

**CONCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS AS  
EXPERTS:  
A NARRATIVE INQUIRY**

By

**CHRISTOPHER LUNGILE TUTA**

**SN: 9605304**

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**SUPERVISOR**

**DR DAISY PILLAY**

**EDGEWOOD CAMPUS**

**February 2017**

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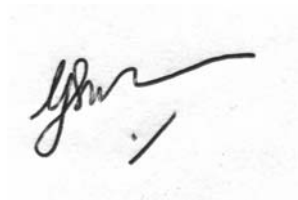
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## **CERTIFICATION**

We, the undersigned, do solemnly declare that we have abided by the University of KwaZulu-Natal's policy on language editing. The dissertation was professionally edited for proper English language, grammar, punctuation, spelling, and overall academic style. All original electronic forms of the text have been retained should they be required.



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**02 February 2017**

## **DEDICATION**

I hereby dedicate this work to the following important people in my life:

To my late father Phangalele Tuta, who would have appreciated to see me completing this intellectual work as he was the one who moulded me from my early years in all spheres of life.

To my loving mother Abbie Tuta who has been a pillar of strength ever since I began my education. I am grateful that she is still witnessing the entire process of crafting this academic and intellectual work.

To my late brother Bafana Tuta who left me early before I could receive any academic achievement. Today, he would have been very happy to see this academic work.

To my late sister Nomawethu Tuta who would have appreciated this intellectual work.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study explores conceptions of teachers as experts through memory work within the Pinetown district. The main purpose was to gain a deeper understanding of who is an expert-teacher and what attributes do expert teachers have? Furthermore, how do these attributes inform what knowledge teachers acquire in the process of becoming experts? And how and where do expert-teachers acquire their knowledge to become experts?

This is a qualitative study underpinned by an interpretive paradigm using narrative inquiry as a methodology. Four teachers at different levels were selected for this study. The participants are qualified teachers employed by the department of education. Using multiple methods that included open-ended unstructured interviews, portfolio inquiry, artefact inquiry and collage inquiry, data was generated to reconstruct four storied narratives of each teacher, about their lived experiences as experts.

The analysis found that expert-teachers have different attributes based on personal and professional knowledge that warrants them to be classified as experts. The study also found that expert-teachers have a sense of resilience as well as a passion for teaching and learning. They also value result-driven practice, possess a winning mentality, are able to win the hearts and minds of their learners, are intuitively inquisitive, have a sense of responsibility, always searching for more pedagogical knowledge, are always hungry for content knowledge, act as agents of change and are humble and exemplary in nature and in their professional capacity.

The study revealed that expert-teachers have content, curriculum and pedagogical knowledge, learned the value of education from an early age from their parents, family and community members, possess organisational knowledge, as well as knowledge of networking and of working through professional clusters. The study also revealed that teachers develop as a result of the space given to them. They learn through the process of induction and mentoring, professional development programmes, expert supervision, motivation by their school management teams (SMT), school culture and an emotionally friendly and healthy environment that allows them to engage in the process of development to the level of becoming an expert.

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## **GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>CPTD</b>	Continuing Professional Teacher Development
<b>IQMS</b>	Integrated Quality Management System
<b>SACE</b>	South African Council for Educators
<b>SMT</b>	School Management Team

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **COMMENCING MY JOURNEY: BECOMING AN EXPERT-TEACHER**

### **1.1. Introduction**

My personal journey of learning, knowledge and skill acquisition began when I was a young boy at primary school in the mid-1980s and continued up until the early 1990s when I finished my schooling and trained to become a teacher. This study on the understanding of teachers as experts has become my life-long area of interest as a teacher in a South African township school. In order to become a life-long teacher-learner, the teacher needs to gain expertise in the field of education. Within this research study I wish to strengthen my grasp of the subject by adopting a narrative approach as a way of understanding and developing further expertise as a teacher-researcher.

I grew up in a family where there was strict parental supervision and I was always kept indoors. As I grew older, I enjoyed being out of my father's control. I began playing soccer with my friends and thereby became exposed to new things in life as a child. This led me to explore new avenues and pathways of learning and life. At age twelve, I took a train ride to the coast with some friends and my elder brother. On our way, I saw many new things which became of great importance to my personal growth as a child. From the train station, I walked with my friends who were familiar with the road to the beach. As we walked, we passed by the Durban Country Golf Club, a place I had only seen on television and in magazines. I was also able to see Kings Park Rugby Stadium for the first time.



**Figure 1.1.**

**My first outing to the coast with family and friends**

The trip to the coast with my friends was my first informal learning exercise about the world without being under the strict control of my family. From this experience, I was able to realise that any learning about oneself is particularly meaningful when not under the strict control and instruction of others.

Getting to know the world in a spontaneous and unplanned way often gives an individual a certain degree of pleasure and freedom (Steyn and van Niekerk, 2007), even to learn from their mistakes. As a teacher, I have come to acknowledge the need to engage in the process of learning without being pushed or coerced (2007). Accordingly, teachers should be given the academic freedom to learn through trial and error without unnecessary interruptions from others.

Part of my development as a school-going learner also took place when I attended extra tuition at the University of KwaZulu-Natal during weekends and school vacations. I found that the university students who taught me were better prepared and equipped to teach different school subjects as they had a deep knowledge of each discipline. As a result, I benefitted immensely from the tuition programme.

### **1.1.1. Question #1**

*What does it mean for a schoolteacher to have a deep understanding of the subject and teach in a way that makes learning meaningful to their learners?*

Unfortunately, the teachers in the township school at which I attended were not sufficiently dedicated or adequately trained to teach us in a way that was meaningful. In Grade eleven and twelve I was enrolled at a private school. Here, I was exposed to being taught by teachers from other race groups who appeared dedicated to their work.

### **1.1.2. Question #2**

*Why were the teachers who taught me in the township school not as dedicated or committed to the task of teaching as their counterparts in the private school?*

In the township school, as learners we were not given individual attention. At the private school I found that when our test results were poor we were given extra tuition for that topic. As a result of this positive learning experience in the private school I was able to obtain a university entrance pass.

### **1.1.3. Question #3**

*What does it mean to be a teacher who actively works to enhance teaching and learning for all learners?*

This research study will not only enable me to gain deeper insight into the knowledge and skills that teachers have, but also how they can become experts/specialists (New Strategic Framework for Teacher Development, 2007). Having completed my teaching degree at the (previous) University of Durban-Westville, where I majored in history and languages, I subsequently taught English as a second language at a secondary school in Ntuzuma Township. This time, I found myself employed as a teacher in a similar township school that I had left earlier as a learner because of my bad experience with the quality of the teaching staff. I was determined to be a different kind of history teacher in this township school, one who was dedicated to the task of teaching and with the capacity to develop expertise in the subject.

## **1.2. Personal motivation**

In all, I have worked as a teacher in a township secondary school for some fifteen years. Unfortunately, my school has been unable to produce good results in certain learning areas in the matriculation examinations. Departmental officials have been visiting the school for many years trying to diagnose the problem. After interacting with us as staff, they came to the conclusion that the school lacks expert teachers in certain subjects. To rectify this situation, the teachers at the school, together with the departmental officials, decided to offer a programme of extra tuition to student learners to try and improve the pass rate at the school. The programme stipulated that after school and during vacations, there would be expert/specialist teachers available from other schools to teach our learners.

### **1.2.1. Question #4**

*Why are teachers not given the opportunity to collaboratively develop a plan for their own learning and personal development that could better support improved student learning?*

Through our interaction with teachers in the cluster meetings we soon realised that most of the expert/specialist teachers that were brought in had the same formal qualifications as the teachers in my school.

### **1.2.2. Question #5**

*What does it mean to be an expert-teacher?*

All teachers have the potential to become experts in their field of specialization. According to the Policy Framework for Teacher Development (2007) all teachers in South African schools must be experts in their area of specialization. It is thus my hope, that this study will assist me to gain a deeper understanding and knowledge of how to become an expert-teacher.

## **1.3. What does it mean to be an expert-teacher?**

Interacting with the research literature, I found a number of definitions of the concept: expert. These established meanings generally revolve around certain attributes and skills that are



possessed by an expert-teacher. Accordingly, I have chosen the following sub-themes to present different definitions, understandings, and perspectives of what it means to be an expert-teacher. These are:

- i. The attributes of an expert-teacher;
- ii. Teacher-learning and development;
- iii. Creating space for teacher-learning and development.

### **1.3.1. An expert-teacher**

According to Schempp, McCullick, St. Pierre, Woorons, You and Clark (2001), an expert-teacher is one who has the ability to grow independently. Schempp *et al.*, (2001) go on to argue that an expert-teacher must be well-grounded in the knowledge, skills, values, principles, methods, and procedures, relevant to the chosen discipline or learning area. For Sanchez, Rosales and Canedo (1999), an expert-teacher is one who is always seeking new knowledge for personal and academic development. Likewise, Ono (2010) describes an expert-teacher as a person who possesses a deep knowledge for teaching and learning that can be used by the learners in various contexts. Scholars such as Berliner (1986) further argue that an expert-teacher is well-acquainted with different approaches to teaching and learning. These insights focus on the individual as a teacher-expert and the resultant quality of teaching and learning that it to be achieved.

For Hattie (2003), an expert-teacher must possess a deep appreciation of teaching and learning. This will make it easier to recognize problems in the classroom and thereby introduce better corrective measures. In other words, expert-teachers are able to anticipate, plan and take relevant measures as required by the situation that presents itself. Additionally, Grasha (1994) views an expert-teacher as one who possesses teaching methods relevant to various contexts of learning. Finally, Grasha (1994) can argue that expert-teachers are able to modify their teaching styles depending on the context at hand.

### **1.3.2. Teachers as knowledge-workers**

According to Reynard (2006) teachers are knowledge-workers. As a result, they understand the entire process of teaching and learning in order to become expert-teachers. Reynard goes on to

add that teachers and knowledge-workers do not depend on pre-set standards but instead develop their own. For Ono (2010) therefore, professional development activities are a way of gathering relevant skills so as to become an expert-teacher. In this regard, Macmillan (2007) also argues that continuous staff development activities are a way of improving teaching competencies that can result in gaining skills to become an expert-teacher. An expert-teacher is also able to use self-help guides to increase their knowledge. In addition, longer courses in education theory can also assist teachers to become experts (2007). For Evans (2002), teachers can become restricted professionals if they depend on prescribed standards. In other words, teachers must also develop an aptitude for learning so as to develop their expertise. Continuous staff development also assists in a teacher's professional growth. Accordingly, Griffiths (2002) argues that reflection in action and reflection on action are the necessary skills possessed by an expert-teacher. This means that an expert-teacher is able to change instructional strategy during the course of teaching and is also able to reflect back on the strategies used for teaching for the purpose of self-improvement.

### **1.3.3. Institutional Culture and teacher expertise**

For Day (2006), school culture cannot be treated in isolation with the teacher activities in a particular school. Accordingly, a positive school culture contributes greatly towards the creation of a teacher-positive identity. Hence, the presence of a positive culture of learning in a school assists teachers develop to their optimum level. As observed by Zembylas (2003), the personal and professional selves of a teacher links to the prevalent culture in a school to the extent that a teacher's identity is both constructed and deconstructed.

Structures within a school, as Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2007) argue, must provide an emotionally-rich environment in order to enable teachers to work at their optimum level. Teachers who work in an appreciative environment are usually motivated to do even better in the future.

## **1.4. Theoretical lenses**

The theoretical lens which underpins this study is both informed and explained through what is called the Force-Field Model of Teacher Development. This model advocates that teachers develop within four distinct factors, namely, biographical, institutional, programmatic and

contextual (Samuel, 2008). In other words, a teacher's identity in terms of the biographical is shaped and stimulated by who they are and the institution under which they work. Together, these will stimulate their professional and personal development. A programmatic environment allows the development of a teacher in a work space where departmental programmes are in place and that the context is conducive to the activity of learning. Here, the interpretive paradigm is used as a theory of enquiry. An interpretive paradigm looks at people as being subject to their experiences and feelings within the environment they are operating (Gough, 2000).

### **1.5. Policy framework for the study in the South African context**

The Strategic Framework for Teacher Development stipulates that all employees are properly encouraged and equipped to undertake the roles expected of them in the highly varied and ever-changing conditions in which they work. Hence, "priority areas and of need must be constantly reviewed and updated" (Policy Framework for Teacher Development, 2007). In other words, teachers and school managers in the Department of Education are empowered by this policy framework to see to it that a space for teacher development is created. Accordingly:

Teachers are also encouraged to identify the areas where they feel they need to be assisted in order to develop and improve their practices within the classroom situation (2007).

Teachers are also expected to demonstrate a sound knowledge of the subject. In other words, a teacher is expected to design learning programmes and provide appropriate resources for the subject. A teacher is also expected to demonstrate qualities of leadership as well as administrative and managerial competencies in order to assist both teachers and learners. The policy framework also dictates that teachers must be lifelong learners where they continually equip themselves with new information. A teacher is also expected to practice and promote an ethical attitude towards others. A teacher is also obliged to understand various methods of assessment in order to provide feedback to their learners. Finally, a teacher is expected to be well-grounded in knowledge, skills, values, principles, methods and procedures of the learning area or subject. Teachers must also understand other approaches towards teaching.

The National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Professional Development in South Africa was specifically designed to ensure that national and provincial departments of

education create an enabling environment for teacher development (Policy Framework for Teacher Development, 2007). The policy framework also stipulates that teachers are obliged to undergo both CPTD and IQMS in terms of achieving their developmental goals and thereby enhance their roles as teachers.

### **1.5.1. Professional context**

Mestry, Hendricks and Bisschoff (2009) argue that the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) is designed to build teacher-capacity in order to improve their skills and knowledge in the classroom. In 2004, the South African Department of Basic Education introduced IQMS as a means to develop and monitor teacher development in various contexts of a teacher's professional life. According to Mestry *et al.*, (2009), IQMS teachers in a school setting are duty bound to undergo teacher appraisal so as to ascertain that the system is benefiting them professionally. In other words, the IQMS is a system that is meant to ensure that teachers fulfil their roles as stipulated in the official policy.

In 2009, the South African Government introduced Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) as a means to develop teachers on a continuous basis. According to CPTD, teachers are expected to accumulate developmental credits through developmental activities over a three year cycle. These must be filed in order to assess the continuing development of each teacher. The programme is monitored by the South African Council for Educators (SACE) which is a professional body for all educators in South Africa (SACE, 2009). Teachers under this policy are obliged to develop themselves formally and informally. This means that teachers must improve their qualifications and attend developmental programmes within and outside the school environment in order to ensure their continual development (2009). CPTD is meant to ensure that the IQMS is implemented properly and that the roles of educators are all fulfilled.

Within this professional teacher context, this present research study draws on how teachers are provided with the platform to advance and gain expertise in different schooling contexts.

## **1.6. Research problems and objectives**

The focus of this research study is to explore teachers' conceptions of what it means to be an expert-teacher. To achieve this goal, the study will examine the research participants understanding of what it means to be a teacher, as well as an expert-teacher and the source for these meanings. Interviews and group discussions were used to generate data from teachers (who are labelled expert-teachers) and subject advisors (who allocate such expert-teachers to a school), as to what it means to be an expert-teacher. Subject advisors are also used as participants in the study in order to get their understandings and meanings of the expert-teacher in the field of education.

## **1.7. The key research question**

*Who is an expert-teacher?*

### **1.7.1. Sub-questions**

- i. *What personal and professional attributes does an expert-teacher have?*

This question will focus on the personal and professional attributes acquired by teachers in the process of their development as expert-teachers.

- ii. *How do these personal and professional attributes inform what knowledge teachers acquire in the process of becoming experts?*

This question will assist in generating data about the different knowledge sets teachers acquire in the process of becoming experts. Teachers will offer their meanings and understandings of what it is to be an expert-teacher and how the knowledge that expert-teachers acquires assists them in becoming successful in teaching and learning.

- iii. *How and where do teachers acquire their knowledge to become experts?*

This question will explore what it means to become an expert-teacher, e.g., its challenges, contestations and complexities. The research participants will reflect on the structures that exist for professional development in their schools as well as how the development programmes assist them in meeting curriculum demands and the challenges that limit teacher development.

## **1.8. Methodological approach**

The methodology used in this research will be a narrative enquiry. Clandinin (2006) argues that the lives of human beings are characterized by stories that relate to their experiences. In other words, stories are a source of knowledge that are created through life-experiences that shape a person's environment and give new meaning to it. Narrative enquiry is a method used to collect textual or verbal data. It is often used when depth data is required (Onyx, 2001). In other words, participants will provide data through memory work.

The context of the study will be a secondary school and district office. The study will be conducted in one secondary school where two teachers identified as expert-teachers work. The school is situated in a South African township. In other words, data will be collected through teachers lived experiences. At the district level, subject advisors will also be research participants so as to poll their professional view of the topic.

## **1.9. Overview of chapters**

**Chapter One:** This chapter provides a description and overview of the research study. In particular, this chapter clarifies the focus and the purpose of the research study as well as the rationale behind it. In addition, the key research questions informing this study are presented and a brief synopsis of the methodological approach is provided.

**Chapter Two:** This chapter presents a detailed literature review, highlighting the scholarly conversations that inform and influence the study as a whole. The chapter also incorporates the theoretical framework of the study, which includes the Force-Field Model of Teacher Development as well as two dimensional theory for teacher development.

**Chapter Three:** Here, the research design and methodology adopted in the research study will be discussed. A detailed description of narrative inquiry is provided as well as the justification for using this methodology. A table clearly showing data collection and a production plan is presented as well as reasons for the selection of the research participants and the research setting. An explanation of the data production methods employed in the study is also provided, followed by an analysis of the data, ethics, trustworthiness and possible limitations of the study.

**Chapter Four:** This chapter contains the narratives of the four participants. This is constructed from interviews, documents in their portfolios, artefacts and college inquiry. The narratives of the participants provide insight into their lived experiences and how they understand themselves as teachers and individuals. From their narratives, a glimpse is provided into their personal, professional and social lives as well as the personal and professional changes that have taken place as a result of their development as expert-teachers.

**Chapter Five:** This chapter presents in the form of vignettes from the storied narratives an analysis of the narratives in response to the critical research question. This chapter also reviews the personal and professional attributes that expert-teachers possess.

**Chapter Six:** This chapter offers a thematic analysis of the research sub-questions and is a continuation of the data analysis that emerged from the storied narratives of all four participants. In particular, the chapter not only reviews how teachers become experts, but it also analyses how and where teachers acquire their knowledge to become expert-teachers.

**Chapter Seven:** By way of a conclusion, this chapter presents a review of the research study, its context and methodological reflection. It also provides a synthesis of the research findings in response to the key research questions posed. It also proffers theoretical reflections, policy and practice imperatives, its contribution to educational research and how future research can build on this study. The chapter closes with some final reflections of what it means to be an expert-teacher.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1. Introduction**

In the previous chapter, I dealt with the primary focus of this research study and the methodological positions I have taken as a researcher in the study. In this present chapter, I will provide from an official as well as practice perspective, a detailed review of the literature related to the central focus of the study, namely that of expert-teachers. The literature reviewed covers both local and international studies. This will be reviewed and discussed under three section headings that engage with the debate and discussion around expert-teachers:

- i. Professional knowledge and skills.
- ii. The attributes of an expert-teacher.
- iii. Spaces for learning and development as expert-teachers.

In particular, the literature review will be based on the attributes of an expert-teacher and the knowledge that enables an expert-teacher to function effectively in their work how the expert-teacher develops expertise.

#### **2.2. Professional knowledge and skills**

In this section I will present the debates around the professional knowledge and skills requisite of an expert-teacher. The debates covered in this section will revolve around curriculum knowledge, content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and communicative competency.

##### **2.2.1. The expert-teacher and curriculum knowledge**

According to Everton and Poole (2008) teachers must have a curriculum and content knowledge, as well as pedagogical and communicative competency in order to be effective in the classroom. In this regard, Ono (2010) understands curriculum knowledge as an understanding of all activities related to teaching and learning. For Shulman (1987), to be



effective in the classroom environment a teacher must have curriculum knowledge in order to grasp the materials and programmes that serve as tools for teaching to be effective. Furthermore, curriculum knowledge enables a teacher to understand the subject offered, its syllabus and knowledge of all the activities that assist a teacher in a classroom situation. In other words, curriculum knowledge is one of the key qualities indicated by the literature that assist a teacher to execute her/his duties properly.

In supporting this view, Garmston (1998) maintains that a teacher with curriculum knowledge is able to plan effectively because they will know what is to be expected with regard to curriculum content. Garmston (1998) further explains that an expert-teacher is able to search for relevant information about what is to be taught and how it should be taught. Accordingly, curriculum knowledge makes a teacher understand the syllabus better.

Recent studies by Schempp *et al.*, (2001) argue that an expert-teacher is one who is well-grounded in teaching and learning, because of possessing more knowledge of curriculum content. For Berliner (1986), an expert-teacher has knowledge of different approaches to teaching and learning as well as what is exactly to be taught in the classroom. An expert-teacher according to Hattie (2003) is one who possesses a deep understanding and knowledge of the curriculum which can be used in various contexts of teaching and learning. For Rollninick, Bennett, Rhemtula, Dharsey, Ndlovu and Rollink (2008), an expert-teacher is one who understands the curriculum and its instructional demands. These insights concerning the curriculum knowledge of expert-teachers are important in opening up understanding as to how important it is for teachers to have a rich grounding in curriculum knowledge and how this allows for different approaches to teaching and learning where contextual relevance is significant.

### **2.2.2. The expert-teacher and content knowledge**

Content knowledge according to Addediwura and Tayo (2007) is defined as subject knowledge. Subject knowledge is an important prerequisite if a teacher practitioner is to be well-prepared in the classroom.

For Turner-Bisset (2006), content knowledge consists of deep knowledge about the subject at hand. In other words, an expert-teacher possesses deep knowledge of the subject. In this regard, Ono (2010) argues that expert-teachers have deep knowledge about the discipline they teach. In other words, the greater the subject matter knowledge, the more flexible and student-oriented a teacher will be in her/his teaching.

In order to be an effective teacher in the classroom situation, Shulman (1987) argues that a teacher must have content knowledge in order to grasp materials and programmes that serve as tools for teaching to be effective. Teaching necessarily begins with teachers understanding of what is to be learned and how knowledge can be passed on by the teachers. In other words, an expert teacher must have more knowledge about the subject (Shulman, 1987). As Garmston (1998) can comment:

In order to be effective in teaching, you must equip yourself with more subject content knowledge in order to be more fluent on the subject.

Expert-teachers must therefore demonstrate exceptional knowledge in the classroom better than other teachers (Garmston, 1998).

According to Sanchez, Rosales and Canedo (1999), an expert-teacher as one who is always seeking content knowledge for personal development. In this, Schempp *et al.*, (2001) argue that expert-teachers are always fully abreast about content knowledge—a fact which makes them different from other teachers.

These insights about the content knowledge of expert-teachers are an important consideration in this present study. The issue of a teacher's fluency and ability to think and act differently, as well as keeping abreast about content knowledge is of great importance.

### **2.2.3. The expert-teacher and pedagogical knowledge**

According to Reynard (2006), pedagogical knowledge consists of a repertoire of teaching skills possessed by an expert-teacher. In other words, expert-teachers should possess a complex understanding of teaching strategies and methods as well as recognize which teaching strategies are most appropriate for the particular lesson being taught.

Pedagogical knowledge according to Abel (2008) assists a teacher impart content knowledge vividly. As Farrel and Bennis (2013) further argue, a teacher with more pedagogical knowledge is able to merge well with their learners and is able to use a relevant approach as dictated by the situation. According to Shulman (1987), a teacher with greater pedagogical knowledge will be more likely to communicate effectively with learners because s/he will implement a variety of teaching strategies. For Turner-Bisset (2006), an expert-teacher is able to link content with pedagogy, whereas Angel, Ryder and Scott (2004) maintains that an expert-teacher utilizes a variety of pedagogical skills that fit the curriculum in a particular moment and that such expert-teachers will be well-versed in the science of teaching so as to convey the content properly to the learners.

These scholarly insights concerning pedagogical knowledge are most relevant to this study. Expert-teachers need to possess knowledge that enables them to extend their methods of teaching, link content with pedagogy, and draw on pedagogical skills that encourages situated learning and enhances expertise.

#### **2.2.4. The expert-teacher and classroom management knowledge**

##### **2.2.4.1. Planning skills**

Planning according to Rathgen (2006) is the first-phase of teacher preparation that is essential before going into class. A good teacher prepares thoroughly before going into class in order to minimise surprises. As Davis (2003) notes, lesson planning is the most critical stage of teaching as it equips the teacher with all the resources needed for the classroom. It means that before going into the classroom a teacher must always collect all the necessary pedagogical resources that s/he intends to use (Davis, 2003).

According to Griffiths (2002) an expert-teacher is able to plan properly. Lesson planning makes a teacher reflect in and upon action. It means that during the course of teaching, a teacher can be able to change her/his teaching strategy as the situation demands. Reflection upon action is when a teacher is able to reflect on the teaching strategies s/he selects. It is when a teacher is able to identify a problem that occurs in the classroom and immediately takes corrective measures (2002). For Bergee (2005), an expert-teacher is able to prepare thoroughly before

going into class. It also allows for the work of a teacher to be appraised according to how s/he executes her/his teaching duties as reflected in the planning (2005).

An expert-teacher's capacity to reflect in and upon action and to initiate corrective measures as required is critical to this study because it is one of the vital skills needed for the personal and professional development of any teacher (Davis, 2003).

#### **2.2.4.2. Developing capacity and knowledge: Learning from one another**

Networking and professional dialogue within scholarly communities enhances the expertise of teachers. As Garmston (1998) argues, when teachers engage with their peers about a particular aspect related to their work they are able to increase their knowledge and expertise. Accordingly, networking with other teachers is not only empowering, but it also means that teachers gain greater confidence having networked with other teachers. Furthermore, as Garmston (1998) argues, teachers who enhance and develop their knowledge by engaging in professional dialogue about their teaching subject, increase their overall understanding of that subject.

For Shulman (1987), a teacher by definition belongs to a scholarly community. Cluster meetings are of great significance to teachers because this is where they can learn important ideas and teaching skills from other teaching professionals (1987). According to Rampa (2012), a cluster meeting is not only a means of teacher development, but it can also sustain professional growth for teaching. Supremely, cluster meetings open up opportunities for learning where teachers can learn important things related to their work. At cluster meetings, teachers are able to learn from one another because they engage in professional dialogue that results in professional development. It is also where they are able to share their skills, knowledge, attitudes and values in order to teach one another. As Stoelinga and Magin (2011) argue, peer relationships must be recognised as important spaces that make room for teachers to develop. Accordingly, such spaces allow teachers not only to become better equipped in terms of teaching and learning, but by sharing with others their knowledge and skills, they make the best teachers.

#### **2.2.4.3. Expert supervision**

Expert supervision according to Stoelinga and Magin (2011) is a way of improving teaching practice. It is also a way of monitoring progress because it promotes professional dialogue about the subject curriculum material within the school context. As a process, knowledgeable teachers use their expertise to advise others about teaching practice (Stoelinga and Magin 2011). For McMillan (2007), expert supervision is a way of improving teaching competencies which often result in more effectiveness within the classroom.

Networking, scholarly dialogue and expert supervision are important approaches for developing expertise in teaching practice. Working within clusters and through professional peer relationships provides a depth of understanding, greater knowledge and better skills that would otherwise be impossible to achieve.

#### **2.2.5. Synthesis**

The literature reviewed above sheds important light on the range of knowledge and skills expert-teachers possess. Furthermore, it offers a complex understanding of knowledge categories and how expertise is used to enhance what is taught (depth of knowledge), how it is taught (repertoire of strategies and approaches) and where (contextual and situated). The viewpoints presented here are important to this present study in that they explore the everyday professional lives and educational experiences of expert-teachers. Not only that, but they are relevant in foregrounding the different knowledge categories that expert-teachers develop and utilise in their classrooms so as to make their teaching and learning approaches contextually-relevant and situated.

### **2.3. The attributes of an expert-teacher**

This section will concern itself with the attributes that are possessed by an expert-teacher. The survey of the literature indicates that expert-teachers have attributes that distinguish them from other teachers. Such attributes are demonstrated by expert-teachers in the process of teaching (Clark *et al.*, 2001). The scholarly insights discussed in this section will reveal that expert-teachers are agents of change who are passionate about teaching and learning.

### **2.3.1. The expert-teacher as an agent of change**

Scholarly debate indicates that teachers must be agents of change in a school. In order for teachers to be agents of change, they need to be humble and exemplary in nature so as to be accessible to other teachers. Furthermore, teachers must understand more about teaching and learning in order to assist in a given teaching situation (Ono, 2010). For Stoelinga and Maggin (2011), expert-teachers should be able and willing to assist in the situation where they work. This means that a good teacher is able to assist by charting the way forward during a time of uncertainty. A lead-educator with exemplary skills must be accessible to other teachers for professional advice. Lead-educators are expected to gain peer trust based on their activities in a given school situation. It follows that teachers who trust lead-educators will seek advice and assistance. In other words, an expert-teacher is able to be consulted by other teachers based on the expertise s/he possesses. An expert-teacher assists by helping to solve the educational problems of their colleagues (2011).

### **2.3.2. A passion for teaching and learning**

Scholars indicate that passionate teachers are able to do well on the field of education. In turn, a passion for teaching and learning leads to teachers developing a winning mentality (Day, 2007). For Hattie (2003), a passionate teacher has a sense of identity and self-belief that can make a meaningful contribution to the learning and achievements of their learners. This means that in whatever situation, a passionate teacher will be able to function with confidence. In other words, a passionate teacher will be always be a passionate teacher irrespective of the situation (2003). Accordingly, a passionate teacher is forced into the duty of teaching, but is driven by a passion to teach and learn.

As Day (2007) suggests, a passion for one's learners enables a teacher to manage a number of tensions and dilemmas related to the ever-changing demands of their work. In other words, passion gives teachers an inner drive to function effectively irrespective of the situation. Accordingly, Day (2007) defines passion:

As any kind of feeling by which the mind is powerfully affected or moved. It is a driver, a motivational force emanating from strength of emotion. Being passionate generates energy, determination, conviction commitment and even obsession in people. Passion makes teachers to be always competitive in all

spheres of education life, as they have got a driving force in their mind which is passion.

For Evertson and Poole (2008), the term “classroom management” must be broadened beyond student behaviour control so as to include the actions teachers take to create an environment that supports and facilitates both academic and social-emotional learning. This means that an expert-teacher must be good in communicating with learners and managing relationships across differing contexts so that they can convey academic activities to them properly. Accordingly, Evertson and Poole (2008) view the teacher as one who is able to convey knowledge about the norms, expectations and routines of the classroom. The ability for a teacher to create an environment that both supports and facilitates academic and social-emotional learning in relation to differing contextual realities in their work is an important attribute of what it means to be an expert-teacher.

### **2.3.3. Qualities of leadership**

For Baron (2008) teachers as leaders who are expected to create a good atmosphere for teaching and learning using their leadership qualities. Baron (2008) goes on to argue that teachers must also engage in the process of creating enabling conditions for teaching and learning as leaders in the classroom.

Similarly, Hattie (2003) maintains that teachers must possess leadership qualities that enable them to create a healthy atmosphere for teaching and learning in the classroom. A leader is able to influence learners in a certain direction (Hattie, 2003). For Grasha (1994), an expert-teacher makes informed decisions about teaching and learning.

### **2.3.4. Synthesis**

The literature reviewed under this section has indicated that expert-teachers are agents of change in the environment where they work. Expert-teachers are able to coach other teachers in situations and contexts where teaching and learning is difficult. Furthermore, expert-teachers according to the literature are humble by nature and exemplary in regards to their professional acumen. These qualities make them accessible and sought after by other teachers for their expertise and advice. Expert-teachers also possess more knowledge about the science of

teaching and learning, which makes it easier for them to contribute meaningfully in the classroom (Ono, 2010).

The passion for teaching and learning is an important attribute that drives teacher-experts irrespective of their contextual situation. Passionate teachers work for better results irrespective of the situation as a result of their inner-drive to achieve desirable outcomes. The literature has shown that passionate teachers are always looking for better results irrespective of the situation or work context (Day, 2007). This means that passionate teachers are able to get good results, even in difficult contexts (Kruger and Prinsloo, 2008) Passion as an important teaching attribute becomes a motivating factor that keeps expert-teachers going in the field of education irrespective of the situation or context.

## **2.4. Spaces for learning and development as expert-teachers**

This section will discuss where teachers acquire their knowledge to become expert-teachers. The literature reveals that teachers learn and develop as a result of induction courses, professional development programmes and an emotionally friendly environment which provides the necessary space to gain expertise. Pre-service education becomes the first stage where teachers can gain knowledge in order to be better educators in their field of work.

### **2.4.1. Induction courses**

Staff induction is defined by Steyn and van Niekerk (2007) as an organisational endeavour to enable and assist different categories of new staff members to adjust effectively and as quickly as possible to their new work environment so that the organisation can continue to function with as little disruption as possible. Within the realm of education, induction is the process of familiarisation of new members of staff in a school environment. According to Hodgkinson and Hodgkinson (2007), school structures must provide an emotionally-rich environment for new teachers so that they can teach properly. In other words, an emotionally rich environment allows new teachers to be supported effectively. As Hughes (2010) has argued, in the process of induction, a supervisor must act as a facilitator in the learning of employees. This means that a supervisor must create an educative environment where new workers are given a space to develop themselves. Therefore, a teacher undergoing a course of induction is able to gather all



the necessary knowledge that will assist her or him in the future to develop to the level of a well-prepared and expert teacher.

#### **2.4.2. Professional development**

Professional development according to Steyn and van Niekerk (2007) is defined as those activities performed at the school level in order to assist teachers develop their educational skills and knowledge. As Mestry *et al.*, (2009) have argued, professional development is important at the school level because it creates quality teachers. In turn, quality teachers influence in a positive way the process of learning. In other words, the presence of quality teachers in a given school result in professional development programmes bringing about effective teaching and learning in the classroom. In a school where professional development activities are taken seriously, teachers are able to gain knowledge that distinguish them from other teachers who do not engage or have the opportunity to attend professional development programmes.

For Mestry *et al.*, (2009) staff development is a way of bringing about the lifelong learning of teachers. This means that teachers must always look for new knowledge in order to remain effective educators. Accordingly, McMillan (2007) argues that continuous professional development is a way of improving teaching competencies and results in teaching staff gaining the requisite skills to become expert-teachers. As Ono (2010) has further shown, professional development is one of the key resources used by teachers for their personal and professional development.

#### **2.4.3. A positive emotional attitude**

According to the literature, an emotionally-rich environment is defined as that space where teachers are appreciated for their good work in the classroom situation. For Day (2011), good emotional health plays a vital role in the construction of a positive identity. Consequently, a teacher with a positive emotional attitude is likely to bring about effectiveness and efficacy in the classroom. The emotional climate with a school, as Day, Kington, Stobart and Sammons (2006) have argued can seriously affect teaching and learning emotions in the classroom (Day,

2011). In other words, a school is expected to create an environmental space that is friendly to teachers so that they can remain effective educators in the classroom.

#### **2.4.4. A positive sense of self**

For Day *et al.*, (2006), emotions play a key role in the construction of identity of teachers. This means that teachers that work in a poor emotional environment might lose academic vitality and interest in teaching. In an emotionally friendly environment, teachers are likely to develop an academic interest that leads to their effectiveness as educators (2006). As Dorman (2003) has argued, student learning can be detrimentally affected by an emotionally drained teacher; a problem that can develop into an uncaring attitude towards colleagues and learners alike. For Malm (2009) therefore, teaching is an emotional practice because emotions are at the heart of teaching. A teacher with a positive work attitude is able to perform better in a classroom situation and thereby sustain a positive sense of self (2009).

Structures within a school, as Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2007) have argued, must provide an emotionally-rich environment so that teachers are able to work at their most optimum level. Teachers who work in an appreciative environment are usually motivated to do even better in future because they are accepted by their peers. In other words, senior colleagues who are at the helm of a school are expected to show appreciation for the good efforts done by their staff (Day, 2011).

For Day (2006), the educational culture cannot be treated in isolation to the core teaching activities of a school. A positive school culture contributes towards the creation of a teacher-positive identity. Consequently, a positive school culture enables its teachers develop to their optimum level. As Zembylas (2003) argues, the personal and professional selves of teachers have an indelible link with the prevalent culture at a school, whereby identity is either constructed or destructed. In other words, a positive school culture can be a powerful force through which teachers negotiate and build a positive sense of selfhood and professional identity.

In summary therefore, a positive school culture, consisting of a healthy, emotionally rich working environment will enhance the personal and professional development of new and old teachers alike.

#### **2.4.5. Pre-service education**

According to Maclean and White (2007), student teachers identify themselves as professional teachers due to the influence of their peers. In other words, students during their course of training are influenced by other students and various other activities within institutions of teacher-training. Accordingly, these institutions of training teachers have a great impact in the shaping of a positive teacher identity. During pre-service training, a student is introduced to various skill and knowledge sets that will assist in executing their future work as educators (Maclean & White, 2007). As Maclean and White (2007) further argue, teacher identity during pre-service training is shaped by the ability of teachers to legitimately engage in professional activities while they complete their training. As Kirshner, Pedder and Doddington (2013) argue, teachers are shaped by their learning experiences at school and at university Teachers develop personally and professionally as a result of engaging in various activities that are meant to develop them. This means that teachers learn about pedagogy before they even begin their teaching due to various experiences and opportunities while in training.

#### **2.4.6. Synthesis**

This section has presented various scholarly insights about teacher learning. Teachers learn and develop personally and professionally as a result of positive learning spaces around them that result in the increase in their productivity and the development of a positive self-image. In other words, the environment where a teacher works plays a vital role in teacher development.

According to the literature, teachers learn and develop through induction courses where at an early stage they can become familiar with the work while they are still new in the workplace. Professional development activities can enable the development of expert-teachers because this is where they acquire knowledge about their specialist subjects. This means that staff development at the school level is vital because they are able to bring about expertise in their teachers.

The literature has also identified the importance of a positive and friendly work environment, where teaching staff can be happy in their work (Day, 2011). In order to develop and go the extra mile, good teachers must feel that they are appreciated (McMillan, 2007). Pre-service training is also vital as this is where a teacher begins to gain the necessary skill and knowledge sets needed for their particular field of work.

In the context of this present research study, it is important that teachers learn and become experts. This can only take place with the presence of an environment that has supporting structures and processes that enable them to develop, such as induction courses which can familiarise them with the task of teaching and learning at a particular school. Professional development activities are also vital because this is where teachers are able to find dedicated spaces for learning to enhance their skills. Furthermore, the environment where teachers work must be emotionally-friendly to allow teachers the freedom to develop their expertise. In summary, this means that an expert-teacher is able to acquire knowledge to become an expert as a result of the structures for learning that assist teachers in their development.

## **2.5. Synthesis of the literature review**

The literature review has presented scholarly insights into the development and training of expert-teachers and the range of content knowledge, curriculum, classroom management, as well as personal and professional knowledge and other attributes they must acquire so as to distinguish them from other teachers.

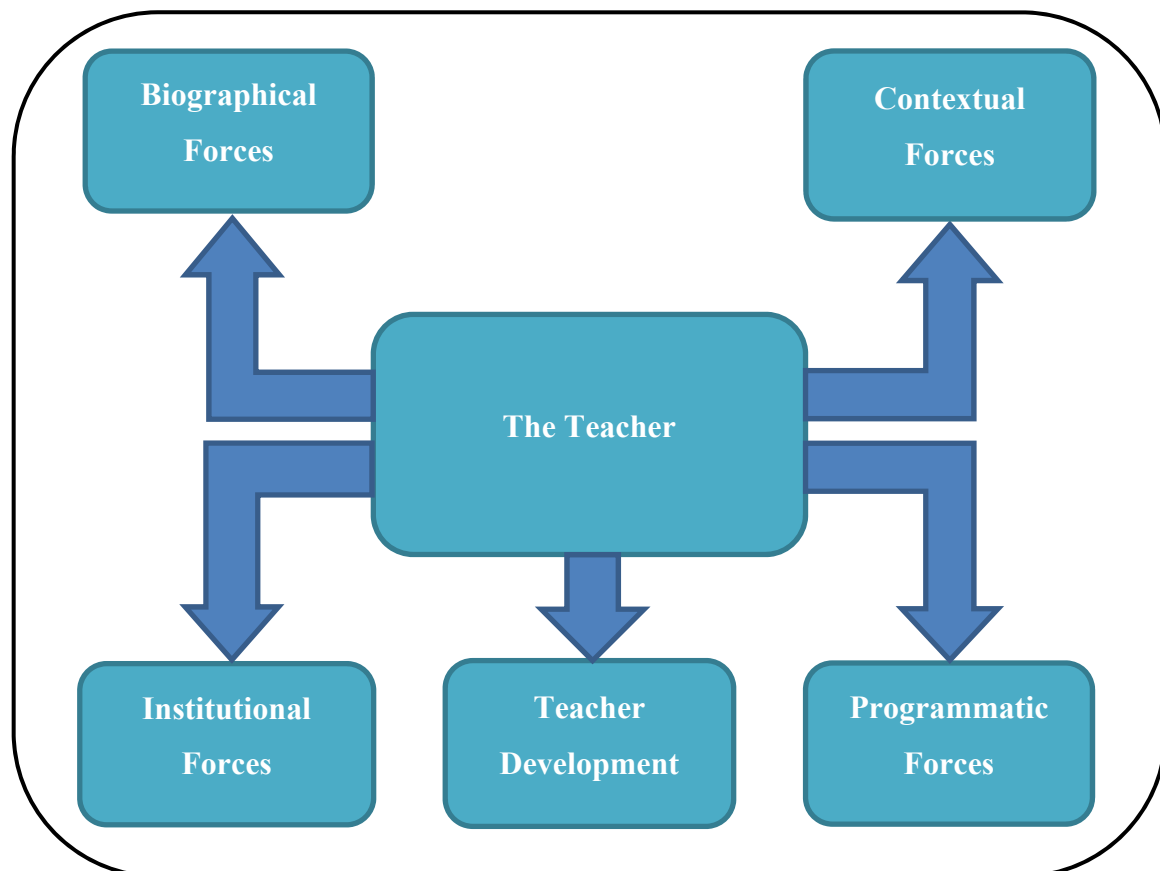
Personal development (i.e., a positive sense of a teacher's self-image) is an important factor that allows teachers to develop both personally and professionally. Expert-teachers are often labelled as passionate individuals who are motivated about their work and have a developed sense of agency that enables them to contribute effectively to their professional lives as teachers. They also serve as important agents of change because they provide important leadership for their school in a right direction. The literature has also indicated that expert-teachers are humble to the extent that other teachers consult them during times of uncertainty (McMillan, 2007).

Developing expertise as a teacher enables that person to demonstrate leadership skills that assist them in influencing learners in the right direction. The capacity to engage in scholarly dialogue through networking with peers and colleagues is important because expert-teachers place a high value in education that makes them always eager to achieve and develop their pedagogic and personal skills (van Niekerk, 2007).

Finally, the literature has indicated that teachers become better equipped when they acquire different knowledge, skills, and attributes in learning spaces that are professionally and emotionally rich for their personal and professional development.

## 2.6. Theoretical framework: The Force-Field Model of Teacher Development

The Force-Field Model of Teacher Development has been chosen as a theoretical framework for this present research study. This views teachers as being shaped by biographical, contextual, institutional and programmatic forces in their personal and professional selves. This process can be clearly shown in the diagrammatic representation offered in Figure 2.1. below.



**Figure 2.1.**  
**Diagrammatic representation of the Force-Field Model of Teacher Development**

### **2.6.1. Biographical forces**

This means force maintains that personal history plays a vital role in a teacher's development. Hence, as Samuel (2008) has shown:

This force is significant as, it focuses as on an individual personal experiences that inform his/ her how the current activities can be structured. It means that individuals, are shaped and natured by their historical forces and experiences.

### **2.6.2. Contextual forces**

This force looks at contextual forces that views people as the products of their environment. According to Samuel (2008), it maintains that teachers are shaped by social, cultural and political environment that result in them interpreting various environments in a particular way. It also assist teachers to view their existing environment and take informed decisions about their duties.

### **2.6.3. Institutional forces**

This force look at teachers being taught by their organisations to be competitive. As Samuel (2008) can argue:

The school ethos is a powerful force that enables teachers to learn from it. In a school where learning is enhanced, teachers are likely to learn and interpret themselves positively regarding their roles as teachers.

### **2.6.4. Programmatic forces**

This force looks at the role that is played by the school in assisting teachers to fulfil their obligations. According to Samuel (2008), it argues that, through the curriculum programmes in the school, teachers are able to get a sense of direction that teaches them good ethical and professional behaviour about their classroom practices.

## **2.7. Chapter summary**

In this chapter, I have reviewed recently-published scholarly literature on the definition and development of expert-teachers and the knowledge and attributes that an expert-teacher must acquire in order to be effective in the professional exercise of teaching and learning. The chapter has also reviewed the conditions and creative spaces for teacher learning that promote the development of expert-teachers. Finally, I have discussed in detail the theoretical framework that will be used throughout this present work in its examination of the personal and professional lived experiences that result in the development of expert-teachers.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

In the previous chapter, I provided a detailed literature review on the subject of expert-teachers. In this next chapter, I will present the methodological approach of narrative inquiry that underpins this research study. In this regard, I will provide a detailed explanation of the choices I have made in relation to the methodology used. In addition, I will explain the methods I selected that enabled the generation of relevant research data for the study. Artefact retrieval, collage enquiry and portfolio inquiry will also be discussed and explained. Finally, the research paradigm underpinning the study will be examined.

For the purposes of analysis, this chapter will be divided into three major sections, followed by a brief summary.

- i. Narrative inquiry.
- ii. Data production and generation.
- iii. Data analysis.

#### **3.2. Narrative inquiry**

In this section the research methodology used in this study will be discussed, namely, narrative enquiry. Scholars such as Clandinin (2006) argue that the lives of human beings are characterised by stories related to their life-experiences. In other words, stories are a rich source of knowledge created through life-experiences that shape the human environment and give new meaning to it. This means that the methodology of narrative inquiry can assist in the generation of data from the research participants through their lived-experiences and stories related to the focus of this study. In this instance, the research participants narrated their stories through memory work where they were able to reflect on their lived-experiences, whether good or bad. In utilizing this methodology, I was able to interact with the research participants in order to retrieve their meanings about themselves and their environment. Furthermore, the methodology allowed for the generation of useful data in terms of the research focus of expert-teachers.



### **3.2.1. Narrative analysis**

According to Hatch and Wisniewski (1995), stories are a way of retrieving history. This means that the narrative method can assist in gaining knowledge through obtaining stories from the research participants. It is also suitable for the study because it enabled the research participants to make sense of their lives in retrospect (1995). Such meanings are created through certain events in the life-experience of the research participants. In other words, good and bad experiences are a way of learning to improve practices within their work. Furthermore, the individuals that related their stories are seen as living in real-time, in concrete places and under particular social contexts (1995). This means that the research participant's stories are considered under certain circumstances. Narrative analysis as a method focuses on retrieving meaning out of the research participants' life-experiences as expert-teachers. Through such stories, it is possible to learn how life-experiences shape individual lives.

Narrative analysis also calls for the researcher and participants to work closely together in order to come to a shared understanding of each participant's story. This means that the researcher is able to feel the story that is told by the participant (Hatch and Wisniewski, 1995). Stories told by research participants are a way of understanding the human condition. This means that the researcher can observe and understand the social conditions that each participant has been subjected to. Narrative analysis also assists in understanding how the research participants were influenced by their environment. In other words, the method assists in understanding the powers and forces that shaped each individual through listening to and analysing their stories (1995).

### **3.2.2. Narrative inquiry and the Force-Field Model of Teacher Development**

Narrative inquiry as a valid methodology allows a researcher to draw from a teacher's story, knowledge and expertise gained through life-experience and education. As Clandinin (2006) can argue, human beings make history on a daily basis—especially within the environments in which they live and work. This means that stories are a way of studying an individual teacher's life-experience in relation to the environment in which they live and work. Indeed, the lives of all teachers are shaped by the social and professional environment in which they live and work. Furthermore, individual teacher's stories in allow the researcher to learn the rich history of how

each person developed in their different contexts and social situations to become expert-teachers (2006).

According to the Force-Field Model of Teacher Development, there are particular forces that shape a teacher's personal and professional identity (Samuel, 2008). In terms of this present research project, narrative inquiry was used to learn how the working place shaped the professional lives of the teachers polled. As the researcher, analysis of these narratives enabled me to identify which programmes enabled them to develop their knowledge and expertise to become expert-teachers.

### **3.2.3. The research paradigm**

The interpretive paradigm has been used as a theory of enquiry. The interpretive paradigm envisions people being subject to their experiences and feelings within the environment they live and work (Gough, 2000). Such a research paradigm views the world as changeable and that it is people who bring meaning to a particular environment (2000). In this regard, the interpretive paradigm was deemed useful to this research study as a qualitative method for generating data about the lived experiences of teachers. It is also suitable for a narrative inquiry study because teacher's feelings and experiences were studied through memory work (Clandinin, 2006). The interpretive paradigm enabled the generation of participant's historical experiences in order to arrive at their subjective experiences and feelings about the environment in which they live and work. This means that data is analysed using the interpretive paradigm in order to view the situation (Cole, 2011).

### **3.2.4. Narrative inquiry and teacher development theory**

Narrative inquiry allows teachers to tell their stories about their lived experiences. It is also a methodology that enables the participants to narrate their stories of how they were able to develop in the past as individuals and as teachers (Clandinin, 2006). Teacher development theory has assisted in analysing the attitude of teachers towards their development and how their attitudes were changed after engaging in professional development (Evans, 2002). The theory assumes that a teacher's attitude can change as a result of engaging in professional development. It also looks at the functional level, which maintains that teachers improve professionally after engaging in professional development. This means that teachers improve

their productivity after professional development activities (2002). This theory assisted in understanding the attitudes of expert-teachers during their development. It also enabled to understand their level of productivity or how they executed their duties as expert-teachers following their professional development.<sup>1</sup>

### 3.2.5. Qualitative research

This study is a qualitative inquiry. Qualitative research is an approach that is used to collect both textual and verbal data. It is often used when depth data is required (Onyx, 2001). In other words, the research participants were asked to provide data through memory work when narrating their stories about their lived experiences. As the researcher, this enabled me to interact with the participants in order to retrieve their meanings about their environment. Accordingly, this method was found useful in collecting data under the focus being studied. It has been useful because stories based on the lived-experiences of teachers concerning their environment were used. Using the qualitative approach, teachers were able to narrate both their challenging and successful personal stories that shaped their development as expert-teachers.

<b>Name<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Racial Group</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Number of Years Teaching</b>	<b>Post Level #</b>	<b>Position or Band</b>
Njabulo	Male	African	>30-40	16 years	Post level #3	Subject Advisor
Bongani	Male	African	>40-50	24 years	Post level #3	Subject Advisor
Hlengiwe	Female	African	>35-45	12 years	Post level #3	FET
Velaphi	Male	African	>35-45	10 years	Post level #1	FET

**Table 3.1.**  
**Selection of the research participants**

The research participants were chosen for the study on the basis that each had been identified as expert-teachers by departmental officials and had at various times been invited by the

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<sup>1</sup> Based on this theory, I will provide in chapter five a number of personal vignettes that illustrate the attitudinal dimension in teacher development. These vignettes look at the attributes that develop as a result of teacher learning, following teacher development. Personal professional attributes have been chosen that reveal an expert-teacher's attitudes and productivity after they have undertaken developmental programmes.

<sup>2</sup> In terms of the ethical reporting of human research data in this study, the real names of all respondents have been replaced with pseudonyms so as to confer anonymity, protect their identity and maintain confidentiality.

department of education to assist at my school. There were four research participants in total, two females and two males. Their selection was based on their work experience and on gender equity considerations. Subject advisors were chosen on the basis of their professional knowledge and presented their understanding of the topic from an official departmental point of view.

I used the purposive sampling method to select the research participants. In purposive sampling, people are chosen for a particular purpose (Clandinin, 2006). Two research participants were identified by the Department of Education as experts. They were brought into my school to provide extra tuition as expert teachers. The third participant was my subject advisor. Employed by the Department of Education, I chose him as an expert because he had guided me on an ongoing basis in my chosen subject discipline. The fourth research participant was delegated by the Department of Education to monitor the extra tuition being offered by the two expert teachers at my school. These four participants constituted the final selection of research participants for my study.

### **3.2.6. Credibility and trustworthiness**

In terms of credibility and trustworthiness, I used other research methods such as collage and artefacts to generate further data and answer the research questions. Not only did this complement the interviews by enabling the participants to elaborate more on what was said in the interviews, but it also provided additional information that was not specifically mentioned in the interviews. I also maintained contact with the research participants. When analysing the research data and following discussion with my peers, I went back to the participants in order to collect more data about their personal lived experiences. As a researcher, I had an ethical responsibility to the participants and respected their stories in all their complexity. I tried to show their lived experiences by creating a story which they could recognise so that their storied narratives were not merely reduced for the purpose of research (Nieuwenhuis, 2010).

### **3.2.7. Research setting**

The context of this present study is a secondary school and the district office in the Pinetown District. The study was conducted in two secondary schools where two teacher identified as expert-teachers work. Both schools are situated in a township. The data was collected through

each teacher's lived-experiences. At the district level, subject advisors were the research participants. They were able to provide their professional insights as they were classified as experts / specialists. As the researcher, I was able to collect data easily from both teacher participants because both schools are situated in the same township where I work. It was not a challenge to drive to their school after school hours to collect a data from them. Both participants allowed me to use their staffrooms as the preferred venue for data collection, as at that time their colleagues had left work. When collecting the data from subject advisors, I used their offices as they indicated that they were comfortable in being interviewed there. It was somewhat difficult to collect a data from the subject advisors, owing to their status as district officials. At times they would indicate to me that they were busy and we had to postpone the appointment to another date. These challenges aside, I eventually managed to collect an adequate amount of data to make the study viable.

### **3.3. Data production and generation**

This section deals with data production and generation.

#### **3.3.1. Unstructured interviews**

By using this approach, the research participants were able to narrate their personal stories based on the lived experiences that led them to become expert-teachers. Memory work was used to reflect on the good or bad lived experiences that gave their development shape. The participants were given the central topic of the study in order to narrate stories that would be relevant to the study. They were also given one open-ended question: "*How did they develop to be expert-teachers?*" All participants were given two hours to narrate their stories relevant to the central topic of the study.

All four research participants were asked to select the date and venue that was convenient to them so that they would be comfortable when narrating their personal stories. All the interviews were digitally recorded in order to generate data of everything that was said by all four participants. After the participants had related their lived experiences using this method, an interview transcript was created from the digitally recorded data. These transcripts were used to rewrite the stories of all participants in a thematic form. Themes were created using key issues from the data.

Through their stories, I was able to understand how the participants under certain circumstances were able to develop both personally and professionally. Their stories also revealed that teacher's practices are often shaped in ways to assist in their development as expert-teachers. By evoking their memories, story-tellers are often able to learn anew from their experiences. In other words, stories are often a way of learning through the events that are told by the participants. Based on their stories, I was able to understand how the participants were able to deal with certain events during their past experiences. The method also gave me an opportunity as the researcher to learn means and opportunities that have been used by participants to develop in the field of education. Stories are also a reflection on the past and thereby provide an opportunity to correct wrong perceptions of the past and offer shape for the future. By choosing this methodology, data relevant to the study was collected (Hatch and Wisnieski, 1995).

<b>Research Question</b>	<b>Narrative Inquiry Method</b>	<b>Context</b>	<b>Research Participants</b>	<b>Data Sources</b>
1. What personal and professional attributes does an expert teacher have?	Reflection memory, work	High schools and district office	Teachers and subject advisors	Interviews, collage and artefacts
2. How do these personal and professional attributes inform what knowledge do teachers acquire in the process of becoming experts?	Narrative method, memory work	High schools and district office	Teachers and Subject advisors	Unstructured interviews, artefacts and collage.
3. How and where do the expert teachers acquire their knowledge to become experts?	Reflection, memory work	High schools and District office	Teachers and Subject advisors	Unstructured interviews

**Table 3.2.**  
**Narrative inquiry research design**

### **3.3.2. Artefact inquiry**

Artefacts are historical objects or sources that lead people to think about the past in different ways (Mitchell, 2011). Artefacts often hold emotional, sentimental or important significance

in people's lives. Artefacts can evoke memories of certain historical events which can be good or bad (2011). A good example of an artefact is that of a photograph. Through artefacts, interesting reflections and discussions about the research participants learning experiences can be evoked.

The use of artefact retrieval in this study assisted in encouraging the research participants to remember special past events in their lived-experiences that shaped their personal and professional experiences to develop them to the level of expert-teachers. The method also assisted in provoking discussion and interaction with the participants.

By using this method, the research participants were able to recall those artefacts that reminded them of certain historical experiences related to their development as expert-teachers and how they were shaped personally and professionally by these experiences. Accordingly, the method was used to generate data about the environment in which the participants had worked and how they executed their duties on a daily basis (Buttler-Kisber, 2008). The participants brought objects that were of educational importance that contained memories during the course of their development as teachers. Participants under this method were able to define what the artefact they had chosen symbolised. Based on their lived-experiences, they were able to recall important historical events that lead to their development as expert-teachers. The research participants were therefore asked to discuss the cultural significance their chosen artefact held for them in the field of education (2008), as well as how it may have influenced them as teachers and as individuals. Their emotional connection to the artefact was also explored. Participants also explained the role the artefact played in a particular environment. As Mitchell (2011) has argued, retrieving stories is a way of learning from the past. In respect to this present study, this means that people have lived experiences that have either a positive or negative impact upon their learning as individuals. It also means that these artefacts symbolise how the participants have been shaped by their experiences.

### **3.3.3. Collage inquiry**

Collage inquiry is a visual art-based method that was employed to generate data for this present study. Collage, according to Buttler-Kisber (2008) is defined as the process of cutting and

affixing found images and image of fragments from popular print magazines to a chart. Collage is therefore a way of portraying we are as individuals.

The participants were informed how the making of a collage would be used in extracting data for the study. Accordingly, the research participants were asked to select images from magazines and other print media that describe them as teachers and individuals and paste them on a chart in the form of a collage. Each participant was given a session where they explained why they chosen particular images for their collage and how the images related to their life-experience as individuals and as teachers. Included here were any critical moments or incidents that were symbolized by images contained in the collage. Stories based on collage have important meanings as to how the research participants viewed themselves as teachers. The images also portray who they are in the field of education.

Through the use of collage, the research participants were able to express their feelings about certain events or critical moments on their personal and professional lives. As Buttler-Kisber (2008) has shown, collage is an art-based communication inquiry. Participants told their lived experiences as expert-teachers, using collage as a method of data collection. As such, it was a method of enabling emotional expression in an artistic way. This method was also suitable for the study because it enabled the participants to recall important past events. As a researcher, it also taught me to not only avoid certain practices in the field of education, but to emulate those good practices contained in the recollections of the research participants.

#### **3.3.4. Portfolio inquiry**

Portfolio inquiry is an effective tool that is used in narrative enquiry. As such, it is a means of asking research participants to reflect on how they structure their work programmes. In other words, a participant's portfolio gives a real sense of how they plan their work. As Lyons and Laboskey (2002) have effectively argued, making a teacher portfolio is a serious exercise that should not be overlooked because portfolios demonstrate how the work of teaching is accomplished. Portfolios contain important information of how a teacher plans her/his work and uses self-help guides meant to assist in lesson preparation. Participants under this method were told to reflect on how their portfolios have assisted them to become expert-teachers. Each of the research participants were asked to bring their portfolios and to explain the importance



of each of the documents therein contained. In their portfolios were found work schedules, work programmes, programmes of assessments, lesson plans, marking grids, lesson plans and mark sheets together with the marks of the learners. The research participants were then asked to explain the importance of all the documents in their portfolios and how they used them in the course of their work as expert-teachers.

Portfolio inquiry as a method enabled the participants to tell their stories of how their work schedules have assisted them to develop as expert-teachers. The participants were also able to state the methods they employ to use their portfolios effectively. They also told stories based on their experiences when it came to using their portfolios. According to their availability, each of the research participants was given a time and date in which they were interviewed. Through this method, important research data was obtained.

### **3.4. Data analysis**

This section deals with the data analysis.

#### **3.4.1. Recorded data**

A digital voice recorder was used to record and playback the interviews. Recorded data from the interviews was first transcribed from the digital recordings. Using the Force-Field Model of Teacher Development and attitudinal and professional dimensions for teacher development, the transcribed data was arranged into thematic categories. Important issues contained in the data were made into themes or categorised according to themes. The inductive method was then used to interpret the data within these thematic categories. (Nieuwenhuis, 2010:43).

In terms of the organisation and production of this research study, chapter four contains the storied narratives taken from interview transcripts. Only that data that was relevant to the research questions and sub-questions was used. In chapters four, five and six, the data was arranged for the purpose of analysis according to the themes that explicated the key questions of the study. In understanding each teacher's story, the Force-Field Model of Teacher Development was used as a theoretical framework to guide and understand the retrieved narratives as to how the research participants developed to the level of expert-teachers. This

theory examines the particular forces at work that shape teachers to develop. In all, there were four factors:

- i. **Biographical factors:** Such factors are important in their relation to teacher development because they reveal how teachers are driven by their personal traits and characteristics to succeed.
- ii. **Contextual factors:** Such factors are important because they reveal how teachers interpret the environment in relation to their professional and personal development.
- iii. **Institutional factors:** Such factors are important because the work location and environment are critical in understanding how teachers relate and interact emotionally and professionally within their environment.
- iv. **Programmatic factors:** Such factors are important because they reveal the connection between a teacher's lived-experience and the development programmes that are in place where they work (Samuel, 2008).

Teacher development theory enables the analysis of a teacher's story narrative about their lived experiences. The theory advocates that teachers develop as a result of their attitudinal elements. Accordingly, their intellectual capacity increases as a result of their positive engagement in professional development. The functional dimension considers teacher development as a result of capacitating teachers, resulting in the improvement of their professional productivity. This latter dimension will be used to understand how the research participants developed functionally as experts (Evans, 2002).

### **3.5. Chapter summary**

In this chapter, the methodological approach that was used in the study was discussed in detail and how it was used to generate suitable data. Unstructured interviews were used to generate data about the research participant's lived-experiences through memory work. The use of artefact and collage inquiry was also used to generate data about the development of expert-teachers.

Through activities related to their contexts, human beings make history on a daily basis. This study focuses on the work of teachers done on a daily basis. In the next chapter, the reconstructed stories of the research participants will be presented.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **STORIED NARRATIVES**

#### **4.1. Introduction**

The focus of this study is that of expert teachers. In the previous chapter I discussed the methodological approaches employed that enabled me to collect the research data that is presented in this chapter. While the data presented is in the form of life stories, the real names of all the research participants have been purposefully withheld in terms of the ethical reporting of human research data. Instead, pseudonyms have been used so as to confer anonymity, protect the identity of my sources, and maintain confidentiality.

#### **4.2. Njabulo's story: Learning for leading**

Njabulo is a subject advisor in the Pinetown District. He grew up in a deep rural area where there was little hope that one day he would be a respectable person working as a departmental official. He began working as an English language teacher at Maphumulo in the Ilembe District. In 2002, he was promoted HOD in languages, and in 2007, was further promoted to subject advisor in English language in the Pinetown District.

##### **4.2.1. The experience of rural schooling**

I received both my primary and secondary education in the early 1980s during the apartheid era. In order for me to attend school I had to travel more than ten kilometres, often along dirt roads.

At both primary and secondary school, the quality of education was poor due to there being a shortage of qualified teachers and school facilities. I recall at times we were taught by metric learners who were not fully sure of the subject content. During this period, I was fortunate to find a career in education because even the teachers were not motivated.

Growing up as a responsible citizen, all those around me assisted and motivated me to become what I am today. I accepted all the challenges facing me by working hard and finishing all the tasks given to me on time. Perseverance, as well as honouring and obeying my duties had a positive impact on my life as a whole.

#### **4.2.2. My schoolmates as my teachers**

We had no choice but to respect these unqualified teachers because we were told by the school principal that appropriately qualified teachers did not want to work in the rural areas. Some were once our schoolmates before passing their metric, so we were able to create a good atmosphere where we treated each other as sisters and brothers. The school principal used to stress during morning assemblies that we needed to be respectful towards them even though we knew they had been with us as learners in the past.

At home, my parents used to tell me to respect all adults irrespective of their status in society. As a consequence, I was able to enjoy a good relationship with these unqualified teachers. Most of the teachers at school had a strong relationship with my parents. Accordingly, it was very difficult for me to get up to wrong things at school! When I was at primary school, my teachers reported me to my parents so that they could discipline me at home. My father was very quick to respond by physically beating and rebuking me not to repeat the offence because it had lowered the dignity of our entire family.

#### **4.2.3. Being a student leader**

In the early 1990s, my secondary school became embroiled in crisis, as the learners involved themselves in the struggle against the apartheid government. I was elected to a leadership position to lead the struggle for better education. I was made driven to succeed under what were extremely difficult circumstances, where I was expected to lead and learn at the same time. There were no proper teaching aids from my teachers, but I managed to pass my matric and received university entry symbols.

When I was in school grade nine, I was elected as a member of the School Representative Committee (SRC). The teachers at my school did not help us develop leadership skills; instead, I acquired them by attending meetings outside of the school that were related to the student

association. When attending these meetings, I discovered how to conduct meetings by looking at how other students were doing it. I also learned how to discuss and debate important issues.

#### **4.2.4 Politics and leadership**

I had mixed feelings about my relationship with the teacher staff at my school because most of them did not want to approve my leadership role. They stated that I was too young to take on such a leadership role. Some of the teachers were not politically aware and to my understanding, they were not looking at that our activities in the struggle as something that was important to South Africa's future. One of my matric teachers called me one day and reminded me that most of the time I was not attending class. For this teacher, I was busy with the "rubbish of politics" that would make me fail at the end of the year. I responded by saying it was not a rubbish, but a fight against the injustices of the apartheid system. The leadership role at high school gave me the opportunity to learn many important things. Accordingly, I do not have a problem with speaking before big crowds.

#### **4.2.5. An opportunity to go to university**

After matriculation I was able to obtain a bursary to further my studies at university. In the early 1990s, I enrolled for a degree in education degree because I wanted to teach the nation. At university, I was again involved in a leadership position where I was elected as a student representative on the education committee. I was able to learn from other students who were also leaders. At university, I had to learn to be disciplined because I was not pushed by anyone to do my academic work. That said, I was inspired by certain lecturers who were very good in teaching me. After graduating, I became well-versed in issues of curriculum and teaching, because the university had prepared me well for teaching.

At university it was easy to make friends. Together, we were able to work together in order to be successful. A change from high school to university was often difficult, because my parents were not as close to me as when I was at high school. I dedicated more time to my studies because I knew that education was the only way I could extricate myself from poverty. My parents had a hard talk with me before going to university. My father told me that if I failed at university, he would not take care of me, and that this was the only chance I had to get a meaningful life. His stern warning made me concentrate more on my studies because I knew

that this would be the only chance I would have to get an education that would change my life completely. It was my dream to get a university degree, and I fought hard until the end.

#### **4.2.6. Becoming a teacher**

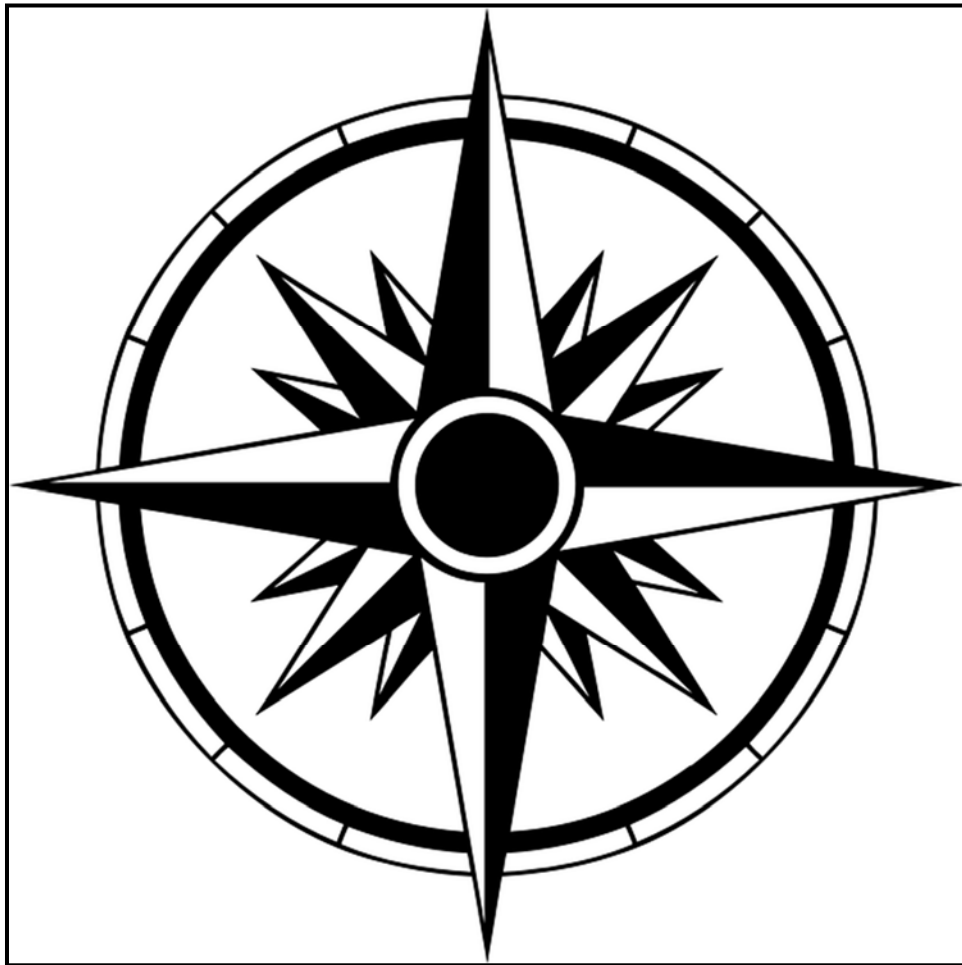
I was partly prepared for teaching at university although when I went for teaching practice, the situation was to prove different. Teachers in the field were so reserved, I was even afraid to ask them about school work. I began my teaching practice in a township school, yet I grew up in rural areas and attended school in rural areas. I soon learned however to be familiar with the environment of the township. These early days of teaching practice taught me that the staff were very close to their learners. This was difficult when I was at school, because I saw them as parents and not as friends. The teacher staff did not want to commit themselves to correcting us as student teachers about our teaching. I soon found that there were lots of things I did wrong when the lecturer visited me during my teaching practice. I was very confused when the lecturer pointed out things that I was not told by the other staff who I worked at the school. When I finished my teaching practice, I was not sure whether I was adequately prepared for what lay ahead; however, my lecturer told me that I did very well.

#### **4.2.7. Charting the way ahead**

When I started teaching at a school in the community I grew up in, I was told by the school principal that I am replacing a good teacher who had produced excellent results. The HOD did not guide me as to what was they expected of me in the classroom situation. I was only told that good results were needed. I battled using theories from university. Towards the end of the first term, I remember that the subject advisor visited me at the school which was situated deep in the rural area of Maphumulo. This was when I became familiar with my work.

After four years of teaching, I was promoted to be a HOD in the same school. In that position, I had to learn by myself how to function, receiving information from other teachers who had been doing the job for a long period of time. As a teacher, I was always prepared before going in to the class. Consequently, planning assisted me in reviewing my work. Planning is like a compass, for it provides direction. Planning also allows the departmental officials to advise me on an informed basis, firmly grounded on the plan that is reflected in the staff portfolios.

#### 4.2.8. Njabulo's artefact



**Figure 4.1.**

**Planning is like a compass**

The school principal allocated me grade twelve to teach. All the grade twelve teachers met once a month in order to check each other's work. During these meetings, I was able to ask questions so as to become familiar with my work. During break times and after school, I asked my colleagues how they managed teaching grade twelve since it was taken to be the most intense of classes. They were able to tell me their experiences of teaching grade twelve. During the grade twelve workshops, I was also able to network with other teachers outside of the school to equip myself better on the subject material. Once a month after school there were staff development activities, specifically for grade twelve educators. Teachers under this programme were able to share ideas and develop together. It became an acceptable practice for teachers at this school to assist one another, for we all knew if the grade twelve results were to drop we



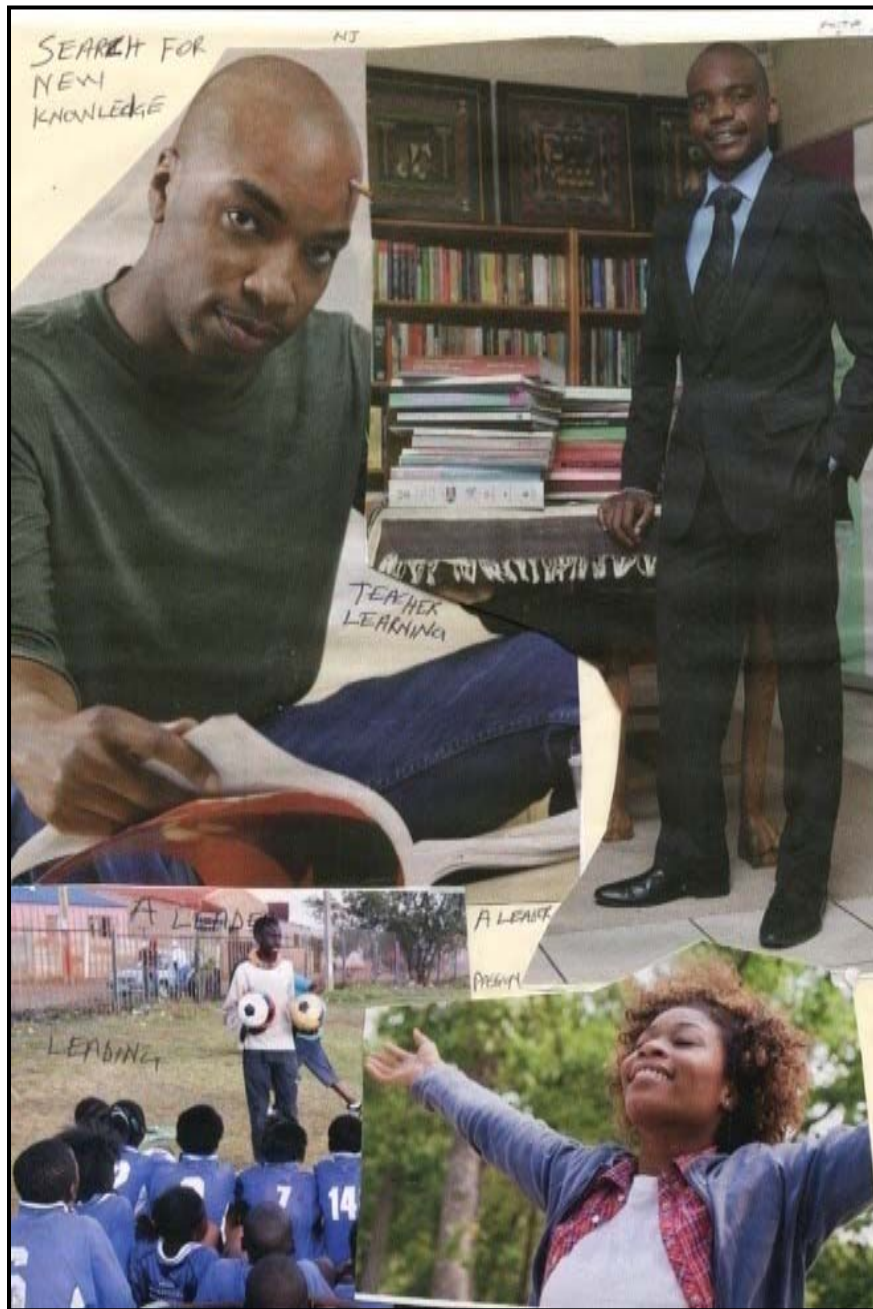
would all suffer and the image of the school would be damaged. It also became an accepted culture at the school for the teachers to compete for grade twelve results in order to motivate one another.

#### **4.2.9. Promoted as Head of Department**

I received a letter from the Department of Education stating that I had been promoted to a senior position as a Head of the Department (HOD). I was nervous, as there was no policy that I followed to do my work. I remember when I called my first departmental teacher's meeting, I thought they were not going to respect me. I soon found to my relief that my anxieties were without basis and that my colleagues had full respect for me.

When I was involved in the union, I attended many workshops about education policy. As a result, I soon became aware of what was expected of me as an HOD. Most think that the union was about politics, but that was only partly true, for in the main, it assisted me to understand the department's policies on education. Union leaders understand education policy better because they are expected to protect their workers when they are not treated well by school management. My experience with the unions placed me in a better situation by learning how to work and lead the staff members of my department. The principal told me that he was happy about my contribution to the school. This news made me even more motivated when executing my duties as HOD at the school.

#### 4.2.10. Njabulo's collage



**Figure 4.2.**  
**Leading the search for new knowledge**

#### 4.2.11. Promoted to subject advisor

In 2007, I was promoted as subject advisor for English as a second language. The first challenge that I faced was how to put departmental policy on HODs into action for there was no-one who was able to clarify my role. After assessing the situation, I was able to identify the additional

skills I would require. Accordingly, I registered for a Master's degree so as to further my knowledge in my subject. This enabled me to always be ahead of the other teachers so that they would not be able to undermine me.

When I was promoted as subject advisor, I was reminded about the personal strengths I demonstrated during those difficult times under apartheid when the social conditions were against me receiving an education. I received my qualifications with the aim of improving my teaching and learning where I grew up because most of the teachers who taught me were not qualified. My parents were strongly supportive of me receiving an education. This enabled me to persevere in my studies, regardless of the circumstances, leading eventually to the awarding of my first degree.

After working as a HOD and as a union member, I grew in confidence. I felt that I was ready for the position, even though I was given certain targets by the district officials in a rural where historically the pass rates had been very low. I was expected to assist teachers who were always complaining about the lack of facilities at their school to increase their learner pass rates.

#### **4.3. Bongani's story: Leading by example**

Bongani grew up in a rural area where he received both his primary and secondary education. Following matriculation, he was employed as an unqualified teacher where he generated funds to further his studies at university. Upon finishing his degree, he was employed as a history teacher in a township school, a position he held for many years. Later, he was promoted to work as a history subject advisor in the Pinetown District.

##### **4.3.1. As a rural boy and a learner**

Growing up in a rural area was not easy because one was subjected to various kinds of difficult tasks that made me very strong. In later life this translated into my being strong in character and successful in life. I had to make sure that there was adequate firewood for my mother to

cook for us after school. I had to fetch water to wash myself before going to school. Every morning before school, I was in charge of taking the livestock out to pasture. After school, I had to make sure that the livestock were brought back home. At school, the infrastructure was very poor. There was also a shortage of adequate resources. At home, there was insufficient time to study as we had no electricity. Instead, we were using candles, my parents often complaining that I should not waste them. Under such difficulties, I developed a sense of resilience in order to be successful in life. My family was also supportive because they allowed me to visit urban areas during school holidays in Durban, where my uncle was living. It was here that I was introduced to television for the very first time. I asked so many questions of my uncle that he invited me to come and stay with him after I had finished my schooling.

#### **4.3.2. Working as an unqualified teacher**

I became interested in teaching when I was growing up as a learner because teachers at my school were often telling us that there was a shortage of teachers in the rural areas. I began teaching in 1987 as an unqualified teacher with a matriculation qualification. I worked at a school in the rural area as a way of meeting the shortage of qualified teachers. I worked there temporarily to generate funds to further my studies at university. At this school I taught all the subjects given by my supervisor as I was paid by the school and not the government. I gained valuable experience as I was there to assist the community.

As an unqualified teacher, my relationship with the other teachers at the school was good because it was there where I matriculated. Most of the staff members were happy to have me working with them. I also felt privileged to work there. I was called by the school principal to assist because there was a shortage of qualified teachers in the rural areas. The principal was very supportive to me because he knew that it was very difficult to get qualified teachers during those days. I remember one moment he made an example of me to the learners, telling them that I matriculated in the school, passing with flying colours and thereby gaining university entry. The other teachers were able to relate to me as a learner and I respected them. I wanted these teachers to assist me to learn how to work. After ten years working as an unqualified teacher, I enrolled at the university to further my studies. I majored in history and political science. After graduating with my first degree, I enrolled for the Higher Diploma in Education in order to become a fully qualified teacher.

Familiarity would sometimes lead to disrespect. Accordingly, learners were sometimes ill-mannered and discourteous towards me. They would call me by my first name because most of them came from the same community as I did. The school however had a culture of discipline. As a result, when I reported the matter to the principal, they were summarily disciplined. The school was very close to the local community and involved them in various activities. In the classroom situation, I was able to relate well with my learners. Certain learners would question me a lot, trying to make sure that I knew about what I was teaching them. I was always fully prepared when going to the class because I knew that learners might take advantage of my temporary status.

#### **4.3.3. Receiving praise for good work**

When I told the school principal that I was leaving to pursue my studies at the University of Natal he told me that he was very thankful for the work I had done at his school. He went further and even offered me a permanent post when I finished my studies at university. The other teachers were always encouraging me to further my studies saying I was still young. Leaving the school at the end of the academic year, they made a surprise party for me, where the parents of the learners were also invited. At this party, both the teachers and parents thanked me for the contribution I had made to the school. I was surprised by all the praises given to me. It was then I realised I was very strong because I was just helping at the school. I did not expect to be praised for my work. As a result, I became even more motivated to move on with my career in teaching and began to value myself as a person.

#### **4.3.4. My studies and politics**

It was not easy for me at university. I found most of the students to be much younger than me. I knew however that I had a goal to achieve. As a result, I dedicated more time to my studies because I wanted to be qualified in order to get a permanent teaching position. I paid for my own tuition. I did not want to waste my money since I worked very hard for it. I was also privileged because I lived on the campus hall of residence that was very close to my lectures and the library.

At university, I happily became involved in student politics as I wanted to contribute to fighting against the apartheid government. I had a better understanding of politics because one of my

major was that of political science. I was also a member of the South African Student Congress. During this time there was a lot of student unrest. I also became involved in a community outreach programme that was an initiative of the university. Here, we assisted matric students by offering extra tuition during the weekends and during school holidays. My friends wanted me to take a leadership position but I refused. I told them I did not want to lose focus on my studies.

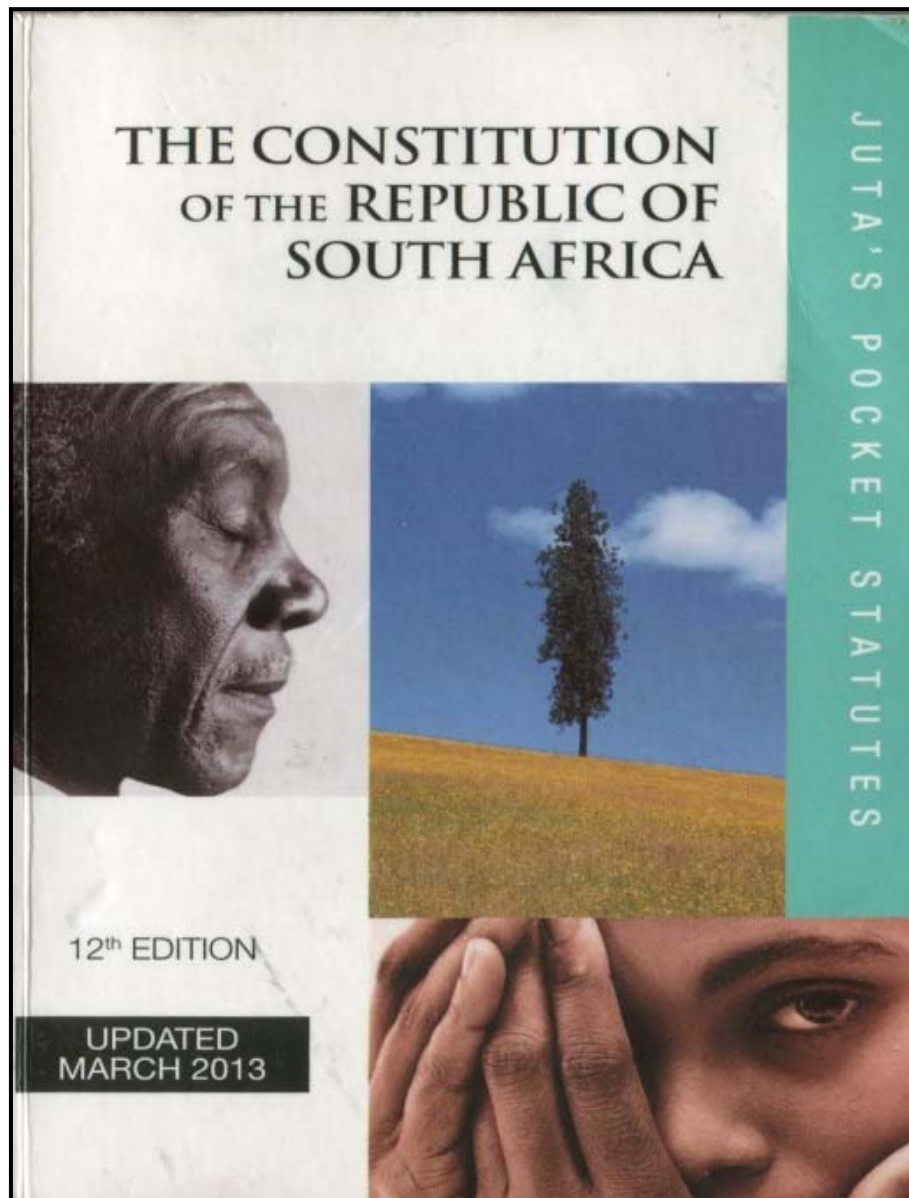
#### **4.3.5. Teaching in a township school**

I was able to cope well in my studies although I did not do a specific degree in education. Instead, I had enrolled in a Bachelor of Arts programme. Upon graduating, I registered for a Diploma in Education because I wanted to be a teacher. While studying for the diploma, I noticed the difference between what I did in the field and the knowledge I received at the university. Accordingly, I was able to link knowledge with practice, which was an interesting and informative experience.

When I started teaching permanently in the early 1990s, a complete change took place in my life. I was born in the northern part of KwaZulu-Natal, but began teaching at a high school in KwaMashu Township, north of Durban. During those first years in a permanent teaching post, I became very frustrated because teachers and learners were not dedicated to their school work. Teachers were lacking in professionalism and often absented themselves from the school without a valid reason. I tried to use my experience to assist the school to take the right direction. So that I would become familiar with the environment, the school principal asked me to work alongside an experienced teacher sharing the same subject. When I advised him of the unprofessionalism of his staff, he told me to be tolerant of the situation. The problem was that we were in the minority at the school. The other teachers also told me that they had found the environment to be dysfunctional when they first came in the school; but there was nothing I could do because they too had failed. After two years of teaching, I joined the union and became involved in union politics. I soon learned that there was something that I could do to change the situation. At union meetings, education policy was discussed at length. I found that some of these policies were related to the constitution of the country. Being equipped with this knowledge, I would bring the South African Constitution with me to staff meetings to remind

my colleagues that education was a basic right of all learners and that we needed to take education seriously as teachers.

#### 4.3.6. Bongani's artefact



**Figure 4.3.**  
**The right to education**

#### **4.3.7. The strength to grow**

The strong belief in myself arising out of my political involvement as a leader gave me the strength to grow in the field of education. I did not want to be a product of the environment since I was not new in the field of education. I also met people I knew when I was a university student that also boosted my confidence as a teacher. After six years of teaching as a qualified teacher, I was promoted to teach grade twelve. It had always been my wish to teach grade twelve class, but it did not come as easily as I thought. This was due to the school principal giving the responsibility to those teachers who came before me. I grew professionally as a teacher because I interacted with other teachers during the grade twelve cluster meetings related to my work. They gave me good advice. Through networking with other teachers outside the school, I was soon able to equip myself sufficiently to deal with the situation at my own school.

#### **4.3.8. Creating stability in the school**

School learners were absenting themselves from my school for no reason. Accordingly, it was difficult to get good results. I tried to persuade my colleagues to offer extra classes for learners after school and during holidays. While some indicated that they would take part in the programme, at the end of the day, few colleagues actually committed themselves. Undaunted, I continued teaching morning classes and afternoon classes. While at first, some learners did not attend these classes, towards the end of the year, the majority of the learners availed themselves of the programme.

It was difficult to accommodate some learners because I could see that they were not serious. Frustrated by the examinations, they only wanted to pass. As a parent and a professional, I found it in my heart to accommodate all of them in extra classes although it was late in the year. By the end of the year, most of my learners had made it and that was a relief to me. My conscience was always telling me that I was expected to do justice to the nation.

#### **4.3.9. Creating a healthy environment in the school**

Another goal that was left for me to do was to try and get the whole school in order because it was in crisis. The teachers did not have an inner-drive. They sometimes failed to attend their teaching periods for no reason. Learners were also undisciplined. The entire school



environment was chaotic. As a teacher, I did not confront the situation head-on. Instead, I complained during staff meetings about the bad practices that were going on. I encountered a lot of problems when trying to normalise the situation. I recall at times when certain teachers would remind me that I was not the principal. They would accuse me of acting as the principal. I reminded them to attend their classes instead of sitting in the staff room having their private conversations. I did not lose my focus even though I received much negativity from my colleagues for trying to create a positive learning environment at the school, being labelled by many as a troublemaker. The approach I adopted in trying to restore teaching and learning was not harsh, but was to my mind, entirely professional, I was also commended by the principal. I used staff development meetings to correct bad practices within the school, as this was the correct platform. Another challenge I encountered, was to balance my school work with that of my studies.

#### **4.3.10. Engaging in professional learning**

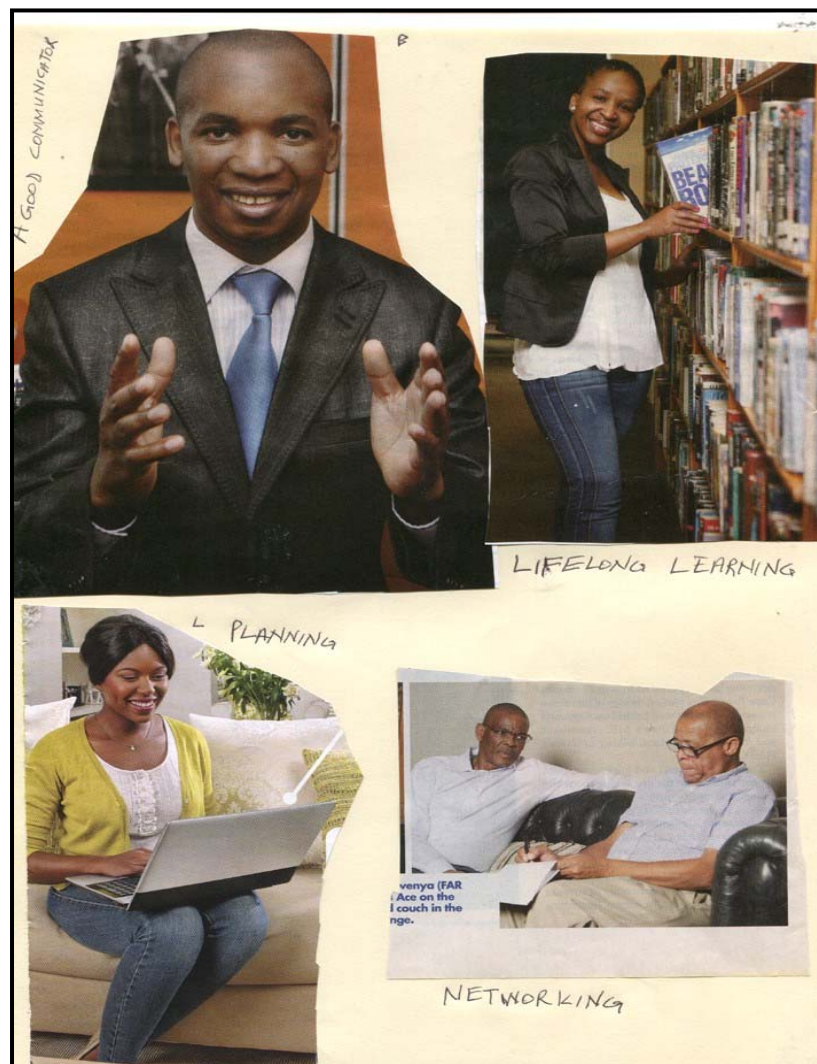
After five years of teaching I enrolled for an Honours Degree in history. I felt it was time for me to gain more content knowledge. Upon obtaining my first senior degree, I enrolled for a post-graduate Master's degree in history. When teaching in the classroom, I acted like a manager because one cannot teach in a disorderly class. I equipped myself with subject content knowledge skills. The research skills I learned at post-graduate level assisted me a lot. I was able to search for new knowledge without waiting for my supervisors to push me. Learners' results were also very important to me. I thought that they must be able to match my qualifications. I was frustrated when my learners were not passing my subject. Soon however, my learners were able to do as I expected and I was pleased with their results.

#### **4.3.11. Studying opened doors**

I studied through the University of South Africa (UNISA) through distance education. Accordingly, my supervisor was in Pretoria. If there was something very serious, I had to travel to Pretoria for a meeting with the supervisor. At that time, I did not own a car and was reliant upon public transport. I remember at one stage that even though my work was submitted through email, I would need to see my supervisor personally to get a good response. I used to go up on Fridays afterschool so that learners would not be affected by my studies. I used to reach Pretoria on Saturday, feeling very tired. I did not have friends there and I would often

wait a long period of time to see my supervisor. This experience made me very strong. As a result, I always advise other teachers to be very strong in what they do. I earned my post-graduate degree graduate through hard work and dedication. I feel that in life you do not need to be always complaining about not achieving your goals. My post-graduate degree opened doors for me. I always advise teachers to further their studies so that they too can be considered for promotion to higher positions. I strongly believe that sometimes good work must be rewarded. Teaching is a noble profession. By doing good work over a long period of time, not only is it good experience, but it can often lead to being promoted to a senior position.

#### 4.3.12. Bongani's collage



**Figure 4.4.**  
**Teacher network, lifelong learning and planning**

#### **4.3.13. Leading by example**

I call myself a professional because, my personal outlook has always been exemplary, both to other teachers and learners alike. I demonstrate a certain zeal and determination for progress to take place at my school. While always remaining humble, I am able to share my skills with other teachers. I feel there is a need to assist other educators. Teachers can freely approach me for assistance and I am always willing to listen to their concerns and aspirations. I feel that an expert-teacher is a lifelong learner who is always inquisitive. When I was a teacher, I was always prepared. I planned thoroughly before going to the class because I felt the need to be always ahead of my learners. Teacher lesson planning should not be made a burden, but must assist in doing their work properly. It is able to measure one's performance as a teacher. For example, if a teacher does not do well, prior-planning becomes diagnostic evidence that officials are able to check and make recommendations. Planning provides direction for the academic year. It also contains evidence for the work that is done. It is a critical instrument for the development and growth of educators and not a punishment.

As a teacher, there is a need for me to maintain good relationships with my learners in order for them to listen to my lessons and understand the subject. I must also be friendly towards my learners so that they will not fear approaching me if they find something problematic about the subject. There is also a need to obtain higher qualifications in the subject. In 2007, I was promoted to be a subject advisor because of my experience and qualifications. Under my supervision as a subject advisor, the pass rate has improved. I am very happy and proud to say that this came about because of my hard work and that of my learners.

#### **4.4. Hlengiwe's story: Destined to be a winner**

Hlengiwe is a head of science department in a township school in the Pinetown District. She grew up in a rural area where she completed both primary and secondary schooling. She started teaching fifteen years ago in the same high school teaching Life Science. She studied her first degree at the University of Durban-Westville (now the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Westville Campus). While studying, she worked as a tutor. After finishing her degree, she was permanently employed as a teacher.

##### **4.4.1. Perseverance is the mother of success**

I grew up in a poor home in a deep rural area of northern KwaZulu-Natal, where I also received my primary and secondary education. My parents were uneducated. Growing up in a deep rural area was a challenge on its own since I had to walk some ten kilometres—often barefooted—to go to school. At secondary school, I developed a love for teaching from my history teacher who ably demonstrated his educating skills. This teacher was able to identify that I was interested in him as an educator.

##### **4.4.2. Family values kept me going**

Although as a family we had no money, I wanted to become a teacher. My mother was uneducated and had never attended school. When my late father was working in Durban, my mother happened to visit him and became exposed to various people who had obtained a good education. She always told me that her biggest dream was to see me living a good life and that I would only achieve this through being educated. When I did not perform well at school in any of the three-monthly assessments, she beat me while asking a simple question: “What do you do at school if you fail?” This prompted me to be always attentive in the classroom. Where I grew up, every elder had a say in a child's education. When a child was late to school or walking without showing any sense of urgency, the elder would physically beat or chase the

child to school. School teachers also punished us if we did not pass our subjects. This too made me work even harder.

On the last day of term, all elders I came across on my walk to school would ask me whether I passed or not. If my answer was no, they would scold or even beat me, claiming that I was negligent and did not care for the hard-working widow—referring of course to my mother. Respect was the main reason why I managed to overcome all these challenges. This is expressed well in the saying: “It takes a village to raise a child.” The elders strongly discouraged improper conduct and often punished bad conduct without consulting the parents first. Loving my mother and wanting to please her at all times helped me to become who I am today. All these challenges also taught me responsibility.

#### **4.4.3. Hlengiwe’s artefact**



**Figure 4.5.**  
**The long road to education**

#### **4.4.4. My teacher, my role model**

As I grew up in the rural area there were very few qualified teachers. Indeed, some of the teachers who taught us only had matriculation certificates. I had to travel twenty kilometres to and from school. At secondary school, one of our teachers told us that he was a university graduate. It was from him that I developed a love for teaching. He taught me from grades ten to twelve. When teaching us he used good English and we were always attentive. He was energetic and enthusiastic in his delivery. I felt I must emulate his style when I became a teacher. He possessed the art of expression and encouraged us to use dictionaries if we wanted to improve our English. At school, he was the only one who used English during the entire period of teaching, most of the other teachers using isiZulu when teaching us the subjects that were tested in English.

#### **4.4.5. Under the tutelage of parents**

While my parents were uneducated, they were always supportive of me obtaining an education. They did not want me to grow up uneducated. Without an education, I would not have a choice of career. At home, we never spoke about careers. Yet, my parents wanted me to finish school and then look for a job. My parents told me that I needed to take them out of poverty, since both parents were only able to find temporary work within the village where we lived.

#### **4.4.6. My teacher my motivator**

The teacher that I admired the most used to ask me to prepare certain topics about history. After preparation, he would tell me to present the topic to the class. Learners would listen and it was very nice. The whole history class was very happy to have a teacher like him, who was able to communicate so well with us. We were always fearful of teachers when we were learners. The opportunity of coming close to a teacher gave us an insight into what life was like after finishing school. We were able to ask about how we could further our studies at tertiary institution of education. He was able to give us good advice. Indeed, he was like a parent to us, even assisting us when we applied for places at university.

#### **4.4.7. My initial exposure to academia**

After finishing secondary school, I was admitted to study for a teaching degree at the University of Durban-Westville (now the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Westville Campus). When in my third year at university, I was involved in a study-work programme as a tutor for first year students. I was also involved in the student structures at university, where I gained leadership skills. At university, I learned to work under pressure because I had to balance my studies and involvement in student politics. I was also able to learn from other students. My training prepared me properly for the teaching environment.

Life at university was very enjoyable because I met students coming from the same rural area that I was from. Everyone was welcoming at university as if we were all coming from the same family. Because I was not living on campus and not close to the library, I found it difficult to study. I had accommodation in Ntuzuma Township with one of my relatives. I also found it difficult to travel every day to university.

#### **4.4.8. Equipped with educational expertise**

When I was tasked to be in charge of first year students at university, it was a good experience. Through this, I gained skills that I am still using today. It was a challenging task to engage in the work-study programme because most of the students posed difficult questions to me. Nevertheless, I was always fully prepared before going to the class. Other students were supportive to the extent that I view my time at university as the best period of my life. Indeed, university life prepared me to be a better teacher today.

#### **4.4.9. As a teacher-beginner**

After finishing my first degree, I was employed at Inanda, where I started working as a level one educator. In my early years of teaching, I learned to network with other teachers. I gained skills to communicate effectively with learners. I have a better understanding of the subject today because during the holidays I did a lot of extra research so as to increase my knowledge of the subject.

My first years of teaching were characterised by a lot of confusion. I had to struggle by myself to learn how to do the work. I further struggled to get information because my supervisor only gave me textbooks and a timetable. The only good thing about me is that I know how to network. Accordingly, I consulted with other teachers from neighbouring schools who were in the field before me.

#### **4.4.10. Teacher learning**

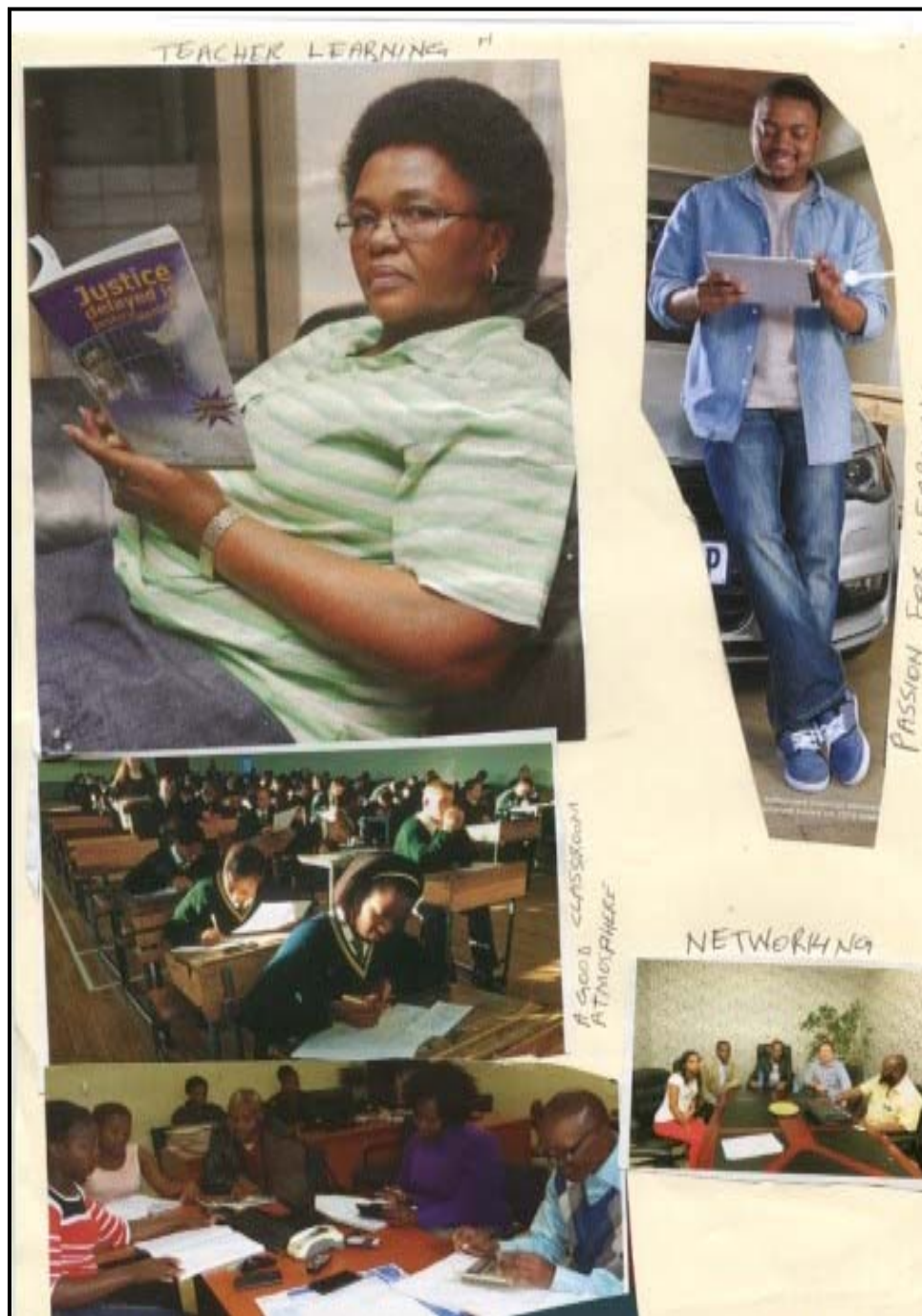
At the school where I was teaching, my supervisor told me he was not a specialist when it came to natural science. I felt helpless to the extent that I thought that he was against me. When I was called for subject cluster meetings, I related the story of not getting adequate support from the school. They told me this was an acceptable practice because there are subject advisors who are responsible for the subject I teach. In those cluster meetings, I learned a lot because there was a subject advisor who was able to clarify issues that would otherwise have been problematic to me.

I became frustrated in my early years of teaching because I found the opposite of what I was taught at university. I was unfamiliar with the environment. I struggled to find myself and what was expected of me. Having received the syllabus from my subject advisors and networked with teachers from other schools, I was able to get direction to do what was expected of me.

Nevertheless, I was not properly prepared for the challenges I encountered in the field of education. University only prepared me for the subject I taught. The challenges that I encountered, were altogether different. For example, it was difficult at times to interact with learners properly because some were unruly. Often there was chaos at the school as a result of a general lack of discipline. There was nothing that was given to me at university to face these challenges. I became familiar with the environment through learning from other teachers. As time went by however, I was able to cope with the school environment. Staff development activities in the school also assisted me to further develop myself.



#### 4.4.11. Hlengiwe's Collage



**Figure 4.6.**  
**Teacher networking and learning**

I had mixed feelings during my first years of teaching. It was a very difficult environment, with learners sometimes becoming disobedient. I was a younger teacher and they were often able to take advantage of this. When it came to teaching, I also found it difficult because I was

allocated lower classes in grade eight and nine. At university, I was taught to use English as a medium of instructions but my learners often complained that they did not understand. To me, learners are very important, I believe as a teacher that learners must know that the teacher cares for them. With this understanding, it will be easier to teach them. As a teacher, planning is also important. It allows me to keep records which those educators that follow me can use to see where I have ended in the teaching syllabus.

At times, I experienced a breakdown in communication with my learners. When interacting with other teachers in the cluster meetings, they told me that they had experienced the same problem. Learners are sometimes very slow because they are second language speakers. After three years of teaching, I was allocated grade eleven and twelve. I had proved myself a capable teacher and had received a lot of support from the subject advisor as a novice teacher.

I soon realised that at school most of the attention is given to senior classes, especially grade twelve. I became very happy at the end of the year as I managed to pass learners who sat for the grade twelve external exam. When we discussed the results in the cluster meetings, the subject advisor told me that I should strive for quality and not simply quantity. As a person who likes to be a winner all the time, I did as I was told. Good results soon came and after that it became the norm.

#### **4.4.12. Becoming Head of Department**

After teaching for four years at the same school, I received a promotion. My HOD was promoted as a principal to another school and I applied for his post that became available. Some of my colleagues who had also applied for the post harboured hard feelings towards me and this affected the way I was able to interact with them. As time went by, things eventually settled down and we again were found working together in a friendly and conducive atmosphere. As a new supervisor, I realised that there was much need for me to be ahead with information. I decided to enrol at the University for an Honours course in Education Management in order to become an informed and good manager. While studying for this degree, I met other students who were also in management positions at their respective schools. I was in a better position to understand my role as a supervisor because during lectures and after hours, we would talk about the problems we were facing at school. It was a helpful experience because I found some

others had similar problems as I was experiencing in not knowing their roles properly. I soon grew in confidence, knowing that I was not the only one with this problem. We also used to relate our problems to the entire class and I was often given good advice from the other students and the lecturer. It thus became a real learning experience for me.

#### **4.5. Velaphi's story: Teaching and challenges**

Velaphi grew up in Inanda Township, KwaZulu-Natal, where he received both his primary and secondary education. After finishing matric, he went to university to study a Bachelor of Arts degree, majoring in history and IsiZulu. After completing his degree, he was employed on temporary basis as a teacher in a rural area. Later, he was employed in a township school that was closer to home. He furthered his studies by completing a post-graduate Certificate in Education. He became permanently employed after eight years of teaching.

##### **4.5.1. My schooling and resistance**

It was very difficult to be a learner under apartheid because the curriculum was set in such a way that they were educationally streamlined to certain professions such as teaching, law, and social work. I received both my primary and secondary education in Inanda Township, KwaZulu-Natal, during the time of the student uprisings when young people were demanding the end to the Bantu education system offered to African learners under the white government. I remember at one stage we boycotted classes for months, demanding better facilities at school. As a consequence of these and other actions, the culture of teaching and learning was destroyed at my school. My parents therefore decided to move me to another school where the culture of teaching and learning was less affected by the unrest. At this new school, I found the environment totally different. The teachers were dedicated and the learners disciplined. I became convinced that I would finish my schooling and further my studies as a lawyer. The school was in an explosive situation because one could not distinguish between school officials and student leaders.

#### **4.5.2. Education path**

After finishing school in 1991, I spent a year at home as there was not enough money to further my studies. In 1993, I was admitted to the university to study for a Bachelor of Arts degree. I specialized in IsiZulu and history. Teaching was my second choice. I wanted to be a lawyer but could not meet the entry requirements of the Faculty of Law. Although naturally a reserved person, at university I learned to network and communicate with other students and teaching staff. I also learned to mingle with people from diverse backgrounds. As a result, I learned from other students. Many were welcoming and always willing to assist, especially with respect to academic matters. I became sociable because the environment called for me to be sociable. At university I also learned to work hard because there was a lot of work to accomplish. I had to find the balance between academic work and social activities. I also learned to be personally responsible there was no-one asking me to attend class. Instead, it became my responsibility as a student. A consequence of this is that I am a responsible person today.

At university, I also learned to cope with an environment where there were many activities on offer. For example, there was too much student politics. These activities were conducted during the study period. I had to learn to be disciplined enough to create time for my students activities and at the same time know where to draw the line and get on with furthering my education. Fortunately, I was not actively involved in student politics. Instead, I was involved in religious activities because I had grown up in a Christian-oriented family environment. I kept on praying not to lose focus and to concentrate on my studies. I was very fortunate to be born in to Christian family where the Bible served as a reminder not to lose hope—something that was of great importance to me and my family during the student unrest.

When I completed my degree, I felt that I could be employed in any field of work. The problem with my degree was that I was not sure of the field I should choose. I wanted to be a lawyer but could not meet the requirements. At first, I thought that I would enrol for another degree, but unfortunately my brother passed away who was the bread winner in the home. As a result, I had to take over his responsibilities. I looked for a job in the Department of Education because I had school subjects as part of my degree. Accordingly, I was able to get a teaching job at a school in the rural area.

#### **4.5.3. The school atmosphere**

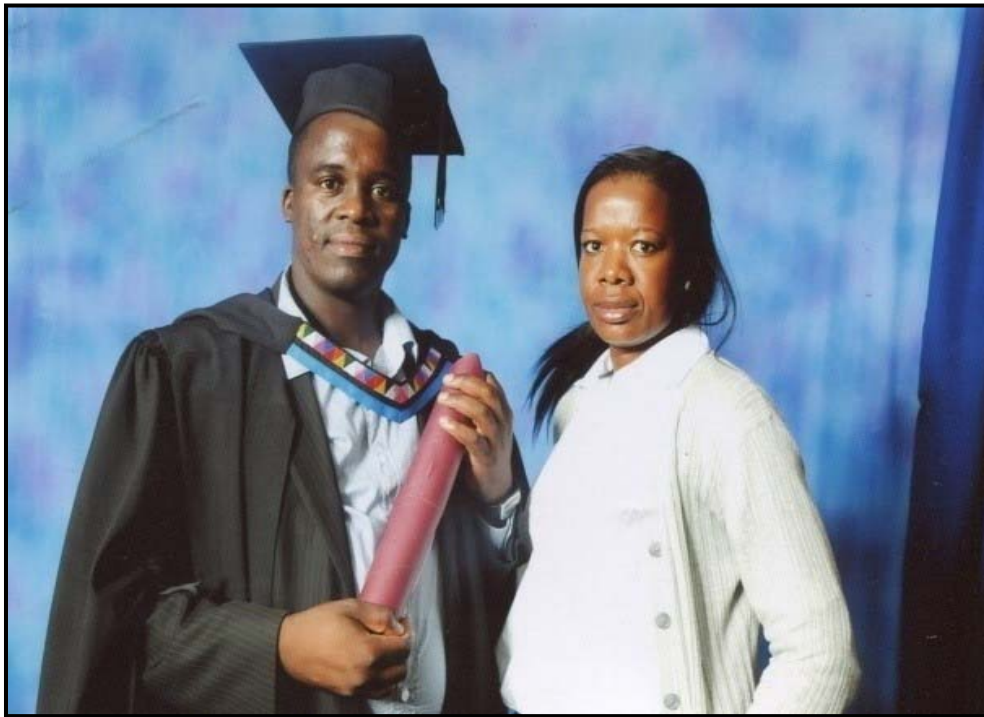
Upon finishing my degree, I was employed as a temporary educator because I did not have a professional qualification in education. Where I started my teaching career, I found that the school had poor facilities as well as a shortage of books in the library and science materials. The teachers and learners however were dedicated to their work. The school principal and teachers were all very supportive and friendly towards me. As a consequence, I felt very well treated at this school. Because I had no professional certificate in education I was allocated to an experienced teacher who was able to guide me properly. Since I was new in the field and working in an unfamiliar environment, with the help of the staff and learners I soon gained a lot of valuable experience. It was an environment that I think equipped me in terms of teaching because we were united in our vision. As a result, I was able to learn much from the other teachers.

The school principal was always preaching the issue of unity. The school was also overcrowded with learners. The school developed a plan to uplift the standard of living of the community. The community was very supportive of us as a school and we did not want to disappoint them. That is why we did our work properly. After two years, I moved to a township school next to my home. As a teacher at my first school, I learned that lesson planning was the most important aspect in a teacher's life. The environment also taught me how to engage with the learners in a helpful manner.

#### **4.5.4. Professional learning**

When working in a township school, I was able to further my studies by enrolling for a professional certificate in education. This professional qualification gave me more understanding of the methods of teaching in my chosen discipline. I also joined cluster meetings for my speciality where I was able to learn and increase my knowledge of the subject.

#### **4.5.5. Velaphi's artefact**



**Figure 4.7.**

**Hard work pays dividends**

After completing my professional Certificate in Education, I expected to be converted to a permanent status by the principal of my new school. Unfortunately, the school principal declined the recommendation to the Department of Education. When the subject advisor visited me, I reported the matter to him. He not only consoled me, but also advised me to move to a better school where my teaching ability and good learner results would be more appreciated.

#### **4.5.6. A toxic school environment**

The situation at this school was very bad. It was difficult to wake up in the morning to go to work because I was not used to such a toxic environment. There was much unnecessary confrontation. As this was my second school, I was able to gain the necessary experience to enable me to continue getting good learner results. I prayed hard under circumstances where chaos was the order of the day. The staff were divided in such a way that everyone got on with their own work in order to try and ignore what was happening around them. Fortunately, I

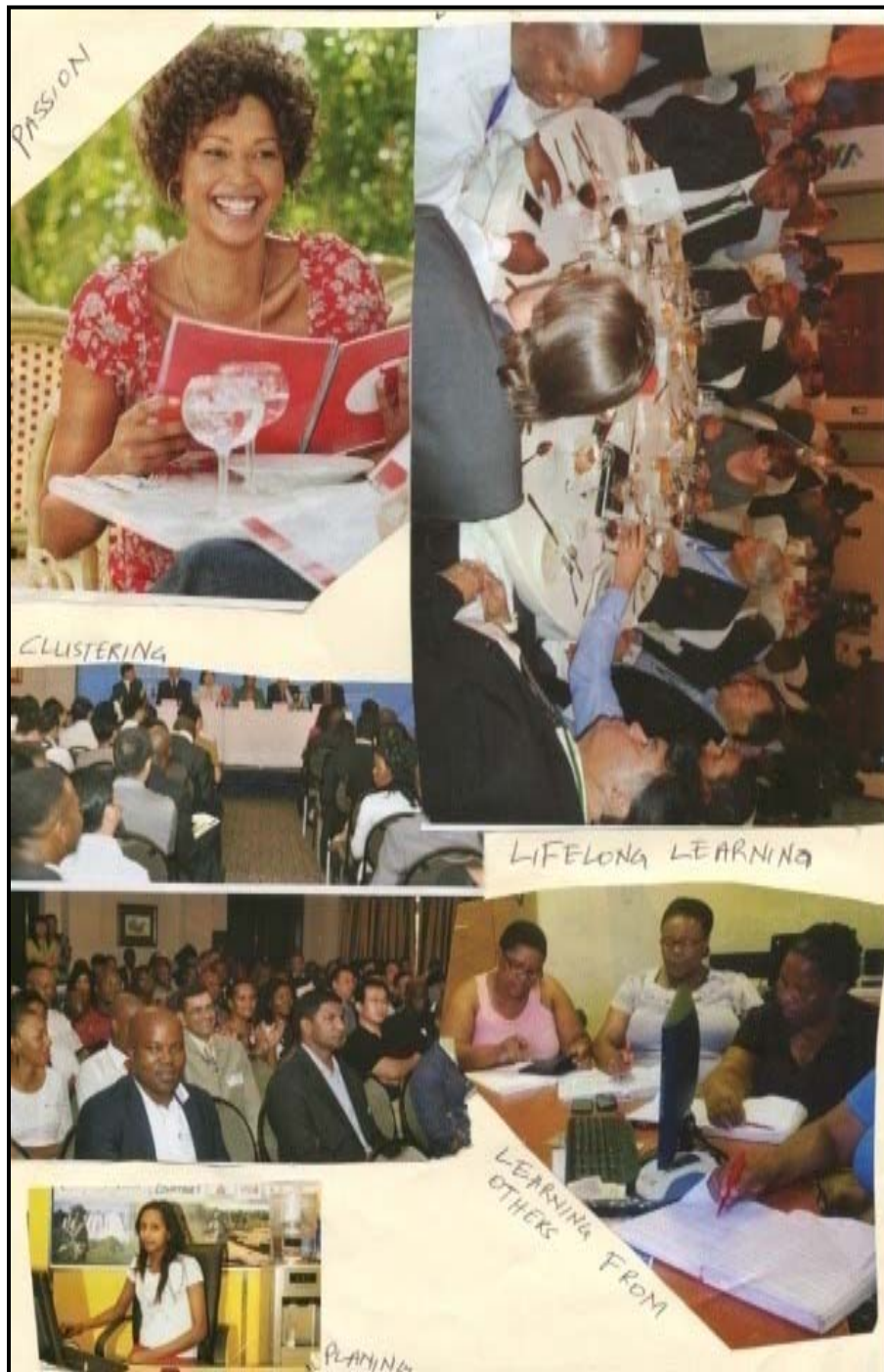
enjoyed a good relationship with my subject advisor who was particularly supportive of me under what were difficult and trying circumstances.

#### **4.5.7. Learning and development**

After five years, I moved to another new school that was situated in the same township. The environment here was totally different and the entire staff accepted me with open arms. The HOD, together with other senior members of staff had several meetings with me in order to familiarise me with the school environment. I was particularly happy in these surroundings. The staff were united. There were several workshops in the school conducted by other teachers and that made me to grow as a teacher. The first workshop I attended in the new school concerned Integrated Quality Management Systems, where two level one educators were the facilitators. The entire staff were involved in the workshop in such a way that I was able to learn much. We went away for a weekend, where an outside facilitator was invited for staff development of the school. All the teachers attended with the aim of building their capacity as teachers. As a consequence of all the staff wanting to develop their teaching skills, we were always getting good results at our school.



#### 4.5.8. Velaphi's collage



**Figure 4.8.**  
**Learning from one another during cluster meetings**



#### **4.5.9. Teaching in a healthy atmosphere**

My relationship with all the learners was a good one. I was happy at this school and it was easier for me to mingle well with the learners. The learners were respectful of me because they were treated like my own children and that I was supportive of them all.

There is much need for teachers to respect their learners so that they can feel loved and wanted. It is easier to teach in an atmosphere where everyone is happy. I came to believe that in order for me to be good at teaching, I must have a passion for teaching and learning, and to be always motivated. For me, the school environment must be created in such a way that teachers and learners enjoy being there. I learned a long time ago that when students are happy in a classroom situation they are more likely to perform well.

#### **4.5.10. A teacher-leader**

At my new school, which was located next to an informal settlement, there was real sense of competition when it came to matriculation results. Due to the social and economic challenges in their homes, the learners were given insufficient time to prepare themselves for their education. To enable my learners to pass their examinations, I organised extra tuition classes for them so that they could do their work before going home. During weekends and holidays, I organised extra classes for my learners in an attempt to keep them working and improving. My school principal always showed his support by making sure he was always in attendance when I conducted these extra classes. I also encouraged my learners to come to school during weekends even if I was not there, in order for them to learn during my absence. The principal thanked me and my colleagues for the good work we were doing. I am always dedicated to my work because grade twelve is taken as a mirror of the school. Accordingly, the focus was always on us as grade twelve teachers. There is always a need for us as teachers to go the extra mile in order to ensure that our learners get good results at exam time.

#### **4.6. Chapter summary**

In this chapter I have related the teacher's stories that emerged from the data generated from all the research participants. The data has been presented thematically as an initial stage of analysis. In this chapter, I have particularly examined though the storied narratives the

adversities and successes of the teachers experienced their professional and personal lives experiences. Accordingly, it was found that irrespective of whether they be good or bad experiences, the teachers developed their professional skills. The narrated stories have also indicated that the research participants were able to develop their expertise and become expert-teachers by developing strong and resilient personal characters from childhood through to adulthood. The research participants also indicated that there were many times when they had to struggle in order to gain knowledge and skills.

This chapter has taught me that most successful teachers possess resilience. They work hard to level their playing fields. They are also able to assist in difficult social and economic environments. They obtain knowledge, formally and informally in order to always be abreast of the changes in the field of education. Furthermore, the narrated stories have taught me that teachers develop as a result of collaborating with other teachers. These collected stories reveal that teachers develop as a result of furthering their studies to gain more subject content and pedagogical knowledge. I have learned that the programmes for teacher development in a school are able to shape teachers as experts. Their stories have also taught me that expert-teachers are able to take a lead where they work in order to assist in teacher development. Finally, through the research participant stories, I have learned that teachers develop to be where they are irrespective of adverse situations or circumstances.

In the chapter which follows, I will present an analysis of these narrated stories. In order to respond adequately and academically to the critical question and sub-questions of this present study, this will take the form of crafted vignettes.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### VIGNETTES

#### 5.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter I presented the reconstructed storied narratives of the four research participants. In this chapter, through a series of vignettes developed from selected excerpts of the storied narratives, I will provide critical responses to the key research question:

*Who is an expert-teacher?*

In addition, I will also provide nuanced responses to the sub-question:

*What personal and professional attributes does an expert-teacher have?*

Vignettes are short, descriptive, written portraits that capture an individual holistically in order to better understand them. Through their use, a researcher is able to look at various aspects on an individual's personal and professional life when analysing the research data (Butler-Kisber, 2008). Drawing on the work of Evans (2002), I will adopt the following two concepts in order to explore the personal and professional attributes that each of the research participant's display in order to arrive at a critical understanding of what it means to be an expert-teacher:

- i. Attitudinal: The process whereby a teacher's attitude to their work is often modified;
- ii. Functional: The process whereby teacher's professional performance may be improved through the acquisition of professional development.

The following vignettes are developed from selected excerpts drawn from the storied narratives of the four research participants.<sup>3</sup> The selected vignettes will particularly focus on the personal and professional attributes which these participants foregrounded through their stories as expert-teachers.

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<sup>3</sup> The four research participants consisted of two department of education officials and two teachers. These four were chosen on the basis of their status that classifies them as expert-teachers.

## **5.2. Njabulo: Determined to be successful**

This vignette deals with two conceptions of Njabulo<sup>4</sup> as an expert-teacher:

- i. Personal attributes
  - a. An expert-teacher must possess the inner-strength of resilience.
- ii. Professional attributes
  - a. An expert-teacher must own a sense of responsibility.

### **5.2.1. Personal attributes**

#### **a. An expert-teacher with an inner-strength of resilience**

Njabulo spoke about resilience as a personal attribute that enabled him to be successful in executing his duties as a teacher. Growing up under difficult circumstances in a rural area of KwaZulu-Natal meant that Njabulo had to endure many challenges. Accordingly, he never had a problem when joining other teachers that were working under difficult circumstances. He managed to triumph over every obstacle in order to become a better teacher:

*At both my primary and secondary school, teaching was of a poor quality because there was a shortage of qualified teachers and other school facilities. At school, teaching and learning [often] took place under the trees. I managed to endure those difficulties.*

Rural schools in KwaZulu-Natal are reported to be among the poorest of all schools in South Africa in terms of resources and facilities. They have fewer teachers, frequent learner absenteeism, larger classes, less-qualified teachers, incomplete curriculum coverage, poor teacher capacity and subject knowledge, fewer resources, less chance of matriculating, less chance of going to university and less chance of graduating (Soudien, 2007; Gilmour and Soudien, 2009).

Nevertheless, it is clear that Njabulo possessed an inner desire to improve his life. According to Day (2007:2), motivational force emanating from emotional strength creates energy, determination, conviction, commitment, and even an obsession to keep going:

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<sup>4</sup> In terms of the ethical reporting of human research data in this study, the real name of this research participant has been withheld and replaced with a pseudonym.

*I felt, I was destined for better things in life. After school on our way back, older boys would bully us, usually, they forced us to engage in boxing and stick fighting as young boys. This was believed to be a training that would make us strong like soldiers. In order to do school work as well, I had to wake up early in the morning to prepare myself, doing everything like collecting firewood because there was no electricity in the area.*

Kruger and Prinsloo (2008) look at resilience (Morales and Trotman, 2004) and issues of motivation (Ryan and Deci, 2000) in rural areas as driving forces in adolescent achievement. Children such as Njabulo are able to be successful in life as a result of adopting values and beliefs that are positive. It has consequences for the kind of teacher Njabulo became as an adult.

### **5.2.2. Professional attributes**

#### **a. An expert-teacher with a sense of responsibility**

The desire for Njabulo to be a responsible citizen is played out in his professional occupation as an expert-teacher. He emphasises that perseverance and honouring one's duties are important qualities in becoming a better teacher. By becoming a responsible teacher he was able to deliver in the classroom:

*Growing as a responsible citizen assisted me to be what I am today. I accepted those challenges by knowing what to do and when to whom, working hard finishing all the tasks on time. Perseverance, honouring and obeying my duties had a positive impact in my life. All have motivated me to be who I am today.*

As a responsible person, Njabulo was able to perform his duties professionally as a teacher and fulfil his obligations as required by his work. This is why he is a successful teacher and classified as an expert.

According to Timperly (2008), a responsible teacher knows what is expected of her/him at any given time. It is this attribute distinguishes expert-teachers from other teachers. Furthermore, teaching and learning begins when a teacher knows clearly all the activities that need to be fulfilled in order to enhance quality learning. As Davis (2003) has noted, expert-teachers must possess a sense of responsibility in order to be successful in their fraternity.

### 5.3. Bongani: Determined to be an exemplary teacher

This vignette deals with four conceptions of Bongani<sup>5</sup> as an expert-teacher:

- i. Personal attributes
  - a. An expert-teacher must possess the inner-strength of endurance.
  - b. An expert-teacher must be an agent of change.
- ii. Professional attributes
  - a. An expert-teacher needs to be humble and yet exemplary.
  - b. An expert-teacher values results-driven practice.

#### 5.3.1. Personal attributes

##### a. An expert-teacher with the inner-strength of endurance

Growing up in a rural areas was an enigmatic task for Bongani. His strong personal character caused him to wrestle for a better education irrespective of the social and economic situation of his family. Coming into adulthood, he was able to become a teacher even though the situation was against him. By enduring these difficulties when growing up, Bongani developed a strong personal character that enabled him to become a successful expert-teacher against all odds:

*The difficulties I experienced in the rural areas made me to be very strong as a person, as I had to develop a strong character in order to be successful and made sure that all the tasks I was responsible for were done.*

According to Kruger and Prinsloo (2008), children growing up in rural areas are able to triumph over obstacles as a result of developing strong personal characters. When they reach adulthood, they are able to use these attributes to be successful in life. Bongani was able to use his strong personal character in order to pave his way in becoming a good teacher in the education fraternity.

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<sup>5</sup> In terms of the ethical reporting of human research data in this study, the real name of this research participant has been withheld and replaced with a pseudonym.

**b. An expert-teacher as an agent of change**

A teacher as an agent of change is one of the more important personal attributes that characterizes Bongani and which has led him to become a successful teacher in the classroom. For Rampa (2012), teachers are expected to assume a leading role in creating a vibrant and positive atmosphere in the classroom.

Bongani explained that a teacher must be an agent of change in order to bring about necessary change during times of uncertainty at a school. He added that expert-teachers display exceptional character by taking a lead in charting a way forward for an institution of learning:

*I did not want to be a product of the environment, since I was not new in the field of education. I tried to persuade my colleagues to offer extra classes for learners after school and during holidays.*

As Rampa (2012) has further argued, teachers must serve as catalysts in order for change to take place in an environment. This means that an expert-teacher must be able to change the environment into a healthy one for teaching and learning.

**5.3.2. Professional attributes**

**a. An expert-teacher's desire to be humble and yet exemplary**

In the interviews, Bongani indicated that he always strove to be a humble and exemplary teacher. For him, this was vital because other teachers would then be able to emulate these good attributes for the betterment of the entire school.

A humble teacher is able to assist others in executing their duties properly. Humility particularly assists a teacher in the classroom when interacting with learners. A humble person is able to be respected and approachable by learners and other teachers within an educational establishment:

*My personal outlook was always exemplary towards other teachers and learners. I demonstrated quest and zeal for the progress of the school. Teachers could approach me for assistance. I felt that there was a need to assist other educators.*

For Stoelinga and Magin (2011), a lead educator with skills must be accessible to other teachers in order to give professional advice. This means that as an expert-teacher must be friendly and

accessible to other teachers who are able to ask for professional advice. Teacher leaders gain the trust of their peers based on their activities in a school situation. It logically follows therefore that teachers who trust a teacher-leader will seek her/his advice and assistance.

**b. An expert-teacher who values results-driven practice**

Bongani is an expert-teacher who places great value on his learner's results. This means that an expert-teacher must always produce better learner results in order to distinguish themselves from other teachers:

*Learners results to me, were very important, they must be able to match my qualifications. I was frustrated during my early years, when learners were not passing my subject after a certain period of time; learner were able to do as I expected, and I was pleased with good results.*

According to Rampa (2012), passionate teachers are always interested in the achievements of their learners. A teacher with such an attitude is able to get good results when teaching learners as they will always be driven by the desire to work at an optimum level.

This vignette is descriptive of an expert-teacher's personal endurance as well as being agents of change. Professionally, an expert-teacher must have an attitudinal disposition of humility combined with a desire to be an exemplary teacher who values results-driven practice. This is what epitomizes an expert-teacher.

**5.4. Hlengiwe: Determined to achieve academic excellence**

This vignette deals with four conceptions of Hlengiwe<sup>6</sup> as an expert-teacher:

- i. Personal attributes
  - a. An expert-teacher needs to be resilient.
  - b. An expert-teacher must own a winning mentality.
- ii. Professional attributes
  - a. An expert-teacher will win the hearts and minds of learners.
  - b. An expert-teacher will possess the skill of learning to lead.

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<sup>6</sup> In terms of the ethical reporting of human research data in this study, the real name of this research participant has been withheld and replaced with a pseudonym.



### **5.4.1. Personal attributes**

#### **a. An expert-teacher's need to be resilient**

When growing up as a child and as a learner, Hlengiwe was confronted daily with the stark economic realities of living in a poor rural area. However, she never lost her dream of becoming a teacher. Her strong personal character drove her to work towards realising her dream of becoming a teacher at all cost:

*Growing up in a deep rural area was a challenge on its own since I had to walk long distances to school on bare feet. At secondary school, I developed the love for teaching from my history teacher, who demonstrated his skills of teaching. This experience made me to be very strong mentally.*

For Davis (2003), enduring difficulties in a rural area brings about resilience and develops strong personal character. Accordingly, growing up in a poverty-stricken rural area where there is no hope for success can bring about an inner drive to overcome obstacles (Davis, 2003).

#### **b. An expert-teacher with a winning mentality**

In order for her to become a better teacher, Hlengiwe indicated that she must own a winning mentality. To possess such a strong mental attitude that never gives up will drive a teacher to always strive for a success. This means that expert-teachers always strives for success no matter what the situation is:

*As a person who likes to be a winner all the time, I did as I had thought was correct, and good results came, and after that it became a norm to get good results.*

According to Shulman (1987), a teacher has special responsibilities in relation to content knowledge. This serves as the primary source for a learner's understanding of the subject matter and to achieve certain outcomes in the classroom. When a passionate teacher achieves certain outcomes and goals, this develops a winning mentality towards fulfilling her/his professional responsibilities (Rampa, 2012).

### **5.4.2. Professional attributes**

#### **a. An expert-teacher's desire to win the hearts and minds of her/his learners**

From young, Hlengiwe developed the attitudinal skill of communicating effectively. Communication is an invaluable skill that all practicing teachers must acquire if they are to connect effectively with their learners. For Hlengiwe, this skill proved to be invaluable in winning the hearts and minds of her learners. Accordingly, her learners began believing her as a teacher:

*In my early years of teaching, I learned a valuable skill of communication with the learners. I gained skills to communicate effectively with learners especially when I persuaded them to attend extra classes. I was able to win their hearts and their minds.*

Classroom management, according to Evertson and Poole (2008) needs to be broadened beyond student behaviour control and should include the actions teachers take to create an environment that supports and facilitates both academic and social-emotional learning. Teachers who experience and possess good communication skills are able to communicate well with their students about academic activities. As Evertson and Poole further point out, a teacher is a person who is able to convey knowledge about the norms, expectations and routines of the classroom.

#### **b. An expert-teacher's skill of learning to lead**

According to Hlengiwe, in order to become an expert-teacher one has to have a better understanding of one's role as a teacher. A better understanding of one's role inevitably leads to a teacher executing her/his duties properly:

*I was in a better position to understand my role as a teacher when I was promoted to a senior position. As a new supervisor, I realised that there is a need for me to be ahead with the information with my junior colleagues. I decided to enrol for an honours degree in education management, in order to get information of how to be a good manager.*

For Baron (2008), leadership qualities are essential if a leader is to create favourable conditions for all stakeholders in an organisation. Furthermore, as Baron has shown, leading is a functional duty that allows senior workers to motivate their subordinates.

### 5.5. Velaphi: Determined to be a better teacher

This vignette deals with four conceptions of Velaphi<sup>7</sup> as an expert-teacher:

- i. Personal attributes
  - a. An expert-teacher has unboundless determination to succeed.
  - b. An expert-teacher is an inquisitive teacher.
- ii. Professional attributes
  - a. An expert-teacher must have an intuition for the future.
  - b. An expert-teacher owns a true sense of identity and self-knowledge.

#### 5.5.1. Personal attributes

##### a. An expert-teacher's determination to finish school

Velaphi grew up in a South African township during the period of student uprising against the apartheid regime. As a result, chaos and confusion was the order of the day, both in the community and at public schools. Yet, Velaphi never gave up on his dream of becoming a teacher. As a person of strong personal character he was determined to finish his schooling, regardless of the hardships and violence that surrounded him, so that one day he could become a teacher:

*Teachers were not dedicated and students were not disciplined. I became convinced that, I would finish school and further my studies as a teacher under those difficulties. The school was in an explosive situation because one could not distinguish between school officials and student leaders.*

Resilience, according to Timperly (2008) is a driving force that enables an individual to accomplish her/his goals. A resilient person is therefore able to work under difficult and stressful conditions in order to achieve their desired outcomes.

When Velaphi was attending a township school there was no recognisable hope that he would one day become a teacher. Determined not to allow his dream to dissolve into the ether, he

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<sup>7</sup> In terms of the ethical reporting of human research data in this study, the real name of this research participant has been withheld and replaced with a pseudonym.

developed a strong personal character that made him work hard towards getting an education and realising his goal.

**b. An expert-teacher is an inquisitive teacher**

To be academically inquisitive is one of the attributes that Velaphi regards as crucial in becoming an expert-teacher. Growing up under apartheid as an African male was a real struggle. The resistance he demonstrated in challenging the institutionalised accepted norm that African men are mere unskilled labourers was instrumental in enabling him to envision becoming a skilled expert-teacher. He is able to acquire knowledge that assisted him to resist those aspects he was dubious about relating to teaching and learning. This placed him in a better position to question issues and in the process he acquired the status of an expert-teacher:

*I could not fit under apartheid simply because apartheid wanted people who were not inquisitive about their system. It was a challenge to grow under that system.*

According to Ono (2012) an expert-teacher is a person who is expected to be inquisitive so that it will be easier to collect knowledge required for teaching and learning. Teachers become better when they are able to access information as mind workers (2012).

**5.5.2. Professional attributes**

**a. An expert-teacher with an intuition for the future**

When studying at university, Velaphi learned to be a responsible person with a sense of direction. This attribute enabled him to fulfil his responsibility of making sure that learners are taught appropriately. A responsible person always knows what is expected of her/him:

*One had to balance between academic work and social activities when studying at university. I also learned to be responsible because, there was no one following us around asking us to attend classes. It became my responsibility as a student; that is why I am a responsible person today.*

According to Shulman (1987), a responsible teacher is able to fulfil all the obligations of her/his profession. This is confirmed by Davis (2003) who asserts that a responsible teacher is able to execute her/his duties as per the requirements set out by the relevant education authority.

**b. An expert-teacher with a true sense of identity and self-knowledge**

Velaphi's passion for teaching and learning is an important attribute that enhances his inner drive to perform better in the classroom and thereby create a good atmosphere for his learners. Learners will also feel that they are loved (Hooks 1994). In other words, a passion for teaching and learning makes a teacher effective in his/her work and is not easily disturbed emotionally as s/he is doing something that comes from the heart:

*I furthered my studies and received a professional certificate in education in order to gain a necessary knowledge on the field of education because I love to teach. The certificate gave me more methods of teaching the subject.*

For Rampa (2012), passionate teachers have a true sense of identity and believe that they can make a difference to the learning and achievement of their learners. As Palmer (1998) has explained, "it's not about the methods, it's about 'who I am as a teacher.'" In other words, whatever the situation, a passionate teacher will be able to engage with the learner with confidence. This is confirmed by Day (2004), who maintains that a passion for students makes for good teaching and good teachers. Such teachers professionally manage a number of tensions and dilemmas related to the changing demands of their work. In other words, passion gives teachers an inner drive to function effectively irrespective of the situation. By Velaphi having such a true sense of identity and self-knowledge, it enabled him to develop into an expert-teacher who uses various methods when teaching. Having a passion for teaching and learning as a functional process operating within resulted in him teaching effectively irrespective of the situation.

**5.6. Chapter summary**

By utilising theoretical lenses adopted from Evans (2002) the analysis of the research findings in this section have indicated what it means to be an expert-teacher. These have been varied and include a range of personal and professional attributes as well as personal curiosity and teacher resilience.

An expert-teacher is an agent of change, who is both humble and exemplary in nature, owns a winning mentality, and is passionate about teaching and learning. These are attributes that fall within the scope of the attitudinal dimension and help explain how the emotional and the

intellectual aspects of the human mind play a pivotal role in becoming and making an expert-teacher.

This chapter has provided an analysis the research data by painting vignettes of each of the research participants. This methodological process has allowed me to look at particular threads in each of the participant's narratives. In particular, the analysis of the research findings have revealed the following attributes of what it means to be an expert-teacher:

- i. An expert-teacher is always resilient.
- ii. An expert-teacher has a constant desire to win the hearts and minds of her/his learners.
- iii. An expert-teacher knows what is to be taught in the classroom.
- iv. An expert-teacher always works towards changing the lives of her/his learners as well as other teachers.
- v. An expert-teacher has a persistent and undauntable passion for teaching and learning.

In the next chapter, I will discuss critical research sub-questions two and three.

## CHAPTER SIX

### THEMATIC PATTERNS

#### 6.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter I presented an analysis of the research data in the form of vignettes or illustrative accounts developed from selected excerpts of the storied narratives, in order to provide answers to the questions, “*Who is an expert-teacher? What personal and professional attributes does an expert-teacher have?*”

In this next chapter, I will offer an analysis of the research data according to the themes that have been produced from the storied narratives. This will be done in order to provide critical answers to sub-questions two and three of this study:

*How do these personal and professional attributes inform what knowledge teachers acquire in the process of becoming experts?*

*How and where do teachers acquire their knowledge to become experts?*

The analysis will be made using the Force-Field Model of Teacher Development (2008) as the theoretical framework. Accordingly, I will explore each of the research participants and the knowledge they draw upon through biographical influences, as well as contextual, institutional and programmatic lenses. The themes will now be analysed based on these four negotiated domains.

#### 6.2. Biographical influences

##### 6.2.1. The need to engage in formal study

All four teachers in this study stressed the importance of being fully qualified teachers with an appropriate university degree. The emphasis placed on being qualified and acquiring knowledge is both relevant and critical to a teacher’s professional status (Abel, 2008). As Bennis and Farrel (2013) stress, the need for teachers to obtain formal teaching qualifications

if they are to be adequately equipped for the challenges such work brings. Curriculum, content, and pedagogical knowledge have all been indicated by research participants as being of vital importance if a teacher is to be effective in the classroom. Equipped in this way, a teacher will be able to engage effectively in the process of teaching and learning.

### **6.2.2. The need to become a qualified teacher**

Bongani<sup>8</sup> felt the need to become a qualified teacher in order to deepen his knowledge as a teacher. His conception of an expert-teacher is that of a knowledgeable person. After working for a long period of time unqualified, Bongani furthered his studies at university:

*I became interested in teaching when I grew up as a learner because, teachers at school were often telling us that there was a shortage of teachers in rural areas. I started teaching in 1987 as an unqualified teacher with a matriculation qualification. I worked in rural areas as a way of assisting because there was a shortage of qualified teachers. I worked there temporarily to generate funds to further my studies at university.*

Bongani was motivated to solve the problem of the shortage of qualified teachers at rural schools. He is driven by an overarching desire to educate the rural community as a qualified teacher with a university degree. This is confirmed by Adeddiwura and Toyo (2007) who support the view that teachers must further their studies in order to gain further understanding of their specialisation and thereby increase their overall productivity.

### **6.2.3. The desire to be a university graduate**

Hlengiwe<sup>9</sup> developed the desire to be a university graduate in order to get knowledge that made her improve in her teaching. Her conception of an expert-teacher is a person who is well-educated:

*There was a certain teacher at secondary school that used to tell us in our class that, he was a university graduate. He was very interesting when teaching us, which is why, I developed love for teaching. He started teaching me when I was doing grade ten until grade twelve. When teaching us, he used English and was able to explain the way that made us to be always attentive.*

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<sup>8</sup> In terms of the ethical reporting of human research data in this study, the real name of this research participant has been withheld and replaced with a pseudonym.

<sup>9</sup> In terms of the ethical reporting of human research data in this study, the real name of this research participant has been withheld and replaced with a pseudonym.



By developing their overall knowledge-base about teaching, teachers will grow in their pedagogical ability. According to Baron (2008), content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge is vital for one to become competent in teaching and learning.

#### **6.2.4. Leadership qualities**

As a university student, Njabulo was able to gain leadership qualities that taught him how to communicate with learners properly when he became a teacher. These qualities also assisted him when executing his duties as a teacher, by influencing learners in the right direction. Njabulo:

*When I was doing grade nine, I was elected to the leadership position with other learners. Teachers in the school did not assist us to acquire leadership skills, I learned them by attending meetings outside the school that was related to the student association. When attending those meetings, I learned how to conduct meetings by looking at how other students were doing it. I also learned how to discuss and debate issues when attending those meetings during my leadership role.*

As a student leader at secondary school, Njabulo was also able to learn leadership skills that became very important to him later when he strove to be a better teacher. As a teacher he was able to use his expertise in the classroom, leading learners and creating a healthy atmosphere for teaching and learning in the classroom. Likewise, the leadership qualities he gained through his political involvement also assisted him when executing his duties as a teacher to create a good atmosphere for teaching and learning to take place:

*The strong belief in myself because of political involvement as a leader, gave me the strength to grow in the field of education. I did not want to be a product of the environment since I was not new in the field of education.*

Consequently, Bongani was able to grow in the field of education as an expert-teacher because he was thrust into leadership positions even before becoming a teacher. His strength to teach properly can be traced back to the leadership attributes he learned when he was politically involved as a leader.

Similarly, Hlengiwe<sup>10</sup> also developed her leadership qualities at university as a student leader. This experience also enabled her to become a good teacher, using her leadership knowledge to influence learners in the right direction:

*I was also involved in the student leadership at university, where I gained leadership skills. At university, I learned to work under pressure because; I had to balance between my studies and student politics. I was also able to learn from other students.*

As a student at university, Hlengiwe was able to learn leadership qualities which placed her in a better position to meet the challenges of teaching as an expert-teacher. This leadership exposure enabled her to learn more about how to exercise leadership in various contexts. As Hattie (2003) has argued, teachers must exercise leadership qualities in the classroom environment, as this will allow them to create a healthy atmosphere for teaching and learning.

Finally, a leader is able to influence learners in a certain direction (Hattie, 2003). As Grasha (1994) has confirmed, an expert-teacher is a person who possesses leadership qualities and takes informed decisions about teaching and learning.

### **6.3. Programmatic forces influencing one's expertise**

#### **6.3.1. A teacher with a quest for more knowledge content**

By utilising different methods of teaching, an expert-teacher will enable learners to understand knowledge content better. As Shulman (1987) has pointed out, when learners are unable to understand properly, the expert-teacher is able to draw on appropriate analogies and use methods that will make them understand better. Velaphi<sup>11</sup> stressed the need for a teacher to have more pedagogical knowledge:

*I furthered my studies and received a professional certificate in education in order to gain a necessary knowledge on the field of education. The certificate gave me more methods of teaching the subject.*

For Reynard (2006), pedagogical knowledge consists of a repertoire of teaching skills possessed by a good teacher. In other words, expert-teachers have a complex understanding of

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<sup>10</sup> In terms of the ethical reporting of human research data in this study, the real name of this research participant has been withheld and replaced with a pseudonym.

<sup>11</sup> In terms of the ethical reporting of human research data in this study, the real name of this research participant has been withheld and replaced with a pseudonym.

teaching strategies/methods and know which teaching strategies are most appropriate for the subject being taught. As Shulman (1987) has argued, a teacher with a more pedagogical knowledge is likely to communicate more effectively with learners because s/he uses a variety of teaching strategies. In sum: to communicate well with their learners, teachers must possess a variety of teaching strategies.

### **6.3.2. A teacher with a quest for more pedagogical knowledge**

When learners are unable to understand properly, an expert-teacher is able to draw on appropriate analogies and use methods that will make them understand better (Shulman 1987). Velaphi stressed the need for a teacher to have more pedagogical knowledge, so that they could have different methods at their disposal so as to enable learners to understand the subject content better:

*I furthered my studies and received a professional certificate in education in order to gain a necessary knowledge on the field of education. The certificate gave me more methods of teaching the subject.*

According to Reynard (2006), pedagogical knowledge is a repertoire of teaching skills possessed by a good teacher. In other words, expert-teachers have a complex understanding of teaching strategies/methods and know which teaching strategies are more appropriate for the subject being taught. In this, Shulman (1987) argues that a teacher with greater pedagogical knowledge is more likely to communicate effectively with her/his learners because s/he uses a variety of teaching strategies. In other words, to communicate well with learners a teacher must possess more teaching methods available.

As Turner-Bisset (2006) can argue, an expert is able to link content with pedagogy and has various pedagogical skills that will fit the curriculum in any particular moment (*cf.* Angel, Ryder and Scott, 2004). As Njabulo stated:

*After matriculation, I was able to get a bursary to further my studies at university. I studied for teaching in the early 1990s because I wanted to educate the nation.*

As a result of his desire to “*educate a nation*” Njabulo chose a teaching degree because he had an inner drive that told him that he could make a difference in assisting the nation to become educated. According to Turner-Bisset (2006), an expert-teacher is able to link content with

pedagogy and employ various pedagogical skills that fit the curriculum in any particular moment (cf. Angel, Ryder and Scott 2004).

### **6.3.3. A teacher with more curriculum knowledge**

According to Shulman (1987), to be effective in a classroom environment a teacher must have curriculum knowledge in order to grasp materials and programmes that serve as tools for teachers to be effective. As Ono (2010) explains, curriculum knowledge is the understanding of all activities related to teaching and learning. Accordingly, as Garmston (1998) has pointed out, a teacher with curriculum knowledge is able to plan effectively because s/he knows what is expected when it comes to about curriculum matters. Njabulo<sup>12</sup> emphasised the need for curriculum knowledge as one of the ingredients that make a teacher to be effective in a classroom situation:

*When doing my professional qualifications, I was introduced to the curriculum that is based at school level. The course assisted me to acquire what was going to be taught at school when I went for teaching practice.*

An expert-teacher is thus also able to search for relevant information about what is to be taught and how it should be taught (Garmston, 1998). Scholars such as Schempp, *et al.*, (2001) and Hattie (2003) affirm that an expert-teacher is a person who is well- grounded in the area of curriculum. As Rollninick, Bennett, Rhemtula, Dharsey, Ndlovu and Rollink (2008) further argue, an expert-teacher is a person with knowledge of curriculum and instructional demands.

Njabulo was able to acquire curriculum knowledge during his training as a teacher. He saw it as one of the more important knowledge-bases he needed in order to perform effectively in the classroom.

### **6.3.4. A teacher with content knowledge**

For Turner -Bisset (2006), content knowledge is about having deep knowledge about a subject. This is borne out by Njabulo who emphasises that to be effective in the classroom, a teacher needs to possess good content knowledge:

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<sup>12</sup> In terms of the ethical reporting of human research data in this study, the real name of this research participant has been withheld and replaced with a pseudonym.

*After assessing the situation, I was able to develop relevant skills and knowledge in my subject. I furthered my studies by obtaining a master's degree in order to get knowledge of the subject. I furthered my studies because I felt there was a need for me to be always ahead of the teachers so that they cannot undermine me*

According to Garmston (1998), an expert-teacher is a person with more knowledge of the subject. Scholars such as Schempp *et al.*, (2001) agree that an expert-teacher develops deep knowledge about the discipline they teach and that this distinguishes them from other teachers. They further explain that a teacher with deep content knowledge is always flexible due to her/his deep knowledge of the subject. Accordingly, as Shulman and Shulman (2003) show, an accomplished teacher must understand what is to be taught in order to reach desirable outcomes and meet prescribed standards.

For Njabulo, an expert-teacher should exude resilience and have a true sense of responsibility as teachers. These facets he developed as a teacher-practitioner. Resilience is both personal and attitudinal. Njabulo was able to develop a sense of resilience that placed him in a better position to develop as an expert irrespective of the situation. A sense of responsibility is both professional and functional. For Njabulo, having a sense of responsibility enables him to become a better teacher. By owning these important attributes Njabulo has been identified as an expert-teacher.

According to Sanchez, Rosales and Canedo (1999), an expert-teacher is a person who is always seeking new knowledge for development. As Adediwura and Tayo (2007) also emphasise, teachers must always look for new content knowledge in order to be up to date in their specialisation. Bongani described in his story that as a teacher he was always hungry for content knowledge, and consequently was better equipped in terms of teaching and learning:

*After five years of teaching I enrolled for an honours degree in history, I felt there was a need for me to gain more content knowledge. After my first senior degree, I enrolled for a masters' degree on the same specialisation.*

For Garmston (1998), in order to be effective in teaching and teacher must equip her or himself with more content subject knowledge so as to be more fluent and flexible in their specialist subject. Such teachers demonstrate their exceptional knowledge in the classroom over and above other teachers (1998). Accordingly, Ono (2010) views an expert as a person with a deeper knowledge which can be used to teach learners in various contexts.

## **6.4. Institutional forces shaping one's knowledge as an expert**

### **6.4.1. Organisational knowledge**

Organisational knowledge has been identified by the research participants as the knowledge that is important for teachers to work effectively. The research participants indicated that it was vital for a teacher to plan adequately before going to a class. This allows the teacher to know, exactly what is needed in the classroom situation. As Bergee (2005) has noted, an expert-teacher is a person who is able to prepare thoroughly before going into the classroom.

In his interview, Njabulo stressed the need to always be well prepared as a teacher. For him, planning gives a teacher a sense of direction about the school work s/he must accomplish. It also enables the senior officials to check the teacher's work against the plan:

*As a teacher, I was always prepared before going to the class because; planning assisted me to review my work if things were not going fine with my work. To me planning is like a compass, it gives me the sense of direction. Planning also allows the departmental officials to advise me on an informed basis based on the plans.*

Planning has been stated as one of the most important aspect that leads to teacher learning and development. When one engages in the process of planning, a teacher is able to grow and develop. Planning also requires a planner to have all the tools that will be used in executing the plan. Njabulo was able to grow as a good teacher because he used his plans to correct himself.

In his interview, Bongani stressed the need to plan before going into the classroom. For him, such planning takes away any uncertainty about the activities of the class during the course of teaching and learning:

*In a classroom situation, I was able to relate well with learners because of planning before going to the class. Certain learners would question me a lot trying to get whether, I was sure of what I was teaching. I was always fully prepared when going to the class; I knew that learners might take advantage of my status.*

Planning therefore assisted Bongani to always be updated about the requirements of his work. In the context of teaching, Bongani was able to obtain a considerable amount of knowledge as a result of engaging in the process of planning before going into the classroom. In other words, planning made him to grow as a better teacher as there was learning in the process.

In her interview, Hlengiwe stressed the need to include planning as a teacher in order to keep records of the work done and to enable monitoring of her work to be accessible:

*Planning is also an important aspect, as a teacher, I am always fully prepared because planning, allows me to keep records even if it means, I leave the school, they will see where I have ended with my teaching.*

In her occupation as a teacher, Hlengiwe developed her teaching skills because of planning. It also gave her a sense of direction of what was expected of her as a teacher. Planning also allows teachers to grow as it gives them an opportunity to evaluate their work against the teaching plan.

For Velaphi, planning provides a sense of guidance to the teacher. It enables the teacher to know prior to going into the classroom what is expected:

*In my first school as a teacher, I learned to plan because; planning is the most important aspect in teacher's life. It makes a teacher to be always in order before going to the class. It gives me a sense of direction in the classroom.*

During the process of planning, Velaphi was able to know exactly what was expected of him in the classroom because during the course of planning he was better equipped and was able to consider many options. When contemplating various teaching options during planning, teachers are exposed to various kinds of aspects related to their work.

According to Griffiths (2002), an expert-teacher is a person who is able to plan properly. Planning enables a teacher to reflect in and upon action. This means that during the course of teaching, a teacher will be able to change her/his teaching strategy to fit the needs of the moment. Reflection on action is when a teacher is able to reflect back on her/his teaching strategies by looking at his/her plan. This is when a teacher is able to identify any problems that might occur (2002).

#### **6.4.2. Synthesis**

All four participants indicated in their interviews the importance of curriculum, content, and pedagogical knowledge in working as an expert-teacher. Such knowledge sets allow teachers to be classified as experts as they are used in the classroom effectively. The knowledge teachers acquired at university was also indicated as significant because it enabled them to become qualified teachers. By teachers equipping themselves with the curriculum, content and

pedagogical knowledge, they become effective in the classroom. A teacher's effectiveness with such knowledge falls within the functional dimension as it is classified as professional knowledge. The research participants also stated that organisational knowledge and leadership skills assisted them in practicing their duties properly. Such knowledge sets fall within the functional dimension as they too are classified as professional activities.

## **6.5. Space for teacher learning**

In this section, I will seek to find out from the data emerging from the storied narratives of the research participants how and where teachers acquire their knowledge to become experts. I will discuss this sub-question under the following topical headings:

- i. The value of education in the home.
- ii. The role of networking
- iii. Working through clusters.
- iv. Expert supervision.
- v. Growth through induction and mentoring.
- vi. Professional development programmes.
- vii. An emotionally friendly and healthy working environment.
- viii. The role of the school principal.
- ix. The role of school culture.

### **6.5.1. The value of education in the home**

In their storied narratives, the research participants indicated that the importance of education was received through their family. Due to the value that was placed on education by family members, the participants were inspired to become better teachers. In other words, the participants became better teachers as a result of being taught by their parents the value and importance of education. Without education, their parents taught them they would not be successful in life. This is confirmed by van Eijck (1997, who maintains that family members influence the educational experiences of children. Through the family, children are introduced to educational settings at an early age. This means that a child who grew up where education is valued is more likely to appreciate education than in a home where the importance of education is either devalued or ignored.



Because of the influence of family and the value they placed on education, Njabulo was successful in education. From an early age, he knew the importance of learning, and later was prepared to go the extra mile in order to become a successful teacher:

*I dedicated more time on my studies because I knew that education was the only way I can use to get out of my poor background at home. My parents had to talk with me before going to university. My father told me that if I fail at university, he would not take care of me, this was the only chance I had to get a meaningful life. The words of my father made me to concentrate more time on my studies because, I knew that was the last chance in my life to get education that will change my life completely.*

As he indicates, the family supported him in his desire to pull himself out of poverty through education in order to be the expert-teacher that he is today. His parents were there and they were able to teach him the importance of education. This means that the family shaped him by teaching him the importance of education. Accordingly, he was able to take his work seriously because he knew its importance.

For Hlengiwe, she learned about the importance of education from her parents who constantly reminded her that only education would take them out of poverty as a family. She became successful in education as a result of the value that the family placed on education:

*My parents were stressing to me, to finish the school so that; I would look for a job. They told me that, I needed to take them out of poverty, since at home, both parents were doing temporary work within our village, where I grew up.*

For Hlengiwe, her family taught her that education was a weapon that would assist her to solve some of life's challenges. She grew up knowing the importance of education not for herself, but for other people as well. As a result of her family's early influence, Hlengiwe is today a responsible teacher.

Taught by his parents the importance of education, when Velaphi moved to a new school he soon became exposed to the positive school culture that existed there. These two strong influences enabled him to develop into a good teacher:

*My parents decided to move me to another school where the culture of teaching and learning was better. In a new school, I found the environment totally different, teachers there were dedicated and students were disciplined.*

During difficult times at school, Velaphi was assisted by his parents to hold on to the importance of education. When he was moved to the new school, he was introduced to an environment that valued education. He was also able to learn how to be a responsible teacher.

Education-conscious parents talk about educational topics at home and take their children to places that encourage education. They teach them to look and listen to the things that are of educational interest (van Eijck, 1997). As Timperly (2008) has argued, a child's family background is of great importance when determining that child's chances in life. In other words, family background cannot be treated in isolation to the education of the learner. A teacher, who grew up in a family where education was most valued, is more likely to work towards self-improvement and/or making a difference in the education sector (2008).

### **6.5.2. The role of networking**

The research interviews revealed that networking is an important source of knowledge, for it is among other teachers that one is to gain knowledge in order to improve teaching practice. Gaining such knowledge through networking enabled the research participants to be better educators. As Garmston (1998) has argued, teachers enhance and develop their knowledge through networking. This results in a professional dialogue about the subject material, which in turn creates greater understanding for teachers.

Through such networking activities, Njabulo was able to improve as a teacher. Not only was he able to acquire greater knowledge of his subject from teachers at a neighbouring school, but it enabled him to be a better educator than the other teachers at his own school:

*I had to learn just by myself how to function, in the education fraternity, getting information from other teachers in the neighbouring schools, who have been doing the job for a long period of time.*

Networking was a source of getting information for Njabulo as he was able to learn what was expected of him as a teacher. This in turn enabled him to develop into an expert-teacher. During the course of networking, Njabulo was able to increase his understanding of teaching and learning. In other words, networking can be used to develop a teacher.

In a similar way, Velaphi also benefited during the course of networking, thereby gaining knowledge that equipped him to become a more effective teacher:

*I was also able to network with other teachers outside the school with a view to equip myself related to grade twelve work, where we discussed subject matters.*

Accordingly, Velaphi grew in experience as a teacher because of his networking activities with other teachers. He was able to learn from other teachers various facets of education related to grade twelve work.

Interacting with teachers in a neighbouring school also assisted Bongani by greater knowledge that equipped him as an expert-teacher:

*Through networking with other teachers outside the school, I was able to get knowledge as to whether, how can I deal with the situation in my school.*

When Bongani experienced problems with teaching and learning at his school, he was able to network with other teachers outside of his school in order to receive academic advice.

Sharing knowledge related to the schooling context is vital in the development of teachers. Accordingly, Hlengiwe was able to elevate herself to the level of an expert-teacher through networking with other teachers:

*In my early years of teaching, I learnt to network with other teachers in order to be informed about the subject matter that put me in a better position when executing my duties in the classroom situation.*

Not only was she able to gather vital subject information from other teachers, but Hlengiwe was also able to develop as a better teacher in the classroom. When mingling with other teachers she was able to engage in discussions related to teaching and learning.

Networking has been identified by the research participants in the storied narratives chapter as one of the sources of knowledge that enabled them to become expert-teachers. As Garmston (1998) has argued teachers enhance and develop their knowledge through networking. This in turn results in a professional dialogue about the subject, which increases more understanding of the subject matter by the teachers. As Rampa (2012) can further argue, passion for teaching increases as a result of a teacher connecting with other teachers. When teachers interact with one another around their specialist subject, it produces a professional dialogue that increases overall teacher knowledge. This means that teachers can receive valuable knowledge through networking with their colleagues.

For Hattie (2003) a teacher is not independent of other teachers. As a professional, a teacher is expected to be part of a teacher association in order to share her/his experiences and knowledge. In order therefore to become an expert-teacher, teachers need to network with other teachers so that there will be a sharing of information that increases teacher knowledge.

For Grasha (1994), an expert-teacher is a versatile person who is able to communicate with other teachers effectively. As Shulman and Shulman (2004) also argue, teachers develop willingness and motivation through discussions with their around a particular subject. After gaining such knowledge, this results in greater teacher confidence.

### **6.5.3. Working through clusters**

Working through clusters is another source for teachers to gain knowledge and skills. After working through clusters, teachers become better in the classroom as they share their knowledge and experience with other teachers.

As Shulman (1987) has argued, a teacher belongs to a scholarly community therefore he or she must understand the structures of the subject matter. Cluster meetings are of great significance to teachers because these are where they can learn important ideas and skills beneficial to their profession from other teachers (1987). This means that during cluster meetings teachers are able to discuss subject matter issues and the skills that are used in various teaching contexts.

In his interview, Njabulo stated that he had gained knowledge as a result of being a cluster meeting member, where they advised each other as teachers related to their subject:

*The clusters for grade twelve teachers, meets once a month in order to check each other's work. During those cluster meetings, I was able to ask questions related to my work, it is when I became familiar with my work.*

He was also able to gain specific knowledge related to his subject specialisation through cluster meetings. In such cluster meetings, teachers are able to engage in scholarly conversation and check each other's work, for the purpose of developing others. As a consequence of the discussions held at the cluster meetings her attended, Njabulo was not only able to become a better teacher, but also gain more knowledge of his specialist subjects.

In her interview, Hlengiwe spoke of the advice she received from other teachers concerning the problems she encountered when teaching:

*When I was called for subject cluster meetings, I related the story of not getting an adequate support at school, they told me that was an acceptable practice because, there are subject advisors who are responsible for the subject I teach.*

Accordingly, Hlengiwe was able to gain knowledge from the cluster meetings as a result of posing questions related to her work.

As scheduled meetings, prescribed by the Department of Education, cluster meetings are a formal platform for sharing ideas, knowledge, skills and values with other teachers. Through his attendance and membership, Velaphi became better equipped for classroom practice. Meeting with other teachers also gave him more knowledge of his specialist subject:

*I joined a cluster for my subject, where I was able to learn and increased knowledge of the subject. During our meetings we discussed subject matters that equipped me for classroom practices as a teacher.*

He therefore became shaped by the cluster meetings to become a better teacher. This is why Velaphi is an expert-teacher today.

According to Rampa (2012), cluster meetings are able to help teachers sustain their passion for teaching because it is here where they can interact with other teachers related to their practice. For Stoelinga and Magin (2011), peer relationships must be recognised so as to make room for teachers to lead in areas where they have strengths. In other words, during clusters meetings, teachers who are leading in terms of expertise must be encouraged to share their classroom practices with the other members of the cluster. Sharing practice with other colleagues will enable teachers develop in terms of their skillsets and knowledge. In terms of departmental policy, cluster meetings are compulsory programmes where teachers gather information needed for teaching and learning. Such a programme allows teachers to engage in professional dialogue.

#### **6.5.4. Expert supervision**

In their interviews, the research participants spoke about expert supervision as a source of knowledge where teachers are able to gain knowledge about their subject and improve their

practice. Finding agreement with this, Macmillan (2007) maintains that expert supervision is a way of improving teaching competencies, which in turn results in developing expert-teachers.

In his interview, Njabulo spoke about the gain in the knowledge of the subject he experienced by the visits made by a subject advisor. Accordingly, expert supervision resulted in his being assisted with the requirements of the subject:

*I remember that the subject advisor visited me towards the end of the first term as the school is situated in deep rural area of Maphumulo. It is when; I became familiar with my work, when it comes to teaching and learning.*

Expert supervision has been indicated as one of the ways used by expert-teachers to obtain greater knowledge skills, attitudes and values. In this, Njabulo is the embodiment of a learning teacher because he grew as an expert because of being supervised by those with more expertise than he. In addition, he was able to gain more knowledge even when he was corrected by his supervisors.

According to Bongani, he received a greater sense of direction by engaging with a subject advisor who was a specialist in the subject:

*After interacting with teachers from other schools and the subject advisor, I was able to get a sense of direction of what was expected of me. The subject advisor gave me a syllabus that assisted me to plan my work effectively.*

After Bongani was supervised by the subject advisor, he was able to learn more about the subject, due to the subject advisor being more knowledgeable about the subject.

The advantage of being supervised by a person is particularly beneficial during times of uncertainty, when a person with expertise will prescribe a relevant solution to a given problem. Accordingly, Velaphi received guidance from his subject advisor during a time of deep uncertainty in his career. Through his interaction, he managed at the end to become a better teacher:

*When the subject advisor visited me, I reported the matter of unhappiness at school to him, and he comforted me. He also advised me to move to another school because; he was recognising me for my good results.*

In his interview, Velaphi reported that a subject advisor rescued him when he was frustrated in the teaching environment he was in. Accordingly, expert advice from a subject advisor can result in a healthy environment for teaching being restored.

For Stoelinga and Magin (2011), expert supervision is a way of improving teaching practice among teachers within the school. It is also a way of monitoring progress because it promotes professional dialogue about the subject material. Furthermore, Stoelinga and Magin (2011) see expert supervision as a process whereby knowledgeable teachers use their expertise to advise others about acceptable practice.

#### **6.5.5. Growth through induction and mentoring**

Induction and mentoring programmes were identified by the research participants as a rich source of gaining knowledge and teaching skills, leading to them becoming expert-teachers. As beginner teachers, they became involved in induction and mentoring programmes that made it easier for them to learn and develop as good teachers. As Hughes (2010) has shown, in the process of induction, a supervisor must act as a facilitator in the learning of employees. This means that a supervisor must create a learning environment where new workers are given the space to develop themselves.

In this regard, Bongani was shaped by an induction and mentoring programme where he had to work with an experienced teacher who was able to familiarise him with the work:

*The principal of the school allocated me to work with an experienced teacher sharing the same subject, so that, I would be familiarised with the environment.*

He became accustomed with the environment because he was placed under an experienced teacher who was able to give guidance and introduce him to various aspects of teaching and learning. The learning that Bongani received was structural in that it assisted him to learn more about his chosen profession. Similarly, Hlengiwe was familiarised with her work as a result of the support she received from a subject advisor when a novice teacher:

*I got a lot of support from the subject advisor, as a novice teacher, teachers within the school were able to give me a considerable amount of support in order to familiarise me with the work and the environment.*

As a result of working with experienced teachers, Hlengiwe found the strength to grow and develop.

Learning takes place from other teachers who were charged with assisting a teacher overcome the challenges they often face in the classroom and school environment. The subject advisor

also plays a pivotal role in acclimatizing a teacher with a new environment. In this regard, Velaphi obtained guidance about the workplace when guided by an experienced teacher who assisted him with good advice:

*I was allocated to an experienced teacher, who was able to guide me properly, since I was new on the field, working in that environment.*

He also received professional support through working with an experienced teacher during his initial years in the field. Accordingly, he was able to learn and develop into a better teacher. In all, this shows that mentoring and induction programmes lead to teacher learning and development.

In particular, the research participants noted how induction and mentoring programmes acted as important developmental features in the field of education. They enabled the research participants to acquire certain knowledge and skillsets so that they could be better equipped for classroom practice. As Steyn and van Niekerk (2007) have shown, staff induction is an organisation's attempt to enable and assist different categories of new staff members to adjust effectively and efficiently to their new work environment with less disruption and as fast as possible. By so-doing, the functioning of the organisation is not disrupted and can continue as normal. In other words, induction is the familiarisation of new members of staff with the school environment. As Hodgkinson and Hodgkinson (2007) argue, structures in the school must provide for the learning and development of new teachers so that they can learn properly in a healthy atmosphere. In other words, a healthy environment allows new teachers to be supported effectively and efficiently.

#### **6.5.6. Professional development programmes**

According to the research participants, professional development activities were seen as an important way of equipping teachers. By engaging them on a continual basis, teachers benefited in their professional teaching practice. Hence, as defined by Steyn and van Niekerk (2007), professional development is an activity done at school in order to assist teachers develop their skills and knowledge for teaching.

In his interview, Njabulo revealed that he was the product of teacher development activities that took place at his school, aimed at making him improve as a teacher:



*Once a month after school, as grade twelve educators, there were professional development activities, specifically for grade twelve educators. Teachers under that programme were able to share ideas to develop each other.*

For the research participants, professional development programmes were identified as another space relevant for teacher learning.

During professional development meetings teachers are able to share ideas related to teaching and learning. Accordingly, Bongani was able to develop due to the development programmes that were in place at the school where he taught:

*I used professional development meetings to correct bad practices within the school, as it was the relevant platform, one can use to develop other teachers. I raised all the issues that were problematic, and we were able to discuss them and teach one another.*

Through professional development at school Bongani was able learn more about his work because as teachers they were able to teach one another during the developmental meetings held at his school. In particular, certain practices were discussed and clarified to ensure that all the teachers at the school were exposed to the process of learning.

In her interview, Hlengiwe reported that her teaching practice improved as a result of engaging in professional development activities within the school:

*Professional development activities in the school assisted me in order to develop myself. It is where I gained a lot of knowledge that made me to improve my practices as a teacher related to teaching and learning.*

Similarly, Velaphi improved his teaching capacity by engaging in the development programme:

*The whole staff was involved in the workshop in such a way that I was able to learn. We went outside for a weekend, where an outside facilitator was invited for Professional development of the school. All teachers attended with an aim of building our capacity as teachers that is why at school we were always getting good results.*

Professional development activities therefore play a pivotal role in correctly equipping teachers for the challenges they face in the classroom. As Mestry, *et al.*, (2009) have argued, professional development is important at the school level because it leads to quality teachers. Quality teachers in turn influence learner's experiences and achievements in a positive way. In

other words, the presence of quality teachers in a school is often the result of professional development programmes bringing about effective teaching and learning in the classroom.

Learners' results are also influenced in a positive way, through quality teaching. For Mestry *et al.*, (2009), staff development is a way of bringing about the lifelong learning of teachers. This means that teachers must always look for new knowledge in order to be remain effective in their profession. This is confirmed by Macmillan (2007), who agrees that continuous professional development activities are a way of improving teaching competencies. Likewise Ono (2010) is also of the opinion that professional development is one of the key sources used by teachers for their professional development.

#### **6.5.7. An emotionally friendly and healthy environment**

As reported by the research participants, the environment under which teachers work has to be friendly and healthy in order for them to productive. In other words, teachers will only develop within an environment that is conducive to their growth (Day 2011).

In his interview, Bongani reported that he became motivated as a result of a happy and healthy environment. This in turn made him walk the extra mile. His senior colleagues were the ones responsible for made the teaching environment friendly and healthy for the development of the junior teaching staff, of which he was part:

*In the party both teachers and parents thanked me for the contribution, I had made for the school. I was surprised by all those praises given to me. It is when, I realised that, I am very strong because, I thought that I was just helping the school, I did not expect to be praised in that way. I became motivated because, from there, I started to value myself as a person.*

An emotionally friendly and healthy environment was indicated by the research participants as a way of levelling playing fields for teachers to develop as better teachers. In other words, an environment that does not disturb teachers emotionally is important for teacher learning and development. In this regard, Bongani reported that he became a better teacher because the environment was made friendly for all teachers at his school.

#### **6.5.8. The role of the school principal**

In her interview, Hlengiwe reported that the good relationship she enjoyed with the other teachers at her school enabled her to do her part towards the improvement of the school:

*As time went by we became friends because, I did not want us to be in conflict because we were working together and good results come in a friendly environment. Where, we treated each other as members of the same family.*

For Hlengiwe, she was able to develop as a better teacher because the staff treated each other at school with respect and were prepared to assist one another with developmental activities. Together, they created an environment that was conducive for learning and thereby enabled her to become an expert-teacher.

The same was true for Velaphi, who reported that he enjoyed good relations with his work colleagues. Because the school environment was a happy and healthy one, this resulted in him desiring to serve the school with added gusto:

*It is easier for me to teach in that atmosphere, where everyone is happy. To me school environment must be created in such a way that teachers and learners enjoy being there.*

Such a stable, friendly and healthy environment meant that it became a space for all members of staff to develop. When employees work in a happy and healthy environment, they are more likely to enjoy what they do. Of equal importance, they also take ownership of the organisation.

For Day (2011) emotions play a vital role in the construction of identity. Accordingly, Day (2011) defines emotion as the ability of a person to control her/his attitude. In the teaching environment, this means that a teacher with a positive emotional attitude is more likely to bring about effectiveness and efficacy in the execution of her/his duties. Hence, as Day, Kington, Stobart and Sammons (2006) argue, the emotional climate of a school can positively or negatively affect the teaching and learning emotions in the classroom.

In the interviews, the research participants also stated that they learned and developed as a result of being appreciated for their work by their senior colleagues. Having been the recipients of appreciation they were more motivated to go the extra mile and develop as better teachers.

### 6.5.9. The role of school culture

According to the research participants, school culture had an enormous effect on how teachers develop one another. Accordingly, a happy and healthy environment promoted professional growth among the teachers, which in turn improved productivity. Hence, as Zembaylas (2003) has argued, school culture cannot be treated in isolation with the development of teachers.

In his interview, Njabulo reported that he was able to learn and develop as a teacher because of the presence of a positive school culture that promoted learning among its teachers:

*It was an acceptable practice as teachers in the school to assist each other because, we knew that at the end of the day, when grade twelve results drops we were all going to suffer as the image of the school will be dented. It became a culture as teachers to also compete over grade twelve results in order to motivate each other.*

All of the research participants indicated that school culture can either motivate or demotivate teachers to learn more about their work, depending on whether it is creative or destructive in nature. The research participants in this study were all products of a healthy environment that promoted teacher learning. Hence, as Njabulo reported, his school had a culture of striving for excellence in their work. They were able to teach each other because the culture of the school promoted the working together of its teachers. This means that a teacher who works in a school where the culture promotes togetherness and assisting each other is more likely to develop into a better teacher. This was confirmed by Bongani who reported that he developed in a school culture that promoted teachers to learn from other teachers so as to improve their skills and knowledge:

*My relationship with teachers in the school was perfect because, it is the school where I matriculated, Most of the staff members were happy to have me working with them. I also felt privileged to work there, I was called by the principal of the school to assist because, and there was a shortage of qualified teachers in rural areas. The principal was very supportive to me because he knew that it was very difficult to get qualified teachers during those days. He promoted the culture of working together as colleagues.*

As a teacher working in a strong school culture that promoted teacher learning, Bongani was able to learn from other teachers because whatever support he needed, he could get it from one of the other members of staff. Accordingly, he developed into a better teacher. The same was true of Velaphi, who managed to equip himself as a result of the school culture that encouraged its teachers to teach others in an atmosphere that was healthy:

*Where I started teaching, I found that, the school had poor facilities, there was a shortage of books, library and science material. Teachers were supportive to me since I had no professional certificate in education; I was allocated to an experienced teacher, who was able to guide me properly, since I was new on the field, working in that environment, was very good because, I got a lot of experience, teachers were friendly. The principal of the school was also supportive. All the teachers even those who came after me were treated nice. It was an environment that I think it equipped me in terms of teaching because, we were united, and I was able to learn from other teachers. The principal of the school was always preaching the issue of unity. The school was also overcrowded with learners. We did not feel that because, the environment was a nice environment, we also developed a mentality of uplifting the standard of living of that community.*

By learning from one another in a motivating environment, Velaphi was able to develop into an expert-teacher. Accordingly, teachers did not feel the burden of overcrowded classes because they were united in a working environment that was both motivating and positive. In other words, the school environment is shaped by the culture of the school and the culture of the school can shape teacher identity and promote learning and development.

For Day (2006), school culture cannot be treated in isolation to teacher activities in the school. A positive school culture contributes towards the creation of a teacher-positive identity. This means that when a school culture is good, teachers develop to their optimum level. As Zembylas (2003) can argue, the personal and professional selves of teachers have an important link with school culture whereby their identity is both constructed and destructed. In other words, a positive school culture is able to build teacher identity.

#### **6.5.10. Synthesis**

The value of education in the home, networking, and working through clusters have all been reported by the research participants as important to teacher development. Accordingly, they were able to gain the necessary skills and knowledge that made them to improve their productivity as teachers and develop personally and professionally as expert-teachers. In addition, subject advisor supported by teacher participants, as well as mentoring and induction programmes are a rich source of learning for expert-teachers. In this Steyn and van Niekerk (2007) agree, that induction programmes assist teachers in gaining knowledge as experts.

Professional development activities are further spaces that were identified by the research participants where teacher-experts acquire knowledge. As Ono (2010) can argue, professional development activities are vital in developing teachers. Furthermore, an emotionally happy and healthy environment as well as the support of subject advisors were identified as important tools in developing teachers. As Day (2011) concurs, a teacher's emotional wellbeing is very important in positively shaping their professional identity as an educator. For Bongani and Njabulo, subject advisors and a school principal that is supportive and encouraging of her/his staff is vital if a teacher is to develop her/his expertise.

School culture was also reported by the research participants as an important space for teachers to become experts. A positive school culture is one that promotes and encourages teachers assisting one another in developing expertise and thereby learn and acquire more teaching skillset and knowledge (Zembylas, 2003).

By using theoretical lenses, the importance of education derived from education in the home, networking, working through clusters, induction and mentoring programmes, professional development, an emotionally happy and healthy environment, a school principal that is supportive and a school culture that promotes growth and development of its teachers are all important indicators of teachers developing expertise. All these elements are within the functional dimension that argues that teachers develop in their professional activities as a result of engaging in professional development activities. Their functional knowledge is enhanced when engaging in those activities they develop personally and professionally. This means that their professional teaching practice improve with regard to teaching and learning.

Using the Force-Field Model of Teacher Development, I was able to understand how the four participants negotiated their daily practices and the knowledge that informed the choices that each had made. The programmes in place at the school were able to compel teachers to acquire the knowledge needed to perform at their optimum level to become experts. As indicated by the research participants, the value of education in the home is a biographical factor that has driven teachers' personal traits. Networking and working through clusters are contextual factors that have enabled teachers to interpret the environment and see the need for acquiring knowledge from a range of sources, including working with other colleagues. Expert supervision, growth through induction and mentoring, professional development programmes

and emotionally friendly and healthy working environments are critical institutional factors that open up opportunities for teachers to engage and interact in emotionally and professionally enriching environments.

## **6.6. Chapter summary**

This chapter has discussed how teachers learn and develop and the space for teacher development. The analysis has found that teachers must have various kinds of knowledge in order to be categorised as experts. Furthermore, there is a need for teachers to develop independently as educators without being pushed by anyone. It has also been indicated that an expert-teacher is able to change the environment where s/he works.

With respect to the research questions, the findings indicate that teachers develop as a result of the programmes that are operational in the field. It has also been noted that teachers are able to learn from each other. Likewise programmes for teacher development in the school are of significant importance. Finally, the environment in which teachers work, should be conducive physically and emotionally, so that they can develop in all spheres of their professional and academic lives.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE END OF THIS JOURNEY

#### 7.1. Introduction

In this final chapter I will make some final reflections on the findings of this study, the methods employed in order to generate the research data, and the context in which the data was collected. By way of a conclusion, I will offer some recommendations as to how teachers can develop in various contexts as well as areas I have identified during the course of this study for future research, and a final summary of the results.

#### 7.2. The context of the study

The focus of this research study was to explore teachers' conceptions of what it means to be an expert-teacher. The research participants consisted of school-based teachers who were able to reflect on their experiences as school teachers. In addition, subject advisors were also chosen to reflect on their experiences as teachers and as specialist advisors, having once been teachers before they took up senior positions as advisors.

The study was guided by the following key research question:

*Who is an expert-teacher?*

In addition, three sub-questions were posed in order to determine the personal and professional attributes that a teacher needs, the different knowledge sets that they should acquire, and finally, the professional development programmes and other formal structures that exist within the South African school system which have assisted teachers become expert-teachers. These sub-questions were as follows:

- i. *What personal and professional attributes does an expert teacher have?*
- ii. *How do these personal and professional attributes inform what knowledge teachers acquire in the process of becoming experts?*



iii. *How and where do teachers acquire their knowledge to become experts?*

Accordingly, the research study provided a vivid picture of what it means to be an expert-teacher.

### **7.3. Methodological reflections of the study**

Narrative enquiry was used as the methodology to generate data from the research participants. The choice of this methodology came as a result of the interpretive paradigm chosen for the research which allows for the collection of textual data. This enabled the retrieval of the research participant's narrated stories of the routes and processes by which they became expert-teachers, as well as how they had managed to shape, or be shaped by the environment. Using narrative inquiry methodology, the research participants were able to narrate their stories through the use of unstructured interviews, while the researcher listened to the teachers recall their personal and professional experiences of how they became expert-teachers. As a consequence, the research participants were able to reflect in retrospect on those lived-experiences that enabled them to acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes and values in order to become expert-teachers. In addition, artefact, collage and portfolio methods were used to deepen the research data generated by exploring the understandings of teachers as experts. All the resultant data that was subsequently analysed in order to arrive at an understanding of the types of expertise that are required for teachers to ultimately become experts. In order to provide a clarity of understanding of the data and analysis, the results of the research were organised under appropriate themes.

#### **7.3.1. The attributes of an expert-teacher**

The study found that resilience was one of the key attributes mentioned by the majority of the participants that kept them going irrespective of the situation. Accordingly, teachers with a sense of resilience are more likely to become good teachers as they are not easily affected by negative things within their environment (Timperly, 2008). In addition, the research findings indicated that expert-teachers act as agents of change in a school environment where they take the lead in teaching and learning activities. Another important quality reported by all the participants was that of a results-driven mind-set, this being indicated as an important attribute

found in all expert teachers. This is confirmed by Stoelinga and Magin (2011), who maintain that an expert-teacher is a person who is always striving for good results.

The study also found that expert-teachers are humble and exemplary, thereby making them more accessible to other teachers who need assistance. A teacher who is able to win the hearts and minds of the learners was also indicated by the expert-teachers interviewed, for this quality enables teachers to communicate effectively with their learners. Finally, a passion for teaching and learning as a key attribute was indicated by both teachers and subject advisors alike. This is supported by Day (2004), who argues that teachers must always be passionate in their work, a trait that will always lead them to be motivated in the classroom.

### **7.3.2. Teacher learning and development**

In order for teachers to be better equipped for their teaching practices, the research study found that the subject advisors stressed the need for teachers to have more curriculum knowledge. As Shulman (1987) has confirmed, those teachers who have greater with curriculum knowledge also know exactly what should be taught in the classroom situation.

The research study also found that expert-teachers have more pedagogical knowledge which makes it easier for them to impart knowledge to their learners. As Garmston (1998) can argue expert-teachers have a complex understanding of the teaching strategies and methods which are most appropriate for the subject being taught. It was confirmed by all the research participants indicated that content knowledge is vital for teachers in order to know exactly what is to be taught (Adediwura and Tayo, 2007). Accordingly, the research findings confirmed that expert-teachers further their academic qualifications in order to improve their teaching practice.

The research participants also stated that leadership knowledge was important, for it enables a teacher-expert to influence learners in the right direction. This view is supported by Hattie (2003), who maintains that experts with leadership knowledge use their ability to lead learners in the right direction. A knowledge of planning was also identified by all the research participants as being a significant attribute in the makeup of expert-teachers. In this, Griffiths (2002) agrees that teachers use planning to correct their practices. Last, but not least, working

through professional clusters was also stated by all the participants as an important aspect of becoming an expert-teacher.

### **7.3.3. A space for teacher learning**

According to the results of the research study, teacher participants and subject advisor research participants alike all acknowledged the high importance placed on the value of education by their parents and family members. The literature also supports this view. As Timperly (2008) has argued, the family plays a crucial role in orientating teachers towards their love of education in their early years.

For the research participants who were subject advisors, they viewed an expert-teacher as a person who knew the value of networking with other teachers as a means of acquiring new knowledge. The research results also indicated that expert-teachers acquire new knowledge by working through professional clusters where they engage in scholarly conversations with teachers, subject-advisors and expert-teachers about their specialist subjects.

The research study also found that teacher-experts learn and develop through induction and mentoring programmes where they are introduced to various types of knowledge about teaching and learning. In this, Steyn and Van Niekerk (2007) agree that induction programmes as an initial stage, enables teachers to acquire expertise.

Professional development is also a space where teachers develop as experts as stated by all the research participants. An emotionally-friendly and healthy teaching environment was also reported by all the research participants as a means by which teachers can develop as experts. This view is supported by Day (2011), whereby he sees the emotional well-being of teachers as being of vital importance in building positive teacher identities.

All the research participants indicated that they had initially become exposed to teaching and learning activities when they were still at university. It was their experience within academia that first gave them an insight into the importance of becoming expert-teachers. Other key points mentioned by the research participants included an empathetic school principal who appreciated the good work done by her/his teachers, as well as a school culture that promoted

teaching and learning and the collegial sharing of expertise in order that teachers could develop into expert-teachers.

#### **7.4. Theoretical reflections of the study**

The Force-Field Model of Teacher Development as a theoretical framework for teacher development that underpinned the study revealed how teachers were shaped by various factors in and outside the field of education. The Force-Field Model of Teacher Development advocates that teacher development is influenced by biographical, contextual, institutional and programmatic factors.

##### **7.4.1. Biographical factors**

As has been mentioned above, the research participants all indicated that the home and community in which they grew up shaped their love of education when they were still young, that is why they were able later to develop into expert-teachers. In other words, the research participants reported that they were able to learn from their family members, community elders, teachers and other how to function effectively in the field of education (Samuel, 2008).

##### **7.4.2. Contextual factors**

The Force-Field Model of Teacher Development assisted greatly in understanding that the context or environment in which teachers work, has a great influence in enabling teachers to develop to the level of an expert-teacher. The Force-Field Model of Teacher Development advocates that a teacher's interpretation of an environment can make her/him strive towards self-development as a better teacher. In other words, in a positive setting, teachers are motivated to grow. The research participants also indicated that the context was also able to shape their experience of teaching to the extent that it drove them to be better teachers today (Samuel, 2008).

Due to three of the research participants being raised in a poor rural area, they were able to learn a sense of resilience that taught them to be successful irrespective of the situation. They managed to receive their education even while attending schools which were poorly resourced, and yet did not succumb to the challenges therein, but instead rose above them in order to

receive an education. A fourth research participant grew up in a township during the struggle against apartheid. Accordingly, this resulted in a great disruption of the education system; nevertheless, he managed to triumph against all types of adversities. The hardships that all the research participants experienced growing up made each of them develop a strong sense of resilience.

#### **7.4.3. Institutional factors**

The research participants reported that the schools where they worked influenced their development as teachers. This means that a school's culture and ethos can be a powerful force in shaping a teacher's professional identity. In other words, in the school where there is a conducive environment for teaching and learning, a teacher is often motivated to grow (Samuel, 2008). Some of the research participants also pointed out that the presence of staff development and teacher induction and motivation programmes shaped and influenced their development as expert-teachers.

#### **7.4.4. Programmatic factors**

The Force-Field Model of Teacher Development assumes that programmes related to the curriculum have an impact in developing teachers. Consequently, when curriculum planning is structured in such a way that teachers are able learn from one another and learn from the programme itself, teachers will grow to the level of an expert. The research participants also reported on the importance they ascribed to professional cluster programmes (Samuel, 2008). It was at such cluster meetings that they were able to engage with senior teachers in order to aid their development as expert-teachers.

### **7.5. Teacher development**

In terms of this present research, teacher development was considered two-dimensional, namely:

- i. The attitudinal dimension.
- ii. The functional dimension.

### **7.5.1. The attitudinal dimension**

The research participants reported that they developed as a result of realising the need for expert educators. In addition, they indicated that they were instrumental in developmental activities within their particular schools. In other words, their intellect as well as self-motivation were the driving factors in their attitude towards teacher-development in their schools.

### **7.5.2. The functional dimension**

The research participants reported that they were able to acquire knowledge that resulted in them improving on their work as educators. In other words, they became more productive when executing their duties. They were also able to understand work procedures more easily, thereby executing their professional duties more efficiently and effectively.

## **7.6. Policy framework for the study**

As a published policy document, The Strategic Framework for Teacher Development (2007) dictates that teachers must have seven roles in order to be identified as educators. During the course of the research, the research participants indicated certain practices that are included in the policy. Hence, the research participants reported that they not only possess subject knowledge, but also have an intimate understanding of the various methods for teaching and learning, as required by the policy (2007).

The study also found that expert-teachers were able to better assist learners. Accordingly, the proper planning of lessons is mandated by the policy (New Strategic Framework for Teacher Development, 2007). Another feature of the policy was the leading roles expert-teachers play in schools where they assist both learners and teachers, in order to develop (2007). The research participants reported that they were always searching for a new knowledge in order to be remain competitive in the process of teaching and learning (2007). Likewise, the research participants indicated that they strove to be exemplary model teachers to their colleagues and the entire school community as dictated by the policy (2007).

The research participants also reported that within their portfolios they were able to keep records of their work as stated by the policy. Such portfolios were not only used for the

purposes of record-keeping and reporting, but also were a reflection of how they engaged in the process of assessment as expert-teachers (New Strategic Framework for Teacher Development, 2007). The participants also indicated their expertise in pedagogical techniques and strategies, all of which enhance their roles as expert-teachers. Each of the research participants also reflected on the requirement to further their academic studies in order to receive the status of being subject specialists (2007).

## **7.7. Professional reflection**

According to the Strategic Framework for Teacher Development (2007), space needs to be created in order for teachers to develop within the parameters of IQMS and CPTD. The research participants all reported that they were able to engage in furthering their education and that their schools were also used as spaces for professional development. Accordingly, they were able to develop to the status of expert-teachers.

### **7.7.1. The impact of the study to my professional practice**

This research study has sought to examine the attributes and development of expert-teachers. The resultant findings of this study have assisted in better understanding the knowledge, skill-sets, attitudes, and values that make up an expert teacher and which play pivotal roles in shaping better pedagogical practice. A number of the research participants reported that it was their inner drive that made them further their studies to enable them to become expert-teachers—often against challenging social and economic conditions and poorly-resourced primary and secondary schools within their communities and households. Hence, irrespective of their circumstances, they were able to remain positive and thereby succeed in their goal of becoming expert-teachers. The study also pointed to the knowledge and skill-sets that exemplify expert-teachers. One important identifying feature of an expert teacher that the study brought attention to was the way in which expert-teachers act as catalysts in creating a learning environment within their schools, where they also act as agents of change.

The study has shown that teachers learn and improve their practices through collaboration with other teachers in scholarly conversations when they meet through professional cluster meetings in order to check each other's work. They also develop as a result of expert supervision that advises how their teaching practices can be improved. The study has also shown the necessity

of lesson planning where the necessary subject information is gathered and organised before they go into the classroom. In addition, a resourceful teacher is always looking for ways to make the lesson plan even more successful. Such planning also includes the continuous reviewing and revising of the teaching plan according to the conditions in the classroom during the course of teaching. The expert-teacher respondents in the study also indicated that a teacher must be willing to learn even from their mistakes when reviewing their lesson plans.

The study also revealed that expert-teachers learn as a result of involving themselves in leadership activities outside the classroom. It is here that they can learn leadership skills that can be adapted for the classroom situation in order to communicate effectively with their learners. The study also revealed that teachers become experts because of the environment in which work. Through the process of induction and mentoring programmes as well as other development activities, teachers are able to develop themselves. The environment where teachers work must also be emotionally healthy and friendly in order to allow teachers to grow professionally. In other words, teachers must be happy in their school environment. Teachers are also motivated when their contribution to the school is appreciated by their senior colleagues and school principals. Teachers learn as a result of a school culture that promotes teachers to work together and learn from one another about how they can function better during the course of executing their work.

## **7.8. Recommendations**

This study has sought to learn from the experience and erudition of senior expert-teachers, both at the school and departmental level. Accordingly, the study has found that teachers must be encouraged to further their academic studies in order to obtain both content and pedagogical knowledge. This will allow them to improve their teaching practices and develop to the level of experts. Accordingly, there is a need for teachers to be equipped with curriculum knowledge so that they will know what needs to be taught, when it is to be taught, and finally, how it is to be taught. Teachers must also be encouraged to search for new knowledge in order to be up-to-date in their subject specialisations. There is also a need for teachers to share their expertise with other teachers in order to improve their schools where they are working and educational and teaching standards generally. Teachers must also be encouraged to always strive for good



learner results and be dedicated for the continual improvement of such results. There is also a need for teachers to develop passion in their work so that their teaching practices will excel.

Teachers network with other teachers in order to share expertise. By so-doing, they will not only learn in the process, but their pedagogical practice will also improve. Teachers must be also be encouraged to attend professional cluster meetings. By engaging in such cluster meetings, teachers will be able to correct mistakes, as well as learn new teaching techniques, keep up-to-date with curriculum requirements, and gain greater subject knowledge. Teachers must also be familiarised with planning in order to always review their teaching practices and learn from their mistakes after reviewing their plans. There is also a need for teachers to be given expert advice in order develop to the level of becoming experts themselves. In other words, teachers must be advised by those who has greater expertise in that field or subject specialisation.

Schools must be advised to arrange induction and mentoring programmes in order to assist new teachers develop their expertise. This will also create a situation whereby new teachers will know what is expected of them. Professional development programmes in schools must be taken very seriously in order to assist teachers to develop and improve their pedagogical practices. The environment where teachers work must be made emotionally friendly in order to avoid teachers being emotionally drained or burned out, as they are the mind workers. If teachers are emotionally drained, they will inevitably bring such negative emotions into the classroom situation. School management teams must make ways and means available to appreciate good work that is done by teachers so that teachers will be always motivated to do even better. There is also a need for schools to develop a school culture that promotes excellence in teaching and learning as well as professional collegiality, where teachers work together and assist one another to develop.

Finally, there is a need for the introduction of subject heads that can advise and develop teachers based on their deeper knowledge of their specialist subjects, professionally qualifications, and excellent reputations, within the schools and districts in which they work. This will create an atmosphere where teachers will not have to wait for the subject advisor for expert supervision within the school. In other words, supervision of the subject teacher cannot

be left to the head of department only, as s/he cannot be a specialist in all subjects within the curriculum.

### **7.9. Areas for further study**

In reviewing the research findings, it is clear that most of the participants were shaped by their schools and environment to develop to expert status. This means that schools have an important role to play in enabling teachers to develop their expertise. Based upon the research findings and analysis this study has found that induction and mentoring programmes, staff development programmes, professional cluster meetings, teacher motivation and networking where teachers work together and teach one another form important aspects of expert-teacher development. A future study may look at how a local school can become a learning environment for teachers to develop their expertise. Another important issue for further study, would be how schools are able to equip their teaching staff for day-to-day challenges related to their pedagogical practices. Finally, a further area for exploration would concern those schools which fail to become institutions of learning.

### **7.10. Some final remarks**

In this concluding chapter, the findings that emerged from the data collected from the four participants were classified as experts in the field of education were succinctly brought together and discussed. A brief review of how the research data was generated using the methodology and the methods chosen for the study. Informed reflection was also given on the research data in light of the published policy framework about teaching and learning in the context of South Africa. Recommendations as a result of the research findings were also offered as to how teachers can be assisted to develop their pedagogical practices in order to reach the level of expert-teachers. Finally, in light of the investigation undertaken, some further areas of research were suggested connected to the professional development of expert-teachers.

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## **APPENDIX 1**

### **REQUEST FOR CONSENT FOR PARTICIPANTS TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY**

L1199  
Mbondwe Road  
KwaMashu  
KwaZulu-Natal  
4360

October 2012

Dear Participant \_\_\_\_\_

#### **REQUEST FOR CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY**

I am a student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), and this research forms part of my Master of Education (MEd) study. The findings of the study will be used in my MEd dissertation and any related publications and presentations.

#### **Title of study: Conceptions of Teachers as Experts: A Narrative Enquiry**

The purpose of the study is to understand teacher's meanings, understandings of the expert teacher, and the source for these meanings. Interviews and group discussions will be used to generate data from teachers about who is a teacher expert.

The study is supervised by Dr Daisy Pillay who is a senior lecturer at the School of Education, UKZN. Dr Pillay can be contacted at: 031-260-7598.

Interviews and group discussions will be conducted to collect data. If I gain informed consent from the participants, I will use the data in a way that respects their dignity and privacy. Copies of their contributions will be securely stored and disposed of if no longer required for research purposes. Their names or any information that might identify them or the school will not be used in any presentation or publication that might come out of the study. They will be informed

that they have no binding commitment to the study and may withdraw their consent at any time.

There are no direct benefits to participants from participating in this study. However, I hope that this study will make a significant contribution to both of us in gaining knowledge related to teaching.

If you have any questions relating to the rights of research participants, you can contact Ms Phume Ximba in the University of KwaZulu-Natal Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Office on 031-2603587.

I hereby request a permission from you to conduct this research.

Thank you for your assistance.

Yours faithfully

Christopher Lungile Tuta  
Cell No. 073-396-7306



## **APPENDIX 2**

### **INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

**TITLE OF STUDY: Conceptions of Teachers as Experts: A Narrative Enquiry**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of this study, and do consent for it to be conducted in the school.

I understand that participants are free to leave/withdraw from the study at any time if they want to, without any negative or undesirable consequences to themselves.

I consent the following data collection activities. (Please tick):

	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>ORAL</b>		
<b>COMMUNICATION</b>		
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>		

\_\_\_\_\_  
**SIGNATURE OF SCHOOL PRINCIPAL**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**DATE**

# **APPENDIX 3**

## **INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: PARTICIPANT**

**TITLE OF STUDY: Conceptions of Teachers as Experts: A Narrative Enquiry**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of this study, and do consent to participate in the study.

I understand that I am free to leave/withdraw from the study at any time if I want to, without any negative or undesirable consequences to myself.

I consent the following data collection activities. (Please tick):


	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>ORAL</b>		
<b>COMMUNICATION</b>		
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>		

\_\_\_\_\_  
**SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**DATE**

# APPENDIX 4

## RESEARCH PROTOCOL

 **UNIVERSITY OF  
KWAZULU-NATAL**  
INYUVESI  
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

24 October 2012

Mr Christopher Lungile Tuta 9605304  
School of Education  
Edgewood Campus

Dear Mr Tuta

Protocol reference number: HSS/1129/012M  
Project title: Conceptions of teachers as experts: A narrative enquiry.


**EXPEDITED APPROVAL**

I wish to inform you that your application has been granted Full Approval through an expedited review process.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

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

Yours faithfully

  
Professor Steven Collings (Chair)

/pm

cc Supervisor: Dr Daisy Pillay  
cc Academic leader: Dr MN Davids  
cc School Admin.: Ms S Naicker

Professor S Collings (Chair)  
Humanities & Social Sc Research Ethics Committee  
Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building  
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa  
Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 3587/8350 Facsimile: +27 (0)31 260 4609 Email: xmbap@ukzn.ac.za / snymanm@ukzn.ac.za

Working Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

**INSPIRING GREATNESS**

