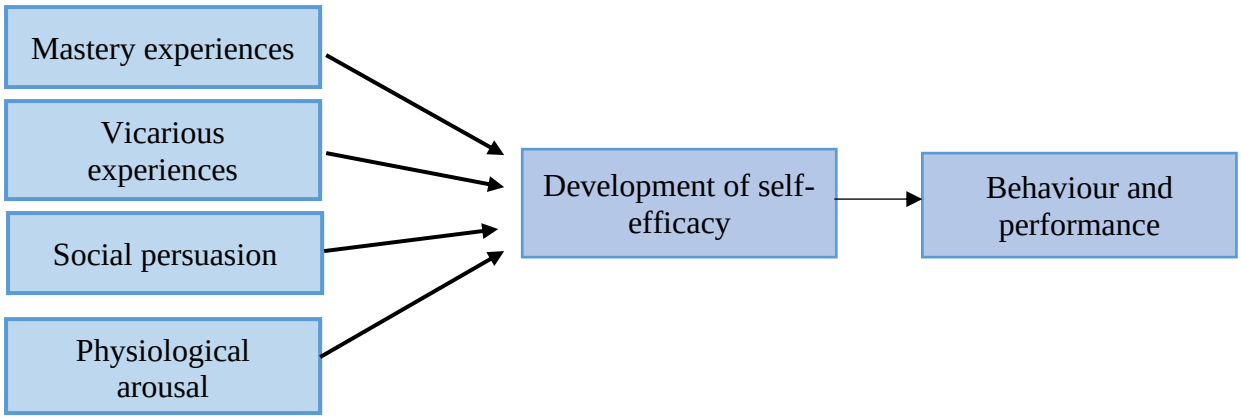

Figure 2.2: Sources of Self-Efficacy (Adapted from Bandura, 1994, pp.2-3)

For Bandura (1994) mastery experiences are when one experiences achievements and setbacks. Mastery experiences are the most effective way to create a strong sense of self-efficacy because achieving success enhances an individual's efficacy. When individuals overcome obstacles, they also develop a resilient sense of self-efficacy. In vicarious experiences, witnessing individuals who resemble themselves achieve success through persistent effort boosts observers' confidence in their abilities to excel in similar endeavours. Vicarious experiences strengthen self-efficacy because when an individual sees people who are similar succeeding after sustaining effort, then the individual believes that he/she possesses masterful capabilities too.

Social persuasion is when individuals are verbally convinced that they can excel in specific tasks. Self-efficacy beliefs can also be strengthened by social persuasion when individuals are verbally persuaded that they possess the capabilities to master activities. Physiological arousal occurs when individuals also consider their bodily and emotional states when assessing their abilities. Individuals' self-efficacy beliefs can be modified by reducing their stress reactions and by altering their negative emotional tendencies to encourage them to view them as energising facilitators of performance in physiological arousal (Bandura, 1994).

Furthermore, Sebastian (2013) elucidates that individuals can either have a positive or negative feeling of self-efficacy toward a situation. He clarifies that an individual can have an intense emotional reaction to generate a state of stress, but self-efficacy represents a way in which multiple advantages can be gained during a stressful period by allowing the feeling of self-efficacy to increase life standards as it is connected to performance. Bandura (1986) explains that even though knowledge, transformational operations and constituent skills are necessary,

it is also insufficient for accomplished performances. People know what to do but they often do not perform optimally. People who possess similar skills may even perform poorly, adequately or extraordinarily. There is a difference in individuals possessing skills and being able to apply them in diverse circumstances. Therefore, it is important to possess both skills and self-efficacy to be able to function competently.

Self-beliefs of efficacy are especially important for teachers. According to Bandura (1997, p.240), the task of creating learning environments conducive to the development of cognitive competencies relies on the talents and self-efficacy of teachers. Teachers' self-efficacy or their individual beliefs in their ability to handle professional challenges, tasks and obligations play a significant role in the influence of academic outcomes in the working environment (Barni, Danioni & Benevene, 2019). Thus, improved teacher self-efficacy has an improved result in students' academic performance (Bandura, 1977).

2.3.5 Efficacy beliefs and outcome expectancies

The expected outcomes for an individual are influenced by the behaviour and self-efficacy beliefs of that individual. According to Bandura (1997, p.22), there is a conditioning relationship between personal efficacy and outcome expectancies. Bandura (1997) further explains that individuals judge their ability to organise and execute performances by their perceived self-efficacy. In this conditioning relationship an individual judge the consequences of the performances that is produced from the beliefs of a personal efficacy viewpoint and the expected outcome. Hence, the level, strength and generality of the individual's efficacy beliefs will impact the course of behaviour to achieve either a negative or positive physical, social or self-evaluative outcome (Bandura, 1997). The following diagram (Figure 2.3) depicts efficacy beliefs and outcome expectancies, each of which is briefly explained below:

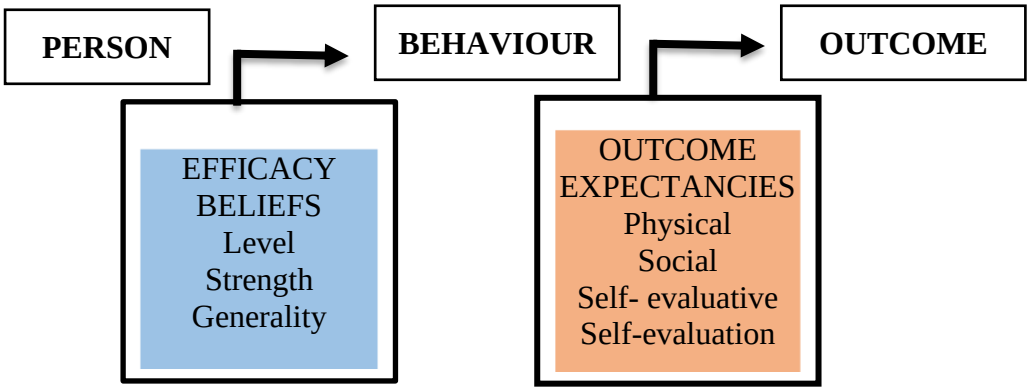

Figure 2.3: Efficacy beliefs and outcome expectancies (Adapted from Bandura (1997, p.22)

In essence, the person's level, strength and generality of efficacy beliefs will determine the way in which the individual behaves (Bandura, 1997). The level, strength and generality of efficacy beliefs differ in the spheres of functioning (Bandura, 1997, p.22).

As explained by Bandura (1997):

- **Strength:** People with low self-efficacy beliefs will easily give up on a task, whereas self-efficacious people will strengthen their efforts to attain goals. People with strong self-efficacy will be more resilient when working toward accomplishments.
- **Level:** There are two levels of control. The first is when a person has control over the outcomes. The second is the control a person has over the social systems that prescribe what the outcomes will be for any actions the person performs.
- **Generality:** People's behaviours are essentially influenced by their generalised expectancies. A person can use similar behaviours to achieve expected outcomes which is the generality of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997, p.22).

For Bandura (1997), outcome expectancies can take three major forms:

- **Physical outcome expectancies:** Positive and negative physical effects that accompany the behaviour of the person are the first major class of outcome expectancies. Positive physical experiences include physical pleasures and sensory experiences, whereas negative physical experiences include pain and physical discomfort.
- **Social outcome expectancies:** The second major class of outcome expectancies involves positive and negative social effects. Positive social effects include expressions of interest, approval, social recognition, conferral of status and monetary compensation as positive social reactions of others. In contrast, the negative social effects include disapproval, deprivation of privileges, disinterest, imposed penalties and social rejection.
- **Self-evaluative outcome expectancies:** Positive and negative self-evaluative reactions to one's behaviour are the third major class of outcome expectancies. People do things that create a sense of pride within them and behave in ways that give them self-satisfaction and a sense of self-worth. Furthermore, people refrain from certain behaviours that will cause self-dissatisfaction (Bandura, 1997, p.22).

Self-efficacy Theory by others in different research studies. There are studies which have demonstrated a positive correlation between self-efficacy and academic achievement (Meera & Jumana, 2015). These studies were related to student academic achievement and schools. This theory was also used in studies for educational practice. Diaz Mujica et al. (2022) conducted a systematic review of studies that used the self-efficacy theory of Bandura in university students. Out of the 48 studies examined, specific aspects of self-efficacy were employed. The majority of these investigations concentrated on individuals' belief in their ability to accomplish academic tasks. I intend to use Bandura's self-efficacy theory to explore whether it influenced any of the perceptions and experiences of the participants in this study when they interacted with the Practical Learning Module and when they were novice teachers at school.

Despite selecting Bandura's theory of self-efficacy in this study, there has been a critique of this theory. Williams (2010) relays that some authors have argued that outcome expectancies have a causal influence on self-efficacy. However, in self-efficacy theory, self-efficacy (perceived ability to do a behaviour) causally influences outcome expectancies (judgements about the likelihood of outcomes) but does not influence the other way around (Bandura, 1997). Biglan (1987) believes that there is a correlational relationship between self-efficacy rating and behaviour. He further expounds that all studies that Bandura conducted to test his self-efficacy theory have a specific sequence and claims the data has been manipulated.

Notably, Usher and Pajares (2008) conducted a critical review of studies (quantitative and qualitative) about the impact of the sources of self-efficacy on individuals' judgements and behaviours. They found that the greatest limitation of research conducted on the sources is how they have been measured (Usher & Pajares, 2008, p.781). Bandura (1984) confutes the criticism of his self-efficacy theory by providing evidence from studies which show that self-efficacy has a greater influence on behaviour than outcome expectancies have on the former. Furthermore, Bandura (1986a) admits that outcome expectancies can influence an individual's self-efficacy judgements but maintains that even when it does occur it does not invalidate self-efficacy judgements.

2.4 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to offer both a literature review covering literature pertinent to understanding the phenomenon under study and to discuss the theoretical underpinnings that framed the study. The purpose of the literature review was to provide an overview of the need for FP teaching in South Africa, gain insight into the meaning of teacher preparedness, the transition of novice teachers into the teaching profession, and the perceptions and experiences of novice teachers regarding the practical learning opportunities afforded to them.

This study's theoretical approach, which followed the literature review, offers insights into teacher preparation and delineates a more general problem of self-efficacy. Along with result expectancies and self-efficacy beliefs, the notion of the Triadic Reciprocal Determinism (TRD) was used to further understand how novice teachers' sense of self-efficacy comes about and how it can be used to explain their readiness or preparedness to teach. In the following chapter, Chapter Three I discuss the methodological considerations for this study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, Chapter Two, I explored pertinent literature that served as a contextual foundation for understanding the phenomenon under study. I also added an explanation and discussion on the theoretical framework that was used to underpin the study. In this chapter, Chapter Three, I describe the methodological; considerations relevant to this study, which I previously alluded to in Chapter One (Chapter One, 1.7). I start this chapter with a discussion of the meta-theoretical framework, research approach and research design. Thereafter the sample and sampling procedures, data collection methods and the analysis process are discussed. Lastly, this chapter ends with a discussion about how I went about to ensure validity and reliability within the study and it ends with the ethical considerations dealt with in my study.

3.2 Meta-theoretical framework

A meta-theoretical framework is important in a study because philosophically meta-theories reinforce research and practice (Allana & Clark, 2018). Allana and Clark (2018, p.1) define meta-theory as broad perspectives, which make claims regarding the nature of reality. The meta-theoretical framework that framed this study methodologically is the interpretivist paradigm. Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) explain that the interpretivist paradigm is one of the main taxonomies in research paradigms because emphasis is placed on how the researcher interprets and acts within the world around them. The key to understanding the interpretivist paradigm is the belief that reality is socially constructed (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). Scholars within the interpretivist paradigm maintain that our understanding of the world is a product of the mind, and our interaction with the world is shaped by individual viewpoints, pre-existing notions, and personal convictions (Nudzor, 2009).

It is important to understand and make known from the onset what one's ontological, epistemological and methodological beliefs about research are since these beliefs shape the way the research is conducted. Nudzor (2009) explains that researchers hold different beliefs about the nature of social reality (ontology) and how humans create their knowledge about the social world (epistemology). Epistemologically, the belief is that qualitative research is exploratory and inductive (Klakegg, 2015; Luo, 2011). Epistemology thus assumes that all

human actions are meaningful and should be interpreted and understood within the context (Usher, 1996, p.18). Methodological beliefs revolve around the notion of being inductive, emerging, and being moulded by the researcher's experiences in the process of gathering and analysing data to answer the research questions (Creswell & Poth, 2013). Therefore, my methodological beliefs led me to select a specific research design because I understand that there is more than one way of understanding the truth and multiple realities do exist. I believe that novice teachers will have different experiences and beliefs about the Practical Learning Module and their preparedness to teach. Also, using the interpretivist paradigm, the phenomenon should be viewed within context. Having different ontological and epistemological beliefs impacts our methodological beliefs, namely how we go about conducting the research, to which I now turn.

3.3 Research approach

The research approach I used is a qualitative research approach, which is underpinned by an interpretive paradigm. Creswell (2007) explains that qualitative research begins with a worldview, assumptions, possibly a theoretical lens and the study of research problems. Fraenkel and Wallen (2005, p.431) are of the opinion that certain features characterise most qualitative studies. These features according to the authors are that qualitative data is collected in the form of words instead of numbers; qualitative researchers immerse themselves in research and are concerned with the process as well as the product; and qualitative researchers want to know what the participants are thinking and why they are thinking it (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2005, p.431).

For Williams (2007, p.67), qualitative research is a holistic approach that involves discovery. This approach best suited my study because I wanted to understand the participants' (selected novice teachers) perceptions and experiences of the Practical Learning Module which formed part of the B.Ed Foundation Phase Teaching degree at a particular University. Furthermore, I intended to discover and interpret their experiences and make meaning of them to gain insight into Practical Learning and how it impacts teacher preparation in Foundation Phase schooling, namely, Grades R-3.

3.4 Research design

The selection of an appropriate research design for a study is an important part of doing research. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) explain that the procedure that a researcher takes to

collect, analyse, interpret and report data in the specific research study makes up the research design. Yin (2014, p. 66) notes that research design is the logic that links the data to be collected to the initial questions of the study. Creswell (2014) refers to five research designs in qualitative research which are phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, narrative and case study studies.

I selected a case study design, more specifically a single case study. Yin (2003, p.13) posits that a case study investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context which is synonymous with Carl & Strydom's (2017) notion that a case study is a unique example of people in real situations. Stake (1995) explains the focus in case studies is on particularisation rather than generalisation as there is an emphasis on thoroughly understanding the responses to the research questions. Furthermore, Yin (2003) offers a technical definition of case study research outlining the characteristics attached to case study inquiry. As Yin (2003) puts it:

> A case study inquiry copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulation fashion, and as another result benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis" (Yin, 2003, pp.13-14).

This definition from Yin (2003) implies that a case study deals with a distinctive situation, which in this case is the Practical Learning Module at the selected University. It relies on multiple sources of evidence to achieve triangulation, which in my study are semi-structured individual interviews, focus group interviews and document sources. I selected to use a single case study to understand the phenomenon within the context of real-life perceptions and experiences of novice teachers pertaining to the Practical Learning Module and their preparedness to teach in the Foundation Phase of schooling.

In order to understand my case very well I had to look at the unit of analysis. A case study has the flexibility to investigate a wide range of units of analysis, encompassing individuals, small groups, occurrences, entities, decision-making procedures and initiatives (Yin, 2009). The unit of analysis is connected to the way the researcher has defined the initial research questions (Yin, 2003). Therefore, the unit of analysis, the micro case, in this specific case study were eight purposively selected novice teachers, because they provided answers to the research questions. These eight novice teachers had to meet certain criteria. They had to be in their first or second year of teaching in the FP and they had to be graduates at a particular university, in a particular teacher education programme, namely B.Ed Foundation Phase Teaching

Programme. In my study, the B.Ed Foundation Phase Teaching Programme at the particular University formed the macro case, the context for this study. The meso case is the module, Practical Learning, which is offered over 4 years and is regarded as the capstone module. Below, in Figure 3.1, I offer a diagrammatical representation of this single case study and its various components.

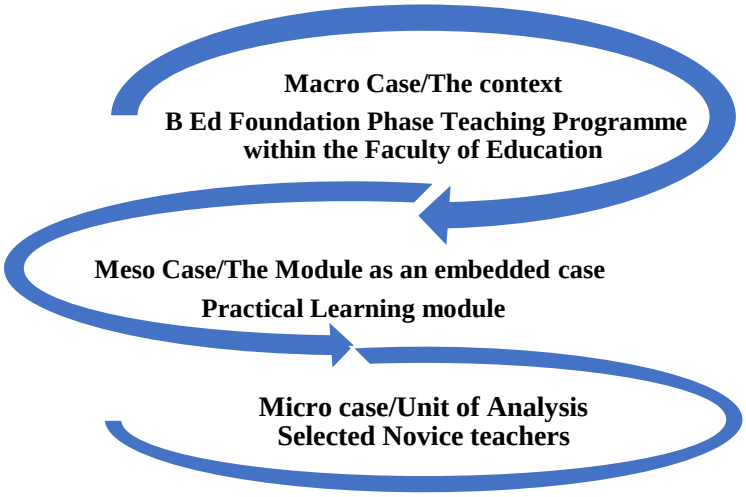

Figure 3.1: A single case study (Adapted from Yin, 2014, p. 99)

As mentioned, the unit of analysis (sample of participants who engaged in this study) were novice teachers, who were purposively selected to participate in the study. In qualitative research, there are sixteen strategies for purposeful sampling and each of these are intended to serve a different purpose (Suri, 2011). Some of the different types of sampling strategies in qualitative research include snowball sampling, critical case sampling, maximum variation sampling, convenience sampling and purposeful sampling (Suri, 2011). In purposeful sampling, the researcher would select individuals for the study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study (Creswell, 2007).

The use of purposeful sampling best suited my study since it allowed me to collect data from a specific targeted group, namely novice teachers. Eight novice teachers were therefore purposively selected based on the following criteria: (a) they completed the Practical Learning Module in the B.Ed (Foundation Phase Teaching) programme; (b) they graduated from the selected university, and (c) they are currently in their first or second year of teaching in Grades R-3.

3.5 Data collection methods

Merriam (2009) emphasises that the researcher's theoretical orientation, the problem, and the purpose of the study, as well as the sample, determine the data collection techniques employed. In this qualitative single case study underpinned by an interpretivist meta-theoretical framework, I employed three types of data collection instruments, namely semi-structured individual interviews, focus group interviews, and document sources. A description of each and how it was employed in the data production process, now follows.

3.5.1 Semi-structured individual interviews

Interviews are commonly used in qualitative research. An interview is a data collection method in which information about the participants' natural setting is provided in their own words (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010). Gill, Stewart, Treasure and Chadwick (2008) particularises that the purpose of the research interview is to explore the views, experiences, beliefs and motivations of participants to provide insight and understanding of the social phenomena being researched. According to Patton (2015):

> The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective. Qualitative interviewing begins with the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful and knowable and can be made explicit. We interview to find out what is in and on someone else's mind to gather their stories (Patton, 2015, p.628).

The interview that the researcher conducts can be facilitated in an individual or group format and it can be structured, semi-structured, or open-ended (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010). When conducting an interview Gill et al. (2008) elaborate that semi-structured interviews comprise a number of fundamental questions which allow ideas and responses to be pursued in more detail. Flexibility in questioning is also important in semi-structured interviews (Canals, 2017) as some features of semi-structured interviews consist of interview guides including a mix of more and less structured interview questions, usually specific data required from all respondents, largest part of the interview guided by a list of questions or issues to be explored, and no predetermined wording or order (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p.110). Furthermore, McMillian and Schumacher (2014), offer a list of different types of questions that interviewers could ask. These questions are displayed in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Types of interview questions

Type	Description and illustration
Experience/ behaviour	Eliciting what a person has done or does- descriptions of experiences, behaviours, actions, and activities.
Opinions/ values	Eliciting what the person thinks about his or her experiences, can reveal a person's intentions, goals and values.
Feelings	Eliciting how the person reacts emotionally to his or her experiences.
Knowledge	Eliciting factual information, the person has or what the person considers as factual.
Sensory	Eliciting the person's descriptions of what and how he or she sees, hears, touches, tastes, and smells the world.
Background/ demographic	Eliciting the person's descriptions of himself or herself to aid the researcher in identifying and locating the person in relation to other people: Routine information on age, education, occupation, residence/mobility, and the like.

Source: Adapted from McMillan and Schumacher (2014, p.383)

The semi-structured interview questions to generate interview data were influenced by the types of questions contained in the table above. All interviews were conducted using an interview schedule, which was sent to the participants prior to their interviews. The individual interviews lasted for a maximum of 40 minutes. The interviews were recorded on the Google Meet platform as well as audio recorded on a cellular device, which were then transcribed. Importantly, the individual interviews allowed me to specifically explore the views and experiences of participants regarding their experiences of the Practical Learning Module, their perceptions of their preparedness to teach, and their current teaching experiences.

3.5.2 Focus group interviews

To obtain a better understanding of case study research a qualitative focus group interview that comprises a sampled group of people are interviewed (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). Vaughn et al. (1996), noted that focus group interviews are more organised and more formal and the analysis of the transcriptions from the interviews yields detailed results. In a focus group, each person's point of view is elicited. In addition, focus groups permit spontaneity of interaction among the participants. It also demands more elaboration of the results, since less data will probably be collected than in the individual interviews (Freitas, Oliveira, Jenkins & Popjoy, 1998).

There are advantages and disadvantages of focus group interviews. According to Freitas et al. (1998), some of the advantages are: it is comparatively easier to conduct, it allows for

exploration of topics and to generate hypotheses, it generates an opportunity to collect data from the group interaction, it has low cost in relation to other methods, and it allows the researcher to increase the size of the sample of the qualitative studies. On the other hand, Freitas et al. (1998) also warn of the disadvantages associated with focus group interviews, namely: assembly of the groups takes effort, the data analysis process is more difficult, the researcher has less control over the data that are generated, and the interaction of the group forms a social atmosphere and the dialogue should be interpreted inside of this context.

Two focus group interviews were held with the same participants who participated in the individual interviews. In the focus group interviews, I expanded on the questions asked during individual interviews. The focus group interviews or discussions yielded interesting responses. It allowed for greater openness, participants engaged with each other in their responses and expanded on issues that they initially raised during individual interviews. The focus group interviews were recorded on Google Meet and then manually transcribed. This enabled me to have a good understanding of the focus group data and allowed for deeper engagement with the data.

3.5.3 Document sources

Document sources are commonly used in qualitative research to support other forms of qualitative data collection instruments. Documents are often used as an umbrella term to refer to a wide range of written, visual, digital, and physical material relevant to the study including visual images (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 162). In addition, document analysis is a systematic process for reviewing documents (Bowen, 2009). McMillan and Schumacher (2014) explain that official documents take many forms within organisations and they can be informal or formal documents. The research questions guide the choice and number of documents that have to be analysed, which may include newspaper or research articles, governmental reports, organization policies and protocols, letters, and records (Paradis, O'Brien, Nimon, Bandiera & Martimianakis, 2016).

Document sources have some advantages and limitations. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) highlight that an advantage of document analysis, as a data collection method is the presence of the researcher that does not affect the study. Documents are objective and many documents can be easily accessed. It may be free and contain information that the researcher may have taken numerous hours and effort to gather. Moreover, data from documents may be used in the

same way that data are used from interviews and observations (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p.182).

On the other hand, Bowen (2009) reveals that document sources are not always advantageous. He explains that despite it not being considered as a major disadvantage, there are also many limitations in documents which are considered potential flaws. The researcher should be aware of these limitations. Some of these limitations as explicated by Bowen (2009) include the researcher not having access to documents as documents may be intentionally blocked. It may be difficult to retrieve documents or the documents may not be retrievable at all. The researcher may be biased in selecting only certain documents or an incomplete collection of documents. Furthermore, documents may provide insufficient detail because they are produced for purposes other than research.

Despite these limitations, document sources are efficient and cost-effective. The documents that were deemed important for this study and that provided the contextual information and verified what I learnt during interview sessions were: The faculty handbook for 2020 containing the module descriptors – these provided the outcomes for the module, course content and assessment type as it relates to the Practical Learning Module; the course outlines per year level – which contained the weekly programme, WIL programme, assessments and the weighting of assessments amongst other relevant information. I also had access to the initial minutes of meetings held during the initial stages of planning the degree.

3.6 Data analysis

One of the most significant steps in the qualitative research process is an analysis of the data (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). Qualitative data analysis is primarily an inductive process of organising data into categories and identifying patterns and relationships among the categories (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p.395).

Merriam (1998) explains that after collating and sorting the raw data, it must be transferred to an analysable framework. The analysable framework involves the process of constructing parts of data and connecting it to a whole (Cone & Foster, 1998). For Merriam and Tisdell (2016, p.202), data analysis can be referred to as the process used to answer research questions. Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2007, p.564) further note that data analysis consists of synthesis, evaluation, interpretation, categorisation, hypothesising, comparison, and pattern finding.

Figure 3.2 displays a more detailed representation of the data analysis process I specifically undertook in my research.

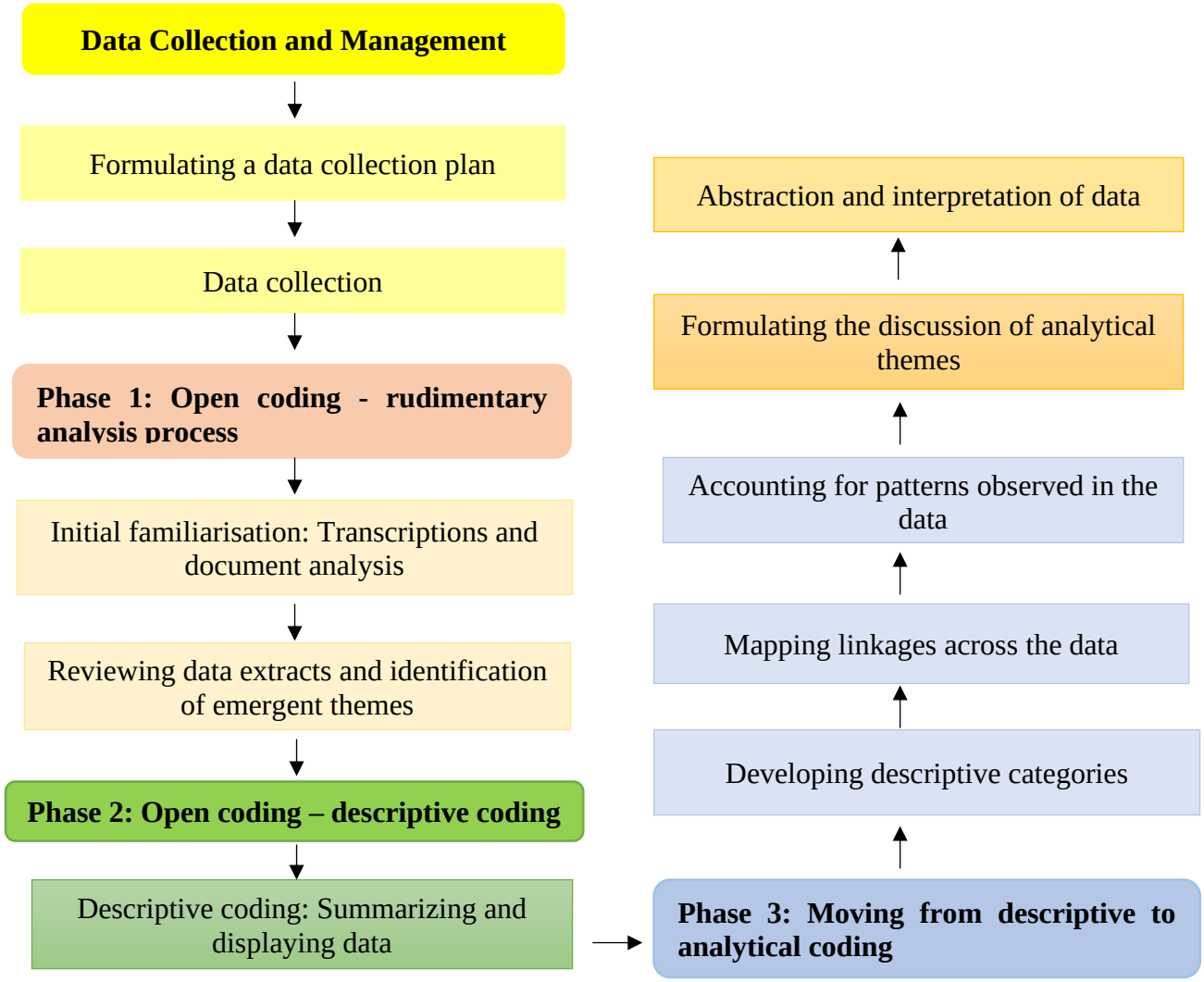

Figure 3.2: Data analysis process (Adapted from Chai, Gao, Chen, Duangthip, Lo & Chu (2021, p.8)

3.6.1 Data collection and management

I first formulated a plan on how I would schedule the data collection process and manage the data. Identifying the data sets in my study, as mentioned, data collection was done via three sources and formed part of the first section of my planning phase for this study. I decided to do the individual interviews first followed by the focus group discussions or interviews. I managed to complete all the individual interviews and then had two focus group interviews. During this period, I also gathered document sources pertaining to my study.

Phase 1: Familiarising myself with the data

During this first step of the analysis process, was to familiarise myself with the data. I did this by listening to recordings and transcribing the data turning it into readable texts. Exhibit 1 illustrates how interesting aspects of texts were highlighted.

Exhibit 1:

"I would say, in terms of the amount of time the University has given I mean it was enough but I wouldn't say it's enough to learn so much that I could go into the schools without doing any extra observation on my own because what I did during university, whenever we were off from campus then I, when it was our holiday then I would go to the schools on my own. Whenever I didn't have classes, I would go to the schools on my own so that I could gain my own experiences (Individual interview, Novice Teacher (NT) 8, 14 September 2021).

It was important at this phase to familiarise myself with the data– treating each data set individually first.

Exhibit 2:

of the amount of time the University has given I mean it was enough but I wouldn't say it's enough

1. More time needed to spend in schools.

when it was our holiday then I would go to the schools on my own

2. used own time holidays to go into schools to learn without being instructed to.

Whenever I didn't have classes, I would go to the schools on my own so that I could gain my own experiences

3. Motivated to learn in schools without being instructed to.

I then wrote down notes regarding interesting information from the transcriptions as shown in Exhibit 2 above. Merriam (2009, p.178) explains that the data analysis process begins by reading the initial transcript and writing down notes and comments about fragments of data that are interesting, potentially relevant, or important to your study. Importantly, I highlighted the similar responses of the participants to the same questions in a particular colour. I read it and made keyword notes about ideas that stood out to me from the participants' responses. I

also read through the documents of the module descriptors and course outlines and after making notes, I highlighted certain aspects to make sense of the information and identified emergent themes. In Exhibit 3, the rudimentary analysis process of one of the focus group interviews is shown.

Table 3.2: Exhibit 3-Rudimentary analysis process

QUESTIONS	Nt 5	Nt 7	Nt 1	Nt 2	Nt 6	Codes
What are your perceptions of the concept "teacher preparedness"?	I think it is a teacher walking into a classroom with having a full idea and practical way of teaching a classroom. And having the lesson prepared, the material. Having discipline and classroom management in place and ensuring that the lesson occurs fluently and effectively.	I would just like to add, in short, I would say that teacher's preparedness means to me a competent teacher. A teacher who knows exactly what it requires to teach. As NT5 just mentioned in a whole. From administration to lesson planning, etc. So a competent teacher I would say that the teacher knows what the requirements are at an employer and being a teacher in class. So he will fulfil his role of which they should be doing you know without somebody supervising over them. That is a well prepared teacher for me.	Okay. Teacher preparedness. It's quite tricky to answer, but basically being ready to teach content that you need to teach for the different subjects and being able to manage your classroom and being ready to be a professional as part of the school team that you'll be working with. And yeah.	Okay. That's what popped into my head. But teacher preparedness, just as NT1 said, as a teacher, you ask, plan your content and how you're going to deliver that content like, well, in advance, the time location that you will spend and also your groups so that you can have just like NT1 was saying, a classroom that is managed, but also to begin to reach your objectives. But now another thing that popped up in my head was how prepared is a teacher to go into the school that she is or he is going to teach at how ready are they? Yes. Okay. That's my two things.	I think it's how prepared you are for school for teaching for the day. If you are prepared, you figured out what you're going to teach for tomorrow. You'll prepare yourself and then you'll see that you have all the resources and things ready. The same as they said also.	Competent to teach Preparing lessons and resources Effective discipline and classroom management Fulfilling the aim, duties and responsibilities of a post level 1 teacher **"Readiness to teach"**

Phase 2: Open coding/ categorising

When I had all the data, I started the coding process. I did not use any software programme but decided to do it manually. In this process of data analysis, I looked for linkages across the notations I made and then placed them into categories. Merriam (2009) mentions descriptive codes are then categorised further into broader categories. Breaking text into segments, writing notations and assigning codes to text made it easier to see linkages (patterns) within and across the data sets.

I looked at each data set individually first and then across data sets to do open coding. Thereafter, I looked for patterns across my notations to put them into categories. I then gave the categories descriptive codes. I labelled each category and gave the description a name. For example, teaching concepts in Maths and English + specific lesson demonstrations + content and lecture improvement = Gaps within the module. Exhibit 4 displays a snippet of the process I undertook in identifying categories and descriptive codes.

Table 3.3: Exhibit 4-Categories that were developed

Categories (individual interviews)	Categories (focus group interviews)
Language barrier 1 Classroom management 6 Covid 19 4 Judgemental lecturer 1 Teaching concepts in Math and English 2 Administration 5 Workplace conflict 2 Planning 1 Lack of resources 1 No transition from student to teacher 1 Conflict with parents 1	Less assignments during teaching practice 2 Specific lesson practical- demo lessons 4 Content and lecture improvement 1 More teaching practice sessions at different times 3 Making resources 1 Changing reflection framework 1

Phase 3: From descriptive to analytical coding

Analytical coding goes beyond descriptive coding; it is coding that comes from interpretation and reflection on meaning (Merriam, 2009, p.180). From this point in the data analysis process, I looked for linkages across all my data sets. I then generated codes for these descriptions. I formed the larger categories by linking categories from one data set with another data set. Here the focus was on interpretation and reflecting on meaning. I used verbatim responses from the interviews to add richness to my presentation of the data. Table 3.4 shows how I linked my categories to themes and research objectives.

Table 3.4: Themes, categories and research objectives

Themes	Categories	Research Objectives
The triadic influence on novice teacher preparedness Learning from two different pedagogical spaces	Learning environment- The university space Learning environment- the school space	To determine the nature of the Practical Learning Module and how it prepares novice teachers to teach in the Foundation Phase of schooling.
Developing self-efficacy through the student-teacher agency	Perceptions and experiences of the PLM Agentic behaviour-having agency	To explore the challenges novice teachers face and how much of these can be attributed to their perceptions and experiences of the Practical Learning Module.
A mismatch between the official/ intended curriculum and the recontextualised/ implemented curriculum Theory practice divide	University space: challenges, addressing limitations School space: classroom management, heavy admin workload, pedagogical proficiency, COVID-19	To discover what changes should be made to the Practical Learning Module to better prepare future Foundation Phase teachers.

The above-mentioned steps I used to do my data analysis. These steps that I took were informed by Merriam's (2009) steps in qualitative data analysis. The data presentation referred to in this chapter will be discussed in the chapter that follows (Chapter Four). The discussion of the findings (analytical codes) mentioned above will be discussed in Chapter Five.

3.7 Validity and reliability

Validity and reliability in research are two factors which are of great importance while the researcher is designing a study, analysing results, and judging the quality of the study (Golafshani, 2003). Johnson (1997, p.282) posits that qualitative researchers refer to research validity as qualitative research that is plausible, credible, trustworthy, and, therefore, defensible. Similarly, Morse, Barret, Mayan, Olsen and Spiers (2002) refer to the works of Lincoln and Guba (1985) in which reliability and validity are equivalent to "trustworthiness" in research and outline four components to enhance trustworthiness which are: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Table 3.5 outlines these four components, as well as the strategies I employed to achieve each component.

Table 3.5: Components for enhancing trustworthiness

Four components	Definitions of components	Strategies employed
Credibility	Credibility is established when the research findings represent credible information that is drawn from the original data and is correctly interpreted from participants' data.	I made use of research methods that are credible and best suited to address the research question of this study. I also ensured credibility by adequately archiving the data I collected. In addition, I engaged with the data for a lengthy period to make sure that the data was reliable. I discussed the process of my study and emerging themes with my supervisor and postgraduate students in our group presentation. Moreover, I abided by all ethical considerations concerning every aspect of accurate data collection, recording, transcribing, analysis, and reporting to achieve a trustworthy, plausible, and therefore defensible research study.
Transferability	The researcher uses thick descriptions to potentially transfer the results of the qualitative research to other contexts or settings involving other respondents.	To promote transferability, thick descriptions were used drawing on the participants' verbatim responses to explain their experiences and perceptions of the module and their preparedness to teach.
Dependability	Dependability is when the data received by the participants of the study support the findings, interpretation and recommendations of the study.	I ensured dependability by using methodological triangulation. I used three methods to collect data (semi-structured individual interviews; focus group interviews; and document sources). The interview data was transcribed verbatim to ensure the accuracy of the data. The data was kept electronically and password-protected.
Confirmability	Confirmability is when other researchers can confirm the findings of the study and establish that the interpretations of the findings are drawn from the data.	I examined the results of my study to verify that I had data to support my interpretations and findings.

Source: Adapted from Lincoln and Guba (1985, p.301-326).

3.8 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations are of paramount importance when undertaking a research study. Arifin (2018) explains that the consideration of ethical issues is crucial throughout all stages of the qualitative study to keep the balance between the potential risks of research and the likely benefits of the research. For this reason, all of the ethical requirements and guidelines of the

University of the Western Cape (UWC) and the Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) were complied with throughout this research process.

The following ethical standards were met as a requirement of the Senate Research Committee of the University of the Western Cape

- The research proposal was drafted and approved by the supervisor and two appointed critical readers.
- The approved proposal and required documents were submitted to the Education of Higher Degrees Committee (EDUHD)
- The Ethical Clearance Application Form for the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) was submitted along with the documentation required to serve at Senate for Higher Degrees (SHD) and HSSREC meetings.
- Ethical clearance was approved and then granted by the HSSREC of the University of the Western Cape (UWC) with a HSSREC reference number HS21/5/29 (refer to Appendix E).
- Permission to commence with this study involving educators at schools was applied for and successfully granted by the research department of the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) (refer to Appendix F).

The following ethical considerations that were complied with in this study will be discussed below: consent, confidentiality and risk and harm.

3.8.1 Informed consent

It is important to provide detailed information to participants about the nature of the research before gaining written consent (Allmark et al., 2009). The participants of this study were informed about the processes and purpose of the research verbally and in written form (see Appendix B for the information sheet). All ethical issues and information about the nature of the research study were explained to participants comprehensively in the form of sending the participants the information sheets and consent forms electronically via email as well as reading them to them in a virtual meeting. Participants were also informed that their participation was voluntary. Permission to record and conduct interviews was sought in the consent forms (see Appendix C) and obtained by participants in both verbal and written form prior to video recording the interviews.

3.8.2 Confidentiality

The participants were treated with dignity and respect throughout the data collection process. It was explained to them verbally and in written form that all their information would be treated with the utmost confidentiality. Therefore, they were assured that their identities would remain anonymous and confidential at all stages of the research and after. It was guaranteed to them that their names and institutions would remain anonymous. Pseudonyms were used throughout the research process. The audio recordings were labelled according to pseudonyms and kept along with the transcriptions, notes and electronic consent forms pertaining to the study on a laptop that is password protected in my possession to ensure the participants' privacy. The audio recordings and transcriptions were only shared with my supervisor to peruse for authentication of my work when required.

3.8.3 Risk and harm

There was little to no risk for harm during this study. The fact that participation was completely voluntary and that participants could discontinue at any stage of the research project without any ramifications was also communicated to the participants. The participants were reassured that the rights of every individual participating in this study would be protected and then they were requested to sign a declaration on the informed consent document which also detailed the potential for low risk and harm. In addition, data from this study was stored in a secure environment that was password-protected.

Interviews were conducted during the Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and to alleviate the risk involved in contracting or spreading the virus, all interviews were conducted virtually and all consent forms were sent and completed electronically. Also, The Protection of Personal Information Act (POPI Act) (Act no. 4 of 2013) was effective from 1 July 2020, but we had a grace period to comply, which ended on 30 June 2021. The POPI Act ensures the safeguarding of individuals' personal information and the constitutional right to privacy which balances the right to privacy, access to information and how personal information may be processed (RSA, 2013b). This study complied with the conditions stated in the POPI Act.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter provided details about the methodological considerations of this study. In the first section, I stated my philosophical viewpoints about knowledge, reality and methodology. This was followed by an explanation of the research design, the multiple data collection instruments,

the analysis methods and the ethical procedures. As mentioned, this study employed a single embedded case study design and was framed within an interpretivist metatheoretical framework. It drew on qualitative data collection instruments, like document sources, semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews to gain a more holistic picture of how the participants (eight novice teachers) perceived the Practical Learning Module (meso case) offered in the B.Ed Foundation Phase Teaching programme at one selected University (macro case). In the next chapter, Chapter Four, I present the data and provide the themes that emerged from the inductive data analysis process.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, Chapter Three, I provided the methodological trajectory of the study. This chapter, Chapter Four, is dedicated to data presentation to derive the analytical findings of the study. In this chapter, I first sketch the context (macro case) of the educational programme that the novice teachers graduated from to obtain their degrees. Next, I take a comprehensive look into the Practical Learning Module (meso case), which emanates from document sources to give one a bird's eye view of both the official/intended and the implemented curriculum. The official curriculum is drawn from the module descriptors and the implemented curriculum is drawn from the course outlines.

The module descriptors show the learning outcomes and content of the officially approved curriculum. The course outlines indicate how the assigned lecturer recontextualises the intended curriculum. Thereafter, I profile the eight novice teacher participants who formed the unit of analysis (micro case) in this study. I then delve into the background of each novice teacher to understand why they were selected to become FP teachers. Subsequently, the themes that emerged from analysing the semi-structured focus group and individual interviews are presented in relation to the novice teachers' perceptions and experiences of their preparedness are presented. Finally, the conclusion of this data presentation chapter summarises the chapter in its entirety and alludes to what follows in Chapter Five.

4.2 The Context: The B.Ed Foundation Phase teaching programme (B.Ed FP Teaching)

This section aims to explore the context of the B.Ed FP Teaching programme to provide insight into the contextual factors of the overall programme within the faculty of education. It is important to note that the B.Ed FP programme was first offered at the University in 2016. I will now look at how the B.Ed FP Teaching programme came to exist.

The historical context in South Africa particularly within the Foundation Phase had a problem of teacher supply in this phase of schooling (Sayed & McDonald, 2017). At the University, the motivation to drive the faculty to embark on conceptualising and designing a B.Ed FP Teaching programme was through monitoring the enrolments of teacher education and finding

that the demand for teachers in the Foundation Phase exceeds the supply of teachers, especially teachers to teach in the primary language of the learners (Green et al., 2011).

Furthermore, Green et al. (2011) emphasise that the shortage of Foundation Phase (FP) teachers, especially those proficient in teaching African languages, has been recognised by the Departments of Basic Education (DBE) and Higher Education and Training (DHET). Green et al. (2011) used a multivariate model to estimate a negative gap of between 15 220 and 42 135 by 2020 accumulating for only six years (Green et al., 2011, as cited in Sayed & McDonald, 2017). To tackle this issue, the DHET secured funding from the European Union (EU) to expand the availability of the B.Ed (FP) program. Initially, only 13 out of the 21 universities offered this degree, but with the EU funding, the number of institutions offering the B.Ed (FP) was increased to 18 (Green et al., 2011).

In 2015, Sayed and Badroodien conducted a longitudinal study on Initial Teacher Education for the Centre for International Teacher Education (CITE) (Sayed & Badroodien, 2015). This study aimed to explore the motivations behind individuals pursuing Bachelor of Education Foundation Phase Programmes. According to Sayed and McDonald (2017), the data from the study revealed diverse and intricate motivations influenced by both extrinsic and intrinsic factors that drive individuals to become Foundation Phase teachers. These findings highlight the importance for policymakers and teacher education institutions to enhance the appeal of the Foundation Phase degree, considering teachers' inherent dedication to serving others.

Each year a diverse group of male and female students are accepted into this degree programme. Since its inception, there have been three cohorts of FP graduates from the University. The key idea from the documents was to encourage and accept more isiXhosa and Afrikaans students to apply for FP teaching as the enrolment of students speaking these mother tongues was fairly low. Table 4.1 displays the number of enrolments in the FP Teaching degree per year since its inception at the University.

Table 4.1: Enrolments of the FP Teaching degree per year

YEAR	isiXHOSA	AFRIKAANS	ENGLISH	TOTAL INTAKE
2016	11	14	82	107
2017	24	25	61	110
2018	23	28	72	123
2019	27	45	81	153
2020	32	55	93	180
2021	32	41	96	169
2022	49	46	97	192

As we look at the table, we identify that there have been three cohorts of FP graduates from the University since its inception. The first Cohort (2016) of graduates completed in 2020. The Second Cohort (2017) of graduates completed their studies in 2021 and the Third Cohort (2018) of graduates finished in 2022. In addition to examining the enrolment figures, we can also consider the number of graduates in relation to the enrolments. Table 4.2 shows the intake in comparison to the total number of graduates.

Table 4.2: Table of total intake and graduates per year

GRADUATION YEAR	TOTAL INTAKE PER YEAR	TOTAL GRADUATES
2020	**(2016)** 107	87
2021	**(2017)** 110	85
2022	**(2018)** 123	104

Upon reviewing the aforementioned table, it became evident that a significant proportion of student teachers did not graduate within the expected timeframe. The deficit in the year 2020 amounts to 20, which subsequently rose to 25 in 2021, and ultimately reaches a cumulative total of 19 in 2022. It is of substantial importance to then look at the possible reasons for the deficit. In the specific University's Student Retention and Success Framework, Brown and Pather (2018) diagrammatic possible reasons for the retention of students. They show that financial, well-being and academic factors are responsible for drop-out rates. These factors include student fees, food security, mental and physical well-being, career planning, tutoring and first-year experience (Brown & Pather, 2018). On the other hand, curriculum reform, career guidance, improved teaching and learning methods, and sufficient funding may reduce drop-out rates (Tswanya, 2017). Hence, the document sources pertaining to the overall programme are of utmost importance.

As previously mentioned, the data from the macro case is mainly taken from the document sources. The document sources that were used were the university website (public domain), course outlines (designed by academics assigned to teach the module), and module descriptors, (extracted from the faculty handbook), amongst other documents. I need to acknowledge the aims of the programme because it will contribute to how we understand the data and how it pertains to the PLM which is a component of the FP Teaching programme.

The B.Ed (Foundation Phase Teaching) programme is a four-year full-time degree housed in the Faculty of Education. It specialises in exposing the students to a variety of exciting theories and activities which are taught through theoretical and practical demonstrations, observations and research in Foundation Phase classrooms. It is aimed at training well-grounded and

competent Foundation Phase teachers to possess the knowledge and skills to facilitate learners' epistemological access to Mathematics, Life Skills and Language (UWC, 2023).

Below, I refer to the data from the Faculty Handbook to display the modules that students will be exposed to across all four years in more detail. Table 4.3 presents the modules offered per year within the B.Ed FP Teaching programme.

Table 4.3: B.Ed Foundation Phase Programme - Modules offered per year

YEAR	MODULES	MODULE	MODULE	MODULE	MODULE	MODULE	MODULE (HL LANGUAGES)	MODULE (AL LANGUAGES)
YEAR 1 NQF level 7	Practical Learning 15 Credits	FP Mathematics 15 Credits	Life Skills 15 Credits	Child Development 15 Credits	Academic Literacy 10 Credits	Education Studies 15 Credits	Afrikaans HL Literacy Teaching/ English HL Literacy Teaching/ isiXhosa HL Literacy Teaching 15 Credits	Afrikaans Second Additional Language/ isiXhosa Second Additional Language 15 Credits
YEAR 2 NQF level 7	Practical Learning 20 Credits	FP Mathematics 20 Credits	Life Skills 20 Credits	Child Development 20 Credits		Education Studies 20 Credits	Afrikaans HL Literacy Teaching/ English HL Literacy Teaching/ isiXhosa HL Literacy Teaching 20 Credits	Afrikaans First Additional Language/ isiXhosa First Additional Language/ English First Additional Language 15 Credits
YEAR 3 NQF level 7	Practical Learning 30 Credits	FP Mathematics 30 Credits	Inclusive Education 15 Credits				Afrikaans HL Literacy Teaching/ English HL Literacy Teaching/ isiXhosa HL Literacy Teaching 30 Credits	Afrikaans First Additional Language/ isiXhosa First Additional Language/ English First Additional Language 20 Credits
YEAR 4 NQF level 7	Practical Learning 30 Credits	FP Mathematics 30 Credits	Introduction to Educational Research 30 Credits				Afrikaans HL Literacy Teaching/ English HL Literacy Teaching/ isiXhosa HL Literacy Teaching 30 Credits	

The data shows that there is an emphasis on FP Mathematics, Practical Learning and Languages which makes sense because in South Africa, most of the problems in our education system are found in Mathematics and Literacy. These modules are focused on across all four years and were on the timetable, but there were also courses taught that were not on the timetable. There were no electives. Students who were Home Language (HL) speakers had to do a first and additional language across all four years. All three languages spoken in the Western Cape were prioritised in the curriculum. It was compulsory if you have isiXhosa that Afrikaans is your second additional language and English the First Additional Language, but the Curriculum changed in 2022. Equally important, this programme within the Faculty of Education is based on enrolment and is focused on skilling Foundation Phase teachers to be able to teach in learners' home languages which include Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa using fundamental components of the curriculum in Foundation Phase.

Since its inception, five years ago, in 2016 the curriculum underwent one change, adding two additional modules to cover the 13 Life Skills components not recognised in the original formal curriculum (tabled in 2022) as a new amended curriculum. Previously the Formal Curriculum – unofficial curriculum was on the timetable but not in the official curriculum. Life skills are offered in years 1 and 2. Creative Arts Modalities is offered in the second year (2023) when the gap in the official curriculum was realised. Introduction to social and physical words was offered in the first year. The data reveals that Life Skills which is a core subject in the FP does not have a module within the final two years of the programme.

Practical Learning is regarded as the capstone module and it has prerequisites, eg. FPL 201's pre-requisite is FPL 101. The credits for the Practical Learning Module (PLM) were also increased. If students fail, they are not allowed to progress to the next year. To progress to the subsequent years there is a certain criterion that has to be met. Assessment is governed by Rule A.5 as stipulated in the University Calendar: General Information Part 1:

> Promotion Rules: Unless Senate decides otherwise, a student shall be promoted to the 2nd year level of study on obtaining at least 85 credits and on passing Practical Learning 101. A student shall be promoted to the 3rd year level of study on obtaining at least 215 credits and on passing Practical Learning 201. A student shall be promoted to the 4th year level of study on obtaining at least 355 credits and on passing Practical Learning 301 and all first-year modules. Students will complete the 4th year of study only when all required modules have been passed and 505 points have been obtained (UWC, 2021, p.44)

The importance of the PLM has been identified because if the student teachers did not pass that specific module, they would not be able to progress to the next year and obtain their degree. Hence, I will now take a closer look at the meso case, which is the Practical Learning Module.

4.3 The meso case: The Practical Learning Module (PLM)

This section will comprise two main sections. The first will focus on the PLM and the data primarily retrieved and analysed from the document sources (module descriptors, course outlines, faculty handbook and meeting notes) and in the second section I draw on the interview data to show how novice teachers experienced the PLM.

As mentioned in Chapter One (section 1.8), The Policy on Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (DOE, 2015) states that Practical Learning comprises of:

> learning from and in practice. Learning from practice includes the study of practice, using discursive resources to analyse different practices across a variety of contexts, drawing from case studies, video records, lesson observations, etc., to theorise practice and form a basis for learning in practice. Learning in practice involves teaching in authentic and simulated classroom environments. Work-integrated learning (WIL) takes place in the workplace and can include aspects of learning from practice (e.g. observing and reflecting on lessons taught by others), as well as learning in practice (e.g. preparing, teaching and reflecting on lessons presented by oneself). Practical learning is an important condition for the development of tacit knowledge, which is an essential component of learning to teach (DOE, 2015, p.12).

Tables 4.4, 4.5, 4.6 and 4.7 below show the Practical Learning Module outcomes, and content as captured in the official curriculum's module descriptors and outlines the weekly programme captured in the course outlines. The latter represents the recontextualised curriculum or the implemented curriculum across four years. Each year level will be discussed separately. Table 4.4 below shows the module outcomes, content and weekly programme (implemented curriculum) for Practical Learning in Year 1.

Table 4.4: Module outcomes, content and the implemented curriculum for Practical Learning 101

Generic Module Name	Alpha-numeric Code	Year Level	Module descriptor (outcomes)	Course Content	Course outline: implemented curriculum
Practical Learning 101	FPL 101	1	• Demonstrate disciplinary, pedagogical, practical, situational and fundamental learnings, as interpreters and designers of learning programmes and materials for teaching Grade R.	• Analysis of teaching videos on classroom teaching, reflection on case studies of Grade R teachers and materials design relating to Grade R. • The role of play in learning at Grade R.	-Class Discussion: who is the Grade R Learner in the SA context -Growth and Development; Language development; Emergent Reading, Emergent Numeracy/ Numerate Skills development; Social Development -Reflective Essay; The Grade R Learner -Play-Based Learning: The South African context -Learning to Teach-Video observation -Training to design an E-portfolio -The utilisation of technology to enhance learning in Grade R -Guiding principles for using technology in multimode -Engaging with digital stories
			• Illustrate an orientation to teaching as a profession.		-Learning to design assessment tasks -Learning to assess in grade R -Assessment tasks for evaluation -Prepare report Card -Experiences of teaching Grade R from NQT -Administrative responsibilities of a Grade R teacher register
			• Teach in authentic and simulated teaching environments.		-The indoor and outdoor classroom -Practical: Students design models of the classroom. -Micro teaching aligned with observation -Observation at schools -Teaching practice
			• Prepare lesson plans, teach and reflect on lessons taught.	• The South African Curriculum for Grade R	-Lesson Planning: Bloom's taxonomy -Planning a weekly cycle of lessons. -Learning Teaching Support Material -CAPS familiarisation

				• Teaching as a profession: learning from practice and the study of practice	-Planning two lessons focusing on Home Language and Mathematics -Designing LTSM for utilisation in Teaching Practice reflective journal
			• Demonstrate an informed understanding of issues relating to child protection.	• Knowledge of child protection policies and programmes in South Africa and elsewhere	-Readings on legislation regulating classroom management.
			• Discuss the physical, social and instructional aspects of a functional classroom environment and ecology.	• Essential elements of functional classrooms	-Classroom Management -The teacher as a classroom manager -Discipline as a precondition for effective classroom management in Grade R -Legislation regulating classroom management in Grade R

Year 1– the focus is on Teaching and Learning in Grade R. The pedagogical approach used in this year is learning through play and is informed by theory based on the Intentional Learning Model offered by Slavin. WIL comprises structured observation and teaching practice in a grade R classroom. In Practical Learning 101 (FPL 101), the students went to schools twice in the year. In the second semester observe Grade R teachers in the classroom. They also went for school-based teaching practice in the third term, for three consecutive weeks, where they were assessed by the mentor teacher only.

The assessment that is conducted is 100% continuous and consists of mentor evaluation reports, reflective journals and the E-portfolio. Practical strategies were used in the micro-group lessons. Video observations and selected readings were used to teach module content. Lesson planning, design of Learning and Teaching Support Materials (LTSM), using technology and a focus on reflection formed part of the weekly programme. Student teachers were exposed to readings on classroom management but did not deal with actual classroom management strategies.

Table 4.5: Module outcomes, content and the implemented curriculum (content) for Practical Learning 201

Generic Module Name	Alpha-numeric Code	Year Level	Module descriptor (outcomes)	Course Content	Course outline: implemented curriculum
Practical Learning 201	FPL 201	2	• Demonstrate disciplinary, pedagogical, practical, situational and fundamental learnings, as interpreters and designers of learning programmes and materials for teaching Grade 1.	• The South African curriculum for Grade 1: practical implications of teaching and learning in a Grade 1 classroom	-Comparison between Grade R and Grade 1 learners in terms of holistic development – Creative art piece -Productive Pedagogy -Classroom organisation and Practice. What does the Grade 1 classroom look like? Stations in the classroom. -Daily Programme/ Timetable -Important times of the day -Baseline Assessment: Introducing student to classroom practice, reasons

					for Baseline Assessment -Assessing the Grade 1 learner to determine his/her development in Mathematics; Language and Life Skills - -Baseline Assessment- Practical Activity -Designing games and activities in Mathematics, Language or Life Skills to develop perceptual skills -Five -day Mathematics Teaching Cycle -Ten - day Teaching and Learning Cycle for Language Teaching -Assessment, recording, reporting and observation administration of a Grade 1 learner
			• Explain the concept of teaching as a profession.	• Teacher professionalism	-Discuss forthcoming School Visits -Administrative responsibilities of a grade 1 teacher
			• Teach in authentic and simulated teaching environments.		-Observation at schools based on set activities -Teaching practice -Micro teaching
			• Prepare lesson plans, and teach and reflect on lessons presented.	• Lesson planning and integrating relevant disciplinary areas	-Engaging with the observation booklet for Work-Integrated Learning -lesson plans; teaching strategies; utilisation of LTSM;
			• Show an understanding of the importance of parental involvement.	• Models of Parental Involvement	
			• Examine and integrate relevant disciplinary areas within the lesson	• Lesson planning and integrating relevant disciplinary areas	-Classroom Management

			plans for Grade 1 teaching.		-Time management; Discipline.
			• Employ appropriate methods to support Grade 1 learners with Information and Communication Technology (ICT).	• Use of ICT resources to support Grade 1 learners.	-E-Portfolio Training -Software suitable for use in Grade 1
			• Reflect on experiences as an observer, assistant and teacher within a Grade 1 classroom.	• Analysis of teaching videos, reflection on case studies of Grade 1 teachers.	-The teacher as a reflexive practitioner -Debriefing from observation -Debriefing from teaching practice
			• Show an understanding of the principles of inquiry-based teaching and learning and design materials based on inquiry-based teaching.	• Principles of inquiry-based learning and inquiry-based materials design.	-Development of critical thinking-emphasis on questioning -Group presentation: Design and present the utilisation of games in Mathematics, Language or Life Skills based on a theme taken from the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) document using an inquiry-based learning approach and focussing on correct register

Year 2 – the focus is on Teaching and Learning in Grade 1. The pedagogical approaches used were inquiry-based learning and productive pedagogical approaches. WIL is comprised of 2 weeks of structured observation and a block session of 4 weeks for teaching practice in a Grade 1 classroom where student teachers are assessed by the mentor teacher only.

Assessments that are conducted are 100% continuous assessments and consist of mentor evaluation reports, reflective journals and e-portfolios. As in the first year, second-year students are taught through the use of video and selected readings. Professionalism, classroom management and teaching with technology are repeated in the second year of PLM. Models of parental involvement appear in the module descriptor but there is no mention of it in the weekly programme. The students were exposed to the administrative responsibilities of a Grade 1 teacher, however, students were not exposed to the practical component of administration, like completing a register, compiling learner profiles etc.

Table 4.6: Module outcomes, content and the implemented curriculum (content) for Practical Learning 301

Generic Module Name	Alpha-numeric Code	Year Level	Module descriptor (outcomes)	Course Content	Course outline: implemented curriculum
Practical Learning 301	FPL 301	3	• Demonstrate disciplinary, pedagogical, practical, situational and fundamental learnings, as interpreters and designers of learning programmes and materials for teaching Grade 2.	• Analysis of teaching videos, reflection on case studies of Grade 2 teachers and material development relating to the knowledge mix	-The Effective school -Legislation regulating Teachers' employment -Baseline Assessment and Assessment in Grade 2 -Experiences of teaching Grade 2 from a Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT)
			• Demonstrate an understanding of teaching as a profession: the formal and material elements of teaching and the roles and competencies as teachers.	• Teacher professionalism, the formal and material elements of teaching as well as the role and competencies of teachers within a South African context.	-Online Lecture and discussion on teacher professionalism -Revisiting the DOE, 2015 document on the roles of the teacher -What skills are necessary to teach in the Foundation Phase -Discussion on teacher competencies based on video -Sound Teacher-Learner relations -Reflective Essay: The Effective -School and classroom serving the community and South Africa -Administrative issues -Reporting to parents
			• Teach in authentic and simulated teaching environments.	• The South African curriculum for Grade 2: practical implications of teaching and learning in a Grade 2 classroom.	-Observation at schools based on set activities -Lesson Planning focusing on grade 2 -Microteaching
			• Prepare lesson plans and teach and reflect on the lessons presented.	• Lesson planning and integrating disciplinary areas in Grade 2	-Taxonomies: Blooms, Barret's and SOLO -Inquiry-based teaching -Lesson Planning -Varied teaching Strategies including inquiry-based Teaching and Learning -Learner-centered lessons -Preparation for Teaching Practice -Classroom discussion on challenges

					experienced in teaching in Grade 2
			• Implement classroom management strategies and strategies for building a disciplined classroom environment.	• Classroom management and classroom disciplinary strategies.	-The Effective classroom: Classroom layout and basic equipment -Lecture and discussion: Effective Classroom Management within School Management -The teacher as an effective classroom manager -Legislation regulating learner behaviour and learner safety
			• Integrate relevant disciplinary areas within the lesson plans for Grade 2 teaching.		-Lesson planning - planning a Weekly Cycle of Home Language//Mathematics/ Life Skills
			• Explain action research		-Students hold discussions on the issue of diversity
			• Design materials to accommodate children with barriers to learning	• Materials designed for children with special needs	-Well-planned, varied Lessons, a variety of taxonomies, and differentiated/diverse teaching to address barriers to learning -Interventions -Diversity teaching. -Types of Diversities -Special Skills to teach -Teaching Strategies -Integrated into lesson planning
			• Acquaint Grade 2 learners with ICT	• Knowledge and use of ICT resources	-Utilisation of technology in the Grade 2 Smart classroom -Professionalising the E-portfolio, link with the Cape Teaching and Leadership Institute (CTLI) online training -E-portfolios presentations
			• Demonstrate knowledge and use of ICT resources		-Using Google Classroom to enhance teaching and Learning (Service Teaching)

Year 3- the focus is on Teaching and Learning in Grade 2. The pedagogical approaches used centred around teacher-centred teaching drawing on questioning or dialogue, productive pedagogies, inquiry-based pedagogy, experiential learning and e-pedagogy. WIL comprised two weeks of structured observation and a block teaching practice session of 5 weeks in a Grade 2 classroom, where student teachers are evaluated jointly by both the school-based mentor teacher and the university-based supervisor. Assessments that are conducted are 100%

continuous assessments and consist of mentor and supervisor evaluation reports, reflective journals and e-portfolios. Practical strategies were used in the micro-group lessons. Video observations and theoretical readings were also used to teach content in the module. The effective school and classroom were done as a self-study research activity with a short presentation and not engaged practically. In this module, intervention documents for learners were developed as part of an assessment in Grade 2, but the policies and education department's circulars and documents were not used as guidelines.

Table 4.7: Module outcomes, content and the implemented curriculum (content) for Practical Learning 401

Generic Module Name	Alpha-numeric Code	Year Level	Module descriptor (outcomes)	Course Content	Course outline: implemented curriculum
Practical Learning 401	FPL 401	4	• Demonstrate disciplinary, pedagogical, practical, situational and fundamental learnings, as interpreters and designers of learning programmes and materials for teaching in Grade 3.	• The South African curriculum for Grade 3: practical implications of teaching and learning in a Grade 3 classroom.	-Working with the Kolb's Leaning Cycle or SAIDE -Reflective Action Cycle to reflect on a lesson taught -Engaging with different theories on how children learn – -What are the neuroscientists saying? -Assessment practices in Grade 3
			• Demonstrate a critical and integrated understanding of teaching as a profession.	• What is teacher work?	-Revisiting the roles of a teacher drawing on the pre-class activity. -Dividing roles into 3 broad categories -Teacher Choices In Action Course -Revisiting MRTEQ -Responding to the new normal -The teacher and the Law -Teacher Well-being: how to cope in the first few weeks of school
			• Demonstrate an understanding of the dynamic nature of schools in relation to communities by organising programmes for learners and interacting with parents and other stakeholders through formal school structures.	• Introduction to Educational Administration	-A model for parental involvement. -Managing an integrated approach to parental involvement -Administrative issues -Reporting to parents - SAOU- applying for a position/working with the advertisement/South African Council of Educators (SACE) application -A Principal's views on effective interviews compiling a comprehensive CV and preparing to be interviewed
			• Teach in authentic and simulated environments.		-Microteaching Activity -Briefing for teaching practice -Teaching practice
			• Prepare lesson plans, present lessons and reflect on them.	• Lesson planning and integrating disciplinary areas in Grade 3.	-Revisit the 'intentional Model' of Slavin (1977). -The process for planning a learning-centred lesson -Design a language or Mathematics lesson that is learning-centred.

					-Classroom discussion on challenges experienced in teaching in Grade 3
			• Integrate relevant disciplinary areas within the lesson plans for Grade 3 teaching.	• Lesson planning and integrating disciplinary areas in Grade 3. • Analysis of teaching videos, reflection on case studies of Grade 3 teachers	-YouTube video extracted from the Bambanani series and based on teaching Data Handling to a Grade 3 class in a South African context.
			• Implement strategies for classroom management and transformation	• Classroom management and classroom disciplinary strategies • Principles of action research.	-Class discussion: Behavioural Theories: Dreikurs' Social Discipline theory; Skinner's Theory of operant conditioning; Kounin's model of Withitness and organisation; Thomas Gordon's classroom philosophy -Lecture Discussion: Drawing on your teaching practice experiences which strategies did you observe teachers using when dealing with behaviour and can the strategies that you encountered in the videos work in a South African context?
			• Design materials for working with children with barriers to learning	• Principles of material design for Grade 3 learners and for children with barriers to learning.	Integrated into lesson planning
			• Demonstrate knowledge and use of ICT resources		-Using Google Classroom to enhance teaching and Learning (Service Teaching)

Year 4- the focus is on Teaching and Learning in Grade 3. The pedagogical approach is based on problem-based teaching and learning. In Practical Learning 401 (FPL 401), Wil comprises 3 weeks doing observation and teaching practice in the second term of the year and a 7- week block session of teaching practice in a Grade 3 classroom, where the student teacher is evaluated by a school-based mentor teacher and a university-based supervisor. Similar to other years, the assessment that is conducted is 100% continuous and consists of mentor and supervisor evaluation reports, reflective journals and e-portfolios. Practical strategies were used in the micro-group lessons. Video observations and theoretical readings were also used to teach content in the module.

Many behavioural theories were discussed as part of classroom management, but student teachers just have to critically evaluate them instead of practically using them during teaching practice and then evaluating them. Barriers to learning are integrated with lesson planning and principles of materials design are outlined, but not practically demonstrated. As in the previous year, the student teachers also do not go to special schools to focus on learners with special needs or barriers to learning to enhance practical knowledge.

In brief, the PLM, as illustrated in the tables above (see Tables 4.4, 4.5, 4.6 and 4.7), differed mainly in terms of grade focus and pedagogical approaches. Three components are focused on yearly but varying in content that is: Professionalism, Classroom management (focus on discipline and time management) and Lesson Planning (including micro-teaching). WIL takes place per year level but varies in the time spent in schools and has a particular grade focus. There appears to be some duplication of course content especially in PLM 301 and PLM 40, more specifically related to professionalism, classroom management, and administration. A range of pedagogical approaches and theories on teaching and learning are covered over the four years however it appears to be very theoretical drawing mainly from selected readings.

It is important to note that all the teacher participants in one way or another were affected by the outbreak of COVID-19 and school closures in March 2020. During the COVID-19 period only final year students were allowed to do teaching practice. Their time spent in school-based teaching practice was reduced from 7 weeks to 4 weeks. Those student teachers who found themselves in the first, second and third year of study during covered had no school exposure and learnt mainly from videos, readings, micro-teaching and the Teachers Choice in Action module (TCiA). TCiA was an online course, which covered six modules and guided student teachers through the use of case studies and videos on teaching to understand the choices made by teachers in the lessons they plan and teach. This course was designed by academics and

sanctioned by the DHET to supplement teaching practice during the COVID-19 period. The course was critiqued for not having cases and videos related to teachers teaching in the Foundation Phase of teaching.

This section focused on the overall degree programme and the Practical Learning Module's content, outcomes and implementation across four years. The specific module was presented using four different tables showing the information for four different year levels. In the next section, I will engage with the PLM first by identifying the gaps. Then I will draw on the novice teachers' experiences of the PLM and what they experienced as limitations. I will also present the ways of improving the PLM based on their current experiences in schools.

4.3.1 Gaps in the Practical Learning Module

One of the most commonly identified gaps in the Practical Learning Module was that it did not offer many practical learning opportunities and ended up being too theoretical.

NT8 declared: "I would in terms of theory say that it's good, but in terms of doing things practically, I think the University could have done more there".

Similarly, NT2 stated, "Okay, to be honest, I didn't find it as practical because I didn't learn much so it's quite ironic" (Individual Interview, NT2, 6 September 2021). Additionally, NT 5 explained that practical lessons were taught and despite there being theoretical aspects put in place she noticed a missing link between the practical lessons she was trained in and how they differed from actual teaching in the classroom. According to N8:

> I feel that there was a lot of gaps you know. Between when you start teaching and what you learn you know… theoretically, I think they put a lot of things in place for us. Practically yes, we did do a lot of practical things. But for me, there was when I started on campus, I noticed there was a link missing between …actual teaching and practical teaching (Individual Interview, NT4, 8 September 2021).

NT7 concurs by stating:

> It focuses more on the theoretical side as to the application. Understand, it's lovely to have all theoretical information, but how do you apply it and how you implement it is more important. So, there were certain limitations. Yes, we were only two times out of the year during observation and teaching practice. But yet again, during those times we were so overloaded with tasks and unnecessary stuff (Focus group interview, NT7, 29 September 2021).

The participants generally felt that the Practical Learning Module was helpful and that lecturers tried the best that they could in presenting lectures despite there being so much content to cover. NT 5 offered a different perspective stating "I liked the way it was presented. It was presented

in such a way that the theory linked to practical examples (Individual Interview, NT 5, 9 September 2021). This was especially important for the participants to be able to use theory and practice during their observation and teaching practice sessions.

Certain teacher participants felt that the reason for the module being too theoretical rather than practical could be reduced to the programme being fairly new. The following excerpts are the verbatim responses of the participants who have more detailed experiences regarding the PLM:

> NT3: So, I actually had a very bitter experience...mainly because…I think it's because it's fairly new or it was very new when I started studying. They didn't really have that complete hang of things so it felt very theoretical. It wasn't as practical as I desired it to be. And I also feel that the things that I've learnt wasn't sufficient for me coming to work and actually working at a school. So, I do believe that…it taught me a lot of things. I'm not going to deny that. It really taught me a lot of things but on a very theoretical basis. The only practice that I experienced is coming out to teaching and presentation. That's about it and we did like one skit (laughs) one or two skits. That was about it. (Individual Interview, NT3, 7 September 2021).

> NT7: Yes, I attended (University) now and I think they just gave me enough… I would not say they didn't advance me. They just gave me enough to survive which I'm referring to now the basics in the Practical Learning Module. Learning the practical side of how things should be practically implemented around the class but with that being said and you know my institution was in particular new at this. They led with teaching us the ground stuff and they taught us the basic stuff but they never taught us what is happening on the ground (Individual Interview, NT7, 13 September 2021).

Apart from the University being new to the degree programme the participants also felt that when the COVID-19 pandemic hit the University could have done more to enhance their practical training experiences. As mentioned, during this period lectures were delivered completely online. NT8 explained:

> I know especially with regard to our last year, that was it was when it was Covid and it was new for everyone, especially the universities as well but even prior to that I feel like the university could've done more practical work or even give us more practical work in the classroom setting at campus because I mean I just feel like we don't have a lot of practical experience that we received from the module itself (Individual Interview, NT8, 14 September 2021).

It was evident from the data presented that the participants felt that the Practical Learning Module was too theoretical and did not provide the practical learning opportunities that they required to teach. NT1 offered some suggestions as to "bring the practice and theory together". She explains:

> …maybe like let us do it the other way around instead of first teaching us the theory. Let us go into practice like throw us into the deep end and just take us to teaching practice first thing like two weeks after and just throw us there and then let us observe and see how it goes in the actual real teaching classroom and then bring us back to University and then teach us. Okay. So, this is actually how you teach. These are the theories that you could use or you should use while teaching. This is how children learn. And then maybe that will help us to bring the practice and the theory together (Focus Group Interview, NT1, 30 September 2021).

4.3.2 Novice teachers' perceptions and experiences of the Teaching Practice component of the PLM

As mentioned (see Chapter Two, 2.2.4), teaching practice forms a key component of the Practical Learning Module. The data revealed that participants found teaching practice to be beneficial, especially in terms of exposure to the real school context.

The following excerpt, based on the verbatim responses of NT1 and NT6, showcases the value of the Work Integrated Learning component of the module and how beneficial it is for practical learning:

> NT1: Okay, we're going to let them observe for like a week or two to see how the teachers teach. And you must get like, they give you a booklet. So, you have to do the things in the booklet. And that helps you because in every booklet we had to take pictures of the classroom. Look at the layout for all the four years so that it helps you prepare and think about how you're going to sort your class, how you're going to decorate it. And then also you have to see the difference if you went to different schools and you'd see how different teachers set up their lesson plans, the weekly lesson plans and how they set up assessments, how they teach and how they assess, maybe some are different (Focus group interview, NT1, 30 September 2021).

> NT6: The opportunities, it was good because for every teaching practice, we go out twice a year, so we Foundation Phase studying period was four years so we went out like eight times and then each year it becomes more. So, for our first year, we went out like maybe two weeks for observation and then the second week is your practice teaching where you are given a certain amount of lessons to teach. So, in our final year, we went out for like maybe three weeks for observation and then seven weeks for teaching practice so in those seven weeks we were given a certain amount of lessons to teach and it helped because you can like for our first year we did grade R, second-year grade 1, third-year grade 2 and now final year was grade 3. Each year you could go to whichever school you choose; you can learn from different teachers (Individual interview, NT6, 13 September 2021).

Moreover, another benefit that was referred to was the extensive useful information regarding teaching that students were exposed to while getting the opportunity to observe and teach lessons during teaching practice. NT2 shared:

> So, I think on my side, what I found really beneficial was I went to different schools, so I got to see how I think the real NT6, I think she mentioned. It like how the different teachers planned. I like to see actual concrete things. I think in terms of, like, a module, I think it was a good module. I think it exposed us to the teaching environment. But in terms of preparing you as a teacher, I think that is a different situation. I think there was exposure, but not as much preparing, because if I look at just if I relate it to my personal experience, actually teaching now, you know you go observe, not at the beginning of the year. So, these big gaps that you miss you go kind of at two completely different time periods (Focus group interview, NT2, 30 September 2021).

NT 5 had a different opinion, as she puts it:

> I would say there was like, I was very impressed with the amount of time spent in the classroom because I remember when I studied Senior Phase, there was no teaching practising in first year and then Foundation Phase, like I think it was around about April and next thing you hear you going on teaching observation so it was like you know, on it and stuff so I liked the opportunity within the classrooms (Individual interview, NT 5, 9 September 2021).

The teaching practice sessions created a space at schools for student teachers to learn many things. NT2 shared that teaching practice created an opportunity to experience classroom teaching and management.

She said:

> "…consisted of actual practice teaching, going out observing and then what you observed. Then later in the year, you get to practice, and teachers have experience with classroom teaching and management. Also, I remember making resources" (Focus group interview, NT2, 6 September 2021).

NT7 stated:

> …we had observation sessions giving you the opportunity of how to observe how a classroom operates and functions and what it consists of to be in a classroom full time for a day" (Focus group interview, NT7, 29 September 2021).

Furthermore, NT8 also felt that she received much more guidance learning from an actual teacher during teaching practice regarding our assessments, baselines, and that sort of thing (Individual interview, NT8, 14 September 2021). Guidance from mentor teachers was crucial in the development of the student teachers' skills.

The mentor teachers also played a role in the participants' teaching practice experiences and NT1 stated:

> "I think in the schools that I went for teaching practice, the teachers were, like very supportive in the sense that they helped me to reflect on what I could improve" (Individual interview, NT1, 6 September 2021). NT 5 claimed that she got to learn on her own when she was in her classroom but also said, "…during my teaching practice experiences where I first-hand witness the theory and also put the theory to practice and apply that knowledge" (Individual interview, NT 5, 9 September 2021). However, NT6 stated that during her first year, it was evident to the mentor teachers that as a student teacher she lacked knowledge about Grade R.

Her experience of teaching practice was:

> There were three Grade R's (students) at that school. They could see we didn't know nothing. We really had no idea what was going on" (Focus group interview, NT6, 13 September 2021).

The data therefore suggests that student teachers were open to learning from mentor teachers, but that the mentor teachers could also see when student teachers lacked knowledge.

Even though the data presented above reveals student teachers' positive experiences of teaching practice and their positive engagements with their mentor teachers, some participants felt that they were being used in schools merely to stand in for teachers who were sick and for those who stayed absent. NT6 described:

> If it was like a teacher absent and they were like, put us in their class alone. And it was now observation week. So, we were supposed to observe a teacher, not teach a class. And then there was also when my mentor teacher was absent…I had to look after the class on my own for a couple of days, and then they would just leave me there alone. I just had to figure it out. I understand that you have to be prepared, but it was our observation time, and we were supposed to observe a teacher so that we can see what they do and to prepare ourselves for our teaching lessons (Focus group Interview, NT6, 30 September 2021).

On the contrary, NT2 saw it to be a positive aspect when her mentor teacher asked her to take over in class. She said:

> "I think the teacher saw that this opportunity to relax. So instead of inhibiting my growth, they would say, okay, take over" (Focus group Interview, NT2, 30 September 2021).

However, NT6 also explained that there were debriefing sessions after teaching practice, which was a great way to communicate all the experiences of student teachers when they were in the schools. She shared,

> "…whenever we came back from observation or teaching practice, then they would ask us, how was our teaching practice and then most of our class. I remember we would complain about how the teachers would put us in classes" (Focus group Interview, NT6, 30 September 2021).

During these debriefing sessions, NT6 realised that she was one of many experiencing the issue of student teachers having to relieve teachers or stand in for teachers across grades who were absent.

Despite the negative experiences that some participants experienced, the data showed that participants generally felt that the opportunity to embark on teaching practice earlier in the year should be arranged and that provision should be made for longer periods of teaching practice. NT1 suggested:

> "…they should allow us as student teachers to be in teaching practice as early as possible, as much as possible. I think that's what's going to help student teachers to be more prepared for their teaching career (Focus group interview, NT1, 30 September 2021).

NT6 agreed and NT2 suggested starting teaching practice earlier in addition to providing more observation periods:

> Perhaps we could see from the beginning of the year, how do you start? We get there, the kids, you already know how to write your name. You already know how to do things. But how do you do things from absolute scratch? Because that's actually the foundation of it all. So, I would say maybe the times that we do go to observe early in the year, maybe more observation periods, because that is more beneficial than much of this theory that we did (Focus group interview, NT2, 30 September 2021).

The suggestion of having more teaching practice and observation sessions which includes it being done earlier in the year indicated that the participants felt that they learnt more in practice, in the real school context than in the lectures. NT1 noted:

> I feel like the opportunities were not enough to practice what I was being taught in knowledge in the… at the university. It's so much better to be in the classroom than to just be sitting at university being given knowledge, but then you never really get to practice it really. And then when you do get to go to teaching practice they give you 5 weeks, but in that 5 weeks, there's already like a criterion for you to like stick to (Focus group interview, NT1, 30 September 2021).

NT4 agreed with NT1 stating:

> I think we could do more we could do more with more practice training instead of the two weeks and the four weeks or the three weeks (Individual interview, NT4, 8 September 2021).

NT8 shared that opinion and went out to do extra practice to prepare for teaching during holidays while still being a student. NT8 shared:

> I would say in terms of the amount of time the University has given I mean it was enough but I wouldn't say it's enough to learn so much that I could go into the schools without doing any extra observation on my own because what I did during university, whenever we were off from campus then I, when it was our holiday then I would go to the schools on my own. Whenever I didn't have classes, I would go to the schools on my own so that I could gain my own experiences (Individual interview, NT8, 14 September 2021).

Similarly, NT7 felt that there were not enough opportunities to observe lessons and said:

> …wasn't enough opportunity created within teaching practice for me to observe a standard handwriting lesson for that matter. So, I do not know how to do it adequately. So, I'm still scared today about it. And that is one of the limitations the course offered me, so I would not be able to do that to my learners (Focus group interview, NT7, 29 September 2021).

This data indicated that the opportunities to observe teaching practices were not sufficient for some students and the suggestions presented above to have more observation periods that are not limited to certain content would be useful to students.

On the other hand, participants felt that schools were not accommodating to them during teaching practice. NT1 explained:

> Then you don't actually really get to practice the knowledge, 'cause sometimes some schools have their own like they want you to do things the way they do it. So, you can't really practice the knowledge you are learning because they don't really give you the space to do that (Focus group interview, NT1, 30 September 2021).

In addition, the participants felt that there was an overwhelming number of administrative tasks they had to do which included assignments during teaching practice. NT7 felt that it negatively impacted the observation period and said:

> I think there were so many administration required from the University's side during teaching practice that it caused a barrier or limitation for us to really be in our full capacity as a student, learning practically how to become a well-rounded teacher (Focus group interview, NT7, 29 September 2021).

NT 5 also felt that the additional assignments added pressure and explained:

> "…there were additional tasks and assignments that needed to be completed, so you would find yourself trying to cover those assignments because, at the end of the day, you need to submit as soon as teaching practice is done" (Focus group interview, NT 5, 29 September 2021).

She suggested that fewer additional assignments should be given during teaching practice sessions.

Moreover, teaching and learning items are an integral part of teaching practice. NT7 explained that he compared his university experience to a student from a different University and his comparison brought him to the realisation that at his university he just made resources for a lesson. However, at a different University, the students get a period where they only make resources and they get a mark for it. He added:

> "I felt like they were more practically skilled" (Focus group interview, NT7, 29 September 2021).

To address the limitation of lacking resources and feeling unprepared, NT3 shared the following suggestions:

> I think just preparing the students better. In a more realistic setting, in a more realistic environment. Bringing the school to the university. Having resource corners. Having various things that we can actually experience and make use of would be of benefit (Individual interview, NT3, 7 September 2021).

Participants expressed a preference for learning experiences that involved physical interaction and hands-on activities, emphasising the value of tactile learning in enhancing their understanding and mastery of the subject matter. They believed that actively engaging with the material through touch and physical manipulation would provide a more immersive and effective learning experience.

4.3.3 Components in the PLM participants found most beneficial

The data showed that the participants found certain components of the Practical Learning Module to be most beneficial to them. Participants referred to the detailed lesson planning in the module and catering to individual learners' needs and learning styles as a benefit of the Practical Learning Module. NT7 commended the lecturers by saying:

> …they really advanced us with lesson planning (Focus Group Interview, NT7, 29 September 2021).

Also, regarding lesson planning, NT3 said:

> So, what I've learnt or what helped me a lot was the lesson planning. It made me understand the importance of including various methods or sources to help the kids to really open up their minds. So having that exposure to the lesson planning and also the different measures that you can implement when you in the classroom. The different intervention strategies. All those things really, like the implementation of it really helped me at the school that I'm working at now (Individual Interview, NT3, 7 September 2021).

Similarly, the following excerpt is from NT 5 outlining the benefits of detailed lesson planning, and differentiation and she added the benefits of knowledge about assessments and reflection on lessons. She shared:

> Definitely with lesson planning, like our lecturers, they were very on our lesson plans, the differentiation with the different groups. They were very hard on that lesson plans. And then what I also learned was the different learning styles of learners. I have to say, I carry it with me daily in my mental suitcase. Not all learners are the same. So that was multiple intelligences. Really. I just cannot forget it. And it helps me greatly because it makes me realise that although you have 60 learners in class or 50 or 40, whatever amount it may be. They are all different. And then another thing was the assessment part. I learned quite a bit from the different types of assessment, the way the tool that is monitored. So, it's assessment. Like I said, lesson plans and also most definitely reflection on the lesson. We went quite in-depth with the different cycles and how you can take that lesson and use it as a progression tool for the next lesson. So definitely lesson plans, assessment, various multiple intelligence, and also various barriers that learners may experience, like the socio-economic background and as previously mentioned (Focus Group Interview, NT 5, 29 September 2021).

NT7 also shared the same sentiment as NT 5 did regarding inclusion and accommodating learners with various socio-economic backgrounds. He said:

> … always accommodate learner social economic background. I think there was a great zoom at University at all modules. They had a core of which they thrive at, and it was always keeping the learner's social economic background into consideration (Focus Group Interview, NT7, 29 September 2021).

In addition to lesson planning, a focus on reflection was also found to be beneficial as NT1 explained:

> I think the reflection part of the observation. Wait, was it? I think we did reflections on our experience during observations as well as on the lessons that we taught during the teaching practice. I think reflections are very important because they help you to improve on because you're still learning. They help you to see and what you should improve, how you should improve (Focus Group Interview, NT1, 30 September 2021).

NT2 expressed her experience of how she felt about reflection and wanted more freedom like the reflection task. She stated:

> Reflecting, I would think it should be less rooted in… my words escaped me now. From like a philosophy…what are those people called again? Piaget. So, we would reflect using their models and using like Vygotsky and things like that, but I personally don't think it's relevant. It's like it just has to be did it work? Did it not work? How would I do it better next time? So now I'm forced to think of this in this researcher's perspective (Individual Interview, NT2, 6 September 2021).

Moreover, NT7 felt that the University did well in developing students to use Integrated Communication Technology (ICT) to plan, deliver and support lessons, as he explained:

> "Yes, so it also made us technology savvy. How to incorporate technology within our classrooms. So yet again it was a holistic approach as to how we can teach- to be able to teach (Focus Group Interview, NT7, 29 September 2021).

NT 5 shared her personal view on what she experienced with technology:

> I was not very technology inclined. I come from the old way. I didn't really have, I wouldn't say opportunities, but not really in that way inclined. So definitely moving from a pen-and-paper approach to doing hands-on research and the different referencing styles and trying to get the additional help (Focus Group Interview, NT 5, 29 September 2021).

For her, she gained valuable knowledge and she became equipped with technological skills.

The above section highlighted the components that participants found most beneficial in the Practical Learning Module. Lesson planning that was comprehensive and differentiated to meet learners' needs was highlighted as being most beneficial. Incorporating technology into lessons, having knowledge of assessments, accommodating learners from different socio-economic backgrounds, reflection and observations were added benefits.

4.3.4 Addressing limitations in the Practical Learning Module

The teacher participants provided various ways to address the limitations of the Practical Learning Module given what they now experienced as novice teachers.

The data showed that participants felt that the Practical Learning Module should have specific practical demonstrations of lessons using various methodologies during lecture periods. NT7 stated:

> "They will say, for example, do shared reading. They only defined a shared reading. They are lecturing or teaching now out of the theoretical aspect and particularised "Handwriting, Mathematics. How do you particularly do certain, for example, what is this now? Mental maths. How do you do it? How do you conduct it?" (Focus Group Interview, NT7, 29 September 2021).

Furthermore, NT2 felt that methodologies should be focused on more. She specified:

> "What is actual group work that you can do different methodologies, different kinds of scaffolding? That's personally what I had to learn going out. I didn't already have that. I had to learn that" (Focus Group Interview, NT2, 30 September 2021).

It was also clear that developing resources throughout the years of practical learning should be considered a priority. NT2 stated regarding the suggestion of developing resources to better prepare future Foundation Phase teachers:

> I think preparing resources already. Like, for example, having a resource box that you can actually take to your class being focused on different kind of resources because I know at a different institution, for example, like this teacher that literally came with big boxes every year they would keep and its resources that they would be like, okay, this is all the activities that you can do within this box, and you take this box with you. So, it's much more you prepared an intentional kind of teaching than just oh, okay. (Focus Group Interview, NT2, 30 September 2021).

Moreover, there were suggestions to address limitations in assessment knowledge and application. NT1 shared the following as a suggestion to improve knowledge of assessments:

> And then also another thing that I really want to recommend is that they should really consider making assessments, like preparing student teachers on how to set up assessments, what really is involved in setting up assessments and recording of marks and all of those things… so even if they have to send the student teachers to schools to actually see how it's done, then they should do that. Like assessments are so important (Focus Group Interview, NT1, 30 September 2021).

NT6 added to the suggestion regarding assessments by referring to allowing student teachers to witness all the administration work at school once assessments are completed. She said:

> After all the assessments. They should really do something just to prepare or even let the teachers or the student teachers go like, maybe the end of term, like, two or three weeks before the term ends, just to observe how the teachers do, like, finish the assessments and how they have to record all of the marks, all of that admin work after you finish assessments (Focus Group Interview, NT6, 30 September 2021).

The responses regarding the lack of exposure to administration show some disparity between what the document sources revealed and what these teachers experienced in the course. According to the course outlines student teachers were exposed to administration in each year but these teachers felt it to be insufficient and that going to schools to see how teachers do it should be prioritised.

Teacher participants also felt that reflective practices were taught but it was too theoretical and not based on what was happening in the classroom.

NT2 exclaimed:

> "… the way in which we reflected, it's like I'm reflecting according to a specific theory, but that's not really what happens in a class or how you

> should reflect is according to how the children responded to your lesson" (Focus Group Interview, NT2, 30 September 2021).

She believed that reflection should be guided by a natural process.

4.4 The micro case/ unit of analysis: The novice teachers

4.4.1 Overview

It is important to look at the trajectory of each participant as the novice teachers formed the unit of analysis in this case study. Eight novice teachers participated in a semi-structured individual interview and five were part of the focus group interview. In the following section, I first profile each participant, focus on what motivated them to teach in the Foundation Phase, and outline the context of the schools they now teach in.

The second section shows the data pertaining to the school space, more specifically examining the transition from being a student teacher to becoming a novice teacher and engaging with key duties namely: classroom management, heavy administrative roles, COVID-19 experiences and pedagogical challenges that these teachers identified as being unprepared for. Table 4.8, which follows, provides the profiles of the eight novice teachers.

Table 4.8: Profiling the unit of analysis - 8 novice teachers

Participants	Year in which studies were completed	Current Age	Gender	Language of learning and teaching (LoLT)	Home Language(s)	Prior qualifications	Prior education degree enrolled for:	Teaching at a public/ private school	Current grade:	Grades previously taught:
1 NT1	2020	22	Female	Sepedi	Sepedi	None	None	Public	2	None
2 NT2	2019	23	Female	English	English	None	None	Public	2	Grade 1
3 NT3	2020	24	Female	Afrikaans	English	None	None	Public	1	None
4 NT4	2020	27	Female	English	English	Early Childhood Development N4 and N5	B.Ed Senior Phase (1 year)	Public	1	None
5 NT 5	2020	23	Female	English	English	None	B.Ed Senior Phase: Mathematics and Natural Science (not completed)	Public	2	None
6 NT6	2019	24	Female	English	English	None	None	Public	2	Grade 2
7 NT7	2020	25	Male	Afrikaans	Afrikaans	None	None	Public	3	None
8 NT8	2020	23	Female	English	English	None	None	Public	2	None

From the table (Table 4.8) it is clear that the majority of the participants (6) started teaching in 2021 after completing their B.Ed (Foundation Phase Teaching) degrees in 2020. Those that completed in 2019 (4) started teaching in 2020. It is not surprising that seven out of the eight participants are female. Historically, the Foundation Phase of schooling normally attracts more females than males. One should also remember that those who started teaching in 2020 (NT2 and NT6) experienced COVID-19 as novice teachers, whilst those who completed in 2020 experienced COVID-19 as both student teachers and novice teachers (NT1; NT3; NT4:NT 5; NT7; NT8), respectively. Their experiences and perceptions as to their preparedness to teach could differ as a result.

The data presented in Table 4.8 reveal that seven of the novice teacher participants were in their early or mid-twenties with no prior qualifications. One novice teacher (NT4) was exposed to teaching younger children when she completed her N4 and N5 in Early Childhood Education (ECE). Two participants shifted from the Senior Phase programme to the Foundation Phase teaching programme. Five participants ended up teaching in Grade 2, whilst two are teaching in Grade 1 and one in Grade 3. The table provided the demographics or profiled the novice teachers. The following are extracts taken from my interviews with each participant. It is in these narratives that one gets a closer look at who these teachers are and what motivated them to become Foundation Phase teachers.

4.4.2 The road to becoming Foundation Phase Teachers

Novice Teacher (NT1)

NT1, a female teacher in her early twenties, decided to study Foundation Phase teaching because she loved engaging with young children. To her, their inquisitive nature and being naïve were attractive in the sense that they could be guided. She felt that she could be a good role model to the children she encountered.

According to NT1:

> "…you can guide them and be a role model to them to show them a good example of what they could become and basically become a good role model of good things".

She had no prior qualifications and started studying after she matriculated. After completing her degree she applied to a public school in Limpopo where she was originally from. Even though she was educated in English throughout her schooling and tertiary education, she got a

post in a school where the language is spoken in the community and the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) is Sepedi.

She said:

> …since I had the government bursary, I had to teach at a government school so most of them are Sepedi speaking.

Furthermore, NT1 experienced her final year as a student in the time of COVID-19. This was a difficult period for her as a student, but she persevered and continued to develop as a novice teacher.

Novice Teacher (NT2)

NT2, a female teacher in her early twenties had no prior qualifications before enrolling on the B.Ed Foundation Phase Teaching programme. Her main motivation to specifically study Foundation Phase Teaching was because she had an urge to help people, especially children.

She explained:

> … as well as you know helping a young mind to grow and flourish. I find that so interesting yes.

Her main aim with children was to help them learn and develop. She described herself as having a big heart for children because she has had very good relationships with children since she was very young. This aided the way that she felt about teaching. What is more, NT2 jokingly hinted towards the idea that she studied teaching to "have a steady pay check". Besides those reasons, she explained that she received an opportunity to study teaching as a bursary recipient and that confirmed her belief that this was the right path to study. Furthermore, NT2 started her teaching career in a public school where she taught Grade 1 and then moved to grade 2 the following year.

Novice Teacher (NT3)

NT3, a female teacher in her early twenties, had the desire to become a teacher all her life. However, she became doubtful because of what she witnessed in classes regarding learners' and teachers' conduct. Then, when she was in grade 11, she encountered a teacher who made her realise that it is the impact the teacher has on learners that creates a positive change. In her own words:

> I wanted to become a teacher all my life, but that changed when I started to experience the older grades. Being a grade 7 to matric learner, I realised that teaching really isn't as fun and games or all fun and games as it seems. So,

> for me, it's really about how teachers handled the kids when I was on school. So that actually changed my mind about wanting to become an educator. Until I met my grade 11 class teacher, just the way she conducted herself, the way she taught. She was an English teacher, but she made it feel artsy. She made it feel…. Like she brought the class alive and that made me realise that it's not about the children or the teacher like how they are acting. But it's really what the teacher brings that affects the children's behaviour. And then I realised that the experiences that I have within school and with my teachers are based on what was presented before me. But I can bring that change in the classroom as well. I can also make children love coming to school. I can also make them passionate about things that they love and also to pursue the very dreams that they have. So that was actually my grade 11 and 12 teacher who brought me back to my passion and then I also wanted to be the one who laid the foundation for kids (Individual Interview, NT3, 7 September 2021).

It is clear from NT3's response that passionate teachers can have a positive effect on the children they teach. Laying the foundation for children and enabling a love for school were important characteristics for her entering the profession. She pursued her studies and ultimately ended up teaching grade 1 at a public school where the language of learning and teaching is Afrikaans.

Novice Teacher (NT4)

NT4, a female teacher in her late twenties, interestingly, took an aptitude test years before studying and it indicated that she should be a nurse or an administrative clerk. However, she matriculated with a diploma instead of a bachelor's pass, which meant that she did not meet the entry requirements to enter the University to pursue a degree. NT4, then decided that she wanted to study Early Childhood Development (ECD) instead of nursing. She obtained both level 4 and level 5 qualifications in ECD. It was at that point that she fell in love with education, but vowed never to become a teacher because she grew up with teachers in her family.

She said:

> "So, I would say like oh it's in my blood. I think like my genetics."

Ironically, NT4 then pursued studies in the Senior Phase for one year but changed to the Foundation Phase Teaching programme once it was offered at the university. She found it "fascinating to see how young children learn and the joy that they bring to teachers", and this motivated her to want to become a Foundation Phase teacher. She was a novice teacher during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. This also impacted the challenges she experienced because the school was new and she ended up teaching at. She is currently teaching grade 1 and is the grade head at a public school that only started in 2019. It is an English medium school, but the

majority of the learners are foreigners and isiXhosa first language speakers. The school is a no-fee-paying under-resourced school serving mostly children from poor communities.

Novice Teacher (NT5)

NT5 is a young female teacher in her early twenties, who had no prior qualifications, but had a yearning to study teaching. Like, NT4 she initially started studying a B.Ed Senior Phase at the University before transferring to the Foundation Phase Programme. NT 5 shared:

> I studied senior-phase teaching before embarking on the Foundation Phase. So, within my first year of studying in the Senior Phase, I thought it wasn't just for me. Apart from wanting to study teaching, the point is I wanted to teach but I never actually realised that I needed to do Foundation Phase teaching and then I just took the opportunity. I did my first year and then teaching practice I really enjoyed and what motivated me a lot was the special needs learners (Individual Interview, NT5, 9 September 2021).

Her teaching practice experience and working with special needs children made her realise that she made the correct choice to shift from the Senior Phase to the Foundation Phase of teaching. She remained determined to become a qualified teacher despite being a student during COVID-19. She teaches in Grade 2 at a public school.

Novice Teacher (NT6)

NT6, is a young female teacher in her early twenties, with no prior qualifications. NT6 expressed why she wanted to study towards a B.Ed degree in Foundation Phase Teaching, as she puts it:

> It is my motivation is to help set the foundation for the learners because it is one of the important parts of your schooling…for them to understand reading and Maths and everything. It's all in Foundation Phase and that's when it's the most important. So, if you set the foundation properly then it will become easier for them because it gets difficult as the year goes on, but it will be easier for them to maybe understand because if they struggle with reading now then they won't be able to read questions in high school or they won't be able to comprehend what the teachers are asking them to understand (Individual Interview, NT6, 13 September 2021).

As noted from the interview extract above, NT6 was motivated to study Foundation Phase teaching because she believed that it is the phase that is very important in schooling for children to understand reading and Mathematics. She aimed to create a solid foundation for learners so that they develop proper skills to equip and prepare them for all their years of schooling. NT6 is currently teaching grade 2 at a public school.

Novice Teacher (NT7)

NT7, a male teacher in his mid-twenties always wanted to become a teacher. He had many aspects that encouraged him to pursue studies in education. He did not matriculate and he worked at a supermarket. He then left his job at the age of twenty-one to pursue his studies. As an Afrikaans first-language speaker this was a difficult decision for him to make, but he decided to take the opportunity. He initially applied to study the Senior Phase but then changed it to the Foundation Phase. Before he made his final decision to become a Foundation Phase teacher, he investigated what studying in each phase entailed.

His research led him to discover two main aspects. He had the realisation that the Foundation Phase is the most challenging because that is where reading should be properly taught and he thrives on challenges. He ascertained that Foundation Phase teachers should be well-trained in methodologies, techniques and learning styles that are required to be a good Foundation Phase teacher. He was also influenced by the fact that the Foundation Phase is dominated by female teachers in schools.

He exclaimed:

> "It's not always that children are longing for motherly love, but they also long for fatherly love."

So, he felt that he could bring that fatherly aspect to young children's lives by becoming a Foundation Phase teacher. NT7 pushed through all the challenges of COVID-19 as a student and is now a grade 3 teacher at an Afrikaans medium school in his hometown town where the majority of the learners are underprivileged. He has also recently been asked by the Education Department to transfer to a school where they feel his skills are needed.

Novice Teacher (NT8)

NT8, a female teacher in her early twenties always wanted to work with children. This feeling was confirmed by job shadowing she did when she was a high school learner. She wanted to become an occupational therapist but then realised that teaching was what she gravitated towards because her mother is also a teacher. She stated when referring to her mother:

> "I could see that she was very passionate about it and I think that sort of motivated me since I was a child to become a teacher." She experienced being a final-year student in a much different way because it was COVID-19.

She is currently teaching Grade 2 at a public English medium school.

The narrative data extracted from semi-structured individual interviews reveal that these novice teachers were driven by a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic reasons for becoming Foundation Phase Teachers. The intrinsic reasons vary from having a genuine passion for teaching, enjoyment of laying foundational skills in literacy and numeracy or making a difference and having an impact on young children's futures. The extrinsic factors provided were job security (having a steady pay check) and job satisfaction (seeing students grow and succeed).

For some teaching was their first choice being influenced by parents being teachers or being exposed to good teachers whilst for others it was not. All the participants ended up teaching in public schools serving mostly poor communities. The latter could be because of the bursary requirements seeing that most of them were bursary holders. One can infer from the data that motivation is a key component to drives aspiring teachers to be resilient and stay on the trajectory of achieving their qualifications. Following, are the challenges these novice teachers faced once in the teaching profession.

4.4.3 The school space- Challenges encountered once in the profession

The findings from the interview data revealed four common areas in which novice teachers encountered challenges. These areas are classroom management, heavy administrative roles, COVID-19 experiences and pedagogical challenges. The data pertaining to these challenges now follows.

4.4.3.1 Classroom management

Classroom management appeared to be challenging for most participants. The participants shared the following experiences:

> NT 5: To be honest mainly classroom management. I cannot find myself, I cannot find what is working yet for me. I try every day then sometimes- at times something will work, the next moment I try it again and then it's not yet it (Individual Interview, NT 5, 9 September 2021).
>
> NT7: They only prepare you on how to teach a lesson in particular in which you will be evaluated accordingly…. But we were never taught how to be in control of a classroom. From receiving learners, up until the point where it departs, you understand… but you were never taught how to actually deal with learners in their nature of being learners (Individual Interview, NT7, 13 September 2021).
>
> NT8: I would say discipline is definitely something that I am still working on. I see it as a major challenge especially because at the school that I am teaching at, we work on biweekly schedule… so, it's very difficult for me to

> keep a routine in the classroom… they start to become rowdy and noisy (Individual Interview, NT8, 14 September 2021).

Classroom management, in terms of discipline or controlling a class, was deemed to be a great challenge despite being a key component dealt with thin the PLM over the four years (see tables 7 to 10). Besides classroom management, novice teacher participants also found the heavy administrative load of teachers challenging.

4.4.3.2 Heavy administrative roles

The lack of knowledge in dealing with administrative matters relating to the classroom and school overall was cited in their interviews. The following excerpts most notably explain the challenges they experienced with administration:

> NT3: I think mainly admin. They don't teach you about the admin. That is one thing I believe should be implemented. An admin module like even if it is just for the first year like showing us this is what you need to do. This is the admin that needs to be covered. This is how it should be covered because even though the different documents were introduced, it was never actually broken down. It was never stated why we need to fill in this or why these particular things need to be updated all the time. And this is how you observe learners. This is how you do this. This is how you do that. So mainly the admin (Individual Interview, NT3, 7 September 2021).

> NT4: I can probably, name a hundred of them…but one that stood out to like I said would be administration. That was a massive challenge because apart from being a teacher, you have twenty billion other things that you didn't even know about…stepping into this role, you know. (Individual Interview, NT4, 8 September 2021).

> NT6: I think all the admin, all of the admin work. we didn't know like when it was my first year last so then I - at the end of the first term so then the teachers, my colleagues they helped me so they still said we finished assessments so then I was like okay we done and then they said "no we must still do this and that and all of this" I was like that's a lot of work. There's like admin work like observations, the portfolios and all of those things (Individual Interview, NT6, 13 September 2021).

> NT7: They led with teaching us the ground stuff and …yes, they taught us the basic stuff but they never taught us what is happening on the ground and I'm referring to admin now you know. Admin is a thing on its own that should be maintained and unfortunately, it is a skill you should be taught. It's not something you can learn by yourself, yes you can but from a novice teacher's aspect, you are finding your feet on so many levels. To find your feet on an administration level it is horrifying (Individual Interview, NT7, 13 September 2021).

Upon entering schools as fully qualified teachers, participants expressed concerns regarding the considerable volume of administrative tasks and responsibilities that they perceived as

mandatory. They voiced apprehensions about the administrative duties, one going as far as describing it as 'horrifying' pointing to the fact that they were not prepared adequately in core areas.

4.4.3.3 COVID-19 experiences

The data revealed that the COVID-19 pandemic had varying impacts on the challenges experienced by novice teachers. While it did not affect all teachers uniformly, some participants reported specific difficulties and adjustments related to the pandemic. Some of the participants were final-year student teachers and others were teaching at schools when COVID-19 broke out. The participants shared their classroom experiences and challenges they encountered as a result of COVID-19. NT1 was struggling to maintain order because the children were on a rotational attendance schedule. She said:

> I think that the COVID situation is making it worse. They were all used to coming to school for three days in this week and then two days in this week. So, they basically got out of the routine of coming to school every day so now that they are all back it's been such a challenge to just maintain like order in the classroom (Individual Interview, NT1, 6 September 2021).

NT2 was struggling with catching up on work because of frequent absenteeism but acknowledged:

> COVID, I think. It's things that the university can't really help like absenteeism and how to catch up on all that work (Individual Interview, NT2, 6 September 2021).

NT 5 found extra admin that was as a result of COVID-19 a challenge. She stated:

> Trying to maintain teaching and learning and also admin and with Covid, it was much more difficult because now you have screening and then learners presenting symptoms so you have to take that into consideration (Individual Interview, NT 5, 9 September 2021).

Similarly, NT8 shared the same frustration with additional work demands as NT 5 and revealed that:

> I don't wanna say everything is because of COVID but because of COVID, there's so many things that we've get, that we are receiving from the department that we have to hand in, whether it's online meetings, things that we need to submit. And it is also very last minute, especially at the beginning of the year, there was a lot of work, paperwork that needed to be done for the department and it was a lot on my plate as a very first, a very out-of-university-teacher (Individual Interview, NT8, 14 September 2021).

NT2 and NT1 felt that the module better prepared them for Grades R-2 but lacked in Grade 3 training as a result of COVID-19. NT1 indicated:

> They can never fully prepare us adequately. It's just not possible. I don't think. Some of these things you just have to learn when you get there. It's just not sufficient. It's just not going to work learning it in a lecture space. You have to be there in real life to actually learn some of these things. So yeah… 70% they did prepare us for grades R-2 because honestly grade 3 we really did not really get much except for teaching practice. That was all we pretty much did for practical learning last year because of the COVID and everything (Individual Interview, NT1, 6 September 2021).

During COVID-19, the participants had online lectures as certain measures were in place to prevent the spread of the virus. This impacted the training received during that period, which in turn contributed to some of the concerns regarding pedagogical challenges some of them experienced.

4.4.3.4 Pedagogical challenges: How to teach

Regarding challenges in pedagogical skills, NT6 revealed her struggle with not being adequately skilled to teach certain topics as a novice teacher. However, she highlighted that her colleagues played a supportive role by assisting her in addressing these challenges. She stated:

> And then there was like some -some topics maybe that I didn't know how to teach but then I would go to my colleague and then I will go see how she does it and I'm like oh that's an easier way to do it than how I'm trying to get it across to the learners (Individual Interview, NT6, 13 September 2021).

In addition, NT2 explained that her challenge was not being skilled in how to teach children to read and use methodology practically. She had to be proactive in discovering how to do it whilst already teaching. Like NT6, she relied on her colleagues and workshops that were presented to her as a novice teacher to equip herself with teaching methodology. NT2 shared:

> Once I understood what to do so I did it. But I had to learn that by myself. I had to learn through the workshops. Through the asking of teachers that type of thing. So, for me, I had to find that out for myself. How to teach them how to read (Individual Interview, NT2, 6 September 2021).

NT7 also shared the same sentiment and stated:

> They should have core demonstrations, practically. You know what I get so furious about? They will say, for example, do a shared reading. They only gave a definition of a shared reading. A shared reading is when you sit down there, they are lecturing or teaching now out of the theoretical aspect. …then they expect from you to do 100% accurate shared reading lesson based on

> the explanation, but no demonstration (Focus Group Interview, NT7, 30 September 2021).

NT 5 explained that she was exposed to practical skills during handwriting but would have also liked it done in a more demonstrative manner. She said:

> Then also, for example, I remember they mentioned about we're going out of the boards to do handwriting practical ways. I would appreciate much more like very specific practical ways instead of saying, okay, this is now how you do a lesson. But the core and integrity the methodology of that, for example, how a learner should hold the pencil and then show us technically how the pencil is being held, how the movement is being done, that type of thing. (Focus Group Interview, NT 5, 30 September 2021).

What is more, some challenges were experienced in isolated cases. These challenges included language barriers, a lack of resources, managing parent-teacher relationships, planning and university-to-school transitioning. NT1 is teaching in her home language, which is Sepedi, but not the language that she studied at the university and she struggles to overcome the language barrier.

She said:

> We don’t know how to bridge the whole language thing (Individual Interview, NT1, 6 September 2021).

For NT4 the lack of sufficient resources for the class was also identified as a challenge. It put pressure on her to develop, create, collect and spend money on resources to effectively do lessons in class using materials.

She stated:

> Yah, then also the fact that you walking to a class a classroom that has nothing you know. Resources is a major issue (Individual Interview, NT4, 8 September 2021).

NT8 emphasised that she felt that managing relationships with parents and communication was a challenge to her because she struggled to communicate boundaries and maintain it with parents.

She noted:

> I'm finding a bit challenging, definitely challenging, would be conflict with parents (Individual Interview, NT8, 14 September 2021).

Furthermore, NT4 shared that “planning is, that’s a nightmare, to say the least” (Individual Interview, NT4, 8 September 2021) when she spoke about not being supported by colleagues

to do planning and schools using completely different templates for planning than the university.

4.5 Cross-case analysis

In the previous sections, I treated each case as an individual case drawing on different data sets. In this section, I look across the three cases to draw some cross-case inferences. There appears to be an identifiable gap between the official (intended) curriculum and the recontextualised (implemented) curriculum. In addition, participants felt that they had very few practical learning opportunities in the PLM, which was detrimental to them on entering the school space, highlighting classroom management and administrative roles as important gaps in the PLM. The lack of knowledge in these two areas alongside not being exposed sufficiently to 'how to teach' was constraining especially when they transitioned from the university to the school space. The data revealed a link between the agentic behaviour of certain novice teachers and how they responded to challenges in the school space. In other words, despite the lack of practical knowledge experienced as a result of the PLM, they (NT4 and NT7, in particular) drew on their agency to better prepare themselves for the teaching profession.

Figure 4.1 below is a diagrammatical representation of the themes that emerged from the inductive analysis process (recurring themes that emanated from this cross-case analysis).

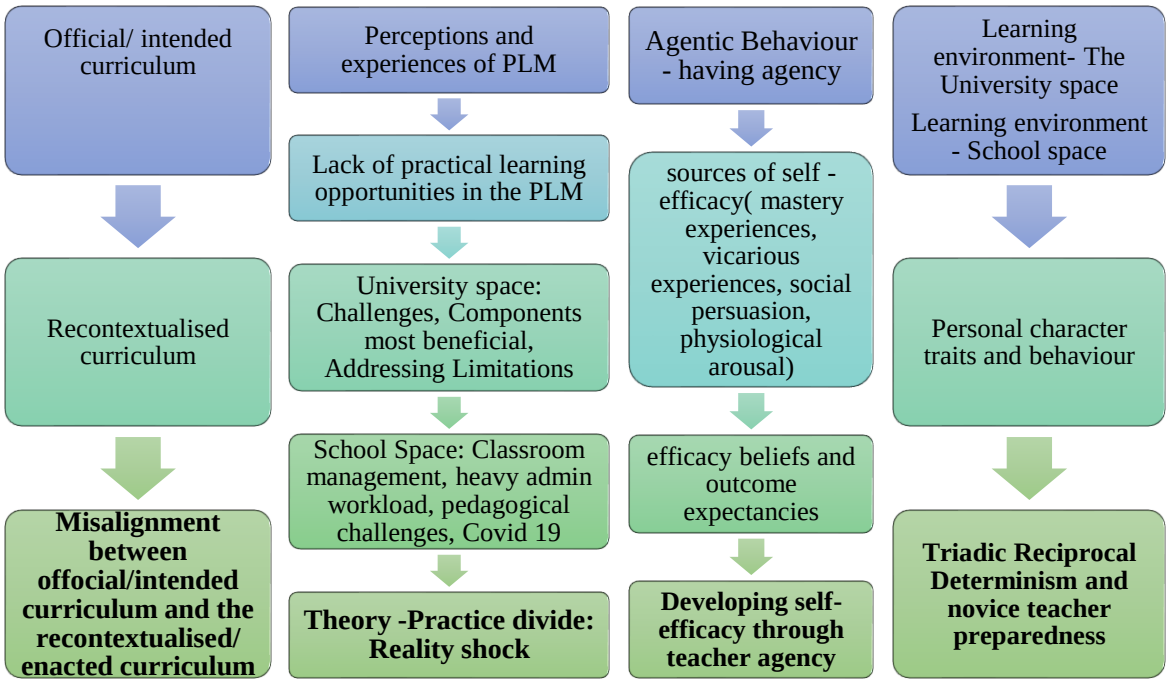

Figure 4.1: Cross-case analysis process

4.6 Conclusion

The purpose of this Chapter was to present the data extracted from three data sets: Document sources, and individual and focus group interviews. Verbatim responses were used to present the data with the use of descriptive codes. The chapter focused on the macro case -context of the study (B.Ed Foundation Phase Teaching programme), the Practical Learning Module (meso case) and the unit of analysis/novice teachers (micro case). The themes that emerged from the inductive analysis process and that cut across these data sets represent the findings of this study. These themes, which make up the analytical findings are:

- Misalignment between the official/intended curriculum and the recontextualised/enacted curriculum;
- Theory-Practice divide: Reality shock;
- Developing self-efficacy through teacher agency; and
- Triadic Reciprocal Determinism and novice teacher preparedness.

Each of these themes (analytical findings) will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Five, which now follows.

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, Chapter Four, I outlined the context (macro case), followed by a comprehensive look into the Practical Leaning Module (meso case) and provided the perceptions and experiences of the 8 novice teachers, the unit of analysis (micro case- novice teachers) of the Practical Learning Module, and their preparedness to teach in the Foundation Phase of schooling. Chapter Five is devoted to the discussion of the findings that emerged from the inductive analysis process explained in Chapter Three and the cross-case inferences drawn in Chapter Four.

The following is a diagrammatical representation of key findings that emanated from the inductive analysis process.

Figure 5.1 provided below illustrates the progression of descriptive codes into analytical codes.

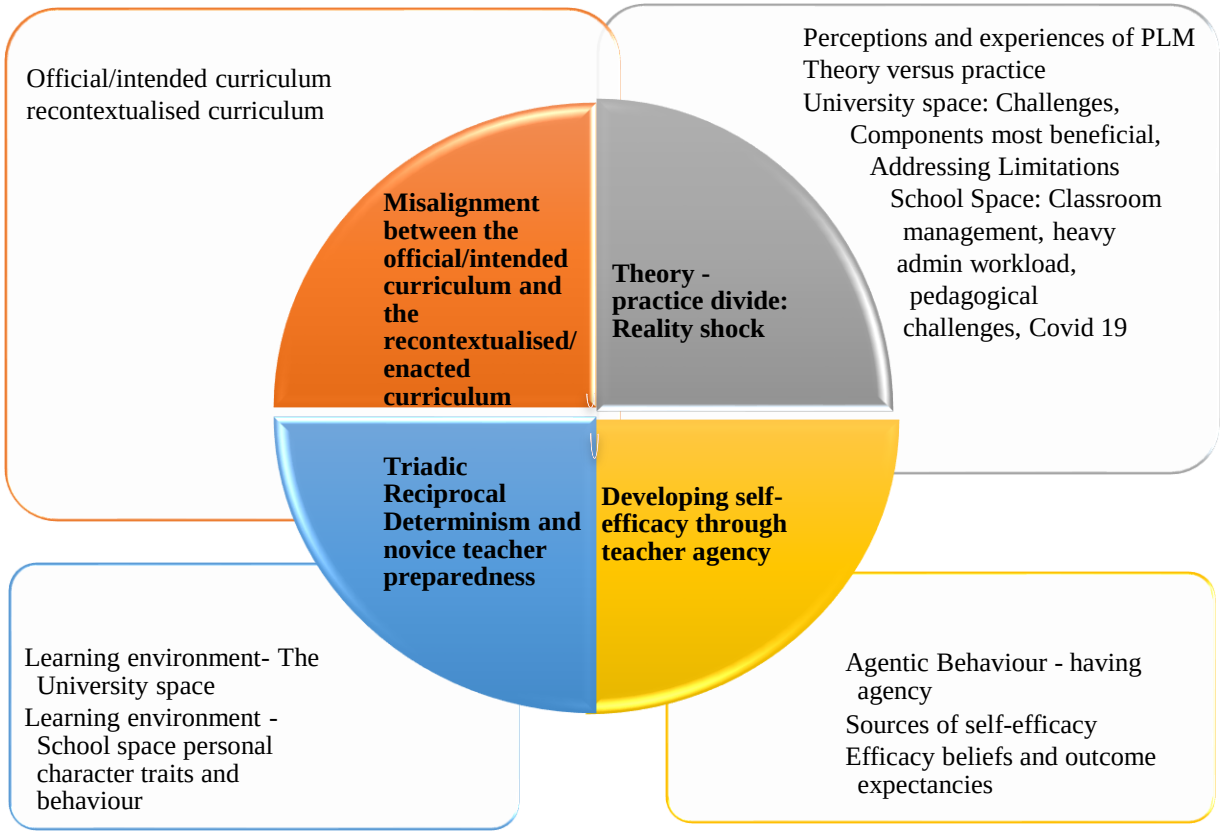

Figure 5.1: Progression of descriptive codes into analytical codes

5.2 Misalignment between the official/ intended curriculum and the recontextualised/enacted curriculum

The data revealed a misalignment between the official/intended curriculum and the recontextualised/enacted curriculum, which had implications for both curriculum design and implementation, more specifically how the curriculum was experienced by these novice teachers. Phaeton and Stears (2017) explain:

> The intended curriculum consists of the ideal and the formal curriculum where the ideal curriculum constitutes the original ideas of the curriculum developers. When these ideas are encapsulated in a formal document it constitutes the formal curriculum. The implemented curriculum consists of two domains; the perceived curriculum which refers to the interpretation of the users of the curriculum who are the main actors- the teachers [teacher educators]. The actual instructional process is regarded as the operational curriculum (Phaeton & Stears, 2017, p.724).

I outlined the different curriculum domains in Tables 4.4, 4.5, 4.6 and 4.7 (see Chapter Four) showcasing the module descriptors (in terms of learning outcomes and content), as well as the implemented curriculum (as perceived by the teacher educator). Furthermore, interview data with novice teacher participants identified notable gaps in how they experienced the curriculum. The gaps relating to classroom management (how to control the classroom in terms of discipline), the heavy administrative duties (as one participant described as 'horrifying'), the COVID-19 experiences (not getting enough practical experience) and pedagogical challenges (knowing what to teach but not being showed how to teach) were identified as limitations or gaps in the Practical Learning Module. NT7 shared:

> You have the expectation that this module needs to prepare you to become a model teacher. But yet again, in our work, in my case and I'm talking about my experience with practical learning, it has its own limitations. There wasn't enough exposure to practical learning.

All participants yearned for more practical learning opportunities, something that was lacking in this PLM. These limitations or gaps could be the reason for these novice teachers feeling a sense of inadequacy and being unprepared to teach.

For Thijs and van den Akker (2009, cited in Phaeton & Stears, 2017, p.726) curriculum implementation may be fraught with problems as it may not occur as intended since it reflects loopholes which create gaps between the expectations of the designers of the curriculum and what takes place within the class or lecture room. Rogan (2004, p.176) refers to this incongruence between the intended and implemented curriculum as a contrast between

expectation and reality. I argue that this misalignment can have implications for the quality of teacher preparedness, which in turn can impact their effectiveness as novice teachers.

Reasons for the misalignment between the intended and implemented curriculum do surface in the data, like lack of practical learning opportunities, inadequate teacher training, insufficient resources, and reduction in time for teaching practice, amongst other things. For some of these novice teachers, COVID-19 could be to blame for them feeling unprepared, especially for those who were student teachers at the time. For these novice teachers having to do the PLM completely online and not getting enough time to practice teaching in an authentic classroom environment and then entering teaching with all its complexities, could be reasons for their negative experiences of PLM.

Teaching practice experience is an ongoing demand of pre-service teachers, who voice a constant desire for more time in school during their initial teacher education (White & Forgasz, 2016). Most of the novice teacher participants, as is evident from their verbatim responses in Chapter Four, valued and benefitted from teaching practice, a key component of the PLM. As NT1 suggested: "…they should allow us as student teachers to be in teaching practice as early as possible, as much as possible. I think that's what's going to help student teachers to be more prepared for the teaching career". Even though teaching practice (WIL) and the valuable guidance and support of the school-based mentor teacher were highlighted by the novice teacher participants as key to their professional development, some felt that in some instances they were not offered sufficient opportunities in schools to teach or enough opportunities to practice skills they were taught because they had to stand in for teachers who were sick or absent.

Another possible reason for the misalignment that might not directly have surfaced from the data but that literature (Biggs, 1996; Jaworski, 2012; Phaeton & Stears, 2017) points to, is the crucial role that teacher educators play in implementing or delivering the curriculum. Their theories of teaching and learning (Biggs, 1996), deep levels of teacher pedagogical and content knowledge (Jaworski, 2012), individual interpretations, teaching styles, and experiences can influence how they deliver the curriculum, potentially leading to deviations from the intended curriculum. Standardising the curriculum and providing guidelines to teacher educators on interpreting the intended curriculum will address the issue of misalignment (Phaeton & Stears, 2017). Another critique of the PLM module was that it was overly theoretical and not very practical, bringing me to the next finding, the theory-practice divide.

5.3 Theory-practice divide: Reality shock

Striking a balance between theory and practice has been a major challenge for ITE for decades. According to Levine (cited in Allen, 2009, p.647), a widely held concern is that one of the biggest dangers to face is preparing teachers who know theory and know nothing about practice. For Neville, Sherman and Cohen (2005, p.3) traditional teacher preparation and in-service training have failed to produce the level of quality demanded by the new educational environment. The data reveals that the novice teacher participants mostly felt that the PLM did not prepare them adequately for the realities of teaching. Terms like 'challenging', 'difficult', and 'horrifying' and expressing sentiments like "I did feel like a bit of a fish out of water" (NT2) or as NT4 puts it: "it is a nightmare, to say the least" (NT4), typifies their responses. Botha and Rens (2018) liken these feelings to a 'Reality Shock'. According to Botha and Rens (2018):

> The expectation is clear that they will successfully transition from a theory-orientated pre-service teacher to a well-rounded practice-based teacher within the first few years of employment. Reality shock, however, often quickly sets in for most of them; beginner teachers find themselves to be directly confronted with the gap between theory and practice (Botha & Rens, 2018, p.1).

Transitioning into the school space was fraught with difficulties for most of the novice teacher participants. I alluded to some of the areas they felt they were not sufficiently prepared for in 5.2. In other words, despite the preparation they received in the university space most of them felt it did not prepare them for the actual school environment. Most of these teacher participants attributed their unpreparedness for the realities of schooling to the PLM being too theoretical as one respondent explained:

> So, I actually had a very bitter experience...mainly because…I think it's because it's fairly new or it was very new when I started studying. They didn't really have that complete hang of things so it felt very theoretical. It wasn't as practical as I desired it to be. And I also feel that the things that I've learnt wasn't sufficient for me coming to work and actually working at a school. So, I do believe that…it taught me a lot of things. I'm not going to deny that. It really taught me a lot of things but on a very theoretical basis. The only practice that I experienced is coming out to teaching and presentation (NT3).

NT7 concurred:

> …They just gave me enough to survive which I'm referring to now the basics in the Practical Learning Module. Learning the practical side of how things should be practically implemented around the class but with that being said and you know my institution was in particular new at this. They led with

> teaching us the ground stuff and they taught us the basic stuff but they never taught us what is happening on the ground.

These sentiments expressed by NT3 and NT7, the yearning for the PLM module to be more practical was followed up by suggestions. Some felt they would benefit from spending more time doing teaching practice in an actual classroom, privileging practices observed and experienced in the classroom over theory taught in the classroom. In addition, they felt the period for going to school should shift to the beginning of the year, whereas others felt more demonstration lessons were needed as stated by NT7, who voiced his frustration by saying:

> They should have core demonstrations, practically. You know what I get so furious about? They will say, for example, do a shared reading. They only gave a definition of a shared reading. A shared reading is when you sit down there, they are lecturing or teaching now out of the theoretical aspect. …then they expect from you to do 100% accurate shared reading lesson based on the explanation, but no demonstration (NT7).

NT3 shared the following suggestion:

> I think just preparing the students better. In a more realistic setting, in a more realistic environment. Bringing the school to the university. Having resource corners. Having various things that we can actually experience and make use of would be of benefit (NT3).

Resch, Schrittesser and Knapp (2022) emphasise the significance of teacher educators actively seeking new practical opportunities for students to narrow the divide between theoretical knowledge and practical application. According to Gravett (2012):

> Teacher-educators should generate the concerns by creating suitable concrete experiences for students. This can be done in coursework through using, for example, authentic classroom materials, videotapes of teaching and learning, cases and by invoking students' own experiences as children and learners in schools (Gravett, 2012, p.6).

When looking at how to narrow the divide between theory and practice, it is of great importance to realise that novice teachers learn from different pedagogical spaces. Swart (2013, p.44) asserts that becoming a teacher occurs across two phases and different professional spaces. When the student teachers are at the university, they are immersed in the university space and when they go out to teaching practice, they are immersed in the school space. Resch and Schrittesser (2021) challenge the notion of the theory-practice gap as merely being – 'university theory here, school practice there', which for them seems to inaccurately describe the relation between the worlds of thought and practice. Instead, "two different 'practice worlds' Resch, Schrittesser and Knapp (2022) further note:

> The practicum is often split between different learning sites with neither the university nor the school staff fully understanding nor having sufficient awareness of the other, thus potentially contributing to tension for students who are trying to orient and situate themselves within theory and practice. It is mostly left up to the students themselves to link their practical learning with the theory-based approaches of teacher education (Resch, Schrittesser & Knapp, 2022, p.3).

Once student teachers transitioned to the school as professionals, they encountered learning in their respective professional domains (varying school contexts, which each of them yielded different experiences). Ovens, Garbett and Hutchinson (2012, p.372) argue that the experiences of becoming a teacher are multi-perspectival and complex. They must recognise that they are experiencing meaningful transformation and should adopt a comprehensive perspective by integrating the experiences gained from both spaces. Thriving in their teaching career requires merging the knowledge and insights acquired across these different learning spaces. Sayed et al. (2018) are of the view that teacher education should comprise a pedagogy that promotes a thoughtful relationship between knowledge domains and practical experience encouraging critical reflection for teaching graduates to develop professional agency.

5.4 Developing self-efficacy through teacher agency

Self-efficacy refers to teachers' beliefs in their capacity to effectively handle the responsibilities, tasks, and challenges associated with their role as professional educators (Barni, Danioni & Benevene, 2019). Self-efficacy beliefs also influence performance and as Bandura (1997) describes:

> Efficacy beliefs operate as a key factor in a generative system of human competence. Hence, different people with similar skills, or the same person under different circumstances, may perform poorly, adequately, or extraordinarily, depending on fluctuations in their beliefs of personal efficacy (Bandura, 1997, p.37).

When I look at the self-efficacy beliefs of the novice teachers' I am presented with the data that they believe themselves to be somewhat efficient and acknowledge that challenges that they experienced at school were an outcome of their own self-efficacy beliefs and behaviour. However, they have stated, as mentioned before, that if they had training which was not limited, they would not have experienced the myriad of challenges (classroom management, heavy administration workload, pedagogical proficiency and COVID-19) they did nor the reality shock they encountered. NT1 put it:

> Okay, as I mentioned, I do feel like we didn't get enough training. Also, I feel like I could look into more like online like academics and do some research about how to manage a class. The things that you could do, the

> things that you could not do in order to maintain order in your classroom. I think that I could do more research on that and uhm also preparing better and having a routine I figured actually helps to lessen the disruptiveness and everything. When they know what to do next. This is done and what can I do and me preparing extra lessons and extra activities for those who are fast learners and all those things. So yes, I think it could be my fault than the training (Individual Interview, NT1, 6 September 2021).

NT3 noted:

> So, I do believe that even though my reasons were valid my actions could have also affected the various challenges that I face now. Because I could have just stepped up and just be the example and not the person that just like left everything and done my own thing until I felt like I actually want to be there. So yes, I do believe that I am also a part of the reason that I face challenges today (Individual interview, NT3, 7 September 2021).

When I look at self-efficacy as a means to overcome these challenges that the novice teachers faced, I can see that the efficacy beliefs of the individuals influenced their behaviour and outcome expectancies. Moseley, Reinke and Bookout (2002) propose that self-efficacy influences outcome expectancy, as the latter reflects one's perceived competence or effectiveness. In contrast to the participants above, other novice teachers exuded self-efficacy beliefs and achieved certain outcome expectancies at their schools. One novice teacher was requested to mentor other teachers and perform model tasks as requested by the curriculum advisor, while the other novice teacher was approached to be a grade head despite having recently qualified from the university. This shows that they experienced physical and social outcomes because they evaluated themselves in their reflection and used their self-efficacy beliefs to drive their behaviour and achieve expected outcomes.

The present study's findings highlight how a range of sources affected the participants' self-efficacy beliefs and their expectations for outcomes. The participants had different experiences of personal achievements and challenges (mastery experiences) in their lives before becoming teachers and in their professional domains as novice teachers. The participants who experienced a great deal of success by overcoming challenges as novice teachers demonstrated a stronger sense of self-efficacy. Some participants witnessed their young colleagues at their schools achieve success and witnessing this drove them to be more confident in their abilities (vicarious experiences). In some instances, the participants were encouraged by colleagues or departmental heads who believed in them and assisted them in overcoming some of the challenges they experienced as novice teachers (social persuasion). It was powerful to hear the emotions of the participants in their interviews as they delved into their experiences as novice teachers in schools (physiological arousal). They had to be able to assess their own self-

efficacy beliefs to cope with the challenges they were exposed to that were mentioned in chapter four. This emphasises the bearing sources of self-efficacy have on novice teacher success which holds considerable importance to teacher quality. DeStefano (2023) claims:

> Many researchers contend that a high level of self-efficacy in early teaching careers is a result of adequate preparation and support for new educators. It is widely recognized that these crucial ingredients are needed to ensure the success of a beginning teacher, but researchers, practitioners, and policymakers have differing ideas about what should be targeted to help bolster beginning teacher self-efficacy (DeStefano, 2023, p.3).

To cultivate self-efficacy, novice teachers should focus on developing their agency while they are still students. By establishing a habit of taking initiative and being proactive, they can carry this mindset into the school environment and demonstrate self-efficacy.

Biesta, Priestley and Robinson (2015, p.626) argue that agency is not something that people can possess as a property, capacity, or competence, but it is something that people do. They emphasise that a person's past experiences, aspirations for the future, and current engagement all contribute to their agency. In individual expressions of personal agency, individuals exert their influence over their functioning as well as the events in their environment (Bandura, 2006). Teacher agency encompasses educators' proactive engagement with professional advancements and their willingness to drive their professional growth. Agency, a concept rooted in sociology and psychology, underpins individuals' belief in their capability, positivity, and proactive engagement in cognitive, emotional, and behavioural domains (Polatcan et al., 2021). Even though there is limited research on teacher agency and student-teacher agency, it is evident that personal qualities play a significant role in shaping teacher agency and the functioning of student teachers.

It is noteworthy that the analysis of the study revealed that some novice teachers exhibited agency in both positive and negative ways during their time as students. They made decisions that impacted their learning and ultimately affected their self-efficacy. NT3 said:

> Only when we had presentations, I would be present to do the presentations. By submitting assignments, I'll just go in to submit by signing the attendance and then I'll just leave. I'll just leave again because I just felt that it was a waste of time at some point. But when there were the engaging periods or I knew like okay we are going to do something fun then I would actually attend the full double session. If not then I'll miss the first and come the second (Individual interview, NT3, 7 September 2021).

Her first year of teaching was affected by her frequent absences from lectures, which deprived her of valuable content that could have benefited her. In contrast, the are novice teachers who

took the initiative to visit schools during university breaks and in times when they did not have lectures, acquiring essential skills that could positively shape their teaching practices. This proactive approach contributed to the development of their self-efficacy. NT8 used agency to develop her self-efficacy. She explained:

> …whenever we were off from campus then when it was our holiday then I would go to the schools on my own. Whenever I didn't have classes, I would go to the schools on my own so that I could gain my own experiences, especially in the grade 1 classroom setting (Individual Interview, NT8, 14 September 2021).

This form of vicarious learning (observing and learning from others) demonstrates how this novice teacher developed her sense of agency despite the limitations imposed by the PLM. Moreover, Leijen, Pedaste and Baucal (2022) highlight the relationship between teacher education programmes and agency. They emphasise the inclusion of assignments in professional practice sessions that encourage student teachers to integrate their personal and professional identities, fostering a sense of contentment and self-confidence. This connection is evident in the module, as the document sources indicate that research assignments were given to students, prompting them to reflect and think critically about their approach to various scenarios.

Individuals typically rely on their personal and professional identities when faced with challenges, and this was reflected in how they handled the difficulties they encountered during their first year of teaching. Some demonstrated determination and created their resources or sought assistance from more knowledgeable staff members. By observing colleagues who demonstrate proactive behaviour and successful outcomes, teachers can gain confidence in their ability to exercise agency. Others struggled independently, hindering their self-efficacy and diminishing their motivation to attain it. In Bandura's words:

> The self-assurance with which people approach and manage difficult tasks determines whether they make good or poor use of their capabilities. Insidious self-doubts can easily override the best skills (Bandura, 1997, p.35).

Furthermore, certain novice teachers demonstrated exceptional abilities in areas like lesson planning, providing learning support, and creating educational resources at their schools making good use of their perceived capabilities (exercising their agency). Furthermore, it showed that this association between their agency and professional growth began during their time as student teachers, as it aligned with their initial motivations for pursuing a teaching career. Notably, those novice teachers who exhibited agency during their preservice teaching

years were the ones who continued to demonstrate it in their workplace as novice teachers. Consequently, the data analysis indicated that agency played a significant role in fostering self-efficacy among novice teachers.

5.5 Triadic Reciprocal Determinism and novice teacher preparedness

Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) highlights the interactions among the triadic elements of environment, and personal and behavioural factors (Min, 2019, p.3). In other words, behaviour, personal beliefs (cognitive and affective actions), and the environment are intertwined and influence each other. The interplay of these three factors is crucial, more so than any pair of them alone. There has been relatively little research applying TRD to the study of learning behaviour (Mo, Jin & Jin, 2022). However, Housego (1990) conducted a study and found that there are intricate connections between teaching behaviours, a teacher's dispositions (such as feeling prepared), and the educational setting (environment). Figure 5.2 below shows the interconnectedness between the three elements (personal, environment and behaviour), and how they influence novice teachers' development of agency and self-efficacy beliefs (in turn impacting their sense of preparedness to teach).

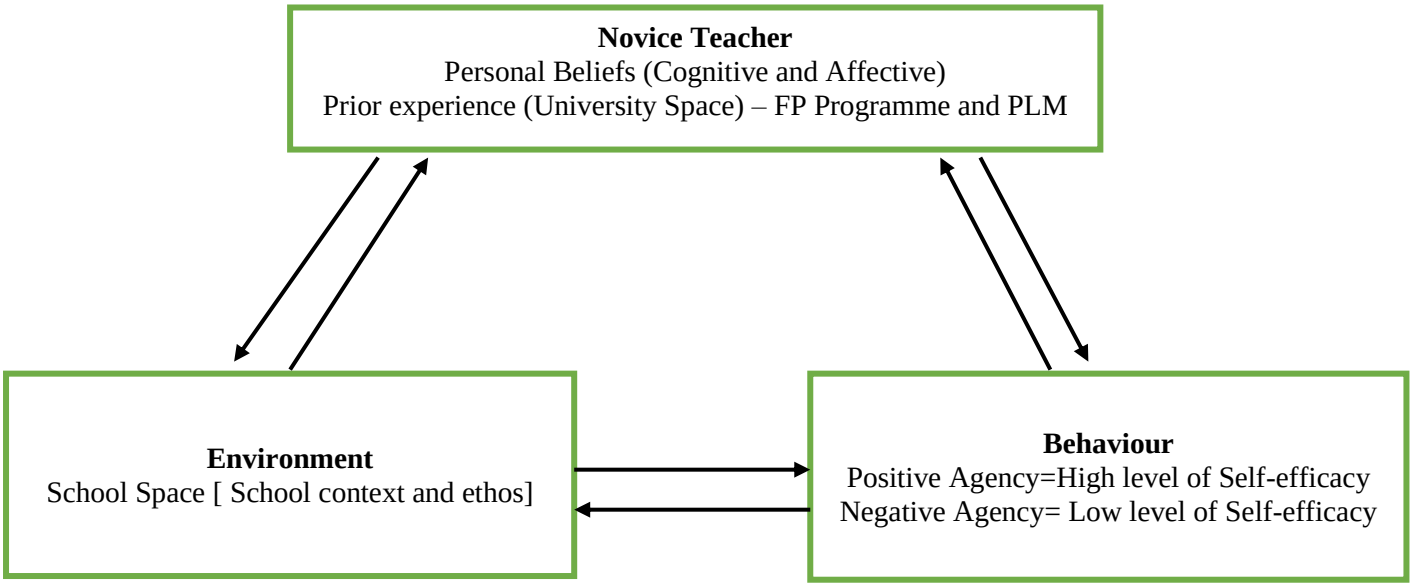

Figure 5.2: Diagram of Bandura's Model of Triadic Reciprocal Causation adapted from Bandura (1986a)

The three elements - personal factors, environmental factors, and behaviour - have a reciprocal relationship, meaning they can exert influence on each other in either direction. Action and reaction result in a continuously dynamic interaction among the three factors, meaning that reciprocal influences do not necessarily need to be equal or simultaneous (Font, Garay & Jones, 2016). Personal factors (both cognitive and affective), which include the novice teachers' prior

experiences (in the FP programme and exposure or lack of exposure in the PLM) could enhance the novice teachers' sense of preparedness or leave them feeling inadequate and unprepared for the complexities of schooling, in this case, teaching in the Foundation Phase. However, as the participants transitioned into the role of novice teachers, they found themselves immersed in the school environment (school culture), where they continued to learn through workshops and fellow staff members, as expressed by NT2 (in Chapter Four, specifically 4.4.3.4), and NT 5 when she said:

> I have a very good HOD, so she would always remind me like weeks before the time and would always give me the tricks in terms of don't leave this for last minute (Individual Interview, NT 5, 9 September 2021).

This altered their sense of preparedness to teach. As such, it is important to note that not all novice teachers enjoy a supportive environment within their schools. Some of them encountered challenging situations where their fellow educators exhibited a competitive attitude, creating a toxic atmosphere. As a result, these novice teachers felt embarrassed and disheartened, contributing to their overall sense of dismay, as experienced by NT3:

> it's like they want to test how you work under pressure but not even for the school's gain, but for their own personal gain. We all know those colleagues that doesn't really think of the wellbeing of the new teacher and they forget that they were there, that they were also once a novice teacher (Individual interview, NT3, 7 September 2021).

An unsupportive school environment could hinder a teacher's preparedness and confidence. From the data, one can infer that one's personal factors and environmental factors can lead to these novice teachers exercising positive agency, which leads to high self-efficacy levels despite the feelings that the PLM did not sufficiently prepare them for the realities of schooling. High self-efficacy increases the likelihood that novice teachers will be able to cope with difficult tasks, set realistic goals and persist in difficulties. Alternatively, low self-efficacy brought on by exercising one's agency in negative ways, could lead to feeling overwhelmed and "like a fish out of water".

5.6 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to offer a discussion on the findings of this study. It revealed a misalignment or incongruence between the intended and implemented curriculum which could have implications for the quality of teaching. In addition, the data showed the PLM being overly theoretical and not very practical which could account for these novice teachers feeling unprepared for the realities of schooling. Furthermore, it shows how some can draw on their own agency despite the gaps in the PLM to develop their self-efficacy beliefs, lastly, it

highlights the reciprocal role of three elements: personal factors, environment factors and behaviour and how these might account for high and low levels of self-efficacy. I now turn to the final chapter to offer some concluding remarks, highlight the implications of what I found and offer recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

Chapter Five, the previous chapter of the thesis, presented a thorough discussion of the analytical themes identified in this study. This chapter serves to provide an overview of the research and offers a discussion of the findings in relation to the research questions. Moreover, I examine the limitations of the study, delve into the implications of its findings, and propose recommendations for future research.

6.2 An overview of the study

The purpose of this thesis was to explore novice teachers' perceptions and experiences of the Practical Learning Module and their preparedness to teach in the Foundation Phase of schooling. Despite gaining international attention, the literature pertaining to Initial Teacher Education and novice teacher preparedness revealed that there is a dearth of research focusing on ITE programmes, especially from a novice teacher's perspective. Novice teachers' voices are seldom used to ascertain whether modules taught in ITE programmes achieve their planned goals. This study sets out to contribute to the research knowledge base regarding the initial teacher provisioning of FP teachers in South Africa.

Methodologically, this qualitative interpretive study adopted a single case study design to collect data through document sources, semi-structured individual interviews, and focus group interviews. This single case study comprised three embedded cases, namely the macro case (B Ed FP Teaching programme), the meso case (Practical Learning Module), and the micro case (8 novice teachers the unit of analysis), to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research topic. Theoretically, this study is underpinned by Bandura's Social Cognitive theory, more specifically his notion of Self-efficacy Theory and Triadic Reciprocal Determinism.

Both the methodological and theoretical frameworks, respectively, provided direction for this study allowing for a more comprehensive understanding as to how the PLM at the specific University played a role in the FP novice teachers' preparedness to teach in the Foundation Phase of schooling.

The data collected in this study yielded several key findings, which are now discussed in relation to each research question.

6.3 Summary of key findings in relation to the research questions

6.3.1 What is the nature of the Practical Learning Module and how does it prepare novice teachers to teach in the Foundation Phase of schooling?

The Practical Learning Module (PLM) is comprised of both formal lectures and practical experience in an authentic school setting. Student teachers attend lectures at the university and then engage in teaching practice at schools throughout the year. This module is compulsory and spans four years. It is regarded as a capstone module since students cannot proceed to the next year's level unless they pass this module. Novice teachers have expressed that the PLM effectively equipped them with some skills in lesson planning, differentiating between diverse learner needs and doing reflection.

Teaching practice, spending time in schools was regarded as the most beneficial dimension of this module however these novice teachers often yearned for more time in the classroom. One of the greatest critiques of this module is that it was too theoretical and novice teachers felt that if there had been more practical learning opportunities and more demonstration lessons they would have felt better prepared. It appears from the data that the PLM did not adequately prepare them for the realities and complexities of teaching in the Foundation Phase of schooling.

6.3.2 What are the challenges novice teachers face and how much of these can be attributed to their perceptions and experiences of the Practical Learning Module?

In Chapter Four, the study highlighted the challenges faced by novice teachers as they transitioned into the school environment. One significant challenge revealed in the study was classroom management, in terms of discipline and inability to control the class. They also faced stress due to unfamiliar administrative duties, as they lacked knowledge in these areas. In addition, they encountered pedagogical challenges (knowing what to teach but seldom knowing how to teach it).

While they had a strong understanding of the theoretical aspects of learning from the lectures, they found it challenging to apply that knowledge in practice. Interestingly, they attributed these challenges to their lack of practical training in the PLM and experiences within the school environment rather than questioning their self-efficacy. Furthermore, despite the novice teachers experiencing some challenges, they were able to overcome some of them because of their agentic behaviour.

6.3.3 What changes should be made to the Practical Learning Module to better prepare future Foundation Phase teachers?

The findings of the study indicate that novice teachers recognised the role played by the Practical Learning Module in their preparation, acknowledging the valuable aspects they learned from the module. However, they also had recommendations for enhancing the module to better prepare future FP teachers.

One recommendation was to reduce the number of assignments during the teaching practice period, as it tended to divert their focus away from observing and learning. The novice teachers felt that the pressure to complete assignments hindered their ability to fully engage and learn from the work-integrated learning component of the module. Another suggestion was to make the reflection task more flexible, removing the requirement to adhere to a specific theoretical framework. This change would allow for more open and diverse reflection, expanding the learning experience.

They proposed the development of a compulsory resource box that could be gradually built over the four years of the module. This resource box would serve as a ready-to-use kit when beginning the first year of teaching, alleviating stress and time-consuming efforts in creating resources. They also recommended having additional teaching practice sessions at different times of the year. Specifically, the novice teachers preferred starting the year with teaching practice to witness the beginning of the school year. Furthermore, the most common suggestion from novice teachers was to incorporate more practical demonstrations of lessons during lectures across all FP subjects. They believed that increased exposure to practical demonstrations would enhance their pedagogical skills.

Overall, these recommendations aimed to refine the PLM by reducing assignment workload during teaching practice, fostering flexible reflection, providing a resource box, incorporating more teaching practice sessions at different times, and emphasising practical demonstrations to improve pedagogical skills in the FP subjects.

6.4 Limitations of the study

As I conducted this study, I was aware of certain limitations. A limitation of a study design or instrument is the systematic bias that the researcher did not or could not control which could negatively affect the results. Next, I will highlight the limitations inherent in the study. Firstly, this study was limited to a small group of 8 participants. As a result of this, the findings of this study cannot be generalised. However, Mwita (2022, p.622) states that qualitative studies tend

to utilise small samples. The debate on whether the findings of qualitative studies are appropriate for making generalisations has existed for decades. Despite not being able to generalise the findings, in qualitative research, participants are selected based on the richness of the information they have to offer. Staller (2021, cites Yin, 2011) explains the selection of the unit of analysis aims to identify those that can provide the most relevant and abundant data, considering the study's topic. Furthermore, the selection process ensures the inclusion of a wide range of perspectives to encompass diverse viewpoints.

The study intended to enhance readers' understanding of how a PLM can play a role in novice teachers' preparedness and how efficient they are within the school environment. Furthermore, there were methodological limitations which I alluded to in Chapter Three, specifically (3.9). A consideration for further studies could be to observe the student teachers in their final year of studies and then in their first year of being novice teachers to see how they transition from pre-service teachers to becoming in-service teachers.

6.4.1 Methodological limitations of the study

Some methodological limitations influenced the procedure for collecting data. Firstly, I embarked on data collection during the pandemic. As a result of COVID-19 participants were given a choice on whether to do face-to-face or online interviews. All the participants decided preferred to do the interviews using an online platform. As a consequence of doing the procedure electronically, I struggled to obtain signed consent forms from the participants in the planned time frames. I had to send the participants reminders that the signed consent forms must be submitted to me electronically before I could commence with the interviews. Secondly, using digital technology also proved to be unreliable because of load shedding and I had to plan efficiently to select times that were convenient for both the participants and me, which was difficult at times. The aforementioned in addition to conducting all the interviews impacted the time frames that I initially set out to conduct my research in.

Logistics and timeframes were challenges relating to conducting focus group interviews. I had to reschedule the focus group interviews thrice instead of having one focus group interview. I ended up conducting two focus group interviews allowing for flexibility and adhering to time schedules that suited all participants.

6.5 Implications and recommendations for further study

This study primarily focused on the Practical Learning Module of a specific University, but its findings have broader implications for teacher preparedness overall, with a specific focus on

FP teacher training. In addition, the study opens up possibilities for future research. Presented below are implications and recommendations for further study:

a. This study focused on the perceptions and experiences of novice FP teachers in relation to the Practical Learning Module across two pedagogical spaces of learning.

Implication: The perceptions and experiences regarding the Practical Learning Module (PLM) are subjective and may be influenced by individuals' experiences as novice teachers, rather than solely reflecting the impact of the PLM on their preparedness.

Recommendation: A longitudinal study could be conducted in which final-year FP student teachers at the specific university are observed and then they are observed once again when they are novice teachers in their first year of teaching. Researchers can evaluate the long-term effects of the training by tracking the professional development of teachers who have completed the programme over an extended period. It will ultimately provide valuable insights into the impact of the PLM on teacher performance.

b. The findings of this study revealed that there is a misalignment between the intended/official and the recontextualised/ enacted curriculum of the Practical Learning Module.

Implication: The implementation of the curriculum is dependent on the teacher educator (the academic assigned to the module). These individuals come with their own beliefs about teaching, theories, pedagogical approaches and teaching and learning styles which could influence how they deliver the module and ultimately influence how students experience the module.

Recommendation: Curriculum designers should consider standardising the curriculum and designing teaching guides that interpret the intended curriculum.

c. This study highlighted the reality shock South African FP novice teachers face in their first years as they transition from being students into the school environment. FP teachers experience various challenges, despite being a part of the teaching practice component of their formal learning.

Implication: Teaching practice does not give students sufficient opportunities to be prepared for the realities of FP schooling. The schools, mentor teachers, student self-efficacy, teacher agency and the overall FP training programme play a role in their preparedness.

Recommendation: Comparative studies of different tertiary institutions that provide Foundation phase initial teacher education can be conducted. This would possibly allow researchers to gain a thorough understanding of teacher training approaches that promote teacher preparedness in the Foundation Phase of schooling.

By considering these implications and pursuing these recommendations for further study, researchers can make significant advancements in the field of FP teacher training. This, in turn, will contribute to the overall enhancement of educational practices.

6.6 Conclusion

In this final chapter, my objective was to provide an overview of this study by revisiting the research questions. I presented the findings in relation to the research questions and acknowledged the limitations of the study. Furthermore, I offered recommendations for further research. Through this study, it became evident that there is limited knowledge regarding the impact of the PLM on equipping student teachers with practical skills for effective transition into the school environment. The issue of novice teacher efficacy is a global concern with implications for teaching and learning quality. Research has shown that teachers with high levels of self-efficacy ultimately experience higher levels of job satisfaction, and lower levels of job-related stress and face less difficulties with dealing with student misbehaviours (Barni et al., 2019).

Furthermore, according to this thesis, improving the PLM at a particular university can improve FP teacher preparation. If the PLM has a more practical approach, offering more practical learning opportunities, then it will have the potential to enhance initial teacher education in South Africa by reducing the gap between theory and practice, ultimately resulting in better-prepared teachers. This study also addressed a research gap because the majority of previous studies have concentrated on the experiences and perceptions of student teachers regarding teacher preparedness whilst this study focuses on the experiences and perceptions across two pedagogical spaces, namely schools and universities.

Prior experiences, beliefs, environment, and agency all play a role in novice teacher preparedness. However, it is noteworthy to mention that if novice teachers have positive agency, despite them having negative experiences or perceptions of the PLM they will go into the schools and strive to engage in quality teaching and learning.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Permission from the WCED

University of the Western Cape
Faculty of Education, Private Bag X17, Bellville, South Africa

Directorate: Research

Western Cape Education Department

Dear Mr M Kanzi

RE: Request for permission to conduct a research project involving WCED-employed teachers at primary schools in the Western Cape

I am currently a registered master's student at the University of the Western Cape. I am conducting a study that explores a practical learning module and its impact on novice teachers' perceptions of their preparedness to teach in the Foundation Phase of schooling. The sample that I wish to use is novice teachers who are currently in their first or second year of teaching Grades R-3 at schools in Cape Town. I have received ethical clearance for my research project and the HSSREC reference number is HS21/5/29. I hereby would like to formally request permission from WCED to conduct this study with educators who are currently employed by WCED in Cape Town.

This study will be conducted purely for research purposes. The identities of the educators and the schools where they are teaching will not be mentioned in the study. Anonymity will be ensured by my using pseudonyms in the research. The focus group and individual interviews that I shall conduct with the participants will be audio-recorded for transcribing purposes. No classroom observation of learners or educators will be conducted. The data collected will remain confidential throughout the research process and only be used for this study.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at 2923855@myuwc.ac.za if you have any inquiries regarding the research. Alternatively, you may contact my academic supervisor Dr Lucinda Du Plooy at Iduplooy@uwc.ac.za.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Researcher: Mrs Zureenah Williams

Appendix B: Information sheet

University of the Western Cape
Faculty of Education, Private Bag X17, Bellville, South Africa

Information Sheet

Title of the research project: Novice teachers' perceptions and experiences of the Practical Learning Module and their preparedness to teach in the Foundation Phase of schooling

Researcher: Mrs Zureenah Williams

Purpose of the research: The purpose of this study is to explore a practical learning module and its impact on novice teachers' perceptions of their preparedness to teach in the Foundation Phase of schooling. Moreover, this research will inform the existing body of knowledge on novice teachers' perceptions of teacher preparedness in Grades R-3.

Location: The research project will be conducted in Cape Town, Western Cape, South Africa.

Sample: Newly qualified teachers who graduated from the specific teacher training programme at the selected university and who are in their first or second year of teaching in a Foundation Phase (Grade R-3) classroom.

Participants may volunteer to participate in this research project of their own free will. The participants also have the right to withdraw from this research project at any time, without any consequences. Participants who volunteer to participate will be asked to complete a consent form that concerns consenting to one or more of the following:

1. Participating in a focus group interview
2. Participating in an individual interview
3. Being audio recorded during the interviews

Confidentiality and Anonymity

All the participants and the higher education institution will remain anonymous throughout the entire research process. The research will not interfere with the participants relating to their teaching and classroom functioning.

Voluntary Participation:

Participation in this research project is voluntary. All participants may refuse to participate and refuse to answer any questions during the interviews. Participants may also choose to withdraw themselves from the study at any time without any consequences.

Possible risks and harms: There are no known or foreseen risks associated with participation in this study.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information regarding this research project.

Researcher: Mrs Zureenah Williams

Email: 2923855@myuwc.ac.za

Supervisor: Dr Lucinda Du Plooy

Email: Iduplooy@uwc.ac.za

HOD: Dr Neetha Ravjee

Email: nravjee@uwc.ac.za

Acting Dean: Prof R Govender

Email: rgovender@uwc.ac.za

HSSREC

Research Development

Tel: 021 959 4111

Email: research-ethics@uwc.ac.za

Appendix C: Consent forms

Appendix C1: Consent form for educator individual interviews

University of the Western Cape
Faculty of Education, Private Bag X17, Bellville, South Africa

Consent Form for Educators for Individual Interviews

Research Title: Novice teachers' perceptions and experiences of the Practical Learning Module and their preparedness to teach in the Foundation Phase of schooling

Principal Researcher: Mrs Zureenah Williams

Please read the following information carefully so that you are aware of what you are consenting to when you choose to participate in this study.

Please put a (X) in the appropriate box.

I give consent:

1. To participate in an individual interview with the researcher.	
2. That the individual interview be audio recorded.	
3. For the interview audio recordings to be used by the researcher in the study.	

I hereby give consent to participate in this research study and to be interviewed by the interviewer. This is for data to be collected by means of an interview to be used in this research study. Permission to record the interviews has been requested from me and I am fully aware that I may refuse to have the individual interview tape-recorded.

I understand that participation in this study is voluntary and that I may refuse to answer any or all questions which may make me feel uncomfortable. Additionally, I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time if I wish to do so. The information gathered from this study will be handled with confidentiality and anonymity will be ensured by a pseudonym to protect my identity. I am assured that the information gathered in this study will be used for research purposes only and I am assured that there is no risk involved in participation in the study.

I hereby acknowledge that I have read and understood what taking part in this research study involves and I consent to voluntarily participate in this research by signing this form.

Signed_____ on _____this day _____ at _____

Researcher: Mrs Zureenah Williams

Email: 2923855@myuwc.ac.za

Supervisor: Dr Lucinda Du Plooy

Email: Iduplooy@uwc.ac.za

Appendix C2: Consent form for educator focus group interviews

University of the Western Cape
Faculty of Education, Private Bag X17, Bellville, South Africa

Consent Form for Educators for Focus Group Interviews

Research Title: Novice teachers' perceptions and experiences of the Practical Learning Module and their preparedness to teach in the Foundation Phase of schooling

Principal Researcher: Mrs Zureenah Williams

Please read the following information carefully so that you are aware of what you are consenting to when you choose to participate in this study.

Please put a (X) in the appropriate box.

I give consent:

1. To participate in a focus group interview with the researcher.	
2. That the focus group interview be audio recorded.	
3. For the interview audio recordings to be used by the researcher in the study.	

I hereby give consent to participate in this research study and to be interviewed by the interviewer. This is for data to be collected by means of an interview to be used in this research study. Permission to record the interviews has been requested from me and I am fully aware that I may refuse to have the individual interview tape recorded.

I understand that participation in this study is voluntary and that I may refuse to answer any or all questions which may make me feel uncomfortable. Additionally, I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time if I wish to do so. The information gathered from this study will be handled with confidentiality and anonymity will be ensured by a pseudonym to protect my identity.

I am assured that the information gathered in this study will be used for research purposes only and I am assured that there is no risk involved in participation in the study.

Non-Disclosure Statement

I ……agree to maintain the confidentiality of the information discussed by all participants and researchers during the focus group session.

If you cannot agree to the above stipulation please see the researcher(s) as you may be ineligible to participate in this study.

To obtain more information about the project, ask questions about the research procedures, express concerns about your participation or report any problems relating to this research please feel free to contact me.

I hereby acknowledge that I have read and understood what taking part in this research study involves and I consent to voluntarily participate in this research by signing this form.

Signed_____ on _____this day _____ at _____

Researcher: Mrs Zureenah Williams

Email: 2923855@myuwc.ac.za

Supervisor: Dr Lucinda Du Plooy

Email: Iduplooy@uwc.ac.za

HOD: Dr Neetha Ravjee

Email: nravjee@uwc.ac.za

Appendix D: Interview sheet

Appendix D1: Focus group interview guide for educators

Semi-structured Focus Group Interview Guide for Educators:

1. What are your perceptions of the concept of "teacher preparedness"?
2. What role do you think practical learning plays in the training of teachers and teacher preparedness?
3. Explain what the Practical Learning Module of the university you graduated from entailed.
4. How do you think the Practical Learning Module prepared you as novice teachers to teach in the Foundation Phase of schooling?
5. What is the most useful knowledge that you gained in the Practical Learning Module about how to transition into the school as a qualified educator?
6. How would you describe the Practical Learning Module made an impact on your efficacy as a teacher?
7. What types of challenges did you experience as Foundation Phase student teachers? Please provide me with examples of these challenges.
8. In your opinion, do you believe that the Practical Learning Module of the teacher training programme adequately prepared you to overcome these challenges?
9. What suggestions do you have that you think should be made to the Practical Learning Module to better prepare future Foundation Phase teachers?

Appendix D2: Semi-structured individual interview guide for educators

Semi-structured Individual Interview Guide for Educators:

1. What has been your motivation to specifically become a Foundation Phase teacher?

2. How would you describe your perception of the Practical Learning Module of the B.Ed (Foundation Phase Teaching) training programme at the institution that you attended?
3. How would you describe the opportunities you were exposed to in the Practical Learning Module to observe, practice, review and reflect on your teaching of lessons?

4. What are some of the challenges that you faced as a newly qualified teacher in your own classroom? Please provide me with examples of the challenges.

5. How many of the challenges that you experienced do you think are a result of inadequate training in the Practical Learning Module? Please explain.

6. Do you believe any of these challenges were an outcome of your own self-efficacy beliefs and behaviour? Please explain.

7. In your opinion, do you believe that the Practical Learning Module of the teacher training programme adequately contributed toward preparing you to teach Grade R-3?

Appendix E: Ethical clearance HSSREC of UWC

UNIVERSITY *of the* WESTERN CAPE

60 YEARS *of hope, action & knowledge*

20 July 2021

Mrs Z Williams
Educational Studies
Faculty of Education

HSSREC Reference Number:	HS21/5/29
Project Title:	Novice teachers' perceptions and experiences of the practical learning module and their preparedness to teach in the Foundation Phase of schooling.
Approval Period:	16 July 2021 – 16 July 2024

I hereby certify that the Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Western Cape approved the methodology and ethics of the above mentioned research project.

Any amendments, extension or other modifications to the protocol must be submitted to the Ethics Committee for approval.

Please remember to submit a progress report by 30 November each year for the duration of the project.

The permission to conduct the study must be submitted to HSSREC for record keeping purposes.

The Committee must be informed of any serious adverse events and/or termination of the study.

Ms Patricia Josias
Research Ethics Committee Officer
University of the Western Cape

Director: Research Development
University of the Western Cape
Private Bag X 17
Bellville 7535
Republic of South Africa
Tel: +27 21 959 4111
Email: research-ethics@uwc.ac.za

NHREC Registration Number: HSSREC-130416-049

Appendix F: Ethical clearance WCED

Western Cape Government
Education

Directorate: Research

meshack.kanzi@westerncape.gov.za
Tel: +27 021 467 2350
Fax: 086 590 2282
Private Bag x9114, Cape Town, 8000
wced.wcape.gov.za

REFERENCE: 20210824-5227
ENQUIRIES: Mr M Kanzi

Mrs Zureenah Williams
12 Erica Way
Lentegeur
Mitchell's Plain
7785

Dear Mrs Zureenah Williams,

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: NOVICE TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF THE PRACTICAL LEARNING MODULE AND THEIR PREPAREDNESS TO TEACH IN THE FOUNDATION PHASE OF SCHOOLING.

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

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from 30 **August 2021 till 31 March 2022.**
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Mr M Kanzi at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number.
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
10. The approval of your research request does not imply a promise of any data from the WCED. Should you require data, you will have to request it from the participating schools where it will be possible to secure parental consent.
11. Please note that POPIA prohibits the sharing of personal information without parental consent.
12. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
13. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

    The Director: Research Services
    Western Cape Education Department
    Private Bag X9114
    CAPE TOWN
    8000

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.

Meshack Kanzi
Directorate: Research
DATE: 30 August 2021