

CHAPTER ONE

SITUATING THE INQUIRY

1.1 Background: Supply and demand for teachers

In many countries in the world the teaching profession loses many of its human resources, for a variety of reasons. In South Africa the situation is no different, except that teachers leave not only the profession but also the country. Qualified teachers are being actively lured to countries in the developed world. Local newspapers contain advertisements placed by recruitment agencies that entice young South African professionals with promises of adventure and financial reward to teach children in other nations. (Sunday Times, 2004-09-05, The Citizen, 2004-09-06). This attempt to attract teachers is suggestive of at least three things:

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- ◆ Many South African trained teachers enjoy a good reputation internationally.
 - ◆ First world countries are failing to satisfy their need for teachers from among their own citizens.
 - ◆ The perception exists that South African teachers would choose to leave the teaching profession in their own country.

The first of these assumptions is encouraging for anyone involved in the preparation of teachers in South Africa. The ongoing reorganisation of pre-service learning facilities can be viewed in terms of improving the already highly regarded training of teachers in this country. On the other hand, especially since 2000, rationalisation of facilities has meant closure for some institutions, amalgamation for more and the establishment of new partnerships between others. Understandably, this degree of reconstruction will not happen without some degree of institutional angst. However, given present levels of competence among qualifying teachers, I would argue that a complete reinvention of the wheel is not necessary. The fact that some countries continue to be eager to employ South African teachers is a positive comment on teacher education practices. I agree

with Hindle of the Department of Education, who has recently acknowledged that teacher education in South Africa has, "not had a smooth history,"(Hindle 2003:335) and despite benefiting from, "a renewed national emphasis on skills development," the path ahead is likely to be extremely difficult. Hindle is, however, encouraged by an apparent consensus among stakeholders in various levels of government and from the training institutions that certain aspects have been commonly identified as being of particular importance. He cites the National Teacher Education Policy Conference of November 2001 that identified two areas of pressing concern:

- ◆ The allocation of responsibility for teacher education
- ◆ The need to dramatically increase the intake at teacher education institutions

Hopefully, these issues can be addressed without, 'throwing the baby out with the bath-water' and with due recognition of the very positive image which some South African teachers have historically enjoyed. I would, however, argue that that the fine reputation of South African teachers would probably be limited to those who have had a good education and who have learned the main language well enough to be accepted in other countries. The other side of this picture is that the vast majority of practising South African teachers are unlikely to be invited in this way. The first assumption, to my mind, is thus only applicable to the historically privileged teachers who were educated at schools and higher education institutions where they could learn to compete internationally.

The second point concerns the failure of first world economies to meet the demands of their schools for professionally qualified teachers. Successive governments in highly developed states such as the United States and the United Kingdom grapple with this problem. Numerous commissions and national reports have sought to explain and solve the teacher shortfall (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996, Select Committee on Education and Employment [U.K.], (1997). The continuing deficit in supply would indicate that they have been largely unsuccessful. The shortage can be considered to be the composite result of problems in three different stages in the preparation of teachers. I would conceptualise these stages as *recruitment*, *qualification* and *retention*. I also believe that present South African Teacher Education and

Teacher Professional Development programmes can take cognisance of possible reasons for ongoing deficits in the teacher human resource category.

The problem of recruitment seems to be that most countries are failing to attract enough young people to embark on teacher training programmes. Recent research suggests that in the United States alone the shortage of qualified teachers in the decade 1998-2008 would be in the region of 2.2 million professionals (Gerald & Hussar, 1998). Internationally, poor working conditions, comparatively low salaries and waning social status are among the most common reasons for the reluctance of many academically capable school leavers to consider a career in education (UNESCO, 1998). These discouraging aspects associated with the teaching profession are not new but the burgeoning number of new occupations that now compete with teaching has brought them into sharper focus for young people (Avalos, 2000:12). Even fifty years ago teaching did not have to compete with the myriad of opportunities available to young people today. It would be naïve to think that the position of teaching relative to other career paths is likely to become more attractive in the foreseeable future. As recruitment becomes more problematic, attempts to induce young people into a career in teaching are commonly based on financial aid towards the cost of tuition and/or the lowering of admission criteria to faculties of Education. These strategies would seem to be at best a double-edged sword as levels of commitment and ability are compromised out of desperation to satisfy numbers.

Given the interventions outlined above it is hardly surprising that many first year students who enrol for education courses fail to reach qualification. Many of them are lost to other career paths after changing the direction of their tertiary studies. Others simply do not have the academic ability to succeed at tertiary level. Clearly, attempts to address the deficit in prospective teachers based on subsidies and easier access bring as many problems as they do solutions. This is particularly so in a setting which quite rightly insists on the maintenance of academic standards in tertiary institutions. Like the recruitment stage of teacher preparation, it is perhaps naive to expect a significant increase in the percentage of first year teaching students who go on to complete their courses.

The rather bleak picture painted in the discussion so far can be somewhat tempered by the assertion that despite these discouraging realities many very able

and enthusiastic teachers do qualify and do enter the career. These young men and women are given the responsibility for the education of the next generation of South Africans. In the fulfilment of their occupation they will play an important role in the development of the country's human resources. For that reason it is important that they are respected for the vocational choice they have made and that they are nurtured. As a consequence of the difficulties associated with the 'recruitment' and 'qualification' phases of teacher training the sustained commitment of those who do graduate is given added significance. However, trends would suggest that that an unacceptably high percentage of newly qualified teachers are soon lost to the classroom. For instance, recent figures would indicate that at least 20% of American teachers leave within three years of entering the profession (Henke & Zahn, 2001). There is little evidence to show that the situation is any different in South Africa.

In order to address this concern, it is important that researchers inquire into the views a series of young teachers have regarding their initial experiences. In particular, it is vital that more light is shed on the reasons why young teachers seem especially vulnerable during the first years of their careers. Due consideration of these factors may lead stakeholders to a closer examination of the process whereby young teachers become socialized into the profession. From the figures reported above it is apparent that there are aspects of this process that are problematic.

1.2 The need for research into levels of attrition among novice teachers

Unfortunately the argument for practices designed to improve the 'retention' of newly qualified teachers is often ignored and the result is predictable. The rate of new graduates who are soon lost to teaching represents a loss that the profession cannot afford to sustain. Efforts to prevent this wastage are arguably best grounded in a well-considered programme of induction for novice teachers in the critical first years of their careers. It is possibly during this phase in the development of young teachers that the biggest impact could be made. Any research that produces findings leading to a better understanding of factors promoting teachers' professional longevity has inherent value in this context.

The initial years of practice can be a difficult phase in the stages that typify a career in teaching. This conception of a teaching career as a series of stages through which an individual is likely to progress has a conspicuous place in the literature. Prominent writers like Huberman (1989) and Feiman-Nemser (2001) among others have separately been concerned with describing possible paths in generic descriptions of the professional development of teachers. Both authors bring attention to the large number of new teachers who experience difficulties during their first year/s of teaching and decide to leave the profession. Huberman describes this initial period of service in terms of a struggle for 'survival', a term I use as main theme in this study. Survival, according to Huberman, refers to the struggle of neophytes to cope with the 'reality shock' of assuming a full-time teaching position. The struggle takes place simultaneously with the experience of what Huberman calls an element of 'discovery'. This aspect refers to the excitement for young teachers in taking responsibility for the 'ownership' of their own classes. The author argues that it is the enjoyment of the 'discovery' element that makes the unpleasantness of 'survival' bearable. Where the disagreeable factors associated with 'survival' are too great the young teacher is likely to leave teaching. By the same token, if the neophyte is denied the experience of 'discovery' attrition is the probable consequence. In the South African context this tendency is of great concern. Clearly neophytes need an environment in which they can be nurtured and supported as new members of a community. My stance on this practice can be likened to what has become known in the literature as "cognitive apprenticeship" (Brown, Duguid, & Collins, 1989). To this notion I add the term "social" – meaning that what I envisage to be a future, "community of practice" (Wenger, 1998) is also founded on a sense of relationship. I would argue that teachers could be 'retained' for the profession in this type of environment where mentorship is both social and cognitive.

Hindle (2003) of the Department of Education in South Africa has recently written on the national need to retain teachers. He acknowledges that education will continue to struggle to attract sufficient school leavers into entering a career in teaching. In South Africa this shortage is, moreover, compounded by the HIV-AIDS pandemic, which has the effect of simultaneously causing the sickness and death of large numbers of qualified teachers and creating a situation where schools will have to cope with an ongoing situation of chronic absenteeism

(Ramrathan, 2003:78). Given these challenges, it is of great concern to add to research already compiled on the subject of attrition of young teachers.

I have argued thus far that novice teachers need to be retained in the profession and that the lack of structured induction and mentorship may contribute to teacher attrition. I have also alluded to metaphors such as cognitive and social apprenticeship as inherent guiding heuristics for such mentorship. The research topic that I am investigating relates to this void. I am positing that the lived experiences of novice teachers may shed some light on their induction and mentorship needs. The knowledge needed to design suitable induction programmes can only be comprehended from people's professional lives. My own thesis with regard to this is that the above mentioned heuristics could serve as principles for designing induction programmes.

1.3 Analysis of the research topic

Induction programmes are, however, rare for novice teachers in South African schools. Many newly qualified teachers in South Africa are not exposed to any meaningful induction process once they assume a full-time teaching position. For many others the experience of induction is so cursory and intermittent as to be more an unrelated set of events than a sustained programme. Arguably, this shortcoming plays an important role in the unacceptably high rate of attrition of young teachers from the profession. Far too many neophytes are not being equipped with the skills and information that they require to successfully overcome the everyday problems typically associated with the initial period of their teaching careers. In order to make a meaningful attempt to understand these situations educationists need to listen to what young teachers have to say about their experiences and respond to the factors that contribute to them not settling in their new positions. In the *unit of analysis* of this inquiry, which is *novice teachers' experiences regarding induction and mentoring*, there is also an inherent research question: What elements could be included in an induction programme designed to counter this dissatisfaction?

I am thus guided by the central question of inquiry: What are teachers' experiences regarding induction and mentoring and how can their discourse be

interpreted to shed light on the meaning they give to their neophyte professional experience?

1.4 Activity theory as main framework of the inquiry

In framing this study the principles of Activity Theory are used to scaffold the research and also to position the inquiry. Engeström (1987) gives the central precepts of such theory when he makes the following elaboration: “An activity is undertaken by a human agent (subject) who is motivated towards the solution of a problem or purpose (object), and mediated by tools (artefacts) in collaboration with others (community). The structure of the activity is constrained by cultural factors including conventions (rules) and social strata (division of labour) within the context”(Ryder, 1998:2). In this definition the author indicates that Activity Theory was spawned by socio-cultural theory as first developed by Lev Vygotsky (1978) in the second and third decades of the previous century. I use Activity Theory because it immediately and strongly involves context and tool mediation, as well as social roles and conventions, all of which form important clusters of my own thinking about teacher development. (see figure 1. for an exposition of Activity Theory and an activity system).

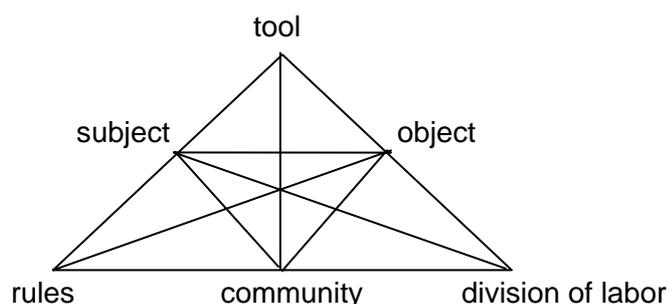


Figure 1: An activity system (Engeström, 1987)

To apply this theory to the case of a neophyte teacher (subject) embarking on her career, it is credible to posit that the goal towards which she is driven (object) is simply to become a happy and successful teacher. However, it is possible that in this desire she may be thwarted and frustrated by other elements in the system. Specifically, the following aspects could be problematic, starting with teachers' own beliefs about teaching.

I would argue that the greatest *tool* that young teachers have in seeking to become successful in their careers is their sets of beliefs regarding what constitutes 'a good teacher'. These beliefs are developed during teachers' own experiences as pupils in a school, during their period of education and training to become a teacher as well as media generated presentations of 'successful teaching.' It follows that young teachers, in communication with school management, with colleagues and with pupils, would use a form of the most significant tool, *language* that they associate with the attainment of their goal. Similarly, they would adopt behaviours and attitudes that they have been socialised into identifying with their own image of what it means to be 'a good teacher.' Whether or not this course of action could be partly responsible for the decision of many young teachers to abandon the profession is debatable. It would certainly be a cause for concern if it were established that attempts to model oneself on the existing sets of conduct and deportment, which society correlates with teachers, often has the effect of causing levels of unhappiness such that abandonment of the profession is the consequence.

I have pointed out above that this tool mediation takes place in the context of the individual's interaction with, and within a community, which is seen as a major component of an activity system (Engeström, 1988, 1991). For new teachers this community involves elements like parents and pupils, but it is most closely related to the neophyte's involvement with fellow teachers and with school management. Here again it is questionable whether failings in the extent and nature of this involvement could be related to the large scale of attrition from teaching linked to newly qualified teachers. Lave and Wenger (1990), arguing from a constructivist view of learning and development, have posited the theory of legitimate peripheral participation (LPP) as form of learning in a community. According to this theory people learn when they become an 'insider' in a community. Once inside they take on the language and viewpoints of that particular group. Thus, a novice teacher learns to become a teacher by adopting the prevailing symbols and actions commonly accepted by other teachers. This begs the question of the likely impact and effect on a young teacher in a case where there is no meaningful sense of community, or even worse when the prevailing ethos is negative and cynical.

When one considers the *conventions* or 'rules' involved in an activity system associated with becoming a teacher, there is also cause for concern. I would argue that it is fair to say that in comparison with most other professions teaching is relatively conservative in its practice. Generally speaking, and in my own experience of 15 years, young teachers with enthusiastic and new ideas tend to be denigrated by their older colleagues as being naïve and inexperienced at best, reckless, foolish and dangerous at worst. It is entirely conceivable that many young people turn their backs on a career in teaching because they are simply not allowed the scope for personal expression, or "legitimate peripheral action" according to Lave and Wenger (1990), by a set of *conventions* in an activity system, that are overly inflexible and resistant to change. Arguably, many school environments mask this destructive sense of rigidity behind a vaunted adherence to what is often given the name tradition or policy adherence. While one wouldn't want to throw out the value of experience there might be a case against keeping allegiance with 'old habits' simply because they are old, or compliance with new policy because it is 'new.'



Finally, according to the description of an *activity system* as set out above, it is important to consider the *social strata* and *division of labour* inherent in the system. Most South African schools are still, to varying degrees, hierarchical in structure. Pyramids of control are still often obvious in the relationship of principals, deputies, heads of departments, senior teachers and junior teachers. The neophyte is generally placed right at the bottom of the heap. Sometimes this might be done openly with new teachers being 'put in their place' by the paragons of power above them. More often the delineation is more subtle and pernicious: the young teacher is 'guided' into what is often no more than subservient professional status by means of elements such as being barred from decision-making structures and being provided with an unequal share in the material and human resources of the school. I would like to use one example of the physical accommodation of teachers and ask the question: How many teachers in this country began their careers in the least desirable classrooms where they froze in winter and baked in summer? Considering not only the symbolic value of this but also Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1954) I wonder what the intention of such induction could be. This often blatant 'initiation' practice does not serve the goal of novice teacher retention.

1.5 Research design and methods of inquiry

This study is conducted in the interpretivist paradigm of social inquiry, aiming to come to some understanding of the nature of teachers' experiences of their first year(s) of teaching (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2000). As such, it attempts to understand more about the research topic through an discursive interaction between the researcher and a group of participants - in this instance with a view to collect data regarding the experiences of the socialization process of neophyte teachers. According to this framework knowledge is constructed, not only by what is apparent or what can be seen but also by, "descriptions of people's intentions, beliefs, values and reasons, meaning making and self-understanding"(Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit: 2004:20). Thus, although what these young teachers say about their experiences is undoubtedly important, what can be read 'between the lines' in the type of language and the discourse that they choose to use, the images that they invoke, and the stories that they tell, as well as the way they tell them, are considered equally valuable. Cognisance is also given to things that they do not say about their experiences and to how they structure their telling. Lightfoot and Roet (2004) say that stories are not only about the world, but also of the world. The reporting itself is thus also the reported. In the process of eliciting data the inquirer becomes party to the reported as well.

I view research as a shared experience between researcher and participants who interact in order to produce contextually derived knowledge and insights. Knowledge is developed through the attempted 'sense-making' of information gleaned during data collection and analysis. Multiple interpretations of the same data are accepted and expected because of the discursive and contextual nature of data, but always with ample evidence of collection and processing of data to strengthen the validity by good craftsmanship (Kvale, 2002). Competence of inquiry does not mean that findings are objective, but that they are open to audit. Ontologically speaking, objectivity in human actions is considered impossible because all actions and interactions take place within a particular social context that will inevitably influence the very meaning of the action (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002). Hence, the study will proceed from a social constructivist epistemological position, which supports a non-objective ontology, a respect for multiple realities and a sense of the discursiveness of all socially derived information.

A logical design type to use given this epistemological foundation is that of discourse analysis (Phillips & Hardy, 2002; Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000; Henning *et al*, 2004). This *design type* has the 'goodness of fit' with my proposed methods of inquiry and is compatible with an *interpretivist* framework.

My primary method of data collection is via a set of open-ended interviews with the participants. These participants were purposively selected as teachers in their first or second year of teaching in a High School in the Ekurhuleni municipality of Gauteng. They were further selected to investigate possible differences in different school settings, the criteria thus being neophyte teacher and different school contexts. Thus, one participant comes from a wealthy private school, one from a less expensive private school, four from "ex Model C" schools and three from an impoverished school in a former segregated black township.

Interviews with participants would be recorded on an audio-tape recorder, transcribed and analysed. Codes of meaning (as discourse markers) will be applied to capture the meaning of sections of field text. From these codes of meaning certain discourse themes will be identified. In addition to the interviews, I spent a period of seven school days at two schools in order to observe novice teachers as they engage in their professional lives. Field notes were taken and later analysed for discursive meaning. This was considered valuable in order to give me a more comprehensive understanding of the issues that the neophytes raised in verbal communication. I also relied on my own experience as a teacher to reflect on the data.

1.6 The Study Plan

In this first chapter of my study I have introduced the topic of inquiry and the educational concern that motivated me to conduct the inquiry. From broad concerns that I identified from a literature review, I singled out a specific, namely that present practices of induction are often failing to satisfy the mentoring and induction needs of novice teachers. In grounding my inquiry in the principles of Activity Theory I related this theory to the struggle of new teachers to establish themselves in schools as activity systems (see Figure 1, p.8).

In the second chapter of the study I consider the research question in a literature review that includes studies on teacher development in their early career and related topics such as mentorship and induction. In chapter three I discuss the data collection and analysis processes of my inquiry.

In the final chapter of the inquiry the patterns of meaning that were constituted from the analysed data are related to the research question. I discuss the meaning of the findings using the theoretical framework and concomitant literature review as lens. I also suggest possible limitations of my study and make an attempt to 'answer' the research problem explicated in part one. I draw conclusions from the inquiry and complete the argument for the need for social and cognitive apprenticeship opportunities for novice teachers.



CHAPTER TWO

TOWARDS CONCEPTUALISING THE PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY OF NOVICE TEACHERS

2.1 Introduction: elements from the literature

This study attempts to add to the understanding of novice teachers' early career experiences regarding induction and mentorship and how this relates to possible reasons for unacceptably high attrition levels among novice teachers. Specifically, it endeavours to appreciate how practices of socialization into the teaching profession might help to explain such levels of attrition. Towards achieving this aim I am reviewing literature in a conceptual framework that includes the following themes:

- Teacher education and training
- Teacher professionalism
- Communities of Practice - (versus isolationism)
- The social and professional reality of the novice teacher

To borrow from the terminology of activity theory, it is the above aspects which represent the *community, tools, rules* and *division of labour* in the context of the neophytes' attempts to experience success in their professional lives (Engestrom, 1987).

2.2 Initial teacher education for multiple school realities

Almost every element of South African society changed after the advent of democracy in 1994. The education system was scrutinized in order to consider ways in which inequalities in this field could begin to be addressed. Initial focus was placed on the development of a post-apartheid curriculum for South African

schools and attempts to move closer to the ideal of more equitable provision of learning opportunities to children of all race groups.

The provision of teacher training facilities was made a challenge to be solved at provincial rather than national level until such times that new structures could be developed. Rationalization of service providers continues to this day with closures and amalgamations typifying government attempts to make the national organisation of training institutions more effective. In order to review the provision of teacher education in five countries, including South Africa, the MUSTER initiative (Multi-Site Teacher Education Research Project) was launched by the Centre for International Education at the University of Sussex (Lewin *et al*, 2003). This project generated a series of research essays that were independently intended to shed light on various issues around the common topic of teacher education. The ultimate goal of researchers involved in the project, reflected in the titles of their essays, was to investigate how best the country could improve the desired *quantity* and *quality* of teachers in the country. Estimates of the number of teachers that South Africa needs to qualify annually in order to satisfy projected needs vary. Most recently, the new Education Minister has reported that 17 000 teachers leave the profession every year while our training institutions are supplying only 3 000 new teachers over the same period. (The Citizen, 2004-07-14). What is undisputed is that future demand for teachers will outstrip even the most optimistic projections of supply levels. Unfortunately, attempts to collect reliable information regarding the country's medium and long term need for teachers is thwarted, primarily, by uncertainty about the impact of the AIDS pandemic on demographic factors.

As a result of this deficit, it is important that our teacher training facilities are equipping students with the knowledge and skills that they will need in order to promote longevity in their careers. An often heard complaint made about teacher training is that a theoretical/practice divide detracts from the value of the preparation. Specifically, it is argued that courses at tertiary institutions are too theoretical in content and, thus, fail to equip students with the information that they need to deal with the daunting practical realities of 'being in the classroom.' Commonly, students claim that periods of teaching practice are infinitely more beneficial than academic lectures around topics such as the 'history', 'philosophy' and 'psychology' of Education. 58% of the final year class at the University of

Durban-Westville in 1999 said that more time should be allocated to teaching practice in the curriculum of teacher training (Samuel & Pillay, 2004:143). However, to simply add on more teaching practice time to the curriculum at the expense of more theoretical aspects might be too simplistic a solution. In a recent American study Wilson and colleagues raise the point that, "too often field experiences are disconnected from, or not well coordinated with, the university-based components of teacher education and limited to mechanical aspects of teaching." (Wilson *et al*, 2001:3). Perhaps, as these studies would suggest a more satisfactory balance and alignment between theory and practice is what should be sought.

A second concern is that, within the same institution, lecturers are responsible for the training of teachers for all schools in our society. In other words, those engaged in faculties of Education will probably be responsible for the preparation of some students who will be seeking employment in affluent urban private schools where infrastructure and teaching tools are developed and accessible. There will be other students who will take up positions in extremely poor rural schools where facilities and equipment will be inadequate. The disparity in 'teaching realities' for these two students (and all others between these two extreme hypothetical examples) begs the following questions:

- Is it possible for one institution to give relevance to students entering vastly different school realities?
- For what school reality should students be prepared?
- If students are prepared for 'best case scenario' is it not likely that for many students much of the course will be 'pie in the sky' education?
- Is it credible that training which does not approximate practical realities could add to the numbers of unhappy neophyte teachers who soon abandon the profession?
- How should institutions respond to the challenges presented by the diverse nature of schools in our society?

In a recent work Lewin (2003) offers a critique of current practices in initial teacher training and makes the point that, "trainees may rightly become confused if advocacy of new methods in training conflicts with the realities of practice in

schools” (Lewin, 2003: 347). In a similar vein Reddy recently conducted a study at the Edgewood College of Education in Kwazulu-Natal and makes the point that, “The old system of education coped with diversity in unacceptable ways. The challenge for the new system of teacher education is to provide a teacher education programme that can cope with diverse environments” (Reddy, 2003:192). Indeed, this writer takes the argument even further by questioning the type of environment that is most suitable for students undergoing periods of teaching practice (Reddy, 2003:192). In a review of international teacher training policy Iredale (1996) adds to the debate when he argues that, “In order to be effective initial teacher training has to be extremely well focused on the situation into which the teachers will be going. There has always been the conflict in teacher education, particularly where it has tried to be progressive, between the kind of teaching that the trainers believe is desirable and the actual classroom situation into which the trainees go, whether on teaching practice or as fully fledged teachers” (Iredale, 1996:15). Henning (2000) refers to a teacher education curriculum in Andean Peru in which students learn teaching largely from the experience and life world of their Andean needs.

2.3 Teacher professionalism and the novice teacher

At the completion of a determined period of tertiary education those who fulfil course requirements are considered to be professional teachers. The question can now be posed whether professionals are largely “generic”, or whether the specific context of teaching requires a specific form of professionalism. A profession is defined as, “A vocation or calling, especially one that involves some branch of advanced learning or science” (Oxford Concise Dictionary, 1990: 952). It is often debated whether teaching qualifies as a ‘profession’ under this set of criteria. The argument hinges on whether the ‘learning’ required to qualify as a teacher can rightfully be described as ‘advanced.’ Whereas practitioners of medicine and law are universally accepted as ‘professional’ people, those who teach are often seen to be ‘poor relations’ who aspire to professionalism but who lack the comprehensive body of specific knowledge associated with the other two. Relatively easy access to training courses, poor remuneration, little real institutional freedom to make independent decisions and limited social status are among the reasons promulgated for exclusion of teachers from the professional classes. This is despite the argument that teachers need specific skills and the

disposition that a specific context requires; aspects which increases the complexity of the issue of professionalism.

Pratte & Rury (1991) consider the question of teacher professionalism from a different perspective. They argue that there is an inherent difference between teachers and the other vocations alluded to above. They make the distinction between *expert professions* and *craft professions*. The former refers to those fields of expertise in which the profession is based on, "a highly formal or codified body of knowledge" (Pratte & Rury, 1991:62). It could be quite convincingly argued that this does not apply to teaching. Craft professions, among which the author considers teaching, are different in that many of the skills and abilities associated with the 'good practice' of the task can only be learned through experience in the discipline.

I would like to add to that that the specific context in which it is practised is important. If this distinction between teaching and the other professions is accepted then important considerations for the preparation and induction of teachers are apparent. Much of what I am now going to discuss relates to the activity system (Figure1, p.8) that is the main heuristic tool for this study. Firstly, curriculum developers for student teachers should be mindful that it is primarily through the 'being' in the classroom that a student learns the skills of effective teaching. This means that it is with the engagement with the activity system that learning takes place in apprenticeship fashion. It is in the classroom that the novice teacher will craft her own tools, learn to mediate them in multiple ways and find her place in the community with its customs and social aspects. Her knowledge is, therefore, not so much epistemic but technological, the knowledge of craft in context. Add to that her practical wisdom, or *phronesis knowledge* (Henning, 2000) is of primary importance, due to the continued design and adaptation of her mediation, and the teacher as crafter-professional becomes a most specialised practitioner to whom the entire society (professionals, labourers, officials and farmers) entrust their youth.

This would suggest that periods of 'teaching practice' could be lengthened or made more prevalent, or both, in order for the whole range of knowledges to feature pre-service. Secondly, as craft professionals, novice teachers would probably benefit from sustained involvement in communities of practice (Wenger,

1998; Lave and Wenger, 1991) with their peers and with more experienced teachers so that they can learn to legitimately participate – at first peripherally and later more comprehensively. The teacher's real achievement of professionalism could be said to be earned by virtue of accepting involvement in this process of interaction or at a rounded engagement with the activity system. A conscious willingness to attempt to become a better teacher by means of critically evaluating teaching practices would be a more satisfactory criterion for professionalism than as a result of a set of examinations passed at a university. The role of structured induction and mentorship as tools could be important in this endeavour to develop a "conscience of craft," among new teachers (Pratte & Rury, 1991:64).

In a recent longitudinal interview study educational researchers examined the first three years in the careers of 50 new teachers in public schools in Massachusetts (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). The purpose of the research was to add to our understanding of the reasons why some novice teachers stayed in the teaching profession while others quickly choose to leave. Interestingly, it was found that many of those who remained in the profession were those who taught in schools where leaders, "accommodated team planning and structured explicit opportunities for collegial interaction" (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003:605). At a school where professional development took place in partnership with a local university one neophyte expressed satisfaction with being involved in an environment where an, "expectation that teachers learn from one another," was an accepted norm.

Feiman-Nemser (2001) is referring to the same process of "in-service" development of professionalism when she uses the terms "deepening," "refining," and "extending" to describe the task of young teachers in relation to adding to their skills base after initial qualification. In the same article the author makes the point that if those responsible for initial teacher training could be assured that professional development would continue as the novice entered the classroom then the pressure to cram topics into pre-service curricula would be alleviated. The pressure on teacher educators would be reduced if they were assured that newly qualified teachers would benefit from experiential learning under the guiding eye of a mentor in an induction programme. This would hopefully result in pre-service courses being designed to be better suited to providing a real basis for future growth, instead of aiming to 'teach it all' (Feiman-Nemser, 2001:1016). In the South African context it would also go some way to helping the current 67 000

underqualified teachers working within the local system (Hindle, 2003:331). This is particularly so given the high attrition rates associated with this vulnerable sector of the country's practising educators.

Rather than claiming a 'pseudo-professionalism' based on a diluted comparison with other professions that are rigidly linked to expertise with a relatively unchanging body of knowledge, those charged with teacher education curricula should accept that teaching is craft oriented. As such, proficiency in the craft is attained through practice, by engaging in the activity system.

2.4 Communities of Practice versus Isolation of novice teachers

In common with other craft professions the novice learns primarily through observation and emulation of skilled practitioners of the craft. The single worker becomes skilled by accepting involvement in a community of practice. Since the introduction of the theories around "communities of practice," the single worker has come under scrutiny. Writing on the 'culture' of teaching Feiman-Nemser makes the assertion that, "teachers work alone in their classrooms, out of sight of other colleagues and protected by norms of autonomy and non-interference" (Feiman-Nemser, 2001:1033). She furthermore argues that this prevailing *modus operandi* inhibits the development of a reflective custom among teaching professionals. Teachers are often not in the position to evaluate their own practices by sharing ideas about methods and techniques. In most schools it is simply not socially admissible for one teacher to encroach on the 'independence' of another, a code of conduct that needs to be problematised, which I will do when I discuss the findings of this inquiry, using the activity system as framework. On the contrary, where a tradition of involvement and social learning has not been intentionally inculcated any attempts to engage in such practices are likely to be viewed as an intolerable infringement of the 'professionalism' of a colleague, probably based on the assumption that a school as a system cannot consist of independent teaching 'parts'.

This state of affairs is very often deeply entrenched and consequently very resistant to change. However, this does not imply that it should not be questioned. Indeed, a number of issues and related suppositions of this study, emerging from this praxis of isolationism are important to take into account:

- Why is it that teachers think they need ‘protection,’ and from what?
- Could this ‘protection’ often simply be a mechanism to conceal incompetence?
- If this is the case does it not reflect poorly on all teachers?
- Is it not incumbent on anyone who desires professional status to be open to honest, balanced criticism of their practices?
- Is the opportunity to learn better teaching practices through interaction with peers often being spurned?
- Are young teachers specifically being denied a valuable chance to learn the skills of the teaching ‘craft’ through involvement with other teachers?
- Might some neophytes be lost to the profession simply because no one told them that the way they were teaching was problematic?

The questions that I posed above reflect the thesis of this study – namely that induction needs to be structured and facilitated holistically, and they also problematise the notion of the ‘independent, individual teacher.’ Commenting on the isolation among teachers at schools Huberman *et al* (1997) use the analogy of an egg-crate in which one egg is ‘protected’ from the eggs on either side of it, knowing that egg shells are fragile! In the same study the authors contend that teachers are often reluctant to borrow from the perceived successes of their peers for fear of being labelled as personally incompetent. The implications for new teachers are stark: they have to learn effective teaching skills ‘on the job.’ However, they are often placed in social settings where interaction and ‘copying’ the effective practices of more experienced colleagues is viewed as an indictment of their professional credibility (Little, 2003:7). Bolin (1987:9) goes even further when she compares the psychological damage caused by the prevailing ‘aloneness’ endured by many teachers as being not dissimilar to that suffered by prisoners on solitary confinement. Contemporary theories of apprenticeship (Brown *et al*, 1989), communities of learning (Brown and Campione, 1996), learning and information ecologies (Nardi and O’Day, 1999 ; Henning, 2003, Henning and van der Westhuizen, 2003), knowledge ecologies (Henning and Diseko, 2004) all point to the validity of working together, and fulfilling different functions as the elements of a natural ecology do.

One way of locating the craft and disposition of novice teachers is to inquire into their processes of entering the profession and gauging their initial experiences. A recent Dutch study (Uhlenbeck *et al*, 2002) suggests a framework for the assessment of beginning teachers. Among the 15 criteria that they advocate were the following, “Teachers should demonstrate that they engage in deliberation and reasoning about their practice,” and “Teachers should demonstrate that they engage in professional conversations with their colleagues” (Uhlenbeck *et al*, 2002:262). Arguably, the majority of schools do not subscribe to a philosophy of teaching that would support such actions, captured in these criteria, on the part of their novice teachers. All learning is often seen to be dependent on collaboration (Kwakman, 2003:5; Lave & Wenger, 1990, in Burroughs *et al*, 2000:346). However, for teachers the pervasive influence of a misguided sense of privacy too often confounds the establishment of professional communities of practice among practitioners.

Thus, while learning theories advocate interaction and close contact between practitioners of the same craft the historical tradition for teachers is one of isolation and non-interference in the practice of peers. In this way conventions of the career could be to the detriment for ‘survival’ (Huberman, 1989) of new teachers.

2.5 The Social and Professional reality of the novice teacher

In keeping with the principles of Activity theory (Engeström, 1987) a *subject* (the teacher) attempts to achieve an object within a *community* and an *activity system*. The successful completion of this activity is constrained or facilitated by *conventions* and *social strata*. In the previous subsection I have made the following comments:

- A sense of *community* in which teachers would be able to develop is often not encouraged by current practices in schools.
- Some *conventions* associated with the teaching profession (privacy and isolation) counter the attempts of neophyte teachers to achieve professional success.

It is now important to consider the *social strata* commonly found in the life-world of a new teacher. It is unfortunate that in the school setting it is often the least capable who are given the most daunting tasks. It is the custom in many schools that newly qualified teachers, who are still struggling to develop their own professional identity, are burdened with an intolerable responsibility.

Previously I have referred to the 'initiation' process often experienced by novice teachers. I mentioned that new teachers are often allocated the least desirable of the physical facilities at the school where they are to 'cut their teeth.' This is not the only way in which the novice is often discriminated against. New teachers are often given fuller timetables than more experienced teachers and are often allocated to perceived 'difficult' classes. The association between youth and available free time is often made. Thus, novice teachers are often expected to be more heavily involved in extra-curricular activities than their older colleagues. They are also often burdened with time-consuming administrative functions such as exam invigilation, taking register classes, taking detention and playground duties.

These expectations are made of inexperienced teachers who are often, simultaneously, grappling with the basic demands of establishing an appropriate level of class and curriculum management and experimenting with the practical application of teaching methods. For many young teachers these demands are insurmountable and the decision to remain in teaching seems untenable. This could be different, however, if they could be one of a number of novices in a supportive programme, which I have referred to as learning communities, communities of practice, learning and information ecologies, networks and knowledge ecologies. I now add the notion of craft ecologies, in which there are experienced practitioners and novices, all performing different activities.

The reasons for these harmful practices seem derived from certain socio-political assumptions commonly held in schools. These could include attitudes and belief systems that may hold that more experienced teachers are 'better' teachers, another professional view could be that so-called 'better' teachers deserve privileges and that privileges include more free time and less onerous duties. The assumption is made that young teachers will learn more by being given more tasks and responsibilities, and those who can't cope were 'never meant to be' teachers.

For those who do cope they will have become more experienced and according to the logic 'better' teachers who have earned more access to privileges.

In my experience, I have seen that this circular conception of a life cycle in teaching is often underpinned by a 'sink or swim' policy towards new teachers. Given South Africa's shortage of teachers the problem with this way of thinking is clear, we simply can not afford the number of teachers who 'sink.' In the United States recent estimates indicate that three out of ten teachers 'sink' within 5 years (Archer, 1999:1). Empirical evidence of the numbers of South African teachers who are lost soon after qualification is not available but the trend is apparent. Lewin *et al*, (2003:371) argue that further research is needed into the reasons why, "the length of time teachers spend in the classroom after initial training may be falling."

In this regard I again refer to the research of Huberman. This researcher writes extensively on the question of typical life cycles of teachers and labels the first stage in a teacher's professional career as a struggle between 'survival' and 'discovery' (Huberman, 1989). When a young teacher encounters 'survival' challenges that she is not able to cope with, they are likely to become so vexing that she is unable to experience the satisfaction of 'discovery.' In this situation it is conceivable that the teacher will opt out of the profession amidst feelings of personal and professional incompetence. The challenge then for schools appears threefold.

Firstly, school administrators must recognise that young teachers are valuable commodities. Secondly, they should acknowledge and accept that novices are likely to experience problems of 'survival'. Thirdly, they should put structures in place in order to counter the potential career threatening impact of these problems.

It is a logical assumption to make that there is probably a direct relationship between the experience of pleasant social relations in the workplace and the decision of a young teacher to stay in the profession. Consequently, in the induction of a new teacher into the school environment it is important that she is made to feel welcome and respected by those she comes into contact with. Too often, as a result of apathy or the not so subtle demonstration of a social pecking

order, this does not happen and the young teacher may question her future in the teaching profession.

2.6 Conclusion: novice teachers' emergent identity and the need for induction

In this part of the essay I have been concerned to place the problem of how novice teachers are inducted into the teaching profession in the larger context of related concerns in the field of education. At this juncture it is appropriate to reiterate what is largely undisputed. That generally accepted truth is the assertion that South Africa needs more teachers than it is currently producing.

Government has acknowledged this and has targeted aggressive recruitment strategies as the primary response to a problem that, if left unchecked, could reach crisis proportions. The point of departure of this essay lies in the contention that it is just as important that we retain current teachers as attract new ones, especially considering the large financial investment in their education and the loss of newly qualified human resources.

Levels of attrition among novice teachers, specifically, are of such levels that it is probable that, for this particular group, particular factors are at play. I would suggest that in order to understand this unsatisfactory situation better it is necessary to look critically at certain practices and belief systems within the teaching profession. More precisely, I posit that the manner in which novice teachers are often inducted into a career in education is problematic and that a more appropriate system of introduction to teaching could lead to a significant improvement in the average career longevity of novice teachers.

CHAPTER THREE

THE INQUIRY

3.1 Introduction: awareness about the predicament of novice teachers

The genesis of this study was my interest in understanding more about the nature of introduction into the teaching profession commonly experienced by novice teachers. This interest developed from a literature review of current concerns in the field of teacher education and also from my 15 years of teaching experience in state and private schools in South Africa, as well as private schools in Malawi and Zambia. From this very broad review issues of teacher attrition and induction practices as well as my own observations culminated the specific topic that framed the unit of analysis of the research. I was intrigued to find out more about what happens when newly qualified teachers arrive at schools for the first time, how the neophytes are socialised into the vocation that they have chosen to enter into and how their environment interacts with them.

3.2 The context of the inquiry

In order to address the research problem of my study, I needed to gain entry into the schools before I continued my research. I made contact with the management of five socially diverse high schools in the Ekurhuleni area of Gauteng and gained permission to interview nine newly qualified teachers about their experiences of induction. The intention was to find out about their initial experiences after assuming a full-time teaching position. These interviews were planned to take place at the teachers' schools between October 2003 and May 2004. I then received informed consent from the teachers and the Education Department through the University's Academic Ethics Committee in the Faculty of Education and Nursing.

3.3 The Research plan

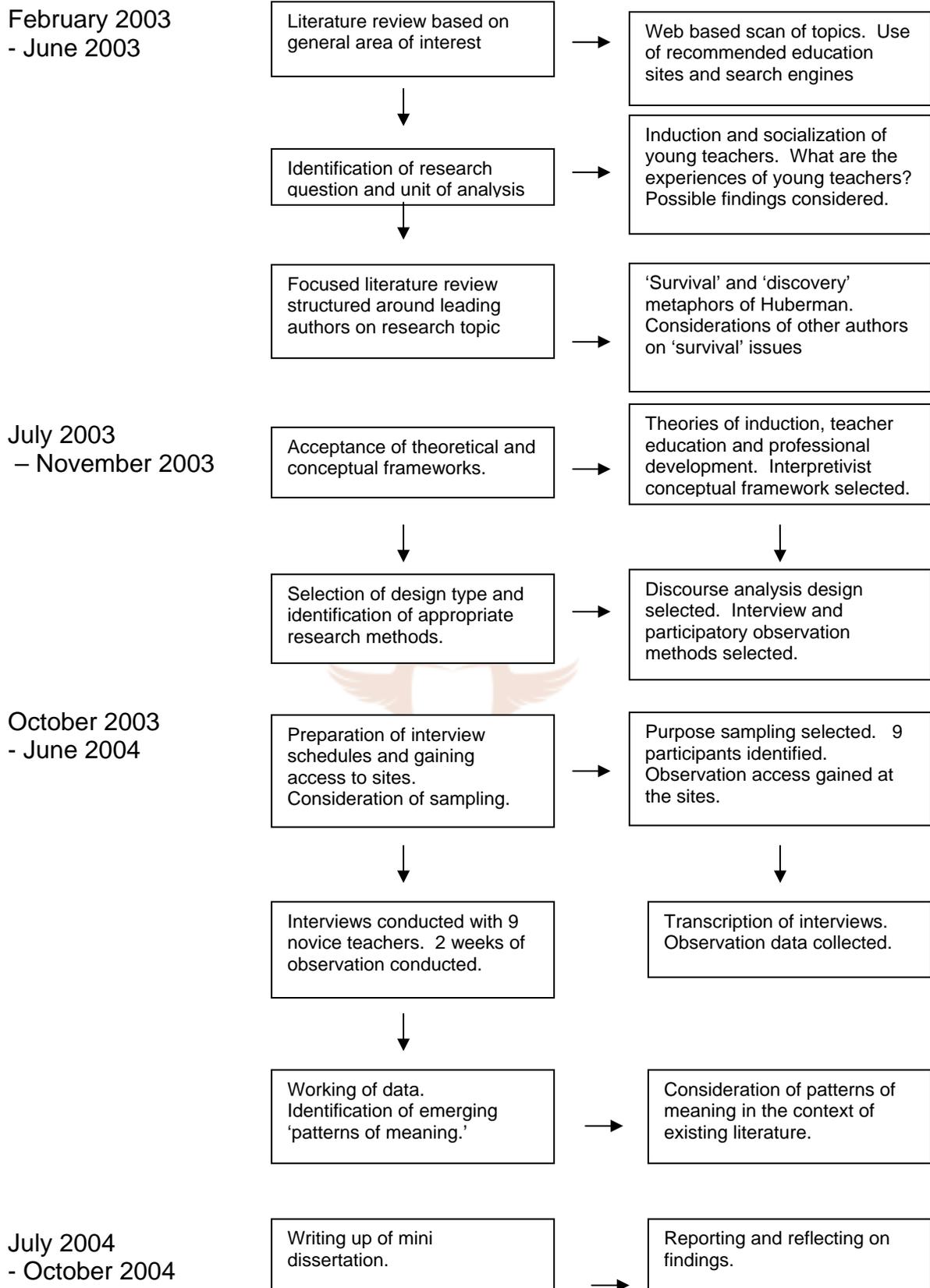


Figure 2: The research plan: strategies and actions

This study was founded initially on my own teaching experiences and my awareness that the socialization of novice teachers at schools where I had worked had been unsatisfactory. This concern encouraged me to find out more about how novice teachers experience induction practices and the possible consequences of these experiences.

As stated in chapter one of this essay I based my research in the Interpretivist theoretical framework (Alverson & Sköldberg, 2000; Mouton, 2000; Babbie & Mouton, 2000). By electing to do so I accepted the philosophy that, "observation is fallible and all theory is revisable" (Henning et al, 2004:19). A welcoming of different viewpoints and multiple realities is considered to offer the most convincing approach in striving to understand an aspect of the world (Henning et al, 2004:20). Thus I had no ambition to suggest that my findings could be generalised to other people in other situations. The validity of the study is evident in the inherent logic of the design for the particular nature of the topic, and of the craftsmanship evident in the report (Kvale, 2002; Henning *et al*, 2004: chapter 7).

In an interpretative approach to social inquiry knowledge is not considered to be constructed by an isolated individual, but rather by an individual in communal interaction with her world. Knowledge is not vacuum-packed for easy absorption but rather is acquired via involvement with, "social constructions such as language, consciousness, shared meanings, documents and other artefacts" (Trauth, 2001:219). Knowledge is thus also discursive, being made in a discourse. Thus, the teachers in this study will express knowledge that they have made or constructed in the discourse community of the schools where they work (Knobel & Lankshear, 1999).

Having decided on a research methodological framework and an epistemological position the next step was to select a design type to fit the purpose of the research. I decided that the most fruitful genre would be an analysis of discourse. This implies that the research question could best be explored through an interpretation of what young teachers said about their experiences during the induction phase of their careers. However, I was convinced that a more complete image of the lives of these novices could be obtained by looking further than the content of their interviews with me. This is not to suggest that what they had to say was not important, just that images and metaphors which they chose to invoke

were at least equally illustrative of their impressions of their experiences. I would thus interpret their way of communication, their means of expression as well as what they would say indexically.

In order to achieve this interpretative 'richness' it was necessary to "work" (Holliday, 2001) transcribed records of interview data for recurrent stretches of verbal meaning which shed light on the attitude of interviewees towards the subject at hand. These 'stretches', or 'units of meaning' would be awarded a shortened code. This code would capture some 'content' but would mostly capture discursive qualities, looking for meaning beyond denotative meaning. The meaning would be beyond the indexical quality, toward iconic and symbolic value of the language signs. The discourse analysis would thus identify discourse markers that would capture elements such as images and metaphors, language structures as icons – representing specific types of meanings in the contexts, symbolic use of language and systems of expression from which the speakers draw meaning (Henning *et al*, 2004: Chapter 6). Where codes or discourse markers were repeated by more than one young teacher they would be given added significance.

In addition to the analysis of the discourse of interview data I would spend time at two of the schools involved in order to observe the day to day reality for young teachers in their professional lives. By being part of their world, albeit for a relatively short time, I hoped to refine my understanding of the way they chose to portray their experiences as new teachers. I selected schools where I have not worked before, so that I could get a sense of the social contexts with which I was not familiar. In the analysis of the interview data the codes or discourse markers would be "collapsed" in main categories. Usually at this point of analysis the dominant themes of the data are identified and the systems of expression from which the participants drew their meaning would be evident.

To these themes I would then add the data captured during participatory observation at two schools. This data, captured in daily field-notes, would be similarly analysed for both content and discourse.

The two sets of data would be combined to yield the findings, which would be interpreted – largely from the literature that has been included in the study, focusing on the unit of analysis.

3.4 Sampling: the selection of the research participants

It is probably valid that collected data would be enriched by the participation of the greatest number of participants in the study. However, limitations of time meant that a sampling strategy had to be carefully considered. I was concerned that despite the fact that the number of research participants was relatively small (9) I wanted them to represent as heterogeneous a group as realistically possible. Criteria for differentiation were made on the basis of gender, race and prevalent socio-economic situation of the school in which the participant taught. This form of purposive sampling (Holliday, 2001; Merriam, 1998; Silverman, 2000) was deliberately chosen in order to determine possible similarities and differences across these divides. I give a brief description of the people involved and the context of their experiences. This information derived from what participants said during discursively oriented interviews precedes the more rigorous working of data required by the design of the study. The portraits (Lightfoot, 1997) are in themselves thus already, analysed data. I use pseudonyms throughout.

3.4.1. Karen: a sense of misplacement

Karen is a single white woman who is employed at a small English-medium private school. She is busy studying for her teaching diploma, having previously completed a Bachelor's degree. The school is apparently battling financially. Karen's home language is Afrikaans and she struggles to communicate fluently in English. This detracts from her confidence as a teacher. She is not happy in her job and looks forward to leaving the profession. She reports feeling intimidated by older teachers and speaks about feeling overworked and underpaid. She feels unprepared for teaching and wants to study further in a different direction. She admits that she struggles to maintain effective discipline and in her relations with parents and older teachers. She has no contact with other new teachers. Karen complains that school management is over-critical and does not appreciate the efforts of teachers. She says that this results in an unhappy atmosphere in the

common room. Karen believes that most pupils at the school do not respect teachers and she does not see a positive future for teachers in South Africa.

3.4.2. Penny: professionally optimistic

Penny is a single white woman who teaches at a large English speaking “ex model C” school. Penny spent time in England in the business world before returning to South Africa to teach. She is a very confident woman who says that she is enjoying her first year as a teacher. Penny is convinced that she will stay in teaching. She says that she is not money-orientated and is happy with her salary. At school she has professional and social contact with other novice teachers and was given special support as a beginner by means of a structured induction programme. She sees teaching as a vocation and finds it sad that many pupils avoid teaching because of poor remuneration. She has no regrets about her choice of career and would recommend teaching to others. Penny does acknowledge some conflict between older and younger teachers and suggests that many older teachers seem to be stagnating and seem ‘territory-fixed.’

3.4.3. Andrea: teaching as a stepping stone

Andrea is a single white woman teaching at a medium size “ex model C” school. She is not a qualified teacher and is presently studying for a qualification in another career. She does not intend to stay in teaching and views her present involvement as being merely a practical ‘means to an end’ until she completes her studies. Andrea divulges that her first six months in teaching were ‘hectic’ but after that things got better as she learned more about what was expected from her. She enjoys interaction with pupils but also complains about the lack of discipline. Andrea speaks of the frustration resulting from the long hours of extramural involvement expected of her and thinks that young teachers are given an unfair burden in this regard. She thinks that some grounding in child psychology would have better prepared her for teaching, as would some training in teaching methodology. She believes that her contact with another new teacher at the same school (Barbara) helps her to solve problems. Andrea mentions that there is no professional development programme at the school and she regrets this fact. In addition Andrea mentions experiencing a degree of fault-finding in the response of older teachers towards novices in the school. Andrea characterises the general

atmosphere among teachers at the school as being negative and says that there are various reasons for this, predominant among which is Departmental interference which is viewed as onerous and largely unnecessary. Andrea comments that most pupils in the school do not respect teachers and she would not recommend teaching as a career for young South Africans.

3.4.4. Barbara: limited professional knowledge

Barbara is a single white woman who teaches at the same school as Andrea. She is also not professionally qualified. She is unsure at this stage whether to complete a professional qualification or to focus her studies towards another career path. Barbara also alludes to difficulties experienced in the first months after her assumption of a full time teaching position and ascribes much of these problems to her lack of professional knowledge. She complains about the lack of discipline among pupils. She also expresses resentment about the exacting nature of the extra mural commitment that she is expected to fulfil. Barbara does not think that she will spend many years in the teaching profession. As a new teacher at her school she was partnered with a 'buddy' who was an experienced teacher given a mentorship role. However, Barbara talks of her reluctance to ask this teacher's advice as often as she might want to for fear of being bothersome. She believes that most pupils at the school do not respect teachers, or any other adults for that matter. She sees this as a general feature of a generation of young people. Barbara thinks that it is unfair that she is paid less than her qualified colleagues due to her unqualified status. She bases this assertion on the argument that she works as hard as they do.

3.4.5. Irene: the value of mentorship

Irene is a married white woman who teaches at an exclusive private school. She has two young children. Irene came to teaching in middle age after failing to find satisfaction in two other careers. She completed her professional qualification in 2003. Irene's husband has a very well paid job and the family are financially very comfortable. She expects to stay in teaching indefinitely but does not aspire to promotion in the foreseeable future. Irene studied by correspondence and complains that the training was too theoretical and that the teaching practice sessions were of most value in preparing her for a career in teaching.

Consequently, she advocates that more practical experience should be built into teacher training curricula. At her school, Irene was paired with an experienced teacher as a mentor and asserts that the advice and guidance that she got from this source was invaluable. She comments that members of school management have also been very supportive in her induction period. Irene describes the general atmosphere in the common room as being very happy and positive. She is sure that most pupils at the school respect their teachers but does think that some of the wealthier parents display an arrogant attitude towards their children's teachers. Irene has no regrets about becoming a teacher and wishes she had made the move to teaching much earlier in her life.

3.4.6. John: poor salary and poor relationships

John is a married black man who teaches in a large school in a former township. John has three small children. His wife is unemployed. He decided to study to become a teacher while he was in his last year at school. During his first year after qualifying John was unable to secure a permanent teaching post and ended up at a school in a neighbouring town where he was employed by the school governing body. The salary he was offered was extremely poor and unsurprisingly he left to seek employment in the mining industry. He was retrenched from mining last year and is now teaching at a different school, again in a temporary post. At the time of the interview he had been at this school for four months and had not as yet received any salary. John thinks that his time in the mining industry has left him with valuable practical knowledge that pupils would benefit from. However, John does not want to stay in teaching. He makes the assertion that for financial reasons he wants to go back to industry and he is presently studying for a qualification that would help him to do this. At his present school John says that he has a very poor relationship with his Head of Department whom he criticises for not having given him any support or guidance whatsoever. On the contrary, John accuses her of manipulating his lack of job security to threaten him with dismissal. John believes that his chances of promotion in teaching are contingent upon the goodwill of school management. He reports that he does not enjoy this support. He describes the existence of conflict between staff members which results in the creation of a very strained working environment. John claims that he is unable to discuss his problems with anyone at the school for fear of reprisals. He says Departmental officials are faceless people who have no understanding or interest

in the problems encountered by teachers. John has had no feedback on his performance in the classroom. He regrets his decision to become a teacher and he would definitely not recommend teaching as a career to young people.

3.4.7. Chloe: unfulfilled ambition

Chloe is a single black woman who teaches at the same school as John. She grew up and studied in a rural area where she failed to secure a teaching job. Chloe was qualified for six years before moving to Gauteng where she secured her present post. Chloe wanted to be a teacher from a young age and was attracted by the status of the profession. She complains about the unruly behaviour of the children that she teaches. She is very softly spoken and says that this encourages pupils to disrespect her. This makes her unhappy and she is interested in changing profession to become a nurse or a prison warder. She admits to having had an idealized vision of what teaching entails and also mentions that her subject knowledge is insufficient. Chloe thinks that some experienced teachers look down on beginners. She is not unhappy with the salary that she expects to earn, although after three months at the school she has still not been paid.

3.4.8. Frances: dissatisfaction with government policies

Frances is a married black woman who teaches alongside John and Chloe. Frances has two children. She became a teacher after failing to secure a position in a training facility for nursing. Frances comments that her main obstacle as a teacher is caused by government policy. She is very bitter about the government's restrictions on punishment that can be legally administered to a pupil who is considered to be 'giving problems.' She says that pupils have too many rights and too few responsibilities, and that this leaves teachers powerless. Frances is very unhappy with the salary that she earns and complains that she cannot afford to provide for her family. As a result she looks forward to leaving teaching as soon as she can. Due to the fact that she sees her stay in teaching as being temporary she is not interested in securing a promotion post in the future. Frances is frustrated by the lack of learning aids provided by the school and complains about the general low standard or complete absence of infrastructure such as furniture. She thinks that there is animosity between older and younger teachers on the staff and says that younger teachers are often given a difficult timetable relative to their more

experienced colleagues. Frances does not think that pupils in the school have respect for teachers and thinks that this is largely because of how they see their own teachers battling financially. She also thinks that pupils are discouraged from becoming teachers because of their awareness of difficulties caused by the Department of Education.

3.4.9. Cindy: an enthusiastic novice

Cindy is a single white woman who teaches at a large “ex model C” school. She says that she has wanted to be a teacher for a long as she can remember. At present she is busy studying for her professional qualification. Cindy mentions that the first few months of her teaching career were difficult but that things became easier after this period. She enjoys contact with pupils but also reports that maintaining discipline is often a real problem for her. She is discouraged by the amount of marking and administration associated with teaching according to the principles of O.B.E. Cindy believes that the P.G.C.E. qualification for which she is busy studying is too theoretical and is practically unhelpful. She would argue for a curriculum that is more geared towards aspects such as how to cope with discipline problems and how to deal with sensitive issues in the lives of the pupils. Cindy says that she was given a lot of good advice during her first months at the school and was allocated to a mentor who was readily available to offer advice and to help solve problems. Members of school management have also been tremendously supportive. She thinks that attitudes among the staff are mostly positive. This is despite the fact that they feel very pressurized due to time constraints attached to the implementation of the new curriculum. Cindy is still living at home and has no major expenses. For this reason she is quite happy with the salary she is earning. She does, however, concede that should her personal circumstances change remuneration may become a real concern. Despite this she would have no regrets in recommending teaching as a career to young people.

3.5 Participatory observation at two schools

In order to give my study more depth I arranged to spend a week during term time conducting observation research at the former township school where John, Chloe and Frances work. In the following week I spent two days at the ex model C school where Cindy teaches. At the end of these two days I was given an opportunity to

present an hour long talk to 12 beginner teachers at the school. I chose to engage these novices on some of the issues that have presented themselves during the course of my studies as being relevant to novice teachers. At the conclusion of my presentation I fielded questions from the young teachers on some of the implications of my research. From this involvement at these two schools I gained valuable insight into the discourse of these novices. Before beginning on an analysis of the data that I gathered during these periods 'in the field' I think it appropriate to offer a narrative descriptive account of what I did at the schools. I will use pseudonyms when referring to the names of the institutions.

In the school in the former township (First High) I arrived on the Monday morning and was introduced to the pupils at an assembly gathering. This was done before the pupils were informed that a Grade 8 boy had lost his entire family on the weekend due to a shack fire. Afterwards I was formally welcomed by the Headmaster who introduced me to the staff and explained the broad focus of my research topic. I met with the 3 novice teachers at the school who all agreed to be interviewed during the next few days at a time convenient to themselves. These interviews took place in the staff room on the Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday respectively. They were recorded on audio- tape and were later transcribed by myself.

In addition I gained permission to teach some classes in order to get a more complete appreciation of what it was like to be a teacher at First High. Between classes I was able to freely walk around the school so as to be able to observe whatever came to my attention. In doing this I was especially interested in the expressed relationship between the young teachers and the older members of staff. On Friday I was asked to present a staff development course for all teachers. In order to accommodate this, the school closed early on this day.

At Second High I was given a 'tour' of the school on the Tuesday I arrived. I was welcomed by the Headmaster and introduced to several of the new teachers on the staff. I explained the focus of my study to them and invited them to approach me if they like to get involved. In this way I organised the interview with Cindy for the following day. I was able to observe the young teachers at work and to see how they interacted with their peers, senior staff members and myself. I was able

to make tentative comparisons between the discourse of teachers at Second High with that of their colleagues at First High.

3.6 Data analysis: looking for the dominant discourses

True to the design of my study, I was concerned to analyse transcribed interview data for patterns of expressed meaning beyond that of the spoken words. I wanted to search for the images which are suggested only if the limitations of connotative meaning is accepted. This level of analysis began during the transcription process itself where particular recurrent ideas and metaphors became apparent. I examined closely 'what' the participants said and reflected on how the spoken words shed light on the professional reality for these novice teachers. Thus, where participants spoke about the lack of induction strategies at the school, the absence of any sort of meaningful mentoring and feelings of individual adequacy I allocated these vocalisations to the category which I chose to label as 'aloneness'. By the same process of analysis the other categories cited below were identified and named. The same principle applies to the data gathered by means of observation methods. I made careful notes of what I had seen during my time at the school. This record was updated several times a day. Afterwards I considered how what I had observed actually impacted on the professional lives of the novice teachers who form the main interest of my study. These interpreted observations were also allocated to the categories of meaning alluded to above. By means of these actions I was able to identify the following categories of meaning from the data that I had collected:

3.6.1 A sense of 'aloneness' in the school

A frequent topic raised by the novice teachers I interviewed was the level of support they had enjoyed from other teachers at the school. For some of the teachers this was perceived to be adequate and beneficial. However, for others it was either simply not present or it was offered in such a way as to be detrimental rather than helpful. As a result of this lack of peer involvement, a sense of 'aloneness' for the young teachers, who are expected to solve their own problems themselves was often evident. For example when I asked Karen about her first year in teaching she responded:

“Very rough, because no one introduced me to all the things. I didn’t know where the toilet was. There wasn’t before Life Orientation, and now I had to do it... I didn’t know what is um, Specific Outcomes or nothing.” Later in the interview Karen made the following assertion about how novices could be linked to a mentor, *“if they want to use new teachers in a school, they have to set up a system, like there is someone with them, so that they, not all the responsibilities is upon them, but between the two people.”*

Karen’s feelings of abandonment are again apparent when I asked her if any teacher had given her special support, *“Only Mrs. R, because she did the Guidance before me, but not Life Orientation... and I still don’t know what’s all the Cambridge systems all about because no one informed me, and I don’t even work with it, and no one informed me about how do you give Colours to children, you know, I don’t know anything, so ja; there wasn’t any support.”*

‘Aloneness’ is again reflected when Karen complained, *“they don’t learn us how to assess or nothing, what to expect if um, for the portfolios, who’s coming, when is it going to be, what’s going to happen, you know what, I didn’t know what’s a teacher’s portfolio, no one helped me, I’ve asked a Biology teacher to help me so ja, there’s no support, no programmes, nothing.”*

Andrea also commented on how this sense of abandonment made her first experiences as a teacher very difficult, *“the first six months was hectic for me...I had to figure everything out for myself, and I think that’s what made it so hectic,”* and later, *“they knew that I was new here and that I don’t know anything about teaching so they let me do things my own way, learn things my own way.”* Andrea goes on to mention that for her to stay in teaching this policy of non-interference would have to change, *“I’d have to receive a lot more support, support and understanding from top management in the school and I think that I would have to get more training, in-service training where they show me, ‘do this now and do this now, this is the way you must do it now’.”*

Barbara echoed similar sentiments, *“it was very difficult at the beginning of the year because I didn’t know what to do, didn’t know how the marks work, I didn’t know about preparation. I didn’t know how to work out a lesson. There are certain words and terms... terminology that I didn’t know and I had to learn that.”*

The sense of 'aloneness' for these two teachers is brought into sharper focus by comparing their situations with those teachers who did benefit from a supportive environment and who were assisted by a designated mentor teacher. Penny, for example, stated, *"we were given a mentor, um C., she's fantastic, um everybody was very supportive to be honest with you, they were very welcoming, and supportive and they made it very easy."*

Irene's introduction to teaching has been similarly facilitated by the provision of an experienced teacher as a mentor, *"I've been told that M. is my mentor. I share the Afrikaans classes with her. You know she has two and I have two and we do all the preparation together and she gives me a lot of guidance and S. as the Guidance teacher have given me a bit of guidance as to where to go, how to go. Everyone's been very open if I've asked questions, asked for help so it's been very easy."*

Cindy was also very glad to be provided, by her school, with a brochure that explained seemingly trivial administrative details and day to day practices such as how to gain access to the school after hours and the like. When I asked her about ongoing personal help Cindy was also very appreciative of the school's policy, *"my Grade tutor was very, very supportive... so that relieved much of the pressure knowing exactly how things worked and where to go... there was definitely support."*

Clearly these three teachers have benefited from a school environment that aims to help young teachers by providing them with an assisted introduction to their careers. For Chloe mentoring was more of an incident than a process, *"The Principal told me, just take me and show me some of the things that are happening here at school and they showed me my H.O.D., then my H.O.D. told me what subject I'm going to do and she gave me the periods, showed me the class and some other teachers."* Unfortunately, for this teacher, this is where induction stopped. After this brief introduction to personalities and responsibilities Chloe was left to her own devices in establishing a professional reality.

Frances, who teaches at the same school, received a similar introduction when her H.O.D. invited her, *“if you have got any problems come and we will show you whatever you have a problem with.”* One has to wonder if this attitude is not anything more but a feeble excuse at real sustained induction on the part of senior teachers. This is especially so because often for young teachers it is not so easy to approach more experienced teachers for help. This is brought out very clearly in the communication I shared with Barbara. This young teacher vocalised the concern that many young teachers have, that to ask for help is an imposition on the teacher whose guidance is being sought, *“I ask Mrs. V. questions all the time and I think sometimes she...I’ve never felt that way ...I never saw or heard that she’s complaining but I think as an older teacher that must be frustrating if you have to listen and give answers the whole time.”* It is understandable that Barbara might choose ‘aloneness’ over the dual feelings of being firstly personally incompetent and secondly, a burden on those perceived to be competent.

For John the experience of being placed under the mentorship of a senior teacher was not helpful at all. On the contrary, the failure of the mentor to provide basic guidance led to a sense of bitterness for the novice. Poor relations between John and his mentor proved more detrimental than the abandonment experienced by those teachers whose induction period was characterised by ‘aloneness,’ *“My H.O.D. was not interested in orientating me... I’m coming from the rural schools so you know there is some teacher’s file, portfolio file, assessment file. In those files we were not having the so-called memorandums and minutes and the like. The only thing we have is the preparation, the scheme of work, the syllabus, the tests, the memos and the assignments. All those things are the only things that were needed, so ma’am found out that I don’t have the school policy, where can I get the school policy? She failed to orientate me.”* This relationship between the novice teacher and the person appointed to mentor him is manifestly unhealthy for the neophyte concerned.

During my period of participatory observation at the school where John teaches I observed visible hostility between his H.O.D. and himself. At a subject meeting conducted in the staff room, it was very obvious that John was literally, a peripheral figure in the Maths department. At this meeting, six teachers were gathered round a table at the head of which sat the H.O.D. There was no table space for John who was obliged to pull up a chair from another table and listen to

what was discussed over the shoulder of one of his colleagues. For me this was a concrete example of the exclusion and separation that many of the young teachers I interviewed had spoken about. In terms of an activity system, (Engeström, 1987) John as *subject* was being denied access to his *object* of social and professional acceptance by the actions of the *community* which formed his working environment.

3.6.2 The novice's struggle for class control and conflict avoidance

Very often the experience of aloneness means that novices are not helped to solve problems associated with 'survival' challenges. Predominant among these problems is the challenge to form a professionally appropriate relationship with pupils; one that will be conducive to effective teaching. During my transcription and subsequent readings of interview data, I established that many newly qualified teachers struggle, during their induction period, to institute a satisfactory level of control in their classes. This was confirmed during my period of participatory observation by my experience of some novice teachers' failure to create an acceptable class climate. Many new teachers who took part in this study reported being very unhappy in their jobs, predominantly because of this single factor. It is a common assertion that many pupils are badly behaved and that attempts to impose discipline and order are frustrated by government legislation which is considered to err on the side of 'sparing the rod.' Government policies regarding corporal punishment and protection of human rights are unlikely to change. However, I do believe that given this very well-intentioned legislation the onus lies with the education authorities to address this preoccupation with control and discipline. In some cases I think that the discipline aspect has superseded all educational goals and has become linked with conflict management and even given rise to a prevailing discourse of violence in those schools where the need for control is perceived to be greatest. Further, I believe that this aggressive atmosphere has gone beyond the classroom and often impacts on relations between staff members. Thus, for some young teachers socialization has come to entail avoiding conflict with pupils, colleagues and school management

In Karen's case this transferral seems very distinct. Karen told me that she struggles to communicate clearly in English, which is not her home language. She feels vulnerable because of this weakness and believes that some of the pupils in

her classes recognise and exploit this vulnerability. This has the effect of creating problems of class management that Karen struggles to solve. However, in this situation where the advice and involvement of a more experienced teacher could play an important role Karen thinks that the more experienced teachers are disdainfully critical of her inexperience, *“next door I’ve got Mrs. R. and she’s got a maths class, and it’s so quiet, and my class is so, not unorganized, but it’s a lot of talking and whispering and ja, and I think they look down on me because they think I can’t manage my classroom.”*

Karen is even more expressive when I asked her if older teachers tend to criticize the teaching methods of beginner teachers, *“they don’t want to change, or they don’t want our suggestions or nothing, you know, and they want to do their own thing and, ja, we are shot down.”* The choice of the phrase ‘shot down’ is suggestive of the kind of conflict discourse which appears to typify much of the relations between novice teachers and their more experienced colleagues at Karen’s school.

In Penny’s case there are apparently limits on her freedom to share professional concerns with some colleagues, *“There are certain teachers that I wouldn’t, because I know that they would think of getting a go at you out of that situation which I don’t think is fair... and I don’t expect people to be malicious.”* Later in the interview Penny described her attempts to resolve conflict issues with other staff members in terms of, *“fighting fires.”* It would appear that a sort of ‘law of the jungle’ is well established whereby young teachers must learn to protect themselves if they are not to be attacked by someone further up the experiential food chain.

Both Andrea and Penny who teach at the same school think that more experienced teachers on their staff look down on novice teachers. They characterise the general atmosphere in the staff room as critical and negative respectively. In this school the conflict would seem to be more latent. However, it is entirely conceivable that the frustration felt by Andrea due to the lack of constructive involvement from older teachers could deteriorate to a more conspicuous demonstration of hostility, *“they are so skilled in what they do because they’ve been doing it for so long so they know the tricks of the trade...they know what to do and what not to do and we are still finding out for*

ourselves... we're getting ourselves in situations that's totally wrong and those are the things they would have known not to do." The young teacher's resentment at the failure of older colleagues to give good advice is palpable.

As noted earlier, for John, conflict is very tangible in his professional life. He places the responsibility for most of this conflict at the hands of his H.O.D. He chose to use an African metaphor to describe his relationship with this woman, *"When two elephants fight who is going to suffer – the grass."* Often during the space of the short interview John used the word "fighting" to describe the relationship between staff members at the school and twice referred to his need for "protection" from victimisation at the hands of his H.O.D. I made the point earlier that schools where the need for control is more obviously necessary seem also to be those where these feelings of hostility and aggression are more prevalent. It is a culture of control that permeates the entire institution. I believe this to be the case at First High where John teaches.

At this school the Headmaster admitted to me that he still practices corporal punishment despite the fact that it is illegal. His justification for doing so lies in his conviction that it is only by caning that a modicum of control and order can be maintained. I observed two incidents during my week at the school that suggests that the use of corporal punishment took various forms and was administered by various members of staff.

On the first occasion the punishment was meted out for the 'offence' of coming late to school. It is the school practice to lock the main gate at 8:00 when lessons are due to start. On the second day of my visit to the school I watched four male staff members with canes and sticks whipping those pupils who were still arriving at this time. Pupils who do not meet the 8:00 deadline are forced to wait outside the locked school gate until it is opened again at 8:30. The Headmaster's reason for doing this is to ensure that the late comers do not disturb lessons in progress. At 8:30 I watched approximately 200 pupils being admitted through the main gate. Again these pupils suffered from blows struck by the same male teachers. The same episode was repeated at 9:00. What I found most disturbing is that when I asked these teachers about the problem of pupils coming late to school they admit that it is often the fault of bus companies who drop pupils far from the school

premises. Thus, pupils are assaulted despite the fact that they are not personally responsible for their late arrival at school.

On the second occasion I watched a group of junior pupils enter the class of a female teacher. As they entered, every pupil automatically presented their hand, which the teacher hit with a flat piece of board. I couldn't establish what these pupils had done to justify this punishment, but judging by the automatic nature of how it was done, I suspect that this was merely standard practice. There seems to be a blurring of teaching and punishing where control is seen to be synonymous with educating. The enforcing of discipline and control is paramount in the ethos of First High. For Chloe, this was apparent when I asked her if the pupils at the school respect teachers. She immediately made the association between respect and fear, *"When they see that you are too soft they can respect but some they look at you maybe that you are not the person who likes to laugh then they do respect because they're scared of you... they don't respect until you can say, "No!" and change your face and then they will see, "this one's not playing," but if they can't see anything on my face they are not going to take it serious so I must say "I am going to hit you."*

The link between schools and violence, for Chloe, appears to have been established when she herself was a child. When I asked her when she decided to become a teacher she again immediately invoked an extremely worrying image, *"When I was still young, maybe when I was in Standard 5. I used to take the sticks and hit the trees as children and me as a teacher so you know that's why I was motivated from that time, I want to be a teacher because I saw teachers, they are disciplined so I just wanted to be like that."*

Her apparent preoccupation with punishment was given more expression later in the interview when she mentioned that if she wasn't a teacher she would like to be a prison warder. It does seem that it would not be stretching the truth to suggest that Chloe demonstrates a desire to inflict punishment that is suggestive of nothing less than sadistic tendencies. This seems to have followed a path from the way in which she was socialized into conceptualising schooling in general and the teacher/pupil relationship in particular: (Figure 3, p.44)

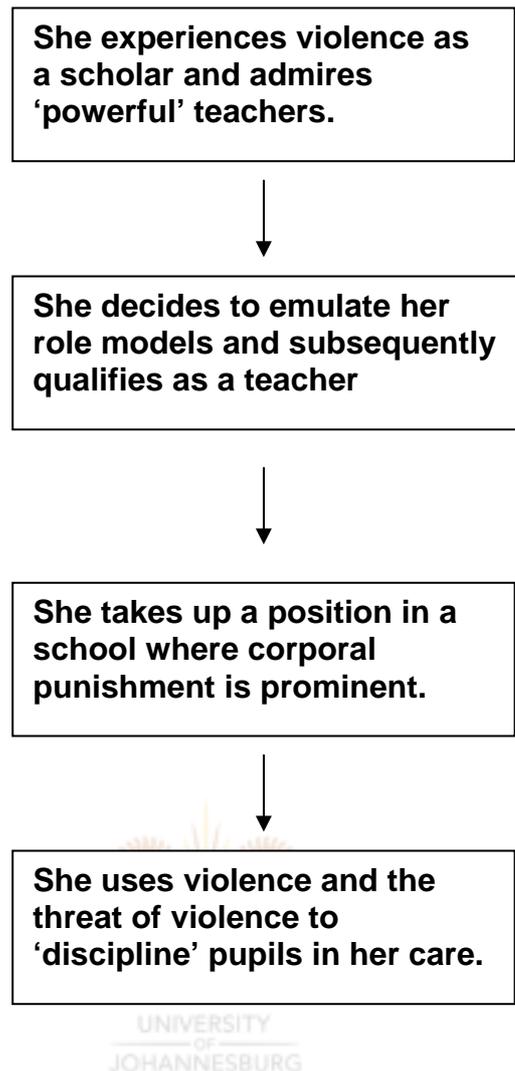


Figure 3: Socialization of a novice into an acceptance of violence as a teaching tool

It is worrying that attitudes and perceptions like Chloe's are engendered in the first place. It is equally distressing that beliefs that have been held from childhood have not been challenged and changed through the process of training to become a teacher or through a school-based induction policy that demands a more acceptable philosophy of education in its teachers. It is surely incumbent on school management to recognize cases where teachers have been socialized into holding dangerous attitudes about the role of the teacher and to take steps to address such cases. Not to do so could have, and indeed recently has had, tragic consequences for the well-being of pupils.

3.6.3 Treading water in the class: a lack of vocation

Of the nine practicing teachers who participated in my study only four are professionally qualified. The others have varying levels of post-school education in other fields. Despite their lack of teacher education and training they are all employed in full-time teaching positions. Possible reasons for this inconsistency are dominated by financial concerns. State schools are only allocated a certain number of teachers by the Education Department. This number is based on a ratio of pupils to teachers. At many schools attempts are made to decrease this ratio, which is perceived to be untenable for teaching and learning. This is done, primarily through the recruitment of 'extra' teachers by the School Governing Body (S.G.B.) In crude financial terms, the cheaper a school can acquire the services of teachers the more teachers they will be able to employ. Professionally unqualified people can be employed to fulfil a role as teacher cheaper than a qualified person on the basis of their unqualified status. For the 'teacher' the assumption of a post at a school is often nothing more than a convenient salary earner while they prepare themselves for a career in another field for which they have a genuinely passionate interest. Without any sort of commitment to building a career in teaching it is very doubtful whether any form of apprenticeship for these 'opportunistic teachers' would be of value. However, schools are entrusting their pupils' education to these unqualified people and this fact alone should be enough to justify an effort at induction being attempted. Indeed, the reality that these teachers have no formal training in education might make an induction programme even more important than for qualified teachers. Where an induction programme is really inspiring it could also have the effect, in some cases, of persuading unqualified teachers to commit themselves to a life in teaching.

Karen is an example of this brand of unqualified teacher. She completed an Honours Degree in Industrial psychology and was then unable to secure a job in this field. She was offered a job at her current school by the bursar who happens to be a family friend. Karen is studying part-time for a law degree. By her own admission she is paid very poorly but accepts this because her involvement in teaching is only a temporary means to an end while she qualifies in another field. When I asked her about teaching she was quite specific about her plans, *"I don't think that's what I'm going to do for the rest of my life, because there's no growth."* Karen is very pessimistic about the future for South African teachers, *"If they don't pay to look after us, it's going to be worse, because now it's already in a crisis, and ja, they must do something."*

Andrea is another unqualified teacher who has no intention of staying in the profession. Like Karen, she began teaching because it is convenient while she prepares herself for another career, *“I didn’t actually study teaching, but then I knew there was a position open at the school... so it wasn’t an actual formal decision that I sat down and said this is what I want to do with my life...it’s more of an intermediate thing, cause I’m studying Human Resources so it simply helps me get my degrees, it’s not a long-term decision for me to be teaching.”* Andrea is also paid much less than her colleagues who are professionally qualified but accepts this because of her future plans, *“My salary at the moment is not an issue because I’m actually still a full-time student so I’m happy with what I get, I don’t really have a problem with what I’m getting, as long as I can get my studies through that’s fine for me.”* A discourse of resignation to a disagreeable present, as a sacrifice towards a perceived better future in another occupation, is evident.

Barbara qualified as a graphic designer but was unable to secure a job in that field. She is teaching Art without any professional training. She is currently studying for a qualification in Marketing, which she intends making her career. Like Karen and Andrea, Barbara is paid very poorly on account of her lack of teacher training. Unlike her two colleagues, however, she is quite bitter about the difference in remuneration offered to qualified and unqualified staff members, *“I studied 4 years, I’m working just as hard as the rest of the teachers are working, I’ve got experience in my subject but I get less money so I’ll just go and study, but I feel it’s unfair.”* Karen, Andrea and Barbara are unqualified and unenthusiastic teachers.

Penny and Cindy are not qualified either and are also employed in full time teaching positions. However, unlike the former group these two young women are currently studying for a professional teaching qualification and both are convinced that they will spend the rest of their professional lives in education. Both of them take a lot of satisfaction from their jobs and have no regrets about their choice of career. Furthermore, both Penny and Cindy would have no hesitation in recommending a career in teaching to other people.

Of the four professionally qualified teachers only Irene is happy in her job and is enthusiastic about being a teacher. She came to teaching after failing to find job

satisfaction in another occupation and wishes that she had made the change years before she did. It is difficult to assess how much her very comfortable financial position is important in influencing her satisfaction with her career. It is instructive to record that for financial reasons Irene stated that she would be happy if her daughter chose teaching as a career but that she would have reservations if her son made the same choice. It would seem that sexist stereotyping is still very much a part of Irene's beliefs.

For John, Chloe and Frances qualification as teachers only happened after attempts to establish themselves in other occupations were thwarted. Failure to achieve minimum entrance requirements and/or to afford study fees led all three to teaching as a more manageable although less personally desirable career option. Teaching was not, therefore, a vocational choice in the sense of being an activity to which these three people were passionate about. For all of them, a discourse of frustration and resentment due to not being able to do what they really want to do is evident. John comments, *"I feel like I can reverse the years and start my Form 5 and pass it with good symbols and go for another good career. Mining engineering is my dream career."* For both Chloe and Frances the decision to become a teacher came only after they failed to gain admission to training courses for nursing. Both would leave teaching immediately if the opportunity to study nursing was made available to them. From these cases it is evident that it is a dangerous assumption to automatically accept that professionally qualified teachers are necessarily more committed to the profession than those who are not. I believe that four quadrants on a qualification/enthusiasm matrix are identifiable: (Figure 4, p.48)

<p>1. Qualified and enthusiastic</p> <p>Teacher is professionally qualified And committed to teaching: IRENE</p>	<p>2. Qualified and unenthusiastic</p> <p>Teacher is professionally qualified but is not committed to teaching: JOHN CHLOE FRANCES</p>
<p>3. Unqualified and enthusiastic</p> <p>Teacher is not (yet) professionally qualified but is committed to teaching: PENNY CINDY</p>	<p>4. Unqualified and unenthusiastic</p> <p>Teacher is not professionally qualified and is not committed to teaching: KAREN ANDREA BARBARA</p>

Figure 4: Quadrants of qualification/enthusiasm of teachers

Most people involved in teaching would probably agree that the ideal situation would be if our schools could be filled with Quadrant 1 teachers. However, this is not realistically going to happen in the foreseeable future. If you accept this picture the question is begged as to how best to deal with practising teachers from the other 3 Quadrants. Specifically, it prompts the following questions:

1. How much and what sort of induction is appropriate for teachers in the different quadrants?
2. What is it that an induction/mentorship programme should be striving to achieve for teachers in different Quadrants?

I will return to these questions in Part 4 of the study when issues such as these are considered in the light of recent scholarship in the field.

3.6.4 Attitude transferral: from experienced teacher to neophyte to pupil

One aspect that became apparent from analysing the data was the sense that neophyte teachers become socialized into accepting beliefs about teaching held by more experienced teachers. This could be destructive for novices where the discourse of teaching promoted by the older teacher is predominantly negative. Where the more seasoned teacher demonstrates a cynical attitude towards being in the profession, young teachers may feel pressurised into tempering or even abandoning their enthusiasm in order to avoid ridicule from colleagues. It may be less personally threatening for the young graduate to slide into an ethos of apathy and gloomy pessimism rather than risk being labelled with naivety. In schools where such an outlook is dominant it is entirely consistent that it will filter through to pupils who will avoid entering teaching. This choice may be partly due to their not having had enough exposure to teachers who demonstrate through their attitudes and their words that they are happy with their choice of career.

The repercussions for the maintenance of an adequate supply of teachers could thus be significantly influenced by the general mood held by more experienced teachers. A 'core of negativity' could be transferred, by professional socialisation, from one generation of teachers to the next and even insidiously to a future generation of potential teachers.

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Karen complains that in her school the relationship among staff members is very rigid, formal and divided, *"You sit and listen to the principal, and that's it, no jokes, nothing...and there are a lot of groupings, like the Science people will sit there, you know they don't mingle with us."* Karen believes that most of the teachers at her school are very negative about their jobs and confirms that this negativity is openly expressed in the presence of pupils.

Andrea uses the word *"critical"* to describe the general atmosphere among teachers at her school. She believes that the main reasons for the negativity among teachers are the administrative burdens associated with the country's adoption of Outcomes Based Education and the difficulties linked to enforcing appropriate levels of discipline among pupils. At the same school, Barbara agrees that the atmosphere in the staff-room is unhappy, *"I think most of the time it's negative, very draining physically and emotionally...I think we complain about the kids and the discipline, the things we need to do, we don't have time for that and there's a lot of pressure on a teacher."*

For John, at First High, the negative attitude among teachers can be ascribed to three factors. Firstly, he thinks that poor salaries are the primary reason for despondency. In addition John identifies the lack of support from the Education Department and the lack of provision of opportunities for social interaction among teachers as being elements that inhibit a better *esprit de corps* being developed. For Frances, at the same school, the remuneration issue is again prominent in her assessment of the poor morale among teachers. She also thinks that a shortage of sufficient equipment and infrastructure is an equally important reason for the poor outlook of her colleagues.

Even though Cindy teaches at an 'ex Model C' school which is very well maintained and which has superb facilities and equipment, she also reports a generally negative atmosphere among teachers. Cindy believes that the primary reason for this situation relates to issues of discipline and the time pressures involved in implementing the new syllabus. She is concerned that as a new teacher her enthusiasm for her career is an object of derision for some of her older colleagues, *"You sort of arrive full of the joys of Spring and there is a slight implication that that will leave you once you have become more experienced which is sad because I'd like to retain that enthusiasm and gain the experience."*

Irene, who is the only teacher of those involved in the study who is both qualified and committed to teaching characterises the general atmosphere among teachers in her school as being, *"Very happy, very jovial, full of fun...I think there's a lot of support for teachers."* Irene goes on to suggest that a very low staff turnover at her school could, perhaps, be partly due to this high level of camaraderie among staff members. She also thinks that the generally positive attitude of teachers at her school is linked to the management style of the principal. Irene commented that structures are sufficiently flexible to avoid the traditional hierarchical 'baaskap' relations between employees typical of many other schools.

During the time I spent at Second High I took the opportunity to ask a group of young teachers about their grievances about their jobs. I received a litany of complaints about salaries, conditions of service, staff relations and government interference. However, when I then asked them what they thought they could do to improve their situation the cynicism of the group came to the fore. I became very

aware of a 'helpless victim of an unfair system' discourse whereby many young teachers seem sadly resigned to a career in which they see no prospects for professional advancement or personal development. Their language and general demeanour suggested an expression of lethargy, and an unwillingness to investigate means of self-advancement was very tangible. In adults, who are charged with inspiring children, this lack of ambition and drive is of great concern. We can not expect children to be inspired to become teachers if the role-models, that they are in close contact with for much of their childhood, seem mediocre figures in comparison with other adults with whom they interact.

3.7 Final configurations

In my study I was concerned to investigate how novice teachers are typically inducted into the teaching profession. It was with this aim in mind that I designed and conducted the study. I began with a literature review in order to gain insight into current issues in the context of my research topic. I then decided that the best design for my study was that of discourse analysis which would provide me with the chance to talk to young teachers about their introduction to the teaching profession. In order to achieve this I developed an interview schedule that I thought would generate data necessary for the investigation. The questions I asked during interview sessions with participants were adapted during the course of the study in order to be better suited to the level of proficiency in English and the social and educational background of the participants. The interviews were transcribed and subsequently analysed for content and for underlying elements of meaning. I spent time at two schools that were quite different from my own school in terms of socio-economic composition of pupils in order to refine my sense of the professional reality for novice teachers in these schools.

Some of the teachers had no contact with other young teachers. Others experienced situations where teachers in the school were compartmentalised to the extent that no contact was possible across subject, departmental or experiential boundaries. For some the constraints of a very full timetable precluded the establishment of a sense of community with colleagues. I decided that these stated and implied elements could be considered to constitute a pattern that I gave the label 'aleness'. I chose this label rather than 'loneliness' because teachers spend their lives in close contact with other people. However, much of what young

teachers could really gain from this contact is denied to them due to a pervasive tradition of professional isolationism. I think that this factor is one reason why many novice teachers do not last long in the profession.

From the data I identified codes of meaning such as 'discipline problems', 'misbehaviour', 'ineffective punishment', 'powerlessness to control', 'fighting' and 'anger'. Eight of the nine teachers reported experiencing problems with establishing class control in a setting where accepted methods of punishment seem unable to counter inappropriate behaviour. Many of the teachers spoke of the frustration at working within a system which seems to give more power to those seen to be acting against the system than those seen to be attempting to uphold it. I noticed that at schools where the sense of order is most threatened due to overcrowding, high staff-pupil ratios, poor facilities etc the sense of desperation is greatest. In these cases, a culture of punishment and violence seems to exist. I noticed that young teachers also reported a lot of hostility between more experienced teachers and themselves. I decided that this code of intra-staff conflict was not totally separated from the code of staff-pupil conflict. I think that, for teachers, conflict with pupils contributes towards the creation of a frame of mind that leads to conflict with colleagues and vice versa. For this reason, I thought that the two elements could best be considered as one pattern of meaning. Like 'aloneness' I believe that unpleasantness caused by involvement in a setting dominated by conflict is another reason why many new teachers might decide to opt for entry into another career.

Teachers cannot be treated as a homogenous group. As I interviewed those employed to teach, one of my concerns was to find out how their training at tertiary institutions had related to their first experiences at schools. It became apparent that many of those engaged as teachers are not professionally qualified. Some have failed to establish themselves in other careers while others are teaching students. This reality is not ideal but it is unlikely that it is likely to improve significantly in the near future. It is, therefore, important that those interested in providing the best teaching possible take cognisance of the differing levels of proficiency likely to be found among staff members at most schools.

The question of professional qualification led me to question the level of vocation among young teachers. I coded participant's level of professional status as either

qualified, not yet qualified or no desire to become qualified. I then thought it appropriate to consider the level of commitment to teaching among participants and to relate this level to their professional status. From this exercise I developed a matrix of four levels of vocation. I contend that for an induction policy to be of value the position of teachers on this matrix must be taken into account.

Teaching is unlike any other profession in the sense those who enter into it have been exposed to the working environment of teaching as they attend schools themselves. This implies that, for young people, the choice to become a teacher will be influenced by their sense that their own teachers enjoyed what they did in their professional lives. The data that I captured in my study suggests that young teachers who show enthusiasm for their profession are socialised by older colleagues into believing that teaching is not rewarding, and that apathy and negativity are more reasonable responses to being a teacher. This attitude is unfortunate because I believe that young teachers who openly demonstrate a love for what they do could be valuable role-models for future generations of teachers. From the collected data I coded elements such as 'staff negativity', 'cynicism towards enthusiasm of novices' and 'reluctance to recommend teaching as a career'. These codes formed a pattern of meaning that I called 'attitude transferral' because they involve sending messages about what it means to be a teacher. These messages are conceivably sent from those considered to know more about being a teacher to those less experienced. Thus the flow of information is most marked from experienced teachers to novices, and from all teachers to pupils.

CHAPTER FOUR

APPRENTICESHIP FOR BETTER TEACHING PRACTICE

4.1 Overview: patterns of meaning in the context of the main claim

In Part one of this inquiry I made the main claim that many novice teachers are lost to the teaching profession because of the failure of stakeholders in education to provide a satisfactory induction programme. The focus of the study was to describe how a series of young teachers from five different schools in the Ekurhuleni metropolitan area of Gauteng experienced induction. From an analysis of data collected via interviews and periods of participatory observation I identified four distinct patterns of meaning. I labelled these patterns of meaning as follows:

1. Aloneness
2. The novice's struggle for class control and conflict avoidance
3. Treading water in the class: a lack of vocation
4. Attitude transferral: from experienced teacher to neophyte to pupil

In this part of the study I consider these patterns in the light of the literature, and in terms of *activity theory* (see Chapter one, p.7), which frames the study. I will reflect on how they might support the main claim of the inquiry. This is done with due cognisance given to possible weaknesses inherent in my study.

The metaphors of 'survival' and 'discovery' (Huberman, 1989:33) are central concepts in the focus of this inquiry. The patterns of meaning constructed from data analysis can all be related to these metaphors for the juxtaposed feelings of 'reality-shock' and 'enthusiasm' in the initial stage of a teaching career, as conceived by Huberman (1989:33). The patterns I have identified relate to the novice's ability, firstly to 'survive' the struggles of establishing herself in a career environment and secondly, to envisage and move towards professional growth.

4.2. Aloneness

In the previous part of the inquiry I described how many of the young teachers who participated in my study produced data that either directly or by implication suggested that teaching is a profession marked largely by privacy and isolation. This has implications in terms of *activity theory* (Engeström, 1987), and *legitimate peripheral participation* (Lave and Wenger, 1990).

A central tenet of the former is that a *subject* is motivated towards the fulfilment of an *object* in collaboration with a *community*. Thus, a novice teacher, as subject, is motivated towards the establishment of a successful career path, in collaboration with a community of colleagues at her school. Obviously where privacy and isolation are dominant features of that community, the accomplishment of this object will be frustrated.

In the latter theory, which develops from a social-constructivist view of learning, learners become “enculturated” (Brown, Collins and Duguid, 1989) in order to become an “insider” (Brown and Duguid, 1991) in a community. Thus, learning depends on a community that promotes contact and the “sharing of stories.” The literature suggests that, in teaching, this is not often the case.

Darling–Hammond (1987:214) writes that *teacher isolation* is not only directly responsible for teacher attrition but is also, “deadening for professional growth and for the evolution and transmittal of professional knowledge.” Feiman-Nemser (2001:1033) argues that, “while some schools promote active collaboration among teachers, such interactions are the exception, not the rule.” In an earlier article (Feiman-Nemser, 1995), the same author suggests that “norms of autonomy and non-interference” are problematic for the success of mentoring programmes that could otherwise be very helpful for the development of novice teachers. Roth (2002) makes this point when he posits that the most important tool for novice teachers to use in learning the craft is *being* with other teachers and sharing in their reality. Little (1990) proposes that mentoring relationships commonly fail because to ask a question is, for teachers, generally considered to be a cry for help. Thus novices are likely to avoid contact in order to protect their appearance of competence. Brock (1988) conducted a study where the interviewer told a young teacher that the problems she was experiencing were actually quite common. The novice was so relieved that she burst into tears and said, “No one

told me that other beginners had these problems. I was planning to quit because I thought that I was a bad teacher.”

This idea was evident in at least two of the interviews that I conducted with novice teachers as part of this inquiry. I would argue that the onus rests on the school administrator to ensure that each neophyte is told clearly that although they may have qualified, they need to learn the ‘craft’ of teaching from experienced practitioners. They should be told that it is natural that they will make many mistakes as they grow in their career, and they should be paired with an experienced teacher, who in the administrator’s opinion, has the personality and knowledge necessary to assist the young teacher in question. Thus one element that could play a role in countering ‘aloneness’ and promoting ‘survival’ is the creation of an ethos of life-long learning for teaching professionals.

The idea that learning takes place in community with other practitioners led to theories of, “communities of learning” (Brown and Campione, 1993) and ‘knowledge ecologies’ (Henning and Diseko, 2004). These theories agree that, “it is the *communal* context that develops and frames the understanding and interpretation of learners and practitioners” (Lave and Wenger, 1990). Thus, learning is constituted through the *interaction* of both parties. The implication is that where *interaction* is limited or even avoided then learning too will not take place (Burroughs *et al*, 2000). This would be unfortunate if we accept that teaching, as a *craft profession*, is different to other professions in that, “the most effective forms of teacher training take place ‘on the job’” (Rury, 1991:63).

I would argue that those tasked to look after the interests of novice teachers need to challenge these conventions of ‘aloneness’ for teachers and strive to build scaffolds for neophytes to feel secure enough to grow as teaching professionals. In a later section of this part of my study I will argue that not all novice teachers have the same needs. However, I think that two areas of ‘*community formation*’ are important for all new teachers. Firstly, as mentioned previously, they should be paired with a mentor figure at their school who should be skilled enough to offer guidance and support in a non-threatening, non-judgemental fashion. Secondly, I believe it is vital that novice teachers are given opportunities to interact with other neophytes in order to benefit from shared experiences. This could conceivably

happen at regular contact sessions organised on a school, district or regional basis.

Another way in which '*communities of practice*' could be expanded is through more contact between tertiary teacher training institutions and schools (Lytle & Cochran-Smith, 1990:99). This contact would arguably go some way to address the apparent theory/practice divide that, according to the literature and the analysed data of this inquiry, is prominent in issues of 'survival' for novice teachers. For me then, induction has as its primary concern the establishment of an institutional, and hopefully, co-institutional ethos that promotes the ideals of learning through interaction, co-operation and the consideration of shared practice.

4.3 The novice's struggle for class control and conflict avoidance

It is to be expected that a novice teacher, entering the practical realities of a permanent position in a school for the first time, should be apprehensive. This is likely to remain the case even where the novice has undergone formal professional education that included periods of teaching practice. Huberman (1989) has written that the "*reality shock*" for new teachers is relatively general. I believe that a useful analogy can be made here between beginning a teaching career and learning to driving a car. The day a person acquires a licence he is qualified to drive. This does not imply that he is as proficient as another driver who has been *practising* the *craft* for many years. Most experienced drivers would agree that they are better drivers now than they were the day they passed their driving test, and they would probably ascribe this development of proficiency to aspects such as experience of different vehicles, weather conditions, types of road and so forth. In other words, they have become better drivers through experience of multiple driving realities. Interestingly, I think many drivers would concede that they learned more about being a good driver from those times when they made mistakes. Thus they learned to become better drivers by learning from their experiences of being bad drivers. By the same token, I would argue that novice teachers gain valuable insights into good teaching methods and strategies through attempting methods and strategies that do not succeed. The implication is that teachers who are not prepared to make mistakes are unlikely to become better teachers.

Using the terminology of activity theory (Engeström, 1987) this suggests that for a novice teacher the greatest *tools* that she could possess are methodological knowledge and a *community* in which the *rules* do not discourage a creative and diversified quest towards the *object* of achieving proficiency. According to the data that I collected as part of this inquiry, from themes in the literature and from my own teaching experience, most school environments have very rigid *rules* that would inhibit 'mistake-making' on the part of novice teachers. On the contrary, I posit that many young teachers do not experiment with different strategies because they fear the censure of more experienced teachers who often hold senior positions in schools. This fear of being rebuked would inhibit growth during an induction period and could, I would argue, contribute to situations where control and the maintenance of order are given higher priority than any professional growth. This mission to create and maintain order is likely to be a stressful requirement placed on novice teachers who feel pressurised into "keeping their classes quiet" above all else. Bolin (1989:84) writes that, "good teachers *cultivate* and *support* human relationships in the class." I think that in too many cases novice teachers are being told, either directly or indirectly, that good teachers *control* and *manage*.

Interestingly, one of the young teachers in my study pointed out that she felt this pressure and argued that the methodological requirements of Outcomes Based Education, which gives great importance to learning in communities and the use of 'group-work', does not lend itself to a 'quiet' class. I would argue that the use of group-work as a teaching strategy is fraught with potential pitfalls for novice teachers, especially when relatively large numbers of pupils are involved.

Bullough (1989:142) writes that, "discipline and management tend to be the principal concerns of student teachers." The majority of novice teachers in my study reported varying levels of difficulty in establishing satisfactory levels of class control and discipline conducive to learning. For most, discipline problems ranked with poor remuneration as being the biggest drawbacks of a career in teaching, and the largest threat to their 'survival.' Johnson and Birkeland (2003:586) report the same scenario for teachers in the United States. In an English study Constable & Norton (1994) found that, in conversations between student teachers and university tutors, the issue of classroom discipline was very prominent. Given the

global prevalence of the same concerns for student/novice teachers, I think it vital that the issue is adequately addressed as part of any induction programme.

Most experienced teachers can recount times when, as young teachers, they chose to adopt a 'control strategy' that proved totally ineffective. It could be that they adopted draconian measures that isolated them from any real involvement with pupils, or perhaps more likely, they thought that if they were 'nice' to pupils then the pupils would be 'nice' to them, probably resulting in a loss of control. These mistakes were for most teachers valuable, although painful, learning experiences. I consider it important that, during an induction period, novice teachers should be guided into developing a skilled approach to classroom management, but should not be castigated or belittled when they make mistakes. To continue with the driving analogy, it appears that many experienced teachers assume the position of experienced drivers who snigger at the mistakes made by youngsters in driving school vehicles. They seem to have forgotten the days when the *mechanics* of driving a car were far from second nature.

A common theme from the data was the feeling among novice teachers that government policy towards the creation of conditions conducive to learning actually favoured pupils who disrupt these conditions. Teachers reported feelings of powerlessness in their attempts to deal with disruptive pupils adequately. The banning of corporal punishment and the tedious administrative processes involved in suspending or expelling troublesome pupils were mentioned as being particularly irksome realities. Many teachers would argue that they are being presented with a professional *object* but are being denied access to the *tools* necessary for its accomplishment. I would argue that these factors often combine to create a level of frustration among teachers, which in some cases leads to an antagonistic and even violent ethos permeating a school. Understandably this creates an unpleasant working *environment* that unsurprisingly, many new teachers would soon seek to leave.

There are no easy answers to this challenge. However, this does not free school administrators from an obligation to act. It is important that young teachers are given the freedom to make mistakes in establishing a level of class control that is workable for themselves. Administrators should allow novices the freedom to make bad choices, and should create a programme of induction in which these

experiences are used as learning opportunities for novices. As mentioned in the previous section, the creation of a non-threatening forum in which novices could share their bad experiences among peers would be extremely valuable.

Problems with the implementation of government policy will vary from one environment to another, depending on the socio-economic position of the school. However, I do think that every novice teacher should be given a clear exposition of how these problems are dealt with at the school in which they teach. Similarly, where an ethos of negativity and conflict has permeated a school it must be addressed. Failure to do so will result in novice teachers becoming socialised into this damaging environment, and possibly leaving the profession as a result.

4.4 Treading water in the class: a lack of vocation

As alluded to earlier, it would be a mistake to think of novice teachers as a homogenous group. In the course of analysing the collected data for this study I became conscious of this reality. When I came to consider the principal differences among the nine participants, I decided that level of professional qualification on the one hand, and enthusiasm or commitment to the teaching profession on the other, were the main distinguishing features among them. One teacher was qualified and enthusiastic, three were qualified but not enthusiastic, two were not (yet) qualified but were enthusiastic while three were neither qualified nor enthusiastic.

Although I do not have empirical data to support the supposition, I would imagine that these differences would be relatively representative of all South African novice teachers. It became apparent to me that, given these differences, no single programme of induction would be appropriate for all novice teachers. In Figure.5 I use a simple axis to indicate the 4 quadrants on the qualification/enthusiasm matrix. I then use numbers 1 to 16 to illustrate examples of hypothetical novice teachers at different positions on this axis (Figure 5, p.61). To avoid confusion I use the word teacher to mean a person employed in a full-time teaching position, whether professionally qualified or not.

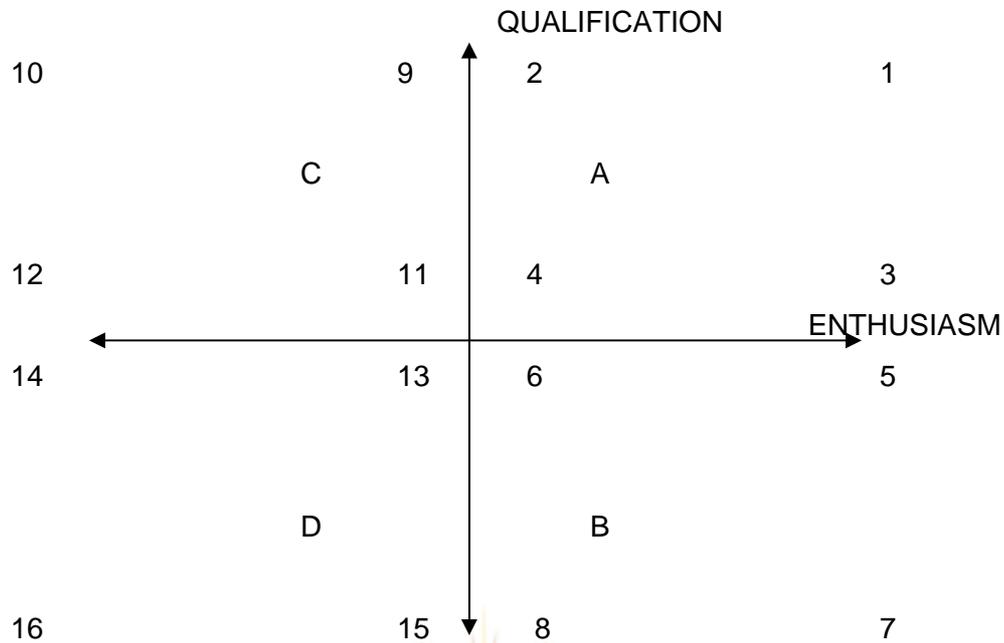


Figure 5: Axis of qualification/enthusiasm of novice teachers

The axis is conceptualised in terms of four larger groupings of novice teachers. In Quadrant A I include those teachers who are either professionally qualified or presently working towards a professional qualification, and who are at least moderately committed to the teaching profession. Teachers in Quadrant B are also reasonably enthusiastic about teaching but have no professional qualification. Some teachers in this group will be academically or *subject* qualified while others will have no tertiary qualifications at all. In Quadrant C I would place teachers who do have the level of professional training of their colleagues in Quadrant A but who display varying levels of nonchalance for the teaching profession. Those in Quadrant D have neither professional training nor enthusiasm for teaching.

This quadrant division is too broad to be able to discuss an induction programme that would work for all teachers contained in the four areas. I think it is necessary to further consider teachers contained in different extremities of the different quadrants. Thus, all novice teachers could be considered to be closest to 1 of 16 theoretical points on the axis:

1. – professionally qualified and very enthusiastic
2. – professionally qualified and moderately enthusiastic
3. – subject qualified and highly enthusiastic
4. – subject qualified and moderately enthusiastic
5. – partly qualified and highly enthusiastic
6. – partly qualified and moderately enthusiastic
7. – totally unqualified and highly enthusiastic
8. – totally unqualified and moderately enthusiastic
9. – professionally qualified and moderately unenthusiastic
- 10.– professionally qualified and highly unenthusiastic
- 11.– partly qualified and moderately unenthusiastic
- 12.– partly qualified and highly unenthusiastic
- 13.– partly qualified and moderately unenthusiastic
- 14.– partly qualified and highly unenthusiastic
- 15.– totally unqualified and moderately unenthusiastic
- 16.– totally unqualified and highly unenthusiastic

I am sure that every Principal in South Africa would like to have a staff made up of category 1 teachers. These teachers would probably be very motivated towards involvement in professional development programmes in order to experience growth in what is probably their career of choice. Teachers in category 2 would also probably benefit from an induction strategy focusing on issues of 'discovery' and personal and professional growth. Realistically, for most schools, staff composition is not going to be so favourable and school administrators will have to utilise induction strategies that best suit teachers from other categories. This would involve a detailed examination of the 'deficits' involved and the anticipated outcomes expected from the induction programme. A few general observations as regards the nature of these induction strategies for teachers classified at different category positions may, however, be pertinent.

I think for teaching, as craft profession, enthusiasm in novices is possibly a more valuable attribute than level of professional qualification. Following from this, I would argue that teachers in categories 12, 14 and 16 are probably so unenthusiastic because they probably never had any vocation to be teachers.

Those in category 10 are likely to be bitter and cynical to the degree that no induction strategy is likely to have much impact. Many members of this group probably qualified as teachers because opportunities to pursue different careers in other fields that genuinely interested them were not accessible to them. I think that teachers in these categories are likely to be destructive elements at schools. Their negativity is likely to spread to other staff members helping to create a climate of pessimism and apathy. For this reason, as far as is possible, administrators should avoid having them on the staff. I would suggest that attempting to reduce teacher/pupil ratios by employing these people is not in the best interests of a school. Recent American research would also suggest that such policies do not lead to greater levels of academic success among pupils (Fetler, 1997:12).

Teachers in category 15 are totally unqualified. Their relatively low level of enthusiasm would suggest that they are not best suited to careers in teaching. Again, as far as is possible, this is the advice they should be getting from school administrators. The same could possibly apply to teachers in categories 11 and 13, unless they could be guided or persuaded into accepting a more positive attitude towards what they do.

I would imagine that teachers in category 7 would be quite rare because a total lack of subject knowledge would probably cause very high levels of 'survival' issues such that that enthusiasm would be improbable. It is quite likely that, for these teachers, induction would probably have to combine a strong mentorship element combined with ongoing tertiary education. Those in category 3 probably arrived in teaching quite by accident and discovered that they really enjoyed it. Their high levels of enthusiasm coupled with subject proficiency make them valuable teachers. Due to their lack of professional training, they would probably benefit from an induction programme consisting of methodological/didactic training and mentorship, ideally coupled with registration for a professional qualification. The same type of programme would probably be of value for those teachers in category 5, perhaps with the addition of subject specific training. Failure to provide this form of apprenticeship could lead to these teachers losing enthusiasm and moving towards category 4.

For teachers in this category the experience of 'survival' has probably been relatively free from major dilemmas. However, if they are not provided with

exposure to a quite extensive induction programme, again conceivably compromising of methodological/didactic aids and mentorship, perhaps coupled with interaction with other novice teachers in order to share experiences for mutual development, they are likely to be lost to the profession. The same would apply to those in categories 6 and 8 who might also, to different degrees, benefit from mentoring and help in the mastery of subject content. The same contact would be of value to the qualified teachers in category 9 who are also probably struggling with 'survival' issues as they manifest themselves as part of the theory/practice divide.

Bolin (1989:85) writes, "Being an administrator requires human relations skills in order to tactfully maintain order in the midst of ambiguity." Given the heterogeneous nature of novice teachers involved in South African schools today, one important ambiguity that administrators are facing is how to provide successful induction interventions for teachers who are working in very different environments, and who come equipped with vastly different levels of qualification and commitment to the profession. The crux of the matter is surely in attempting to create a workplace environment that is supportive for learning for those employed in that environment (Kwakman, 2003:18). According to Leithwood *et al* (1999) a school environment must be created in which, "participation in professional learning activities is widely appreciated and therefore intentionally stimulated." From this starting point it is possible to conceive of a programme of professional development whereby valuable novice teachers will be given the specific type of support that their individual situations might require.

4.5 Attitude transferral: from experienced teacher to neophyte to pupil

The starting premise of this study was that South African novice teachers are important, primarily because of the disparity between the numbers of teachers that the country requires and the number who are presently entering the profession. I made the assertion that in order to address this imbalance one strategy would be the retention of the teachers currently in the system. Because novices are more likely to leave teaching than more established teachers I argued that particular attention should be given to this sector. This intervention could take the form of induction strategies aimed at providing an apprenticeship into teaching. Apprenticeship would involve assistance with subject proficiency, help with the

establishment of effective class control and an introduction to professional development opportunities. The composition of the induction programme would depend on the individual needs of the novice and would be especially geared to suit levels of professional qualification and enthusiasm.

I believe that enthusiastic novice teachers who are also professionally qualified should be encouraged to envisage and take steps towards the establishment of a long-term future in the teaching profession. Those who are committed practitioners of the craft despite a lack of formal qualifications, should be encouraged to gain accreditation in order to boost their professional and personal future in teaching. In the short term this is important for the education of school pupils in the country, because it will imply that more teachers who are passionate about what they do are teaching more pupils.

In the longer term, it is important that schools contain as many teachers as possible who might play a *modelling* function for the profession. In other words, for teaching to attract the best possible candidates to its ranks I think it is vital that school pupils have role models who openly demonstrate and state a love for what they do. It is probable that school pupils might be more likely to accept novice teachers as role models because of their age-proximity. I think it very likely that a young teacher who is respected by pupils and who *exhibits* and *promotes* her craft is the best possible advertisement for teacher recruitment. If it is accepted that, through socialization with more experienced colleagues, the discourse and attitude of the novice will be shaped and influenced, then the importance of enthusiastic older teachers is made apparent. I think it entirely logical to suppose that a positive image of teaching depends on this transferral of *professional affirmation* from experienced teachers to novices to pupils. This flow of enthusiasm is possibly the most effective way in which the teaching profession can recruit scholars into teaching and thus address the current shortages.

4.6 Strengths and weaknesses of the study

The study developed from the initial acceptance of an epistemological position. This position led me to the acceptance of an interpretivist conceptual framework. This framework, in turn led logically to the adoption of a methodological design. I decided that a discourse analysis study incorporating the methods of interviews,

participatory observation and the study of artefacts was suited to the design of the study.

The research question and the main claims of the inquiry were prompted by a review of literature and from personal experience and interest. From this adoption of a research question I was able to engage in purposive sampling for participants and environments to suit the methods accepted for the study. Data collection took place in the time period planned for this stage of the study. The data was analysed for patterns of meaning which were considered in the light of activity theory, which was the theoretical starting point of the inquiry. Worked data provided me with categories of meaning that led to certain implications regarding the research question.

In considering possible weaknesses of the study two elements are worthy of mention. Firstly, I would like to have spent more time in participatory observation settings than the available time allowed me to do. This would, I think, have improved the study by enriching the data. Secondly, at the outset of the study I intended to involve novice teachers who were all professionally trained. This was because I was concerned to explore the theoretical/practice divide between university education and classroom practice in terms of 'survival' and 'discovery' elements developed by Huberman (1989). However, during the phase when I was visiting principals of schools in my area I became aware of the large numbers of unqualified teachers being employed in local schools. This led to a broadening of the research topic as I was forced to consider induction strategies for a more heterogeneous group of teachers than I had initially conceived of. I hope that this broadening has added as much to the study as it has detracted from it.

4.7 Implications of the inquiry

South Africa needs to retain the young people who enter the teaching profession. Some of these novices will be professionally qualified but many others will not be. In order to sustain a core of competent, committed educators it is important that stakeholders accept that these novices are valuable human resources and realize that induction programmes are one way in which their professional longevity can be enhanced.

Much of the current literature relating to programmes of induction and mentorship is directed at the needs of professionally qualified novice teachers. Scholarship is needed into the needs of those teachers who enter the profession without professional status. In other words, from an acceptance that current socio-economic realities will probably guarantee the employment of unqualified teachers, how can policy makers at national, provincial and school level ensure that the future needs of our pupils are provided for by the effective apprenticeship of these teachers?

4.8 Final conclusion

Engeström (1987) speaks of an activity system in terms of a *subject* being *motivated* towards a *purpose* in collaboration with a *community*. The structure of the activity is constrained by *rules*.

For novice teachers who are enthusiastic about building a career in the profession it is important that the *rules* or conventions associated with the socialization of novice teachers do not impede the individual's goal-directed actions. Where the conventions of the system acts against this development they should be changed for the more optimal development of the "discovery" (Huberman, 1989) that can, I believe, come from dedicating a professional life towards building a career in teaching. Neophytes need help to become apprenticed into the craft of being a teacher. In community with their peers they should be guided and assisted as respected members of the same *learning ecology*. Failure to offer this positive socialization will arguably act to the detriment of a profession already under pressure to attract new members, and will ultimately disadvantage the provision of internationally competitive education in South African schools.

For other novice teachers, who do not exhibit the same motivation towards the *purpose* of establishing a career, other strategies should be sought that attempt to instil this professional enthusiasm. Without this commitment, I believe, any attempts to assist in countering the problems of "survival" (Huberman, 1989) would be fruitless.

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