

**INDUCTION EXPERIENCES OF NEWLY QUALIFIED  
PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN ZIMBABWE**

by

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## DECLARATION

I declare that *Induction Experiences of Newly Qualified Primary School Teachers in Zimbabwe* is my own work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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**SNODIA MAGUDU**

OCTOBER 2014

## **DEDICATION**

To all teachers in rural Zimbabwe who are the pillars of the country's education system and the nation's unsung heroes. May you continue to be a source of inspiration to the children you interact with on a day-to-day basis.

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## ABSTRACT

The body of literature clearly articulates the unique needs of newly qualified teachers and the challenges they experience during their early career years. In addition, literature advocates for implementation of induction programmes to enable a smooth transition of the beginners into the profession. This empirical phenomenological study explored the induction experiences of newly qualified primary school teachers in Zimbabwe in an attempt to gain insights into the everyday issues they contend with. Purposive sampling was employed to select twenty participants who comprised of ten newly qualified teachers, five beginners whose experience in the field ranged from one to three years and five mentors. Data were collected mainly through three semi-structured interviews with newly qualified teachers and mentors, reflective essays written by beginners who were not so new in the profession and a focus group discussion with selected beginners. The protocol used for data explication was a simplified version of Hycner's (1985) framework for phenomenological analysis suggested by Groenewald (2004). The findings yielded six themes and revealed that: new teachers experienced adaptation challenges relating to forging of new relationships, location of schools and nature of host communities; induction was largely informal and incidental, and the induction supports experienced by the new teachers were limited; the beginners had various teaching and social concerns that needed to be addressed; and, while the new teachers had derived some lessons from their first year of teaching, these were outweighed by their concerns and might not have made a significant impact on their classroom practices. The data also revealed that the partnership between teacher education institutions and schools in providing for teacher professional development was weak. The study concluded that the absence of a policy on induction in the country has resulted in lack of appreciation of the centrality of induction on the teacher development continuum and the haphazard manner in which issues of induction are being handled. The main recommendations from the study were that a policy on induction should be put in place, that schools are empowered to provide induction and induction supports that are amenable to the country's context be fully exploited.

## KEY WORDS

**Newly qualified teacher; teacher induction; mentoring; communities of practice; phenomenology; lived experiences; induction strategies; professional development; teacher learning; professional identity.**

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## ACRONYMS

BEST:	Better Environmental Science Teaching programme
BSPS:	Better Schools Programme Zimbabwe
CoP:	Community of Practice
CPD:	Continued Professional Development
DEO:	District Education Officer
ECD:	Early Childhood Development

ES:	Environmental Science
ESP:	Education through Sport Programme
FGD:	Focus Group Discussion
GT:	Generalist teacher
HIV/AIDS:	Human Immuno-deficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HOD:	Head of Department
INSET:	In-Service Teacher Education
ITE:	Initial Teacher Education
KM:	Knowledge Management
LPP:	Legitimate Peripheral Participation
NQT:	Newly Qualified Teacher
MoESAC:	Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture
NCTQ:	National Council on Teacher Quality
PLAP:	Performance Lag Address Programme
PRESET:	Pre-Service Teacher Education
TIC:	Teacher in Charge
TP:	Teaching Practice
RBM:	Resource Based Management
SASS:	Schools and Staffing Survey (USA)
SI:	Statutory Instrument
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
ZIMTA:	Zimbabwe Teachers' Association

# Chapter 1

## Introducing the problem

### 1.1 Background to the problem

Teacher professional development is a continuum which begins with initial training and continues throughout one's career. Induction, which is one of the stages on this continuum, is considered to be very crucial because it provides a linkage between initial training and continuing professional development (CPD). This chapter provides a context for the study. It explores the concept of teacher induction and defines the problem and research questions. Other aspects that are highlighted are the significance of the study, scope and limitations of the study.

Induction is a practice that is common to most professions. It is used to address short term and long term concerns that include ensuring that the employee has the requisite practical knowledge and skills to get started on the task and that he or she gets ample assistance to grow professionally. Induction into teaching should be understood within the context of a profession that is viewed as complex (Nahal, 2010). The complexities of the profession emanate from sources such as the diversity of backgrounds and abilities of students that teachers work with in the classroom and the rapid changes that characterise today's society. These factors have placed new demands on schools and in turn have resulted in the extension of the role of the teacher to beyond the classroom. The novice may not realize how complex the teaching profession can be until confronted by the reality of the tasks in the classroom (Nahal, 2010).

In the context of the school, induction can be defined as a process of initiating new teachers into their new roles, both as teachers and as members of a community (Kessel, 2010); a systematic and sensitive provision for further professional development of new entrants (Tickle, 2000); or simply as socialisation into the profession and the school culture (Levine, 2001). Teacher induction, therefore, entails supporting newly qualified teachers (NQTs) in three areas that are pivotal to learning their new roles and enhancement of teaching quality. These are, socialisation into the school culture, further development of knowledge and skills necessary for good teaching, and personal development in aspects such as self-confidence, a

positive self-esteem and stress management (Wang, Odell & Schwille, 2008; Tickle, 2000). This study takes cognisance of the multiple meanings of induction and the shift of focus of the process from a concern with just socialisation and emotional support to a concern with supporting teacher learning that is consistent with national curriculum standards.

Some studies on teacher induction suggest that the first years of teaching are crucial in moulding beginning teachers' professional knowledge and beliefs and have long term implications for teacher efficacy, job satisfaction and career length (Hellsten, Prytula, Ebanks & Lai, 2009; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). However, the transition from teacher education to actual professional practice could prove to be a frustrating and difficult process and may result in new teachers losing their enthusiasm and commitment to teaching. Terms such as 'a sobering experience', 'a struggle for survival', and 'an intense and formative stage in teaching and learning to teach' (Schollaert, 2011; Williams & Prestage, 2002; Feiman-Nemser, 2001) have been used to illustrate just how challenging the first years of teaching can be for the beginner. Many of the struggles cited are attributed to the theory-practice dilemma which is a result of the gap that exists between on the one hand, the theoretical and on the other, academic courses done at college and the realities of the classroom situation (i.e. the disconnect between initial teacher preparation and expert teaching) as well as the shift in role orientation which is associated with the transition from student teacher to teacher of students (Nahal, 2010). Consequently, NQTs are said to experience a 'reality shock' or 'transition shock' on joining the profession and often question the relevance of their formal training as compared to what they learn on the job (Howe, 2006). This calls for intervention measures to bolster the new teachers' entry into the profession rather than to adopt a 'swim' or 'sink' approach (i.e. leaving the novices to fathom their new role and problems associated with it), an approach which has often resulted in teaching being criticised as 'a profession that eats its young' (Smith & Ingersoll, 2005).

The goals of teacher induction would therefore be to extend the beginning teachers' conception of what being a teacher entails, foster their sense of well-being and professional development in light of the many problems associated with the first years of teaching, standardize instruction so as to enhance learning and generally improve teacher efficacy, and bring about job satisfaction leading to teacher retention (Lindgren, 2005; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). In addition, the induction phase should provide some support space for new teachers to properly take the time to analyse and consider their practices and engage in critical

dialogue with their colleagues (Killeavy, 2006). Some authorities (Totterdell, Bubb & Hanrahan, 2004; Tickle, 2000) suggest that the induction process should focus on, for example:

- helping NQTs to develop a deeper understanding of the curriculum and pedagogy;
- improving NQTs resourcefulness and repertoire of classroom practices; and
- encouraging and developing positive attitudes in beginning teachers so that they feel competent and confident to modify their own practice and participate in group activities in their schools.

Literature on teacher development suggests several supports for NQTs to ensure that the goals of teacher induction are realised, for example, mentoring, reducing the new teacher's load and assigning the new teacher to a class where chances of succeeding are high, etc. The most widely cited support though is that of attaching the novice to a mentor who would organize the learning of the new teacher in and out of school and who would be a 'model of good practice'. It is assumed that a mentor would have the requisite knowledge, skills and qualities to engage in monitoring, supporting and in assessment so as to be able to play a strategic role in helping the novice teacher (Carrol & Simco, 2001).

Various sources indicate that induction of NQTs has been a subject of debate for decades amongst scholars (Cherubini, 2009; Feiman-Nemser, 2001a; Tickle, 2000; Day, 1999; Vonk, 1993; Veenman, 1984; Fuller, 1969). Despite the interest and the numerous studies on the subject over the years, the provision of ideal professional development for beginning teachers remains elusive. Questions such as: "What is expected from teacher induction and the new teacher?" "How effective are induction programmes in achieving the desired goals?" and "What and how do teachers learn from their classroom experiences during induction?" continue to be asked and remain unresolved as shown by the number of studies that continue to be carried out on the same issues.

Countries such as the United States of America, the United Kingdom and New Zealand have made induction a mandatory requirement for acquisition of Qualified Teacher Status because of the importance attached to the process in improving teacher quality and retention. These countries have structured induction programmes in place which are undertaken during the

first year of teaching, hence schools are not left to their own devices in deciding the kind of induction to offer to novices. Developing countries, though, still lag behind in recognising the significance of induction to teacher development. Cobbold (2007) cites a study by Lewin and Stuart on teacher education policy and practice in four low-income countries (namely, Ghana, Lesotho, Malawi, Trinidad and Tobago) which found that none of them had a formal induction policy and the modalities of induction were left to the whims of individual School Heads. Hence, in these countries, there were varying degrees of support for NQTs. Such arrangements, in the researchers' view, would render the outcomes of pre-service preparation ineffective and would contribute to the 'washout' of training as NQTs' learning would not be reinforced in their first appointment. Zimbabwe falls into the category of countries with no formal induction policies (Magudu & Moyo, 2008) and in addition, lacks opportunities for continuous professional development (Kangai & Bukaliya, 2011). Furthermore, there is a dearth of systematic information regarding induction in schools in Zimbabwe and this study sought to address that gap.

It was against this background that the study intended to explore the induction experiences of NQTs in primary schools in Zimbabwe. The study investigated the capacity of the induction experiences to foster professional development in the novices. The motivation for the study was derived from the researcher's own years of involvement in teacher education as a lecturer in teachers' training colleges. The researcher had perceived gaps in the teacher development continuum in the country. Since 1980, Zimbabwe has been more preoccupied with training adequate teachers to meet the demand created by a rapid expansion in the education sector and consequently, support for NQTs may not have been a priority. The expansion in this sector was a consequence of the transition from colonial bottlenecks, which had made education the preserve of a privileged few, to the opening up of education to all. Dzvimbo (1986) argues that some compromises were made in the process of expanding teacher education as resources were channelled to quantitative rather than to qualitative expansion. Studies in Australia and the United Kingdom allude to the inadequacies of initial training in equipping students for the realities of the classroom (McCormack & Thomas, 2003; Tickle, 1993). The trade-offs referred to by Dzvimbo above imply that the gap between initial teacher education and actual teaching would be much wider for the graduate from teacher training colleges in Zimbabwe than elsewhere, hence the need for stronger induction arrangements to bridge this gap.



The researcher's involvement in teacher education had also made her aware that some school cultures are unsupportive of teacher learning. Student teachers posted to some of these schools often receive minimal help and work in isolation. On several occasions during the researcher's stint as a college lecturer, some students on Teaching Practice (TP) reported experiencing problems in settling down in practice schools because the supposed mentors had offloaded all the classroom responsibilities on them or would not just provide the required guidance. In addition, student teachers would be piled with extra curricula activities which would make it difficult for them to focus on the task of learning to teach. The teachers training colleges that the researcher has worked in would periodically identify schools to which they would not deploy student teachers for practicum because of the limited professional benefits accruing to students attached to these. One would like to believe that the experiences of beginning teachers in such schools would be no different from those of student teachers.

Although there are no formal statutory arrangements for the induction of beginning teachers in Zimbabwe, the NQTs serve at least a one year probationary period (Public Service Statutory Instrument (SI) 1 of 2000). This is a trial period during which schools and Education Officers from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (formerly the Ministry of Education, Sports, Arts and Culture) determine whether the new teacher is able to meet the standards and expectations of the teaching profession. Although the emphasis would be on assessment of standards and technical specifications of performance criteria and monitoring rather than on specified targets for professional growth (hence a chance of neglecting the areas that NQTs would value), the probationary period however presupposes some form of induction. Induction can be either formal or informal (Fletcher & Chang, 2008; Shaw, Boydell & Warner, 1995) and by design or default (Feiman-Nemser, 2001a). Formal induction would imply having an official programme in place while in informal arrangements the new teacher would receive induction from colleagues and other sources within the school environment. But the informal arrangements might not address the needs of the beginner adequately as these might not be systematic. Nevertheless, Williams, Prestage and Bedward (2001:265) argue that "the characteristics that take induction practice beyond the satisfactory and into the realms of excellence are, by nature, not amenable to statute or external mandate". This implies that although there is no official policy on induction in Zimbabwe, some schools might still have workable induction arrangements in place for beginning teachers.

This study focused on the induction experiences within the Zimbabwean context. As observed by Bullough (1997), every induction experience is unique and the process of becoming a teacher partly depends on the interaction between person and context (Flores, 2001). So, the manner in which NQTs experience induction in Zimbabwe would be different from elsewhere because of the contextual influences. The investigation was conducted with primary school teachers in Mwenezi District, Zimbabwe, who had just completed initial teacher training and were on their first teaching assignment. The study was carried out in rural schools which are the most challenged in the recruitment and retention of qualified staff. It explored the experiences of these teachers in an attempt to understand how they were inducted into the teaching profession and their assessment of the effectiveness of the experiences in terms of their professional knowledge and practices.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

The role of induction programmes in promoting the well-being and professional development of NQTs is well documented. Many authorities see induction in the context of learning to teach when a novice encounters, for the first time, the realities of the classroom (Ferguson-Patrick, 2011; Saka et al., 2009; Brunton, 2002; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Bartell, 1995). The induction process is considered a pivotal part of the teacher development continuum and so it is essential that induction is properly executed (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 1999).

In Zimbabwe, many new teachers graduate each year from the country's teachers' training colleges and find their way into schools with the majority of them having trained to teach in the primary school as shown in table 1.1 below<sup>1</sup>.

Table 1.1: Teachers' College Graduates 2008 – 2013

College/Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Belvedere*	402	415	413	462	482	423
Bondolfi	470	237	178	104	103	80
J.M. Nkomo	502	517	633	144	37	129
Hillside*	562	346	351	320	538	567
Madziwa	-	117	167	58	-	61
Marymount	484	417	696	198	93	337
Masvingo	399	405	373	378	208	237
Mkoba	275	471	300	548	134	203
Morgan ZINTEC	769	783	347	305	173	301
Morgenster	287	285	152	149	155	91
Mutare*	500	512	491	288	492	639
Nyadire	296	302	285	98	61	122
Seke	390	376	389	350	198	336
United College of Education	425	457	415	289	238	255
<b>Total</b>	<b>5751</b>	<b>5640</b>	<b>5 190</b>	<b>3 745</b>	<b>2912</b>	<b>3781</b>

**Source:** Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education Statistics (2013)

\* Secondary School Teacher Training Colleges

Because of the economic meltdown that the country went through especially in 2008, significant numbers of experienced teachers (an estimated 25000 teachers in 2008, according to SW Radio Africa), left the country for greener pastures ([www.swradioafrica.com/news090108/teachers090108.htm](http://www.swradioafrica.com/news090108/teachers090108.htm)). In addition, the HIV/AIDS pandemic has also taken its toll amongst teachers. According to the Zimbabwe Teachers Association (ZIMTA) (2002), teachers are among the 3 top groups of professional groups affected by HIV/AIDS (the other 2 groups being soldiers and police). Hence, the concept of the 'revolving door' associated with the presence of considerable numbers of beginners in schools in USA and some European countries due partly to an aging teacher workforce and teacher attrition (Wilkinson, 2009; Ingersoll, 2003), has been experienced in Zimbabwe but for different reasons. Moreover, a substantial proportion of NQTs are to be found in rural schools as these are shunned by experienced teachers and tend to be staffed mainly by NQTs and untrained teachers (David Coltart, Minister of Education, Sunday News, 24-30 March, 2013, Rural Teachers get allowances). Consequently, new teachers who enter the profession each year might have to cope in the absence of the requisite support from experienced teachers. This makes it inevitable for anyone to raise questions about how NQTs are supported through induction and about the opportunities they get to grow in the profession.

### **1.3 Research questions**

The primary question to be addressed by the study was: *What are the lived experiences of induction by newly qualified primary school teachers in Zimbabwe?* The sub-problems arising from this question were as follows:

- What is the nature and scope of the induction experiences that the beginning teachers are being exposed to?
- What factors influence the nature of induction that NQTs receive?
- What is Zimbabwe's primary schools' understanding of their role in inducting the beginning teachers into the teaching profession?
- What lessons do beginner teachers derive from their induction experiences?
- Which areas seem to require greater attention during induction?
- What are the persistent issues and challenges in teacher induction in Zimbabwe's primary schools?

### **1.4 Aim of the study**

The overall goal of this qualitative empirical phenomenological study was to gain an insight into how NQTs experience induction in primary schools in Zimbabwe. The specific objectives were to:

- examine the nature and scope of the induction experiences that the beginning teachers are being exposed to;
- determine the factors that have a bearing on the nature of induction NQTs receive;
- explore Zimbabwe's primary schools' understanding of their role in inducting the beginner teachers into the teaching profession;
- explore the lessons that beginner teachers derive from their induction experiences;
- establish the areas that seem to require greater attention during induction; and
- identify the persistent issues and challenges in teacher induction in Zimbabwe's primary schools.

## **1.5 Significance of the study**

Policy makers and professional educationalists now increasingly acknowledge that induction is a crucial element of a systematic and comprehensive approach to teacher development (Cobbold, 2007). Central to the professional development of beginning teachers is the need for stakeholders to understand that the novices are not yet proficient in teaching and should be supported in their quest to learn to teach. An education system that does not appreciate this need is likely to be burdened with teachers who will operate with a basic competence kit and who may feel inadequate throughout their careers. Such teachers may be easily de-motivated and may not make the desired impact on student quality and outcomes. It is therefore vital for beginning teachers to be afforded meaningful support during their first year in the profession. The thesis will facilitate an understanding of specific experiences of NQTs and how these contribute to the novices' professional growth.

Teacher induction in Zimbabwe is an under researched area. Most of the research on teacher education in the country has tended to focus mainly on initial teacher education (ITE), for example, pre-service teacher education models (Mswazi & Gamira, 2011); Teaching Practice issues (Gadzirayi, Muropa & Mutandwa, 2006; Chikunda, 2005; Weiler, Gadzira & Mkondo, 2002); and, the place of Professional Studies in Teacher Education (Mukorera, 1997). Thus, literature on induction of NQTs is scanty and this study therefore, addresses a gap in research. A few studies have been conducted on the subject by, for example, Hove (2006), Magudu and Moyo (2008) and Samkange, (2012) but there is still a huge knowledge gap on induction practices and related issues in the country. The research by Hove (2006) investigated the induction of 'new' teachers in general including, not only newly qualified teachers, but also experienced ones who transfer from other schools and are new to the current environments. Consequently, Hove's study is deemed to be wanting in that it does not give adequate emphasis to issues specifically pertaining to NQTs but even experienced teachers who transfer into a new school. Although the study by Magudu and Moyo (2008) concentrated on form, focus and relevance of teacher induction in the country, it is limited in terms of pursuing in depth the themes that emerged from the research. Samkange (2012) researched on the performance of NQTs in different areas of the curriculum in Zimbabwe and the focus of his study was not primarily on induction. Consequently, induction of beginners was only part of the recommendations made in the study as an intervention measure to mitigate the challenges that the NQTs were found to be experiencing with curriculum

delivery. The three studies cited above were generally not comprehensive enough and did not provide an in-depth analysis of everyday situations encountered by novices. In addition, they did not give the beginning teachers the necessary voice to relate and reflect on their experiences so as to facilitate an understanding of where the current induction arrangements fall short.

This study was situated in the realm of teacher professional development, a career long process which involves learning and development. It was an attempt to address the issue of teacher quality and professional development in Zimbabwe. The thesis approached the experiences of the beginning teachers in a holistic manner by focusing on activities, supports and components that the induction experiences cover, and the likely effects of the supports, hence fostering a better understanding of specific professional experiences. It was envisaged that findings would contribute vital knowledge and inform education policy makers and school administrators on the potential of teacher induction to improve teacher efficacy and quality. In addition, the findings could provide a framework for debate amongst education practitioners, administrators and policy makers on the subject, especially on the provision and quality of induction and how this process could be improved for the benefit of all stakeholders. The findings could also provide a basis for improving pre-service teacher education (PRESET) and in-service teacher education (INSET) in the country.

## **1.6 Research methodology overview**

This qualitative study mainly focused on describing and constructing the experiences of the participants. The study adopted an empirical phenomenological design. The participants were purposively sampled and consisted of ten NQTs, who had just completed their ITE, five teachers who were relatively new in the field (with 1 to 3 years teaching experience) and five mentors of NQTs, all from Mwenezi district. Data were mainly collected through semi-structured interviews with the NQTs and their mentors, a reflective essay from the not-so-new teachers and a focus group discussion. The NQTs' accounts of their induction provided insights into what they experienced, how they experienced it and the essence of their experiences and the critical issues in teacher induction in Zimbabwe.

The study was qualitative in that it was naturalistic and endeavoured "to study people, things and events in their natural settings" (Punch, 2005:141), thus facilitating an understanding of a

phenomenon in context; it was phenomenological in that it described the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or phenomenon (Creswell, 2006); and empirical in that it sought to describe a general or typical essential structure based on descriptions of experiences of others (Giorgi 1997). The qualitative methodology was consistent with Wenger's (1998) Communities of Practice (CoP) theory, the framework that informed this study. The CoP theoretical framework views learning as primarily a social process which cannot be divorced from the context in which it occurs. Hence its appropriateness in examining the induction experiences of NQTs and their quest to learn to teach.

### **1.7 Delimitations of the study**

The investigation on induction experiences of newly qualified teachers was conducted with beginning teachers and mentors from Mwenezi district, Masvingo province, Zimbabwe. The majority of NQTs are first deployed to rural areas where most of the country's schools are located because about seventy (70) percentage of the population in Zimbabwe is rural (David Coltart, Minister of Education, Sunday News, 24-30 March, 2013). The schools where potential participants for the study were stationed were, therefore, similar in terms of setting, resource availability, student catchment area, class sizes, and staffing and experiences of NQTs in these schools could be comparable. The research was restricted to documenting the experiences of beginning primary school teachers during their initiation into the teaching profession.

### **1.8 Limitations of the study**

Data on induction experiences were collected from beginning teachers and mentors. The study was limited to 15 beginners and 5 mentors and this sample could be small for generalisations to be made. The study was restricted to a small geographic area and to primary school teachers. These factors might have limited the conclusions that could be drawn from the study and make findings difficult to generalize. However, purposive sampling was employed to ensure that the participants had specific characteristics which could make the findings of the research more admissible and credible. A possible limitation was that some participants might not divulge full information on their experiences, especially where these were negative, for fear of victimisation by school administrators. But this was ameliorated by assuring the respondents about the confidentiality of the process and availing

to them data collected through semi-structured interviews for checking before compilation of the thesis. Another limitation emanated from the fact that it was difficult to retain the nature and context of a study during transcription of recorded interviews, and in the process, the social encounter was lost and only data remained (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000:282). The study was conducted in a rural setting where schools are far apart and there were challenges of travelling between the schools, but the researcher managed to make arrangements to visit each of the participants the planned number of times.

## **1.9 Assumptions of the study**

The following assumptions were made in the study:

- all NQTs experience one form or other of induction in the schools of their first appointment.
- permission to conduct the research in primary schools will be granted by the parent ministry.
- The identified participants are willing to take part in the research.
- Participants respond without preconceived biases in the interviews.

## **1.10 Definition of terms**

**Context:** The environment in which the new teacher works. The environment can be social, political, physical or economic.

**Newly qualified teacher/beginner/novice/new teacher:** These terms are used interchangeably in this study. They refer to a teacher who has completed initial training and is in the first year of formal teaching (Veenman, 1984). Teachers in their second and third year of teaching are also regarded as newly qualified as research has shown that it takes at least five years for a beginning to become proficient (Ferguson-Patrick, 2011).

**Mentoring:** The personal, one-on-one guidance provided usually by seasoned veterans or experienced teachers to beginning teachers in schools (Cobbold, 2007; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004).

**Professional development:** The continuous process of acquiring new knowledge and skills that relate to one's profession, job responsibilities, or work environment. Its primary role is to



maintain trained, informed and motivated employees ([www.austincc.edu](http://www.austincc.edu)>ACC Home>HR> Profdev). In the context of teaching, professional development refers to the development of pedagogic content knowledge (Nilsson & Van Driel, 2010).

**Professional identity:** The extent to which inductees think of themselves as teachers (Battersby, 1981).

**Professional learning:** Both formal and informal opportunities for people to deepen knowledge and refine skills that result in changed practice for the benefit of students (Timperley, 2011).

**Teacher learning:** Acquisition of knowledge, skills, language and habits of mind needed to be become a member of a school community (Cavavos in Saka et al., 2009).

**Well-being:** A positive emotional state that is a result of a harmony between the sum of specific context factors on the one hand and the personal needs and expectations towards the school on the other (Engels, Aeltermann, Van Petegem & Schepens in Kessels, 2010).

**Lived experiences:** These are experiences that occur in one's direct acquaintance with things (Barnacle, 2001).

## 1.11 Structure of the thesis

The thesis is in seven chapters as follows:

**Chapter 1** sets the context of the study. It examines the place of induction on the teacher development continuum and also identifies the problem and research questions to be addressed. Other aspects to be discussed are aim and objectives of the study, its significance, delimitations and limitations or threats to internal validity.

**Chapter 2** reviews literature relevant to a wide range of issues that provide some insights into experiences of NQTs during induction and that are instrumental in shaping their professional practices. In particular, it examines such concepts role demands, teacher socialisation, school culture, mentoring and developmental stages of teachers.

**Chapter 3** outlines the theoretical framework that guided the analysis of this study.

**Chapter 4** discusses the research methodology adopted for this study. The research design, research instruments, sampling procedures, methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation are described in detail.

**Chapter 5** presents and analyses the findings qualitatively in relation to research questions and literature reviewed, with the latter being used to establish the areas of congruence and diversity. The goal of the chapter is primarily to construct the experiences of the NQTs in schools during induction and their perspectives about these experiences.

**Chapter 6** discusses key findings of and themes emerging from the study. The analysis makes use of the analytical frameworks that were considered to be relevant to the research. The chapter attempts to evaluate the impact of the induction experiences on the novices.

**Chapter 7** is a summary of the major findings of the research and their implications for the professional development of beginning teachers in Zimbabwe. The chapter offers some conclusions and recommendations.

### ***Notes***

<sup>1</sup>*The drop in graduate numbers from the colleges reflected in the 2011/12 statistics for most colleges coincides with the peak of the country's economic problems in 2008-2010 which affected all sectors. This would be the time when the graduating teachers enrolled for training.*

## Chapter 2

### Review of related literature on teacher induction

#### 2.1 Introduction

This is a literature chapter that surveys existing scholarly work relating to and debates surrounding teacher induction. It attempts to locate this study within a wider theoretical and conceptual framework. Although there is a dearth of literature on teacher induction in Zimbabwe, a lot of it has emerged from such countries as the United States of America (USA), the United Kingdom (UK) and Australia, where induction has been a subject of study for decades. Such literature may be used as a basis to inform practices in this country despite the differences in context. However, Ingersoll and Smith (2004:30-31) identify the following as some of the possible limitations of the literature that is available:

- a tendency to focus on the impact of induction and neglecting non-induction;
- for some studies, lack of consideration of some factors that may influence the impact of induction, for example, characteristics of schools;
- a focus on attitudinal outcomes, for example, teachers' perceptions on the benefits of induction but at the exclusion of data on visible outcomes such as teacher retention or teacher efficacy; and
- a focus on specific types of programmes in particular school districts about which generalisation is difficult to make.

In reviewing the literature, an attempt was made not to lose sight of these limitations and to establish gaps not focused on before in research on teacher induction, especially those gaps that are of relevance to Zimbabwe.

The chapter focuses on those variables which are at play in the process of learning to teach, that give some insights into experiences of beginning teachers and are instrumental in shaping their professional practice. These include: role demands, developmental stages of teachers, teacher socialisation, school culture and induction strategies in general as well as the concept of mentoring. What follows is a discussion of these variables as well as the

different research perspectives on teacher induction. However, it is deemed important to explore the concept of teacher induction, prior to the discussion of each of these issues.

## **2.2 The concept of teacher induction**

Induction is one of the stages in teacher development and can either be a formal or informal programme for new teachers. In countries where there are formal programmes in place, induction may also be an assessment point and teachers who do not meet the set standards would not be allowed to teach in schools (Totterdell, Woodroffe, Bubb, Daly, Smart & Arrowsmith, 2008). The concept of induction therefore, is based on the notion that the entry of new teachers into the profession needs to be supported and the assistance provided should focus on what teachers ought to learn, know and be able to do in order to be regarded as proficient (Totterdell et al., 2008).

Vallenrand, Martineau and Bergevin (in Nault, 2007) see induction as a threefold process involving construction of knowledge, skills and competencies (which occurs during the period of trial and error as the NQTs try to establish what is practical in the classroom), socialisation in the workplace (the novice learning the practice and traditions of the individual school in order to fit into its context) and identity transformation (concerned with the new teachers' impressions of being a teacher and good teaching). Indications are that induction ends when the new teacher has adapted to the environment and routine tasks, attained a certain level of confidence and competency to function efficiently in the school, and when the teacher has reached a level where (s)he is more preoccupied with enhancing practice and pedagogic flexibility (Nault, 2007).

There has been an evolution in the conceptualisation of teacher induction in the last few decades (Kessels, 2010; Cherubini, 2009). Initially, induction was viewed in the context of the problems that beginning teachers experience (the deficit model). Then from the mid-1990s, it began to be considered more as a way of achieving high standards in teacher quality than overcoming deficits. According to the current perspective, induction is a phase on the teacher professional development continuum (the growth model). The latter approach supposes NQTs to be co-responsible for their professional development by acknowledging their potential to contribute new knowledge and visions to their school (Tickle, 2000).

The process of becoming a teacher, which is what induction is about, has been studied from various theoretical perspectives “ranging from the development of expertise to the existence of a rite of passage and from the evolution of teachers’ concerns to a socialisation process” (Flores, 2001:135). These different perspectives, which in a way are indicative of how the problem of induction is defined, are reflected by the variety of approaches to induction that are in existence. Totterdell et al (2008:8) cite three such approaches, namely, programmes that are guided by the ‘effective teaching’ criteria and mainly seek to coach beginners for mastery of skills and knowledge; programmes which highlight the intricacies of teaching and the ‘need for dynamic, reformative school environments that rely on a broad base of knowledge to inform teacher behaviour’; and lastly, the ‘constructivist’ methods which view new teachers as active learners and require them to be reflective in their practice. As a result of the different perspectives, variations have emerged in the process, content, quality, duration, intensity, prerequisites and products of induction of programmes (Glazerman, Isenberg, Dolfin, Bleeker, Johnson, Grider & Jacobus, 2010). For example, some induction programmes consist of a single orientation meeting at the beginning of the school year. Such a notion of induction though is narrow and diminishes its role in nurturing quality teaching and learning (Feiman-Nemser, Schwille, Carver & Yusko, 1999). Yet other programmes are highly structured and multifaceted and comprised of several elements which translate into comprehensive induction experiences for the novices (Welchsler, Caspary, Humphrey & Matsko, 2010; Smith & Ingersoll, 2005). In the latter approach, induction is viewed as an extension of pre-service training as well as an entry point into career-long professional development for teachers (Feiman-Nemser, et al., 1999). This study attempts to identify the approaches to induction that are prevalent in local primary schools as these determine the quality of the experiences that NQTs are exposed to during the induction period.

The fundamental role of induction in promoting beginning teachers’ effectiveness and in on-going teacher professional development is widely recognised (Cherubini, 2007; Howe, 2006; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; McCormack & Thomas, 2003). Empirical evidence reveals that beginning teachers are less effective in promoting student learning than more experienced teachers as they are still learning to teach (Welchsler et al., 2010). It has also been established that students who are assigned an ineffective teacher at any point during their school career, may lag as much as one year behind peers taught by a more effective teacher (Fulton, Yoon & Lee, 2005). An important goal of induction therefore, is to support beginning teachers

during the first few years in the profession in order to facilitate their development into effective professionals who can help students to improve their capacity to learn.

Teacher induction also has been perceived in the context of bridging teacher preparation and practice in pedagogically appropriate ways (Lindgren, 2005; Smith & Ingersoll, 2005; Feiman-Nemser, 2001a; Bartell, 1995). Feiman-Nemser et al (1999) describe induction as a way of helping novices to link the 'text' of pre-service preparation to the 'contexts' of classrooms. While this characterisation emphasises the pivotal position of induction on the teacher development continuum, it also serves to illustrate the intricacies of the process which arise from combining the complexities of ITE and CPD, the two phases that it straddles.

Tickle (2000) though, argues that induction should be considered as a process that equips new teachers to handle unanticipated challenges rather than a bridge between initial teacher preparation and expert practice. He cautions that the use of the 'bridge' metaphor implies that new teachers are to be socialised into clear-cut, perfect and accepted practices that occur on the other side. Yet that is not the case as what constitutes desirable professional practice is contested.

In developed countries like USA, the UK and Australia where attrition rates among NQTS are high, induction has been viewed as a mechanism that can foster retention. Some studies estimate that in such countries, an average of 30% of new teachers leave within the first 5 years of joining the teaching profession (Fletcher, 2008; Gilbert, 2005; Darling-Hammond, 1999). The attrition rates among beginning teachers particularly in these countries have resulted in a flurry of research on how best to ensure that NQTs are not lost to the profession (Ferguson-Patrick, 2011; Nahal, 2010; Fulton et al., 2005; Smith & Ingersoll, 2005; Darling-Hammond, 2003; Levine, 2001).

As indicated earlier, induction serves different purposes. Britton, Raizen, Paine and Huntley (2000) suggest that the different purposes of teacher induction are at times dichotomous. For example, an important question that arises in the process of designing teacher support is whether to place emphasis on fostering professional growth of novices or on assessment and weeding out those found unsuitable for the job. The formal assessment aspect of induction to determine if NQTs meet set standards can conflict with their needs for assistance with teaching processes and socialisation into the school culture (McCormack & Thomas, 2003).

Critics argue that when evaluation is included in the induction process, novice teachers may be discouraged from voicing their concerns and requesting for help for fear of negative evaluation or for fear of being construed as failure (Fletcher et al., 2008). Another shortcoming that has been observed is that the standards used to assess NQTs ability to teach do not take into account the school context, local issues and less measurable aspects of teachers' work (McCormack & Thomas 2003; White & Moss, 2003) such as co-curricular activities.

In responding to the above concerns, Totterdell et al (2008) stress the significance of appropriate evaluation of the novices' professional practice and the need for such evaluations to be constructive rather than critical. Fletcher et al (2008) argue that assessment of novices may help in moderating the perception that teaching is simple and easy to learn as well as ensuring that the new teachers are appraised on their teaching practices. According to Ingersoll and Smith (2004), nonetheless, the primary function of induction remains that of nurturing and supporting new teachers and assessment should be regarded as secondary. It has been proposed that the evaluation system for novices could be differentiated from that of veteran teachers (Fletcher et al., 2008) so as to allow the beginners some room to learn without necessarily being preoccupied with the assessment aspect.

Induction of NQTs is often defined in relation to its impact on teaching practice, learning, expertise, classroom management, teacher motivation and morale, mentoring or retention (Totterdell et al., 2008). However, some authorities question the effect of induction on beginning teachers. Britton et al (2000), for example, claim that the impact of most induction arrangements on beginning teachers is limited. They argue that some programmes are more of safety nets for new teachers and address a limited range of new teachers' concerns and suggest that programmes should be broadened if they are to address all the elements of the definition of teacher induction. This is supported by similar findings by Smith & Ingersoll (2004) which suggest that basic induction has limited impact on teacher learning and efficacy.

The various notions about induction as discussed above serve to emphasize that beginning teachers are learners and that induction should go beyond a focus on orientation, new teachers' well-being and addressing problems and concerns and support their professional growth. In a nutshell, teacher induction should facilitate development of pedagogical

knowledge and support the new teacher to go beyond survival despite the role demands. But, in order to be able to proffer appropriate support, it is vital for schools to appreciate the role demands that bear upon the beginning teacher.

### **2.3 The role demands of teaching and the novice**

A significant body of literature on teacher induction shows that the transition from teacher education to actual professional practice is a frustrating and difficult process (Long, et al, 2012; Schollaert, 2011; Wang, Odell & Schwille, 2008; Kelchtermans & Ballet, 1999; Bartell, 1995; Veenman, 1984). A great deal of the strife cited by various authors is a result of a shift in role orientation which is associated with this transitional period. This shift is in response to issues of fulltime responsibilities of a teacher, multiple expectations and the need to reconcile the theory and practice gap.

Right from the time they enter the profession, beginning teachers assume full-scale and full-time responsibilities similar to those of their more experienced colleagues. This is paradoxical as the novices are in the process of learning to become teachers and improving their practice but at the same time, are expected to perform at the highest standards (Tikcle, 2002; Kelchtermans & Ballet, 1999). The beginners are required to display skills and abilities that they have not yet mastered and can only attain by beginning to do what they do not yet understand (Feiman-Nemser, 2001b), thus performing the function before fully comprehending or identifying with the new role (Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008). In addition, new teachers are usually delegated the most challenging teaching assignments and more co-curricular duties in the school. Green, cited by Cherubini (2009), calls these practices ‘inequitable professional expectations’ which burden the most inexperienced members of the profession. Bubb and Earley (2006) equate the said practices to initiation rites that gangs subject their new members to prove their worth. Along the same lines, Renard (2003:63) states that this process of initiation is captured in the horror stories of the first year of teaching which veterans often relate and which include “...teaching from a cart with no classroom of their own; being given unwanted duties; and being expected to cheerfully put up with a situation because they are the lowest on the totem pole.” The existence of such practices serves to validate Flores’ (2001) view of new teacher induction as a rite of passage. Howe (2006) though is of the view that the practices referred to above are harmful to



beginning teachers and the students they teach rather than being supportive. The question here is: How prevalent are these practices in Zimbabwe's primary schools?

That new teachers still have a lot to learn on initial entry into the profession is not disputable. In fact, Feiman-Nemser (2003) summarises three things that new teachers need to learn which include learning to teach, the process of enculturation and curriculum implementation. Berliner (1986) shares this same view and identifies six factors which differentiate novices from expert teachers. These are inability of the former to interpret classroom phenomena, discern events, use routines, make predictions, differentiate between typical and atypical events and evaluate performance. The differences demonstrate that proficiency and expertise develop gradually. Bartholomew (2007), Feiman-Nemser (2003) and Ferguson-Patrick (2011) all concur that new teachers need three to four years to achieve competence and several more years to achieve proficiency, hence the need for induction support to foster their professional growth.

Another source of challenges for beginning teachers in their new role is that of multiple expectations that bear upon them (Saka, 2009; Wang et al, 2008; Lindgren, 2005; Feiman-Nemser, 2001a). Such expectations include having to teach and at the same time learn how to teach; attending to demanding pupils and at the same time to be members of a school community (and of the larger community); and adjusting to the school organisation and its culture. While experienced teachers may consider these expectations to be routine, new teachers who have not yet learned to prioritise tasks may find them dichotomous and burdensome.

Several empirical sources allude to the theory-practice dilemma that new teachers in their first post experience (Bainbridge, 2011; Nahal, 2010; Veenman, 1984). This emanates from the gap that exists between the theoretical and academic courses done at college and the realities of the classroom situation (Liston, Whitcomb & Borko, 2006). Teacher preparation programmes have been criticised for being too theoretical and not equipping students with the basic repertoire of practical skills of teaching such as how to plan and implement the curriculum within their classrooms. It is claimed that new teachers emerge from Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes having only acquired a basic competence profile (Frykolm, 1998; Stephens & Crawley, 1994; Tickle, 1993) and with a deficit in preparation thus making them unable to handle the daily challenges of the classroom (Ingersoll, 2005;

Flores, 2001). Consistent with this argument, Cole and Knowles (1993) contend that most teacher education programmes focus on teaching pre-service teachers to teach rather than assisting them to become teachers. As a result, pre-service teachers are ill-prepared for the realities of teaching and the classroom. This discrepancy between expectations and reality leads to disillusionment and shattering of idealised images of the profession when the novice joins teaching as a qualified teacher. Other critics have further argued that ITE programmes equip trainees with wrong theory. Liston et al (2006:353) refer to an example of a study by the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) in the USA which found that many elementary school teachers from the 72 teacher education programmes they reviewed emerged from training without requisite knowledge of the teaching of the reading skill. The theory-practice gap therefore creates some dilemmas which have to be dealt with during the course of induction and the professional growth of new teachers.

Two authorities, however, introduce a different dimension to the theory-practice divide debate. Gees, cited by Rosaen & Schram (1998) notes that the process of becoming a teacher involves an interaction of ‘learning’ and ‘acquisition’ of the teaching culture, with the ‘learning’ being the theoretical aspect that is usually covered in training colleges while the ‘acquisition’, which tends to be practical, would be covered in schools through induction and other related professional activities. Feiman-Nemser (2001a), along the same lines, maintains that it is erroneous to consider NQTs as finished products that only need to refine existing skills and to treat their learning needs as a deficiency in training because there are some aspects that cannot be learned outside the teaching settings. These views, in my opinion, reiterate the need to consider the theory-practice gap in the context of induction as epitomising that which should be learned within the teaching context rather than a deficit in training.

The discussion in the preceding paragraphs demonstrates that the role demands on beginning teachers are quite enormous and that new teachers are generally overwhelmed by the workload encountered in schools. This accounts for the ‘praxis shock’ and frustration that NQTs are said to experience on joining the profession (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 1999; Veenman, 1984) and may in turn cause stress and burnout (Cherubini, 2009). The sources of the stress and burnout as noted by Liston et al (2006) and White and Moss (2003) include such factors as the size of teachers’ workload, paperwork and non-instructional meetings; the uncertainty and complexity of teaching; disillusionment with teaching; complexities of

interpersonal relationships with key players in schools; and the need to frequently defend decisions, practices and profession in many forums. Feiman-Nemser (2001b) and Brunton (2002) highlight that if not adequately supported, the novices may adopt a ‘swim’ or ‘sink’ approach whereby they adapt to situational realities by adopting whatever strategies enable them to survive the immediate demands of the classroom even if these do not promote good teaching practice. Such trial and error approaches are likely to become entrenched in the teachers’ repertoire of strategies unless interventions are made early in the profession (McDonald & Elias in Kardos, Johnson, Peske, Kauffman & Liu, 2001).

The role demands also account for the ‘wash out’ syndrome, a phenomenon which Veenman (1984:147) views as a manifestation of “the impact of teacher education being wacked by every day experience in the schools”. This, he says, is brought about by such factors as the bureaucratic norms of the school; mentor teachers, principals and others with evaluative power over beginning teachers; the structural characteristics of the school and the teacher’s work; the reference group of colleagues; the pupils and parents. Veenman (1984) suggests that faced with all these issues, NQTs may experience some cognitive dissonance and may be forced to change their attitudes to reduce the dissonance. In view of the challenges of the new post it is imperative to examine the different perspectives on teacher learning and professional growth.

## **2.4. Models of teacher development**

Literature suggests that learning to teach is a developmental process and the pedagogic understanding of teachers grows in stages. According to Katz (<http://www.edulink.org/forms>) the term development implies that “both thought and behaviour are learned in some kind of sequence and become increasingly adaptive to the task at hand and to the environment”. Therefore, the basis of competence for anyone assuming a professional role is experience and the attendant knowledge and practice. This explains why teacher professional growth has been conceptualised as occurring in developmental stages.

Frameworks on how teacher learning and development occur have been advanced by stage theorists (Vonk, 1989; Berliner, 1988; Ryan, 1986; Fuller & Brown, 1975) and career cycle theorists (Steffy, Wolfe, Pasch & Enz 2000; Huberman, 1992). More contemporary frameworks, for example, ‘adaptive expert’, ‘progressive differentiation’ and ‘professional

continuum' have also emerged. Some of these frameworks are briefly reviewed below to illustrate the diversity of models employed to investigate teacher induction as well as to provide a context for the study. As explained by Levine (2003), no single theory accommodates all viewpoints on teacher thinking and the teaching-learning process. Each model contributes in a distinctive way to an understanding of how teacher professional growth occurs and may enlighten us on how best to model interventions for enhancing the developmental process (Veenman, 1984).

Work in the field of teacher professional development was pioneered by Fuller (1969) and Fuller and Brown (1975) who originated the *Fuller's developmental theory of teacher concerns*. They identified three stages that beginning teachers progress through before becoming experts with each phase being characterised by specific concerns. The stages as envisaged by Fuller and Brown (1975:39) are:

- **Stage 1:** 'self' concerns (issues of adequacy and survival dominant, for example, discipline and management (class control), being evaluated, etc.).
- **Stage 2:** 'task' concerns' (focusing on curriculum and actual teaching practices, for example, methods and materials, mastery of teaching skills).
- **Stage 3:** 'impact' concerns (focus on improvement of professional capacity).

A later modified version by Fuller and Brown (1975) consisted of four stages, namely, fantasy, survival, mastery or craft and impact. The time spent at each stage in their view varies from novice to novice.

Other stage theorists suggest models of teacher induction crafted more or less along the lines posited by Fuller and Brown (1975). Though termed differently, the stages of development proposed by such theorists as Ryan (1986), Berliner (1988) and Kagan (1992) seem to take more or less the same course as illustrated in Figure 2.1 below:

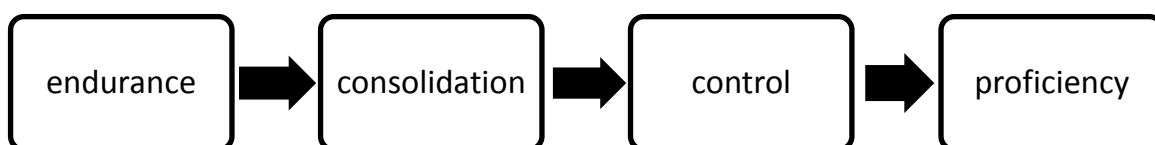


Figure 2.1: Stages of teacher professional development

Each stage is associated with specific teacher concerns and certain levels of competence.

Ryan's (1986) model of beginning teachers' development, for example, identifies four developmental stages: fantasy, reality, mastery of craft and impact. Of interest is the observation by Ryan (1988) that beginning teachers' positive attitudes reach the peak in the first few weeks on the job but start to wane and give way to panic during the first four to five months. Ryan (1986:11) describes this development as 'the curve of disenchantment', a phenomenon that could be attributed to the new teachers' losing their initial enthusiasm as the demands and challenges of the job become a reality and survival becomes the main goal (Feiman-Nemser, 2001b; Bullough, 1997).

Berliner's (1986) model of development of teacher expertise proposed five stages of development namely: novice, advanced beginner, competent, proficient and expert stages. The model shows that some novices and advanced beginners achieve the stage of competence by the third or fourth year, proficiency by the fifth year of teaching and that only a few teachers attain the highest stage of expertise (Berliner, 1986). The model illustrates that experience plays an important role in the teachers' development of instructional theory, skills and attitudes (Levine, 2003).

The stage models provide some insights into issues that new teachers attach importance to in their early career years. Stage theorists view skill development as a progressive cumulative process that is achieved primarily through practical experience (Dall'Alba & Sandberg, 2006). They suggest that as the beginner gains experience and higher levels of knowledge and skill acquisition, focus on self-concerns diminish and the task and impact concerns acquire eminence in the process of learning to teach and that the problems of beginning teachers are transitional and necessary for achieving higher levels of performance (Veenman, 1984). Dall'Alba and Sandberg (2006) assert that the emphasis placed by stages models on growth that emanate from experience, the influence of context on the growth of professional skills and the broadening of know-how all contribute to the understanding of professional development. However, critiques note some major limitations of the stages models which include their customary focus on transfer of knowledge and skills rather than developing an understanding of and in professional practice (Dall'Alba & Sandberg, 2006); their failure to offer solutions on how to propel teachers to change their focus to the next level (Levine,

2003) and that they are over-simplistic, too linear and understate the role of context in teacher development (Day, 1999).

Liston et al (2006) identify other frameworks on teacher learning and development that have recently emerged. The first such construction is ‘adaptive expert’ (Hammerness, Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). This portrays expertise as a combination of two elements namely, efficiency and innovation. Thus, expertise is defined in terms of the ability to perform and accomplish a particular task without effort as well as the ability to “move beyond existing routines... to rethink key ideas, practices and values in order to” respond to novel situations (Hammerness et al., 2005:358-359). Secondly, the concept ‘progressive differentiation’ indicates that teachers rely on five levels of knowledge – declarative, situated procedural, stable procedural, expert/adaptive, and reflective/analysed (Snow, Griffin & Burns in Hammerness, 2005). The five levels of knowledge are not separate and unrelated stages and the levels will be predominant at different points during the development from novice to expert teacher just like the teachers’ concerns at different stages vary. For example, pre-service teachers rely more on declarative or descriptive knowledge than novices or expert teachers.

The third emerging framework views teacher learning and development as a ‘professional learning continuum’ with three phases, namely, pre-service education, induction and continued professional phases (Feiman-Nemser, 2001a:1014). Each of the phases is defined by some key tasks of learning to teach. For example, the essential task for beginning teachers in their first three years of teaching is to build on ITE experiences and include, among other things: studying their contexts, designing a responsive instructional programme, creating a classroom community, enacting a beginning inventory and developing a professional identity (Liston, et al, 2006). The frameworks cited above all reiterate that at career entry point, beginning teachers have needs that should be addressed in order to ensure their professional growth.

This study is not patterned around any of the models on teacher development discussed above but these provide some insights into the trajectory of beginning teachers’ growth during their first years in the teaching profession which is the subject of this thesis. How the new teachers experience the initial years in the profession is partly influenced by the school culture and this is the subject of discussion in the next section.

## **2.5 The influence of the school culture on teacher learning**

The school culture and its influence on the new teachers' professional learning and development is a widely discussed phenomenon (Flores, 2001; Williams, Prestage & Bedward, 2001; Day, 1999; Hargreaves, 1994). Schein (1992:12) defines organisational culture, (which has been adopted for school culture as well) as:

*a pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, and that has worked well enough to be considered valid, and therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems.*

Schools as organisations have diverse ethos which guide beginning teachers and enable them to understand the various procedures within a particular school setting. A school culture normally encompasses the beliefs and experiences of players in a school- students, parents, administrators, teachers and support staff (Kardos, et al., 2001). Flores (2001) found that the school culture or workplace conditions play a significant role in shaping new teachers' practices and attitudes to teaching. The culture affects not only the NQTs beliefs and actions, but also has a bearing on the development of their professional identity (Carroll & Simco, 2001; Flores, 2001; Bartell, 1995), and is crucial to the novice's survival in the profession (Cherubini, 2009). Frykolm (1998) suggests that failure to understand the school culture may impact negatively on the inductee as the new teacher may feel alienated from the environment and therefore not operate effectively.

Hargreaves' (1994) work on teacher cultures makes it possible to explain and evaluate the different experiences of NQTs situated in varied school environments (Williams et al., 2001). It provides some insights into interactions which shape teachers' working lives. Hargreaves identified four types of cultures that may be operational in schools. These are the cultures of individualism, collaboration, balkanization and contrived collegiality. There are three forms of individualistic cultures: constrained individualism, which is a product of administrative and situational constraints; strategic individualism, which is a response to the daily demands of the work environment; and elective individualism, which represents a principled choice to work alone (Hargreaves, 1994). In such cultures, the teacher largely works in isolation and for the beginning teacher, this implies learning the ropes without any assistance or

unsupported. Because the culture of individualism does not make any provision for the needs of the NQTs, they may largely operate at the level of survival and without experiencing some professional growth (Williams et al., 2001).

In balkanized cultures, “teachers will identify with and be loyal to a group rather than the school as a whole” (Day, 1999:79). Such kinds of cultures are likely to hamper cooperation and create conflict within schools as the different groups will compete for resources and influence. However, it should be noted that an understanding of the dynamics of the subcultures will facilitate an understanding of the culture of an organisation (Cherubini, 2009).

The culture of contrived collegiality, (also sometimes referred to as structural collaboration), is, according to Datnow (2011), administratively regulated, compulsory, implementation-oriented, fixed in time and space and predictable. Hence, it would consist of a set of formal procedures and would manifest itself through such activities as joint planning and scheduled meetings, features which Hargreaves (1994) consider to be inflexible, inefficient and artificial. Because the collaboration here is controlled and open to manipulation, it may be just a formality rather than being meaningful. Feiman-Nemser (2001a) states that when teachers interact in contrived collegiality, they may not know how to engage in productive talk about teaching and learning. They usually skirt around the real issues in order to minimise differences in viewpoints or practice and avoid offering alternative opinions and this may explain why Hargreaves (1994:208) describes contrived collegiality as a safe simulation of collaboration. Real collegiality, according to Kardos et al (2001:254), calls for more than teachers exchanging social pleasantries, offering aid and assistance, or even sharing ideas and materials but “is ‘joint work’, in which teachers share responsibility for instruction and outcomes”. Day (1999) though argues that while cultures of contrived collegiality may have limitations, they act as a bridge towards more collaborative cultures by providing openings for professional development.

Collaborative cultures provide the most ideal framework for the development of the NQTs. Collaborative cultures are characterised by teachers interacting and participating as communities in terms of curriculum planning, teaching and learning; they foster partnerships amongst teachers and consequently counter professional isolation and enhance practice. Nias (1998) asserts that in collaborative cultures teachers spend time in productive conversations



about themselves as well as about teaching and learning. These conversations allow for exchange of ideas and continuous support, thus benefitting the new teacher professionally. The conversations are an acknowledgement that teacher proficiency is attained through discussion rather than solo study (Fulton et al., 2005).

According to Williams et al (2001), the different cultures in which beginning teachers operate can be placed on a continuum with the highly individualistic teacher cultures and spontaneous collaboration on the opposite extreme ends. In between the two extreme cultures is structural collaboration. Structurally collaborative cultures have the potential to generate positive developmental experiences for beginning teachers but these are limited.

While Hargreaves' (1994) work on teacher cultures has been highly influential in teaching, it is not without critics. Jarzabkowski (1999), for example, argues that the cultures of collegiality and collaboration as described by Hargreaves are too rigid to rationalise their applicability in the work of primary school teachers. Other critics have noted that there is no consensus on the meaning of the two terms. For instance, collegiality has been presumed to imply that teachers should work together, yet the concept is obscure and lacks precision (Campbell & Southworth, cited by Jarzabkowski). Little (1990) argues that true collegiality is a rare phenomenon in schools and that some activities that are considered to be collegiality do not impact on teachers' classroom practices though they may be of relevance to other aspects of the profession. Critics have also pointed out that collegiality can stifle independence and promote 'groupthink'.

An alternative categorisation of school cultures has been provided by Fulton et al (2005) and Kardos et al (2001). They distinguish three types of cultures that are operational in schools, namely, veteran-oriented, novice-oriented and integrated cultures. Veteran-oriented cultures are common in schools with high proportions of experienced teachers who have established patterns of professional practice. The professional interactions in such cultures are dictated by the concerns and habits of experienced teachers. The veterans may appear hospitable and friendly but they operate independently and value privacy which they equate with professionalism. New teachers in veteran-oriented cultures do not benefit from the experiences of seasoned colleagues as there is little or no interaction between the two. Such cultures barely provide organised support for beginning teachers and are characterised by inadequate formal structures devoid of deeply held values, mechanical appointment of

mentors, infrequent meetings in which topics dealt with are not important and non-engagement of teachers in collaboration (Kardos et al., 2001).

Novice-oriented cultures are common in new schools which would be largely staffed by novice teachers. But such cultures can also be found in established schools where, for example, in an attempt to revitalise the school, the head purposefully recruits substantial numbers of NQTs or where experienced teachers transfer to better schools. While there could be a lot of interaction among teachers in novice-oriented cultures, this is uninformed by expertise and accumulated knowledge of experienced teachers (Kardos et al., 2001). Consequently, no meaningful and sustained induction can ensue as there are no models of good practice and ready support for the novices. According to Fulton et al (2005) and Kardos, et al (2001) both veteran-oriented and novice-oriented cultures do not cater for the needs of beginning teachers. New teachers in such environments are equally disadvantaged as they have to function without the benefit of professional wisdom or experience and expertise.

Fulton et al (2005) and Kardos et al (2001) consider integrated cultures to be most ideal for supporting teacher learning and growth. In integrated cultures, new teachers are offered constant support and opportunities to interact with experienced colleagues. Such cultures take cognisance of the fact that the new teachers still need to learn to teach and will benefit from dialogue and engagement with other teachers from all experience levels on such issues as curriculum, instruction and their shared responsibility for students (Kardos et al., 2001). The needs of novices are categorised and addressed through formal elements of induction which include mentoring, observations and teacher meetings and organized discussions about expectations, needs of students and improvement of practice, as well as through informal supportive collegiality. The school head plays a key role in developing and maintaining integrated cultures (Kardos et al., 2001).

The manner in which a school inducts or socialises a new teacher is a reflection of that school's culture (Fulton et al., 2005; Kardos et al., 2001). The school culture therefore determines how a NQT experiences the socialisation process. The concept of teacher socialisation is discussed in detail below.

## **2.6 Induction as teacher socialisation**

Teacher induction is viewed as a process of socialisation which entails acculturation of the new teachers into the teaching community (Rippon & Martin, 2006:7) and construction of their role as teachers. Consistent with the above notion, Brunton (2002) defines socialisation as the process through which an individual develops the knowledge, skills and values required to undertake an organisational role such as teaching. This demands the ability to participate in and deploy the knowledge and skills relevant to the particular community of practitioners. Becoming a teacher therefore entails both professional and organisational socialisation and the experiences of NQTs during induction not only determined by pedagogic and didactical issues at classroom level but also by the organisational context and the conditions under which they operate (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 1999). In this study, the notion of teacher socialisation is paramount for exploring how the novice adjusts to the new environment.

Professional socialisation refers to the process of becoming a member of a profession and identifying with it (Brunton, 2002). It involves ensuring that the novices become effective members of the profession by introducing them to the relevant professional activities (White & Moss, 2003; Day, 1999; Ransby, 1993) as well as developing a positive teacher identity.

Brunton (2002) conceives organisational socialisation as denoting the processes through which one is taught and learns the knowledge, and skills of an organisational role in the context of a particular workplace as well as the perspectives and goals of the organisation (or the school culture). Blasé (1998:549) views organisational socialisation as centring on the development of ‘organisational literacy’. The concept of organisational literacy involves the acquisition of knowledge about the life and politics within the school and the ability to read and comprehend the situations that they meet. Schein (2004:32) concurs with this observation and asserts that novices often lack a ‘mental map’ to enable them to understand and interpret the culture of a new workplace, break into the professional circle and find a place among veteran teachers. The socialisation process therefore involves meaningful interaction between the beginning teacher and the school as an organisation and adapting to its micro-political realities (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 1999). The notion of ‘organisational literacy’ is relevant to this study as an appreciation of the work context and its influences is an integral part of the new teacher’s day-to-day interactions and these in turn translate into induction experiences.

The success or failure of the novice in the new role depends, not only on possession of knowledge and skills but also on the quality of their interactions with colleagues. Kardos et al (2001:251) say the following about the importance of these interactions:

*The novice teacher, eager to succeed in the classroom and the school, seeks signals from colleagues about how they interact with students, what instructional approaches they promote or suppress, what topics they deem appropriate or out of bounds at meetings, whom they look to for expert guidance, how they use their planning time and whether they encourage peers to exercise leadership beyond the classroom.*

The indicators referred to above need to be clear as the new teachers' initial experiences impact on their emerging identity and long-term performance in the classroom (Feiman-Nemser, 2001a) as well as their decision on whether to remain in the profession or not.

Several authors view the construction of a professional identity which enables the novice to fit into the profession as a key derivative of teacher induction or socialisation (Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008; McNally, Blake, Corbin & Gray, 2008). This professional identity is defined as "what beginning teachers believe about teaching and learning as self-as-teacher" (Bullough in Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop 2004:109) or a professional status associated with an individual's social and professional role (Nault, 2007). So, identity enables the beginners to feel that they are part of the teaching profession and to identify with it. Identity develops over time, and implies gaining insights into professional practices and the values, skills and knowledge required and practised within the profession (Chong, Ling & Chuan, 2011), the demands of the job and how society perceives the role of a teacher (Alspup, 2004). The process of acquiring a professional identity entails the novice seeking and negotiating membership to a community of educators and the new teachers may have to prove their worth first to earn this affiliation (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 1999; Bullough, 1997). Alspup (2004:36) sees the formation of the professional identity as including a suppression of "aspects of personal selves that do not conform to the standard cultural model of teacher". In support of this view, Feiman-Nemser (2001a) asserts that the realities of teaching and school cultures often challenge novices' idealism and self-image and may force NQTs to abandon their beliefs and what they learnt at college or university. Hence, there may be tension between the new teacher's expectations and those of other players within the school which in turn may

undermine the harmony that is a precondition for the development and consolidation of a teacher identity (Nault, 2007).

In the process of socialisation, the beginning teacher is not a passive recipient of social norms or presented content. Kelchtermans and Ballet (1999) and Tickle (2000) conceive teacher socialisation as an interpretive and interactive process in which the new teacher is influenced by but also influences the context. While the NQT is a novice in the profession, (s)he is a thinking intellectual who could make a meaningful contribution to the profession and the school. According to Tickle (2000), focusing on the deficiencies of novices as compared to their experienced colleagues results in missed opportunities to exploit the latter's enthusiasm and willingness to be innovative in their teaching. This presupposes a need to support the novices at career entry point so that their potentials can be fully realised. The support can take a variety of forms as discussed in the next section.

## **2.7 Induction support for beginning teachers**

Several research studies have established that there is a relationship between effective teacher induction programmes and various pointers such as job satisfaction, efficacy and retention (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Carroll & Simco 2001; Britton et al., 2000). Well-constructed and managed induction programmes have an impact on professional development and can contribute in improving teacher quality. But induction programmes that are insufficient and not continuous are of little value to new teachers (Kardos et al., 2001). The consequences of inadequate or inappropriate support that narrowly focuses on survival support for new teachers according to Bubb and Earley (2006) and Brunton (2002), are rusty teachers who, if they do not leave the profession, will work below potential. The long-term impact of this would be generations of children who come into contact with such teachers not learning as they should. Along the same lines, Jones and Stammers in Williams and Prestage, (2002) note that working with inadequate support networks can be discouraging and can result in the beginning teachers failing to appreciate that the challenges that they encounter in the classroom are not unique to them but common to most beginning teachers.

Literature reveals some common elements that characterise effective induction of NQTs. William and Prestage, (2002:37), for example, advise that if the goals of induction are to be realised, attention should be paid to such aspects as recognising÷ that NQTs need to feel

supported and encouraged, the value of informal support mechanisms, the need to balance between survival and development and a need for schools to balance their role of support and that of providing further training.

In an analysis of induction programmes from across the world (Australia, Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, New Zealand and the United States of America) Howe (2006) concludes that the common attributes of successful induction programmes include opportunities for experts and novices to learn together in a supportive environment promoting time for collaboration, reflection and gradual acculturation into the teaching profession.

Carroll and Simco (2001) consider monitoring, support and assessment as the pillars of the induction year. Monitoring and support entail forging a professional relationship with the NQT and making provision for the necessary induction supports. A study by Gilbert (2005) indicates that while mentoring has often been considered as the most dominant induction strategy, it is only one of several activities prized by beginning teachers. Elements of effective and comprehensive induction programmes as indicated by several authorities (Wechsler et al., 2010; Fletcher et al., 2008; Fulton et al., 2005; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Feiman-Nemser, 2003; Carroll & Simco, 2001; Kardos, et al., 2001) include a mentor from the same teaching area or grade; supportive collaboration from the principal and other administrators; common planning with other teachers in the subject area or Grade. These elements also include regularly scheduled collaboration time with other teachers to facilitate peer support and allow novices to share experiences. This entails promoting collegial collaboration, i.e. teamwork between beginning and experienced teachers which is facilitated through existing school structures, for example, grade level teams where there is coordinated instructional planning (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000). Collaboration could also take the form of matching of a novice teacher with a veteran teacher which may not be necessarily scheduled as the arrangement might be informal. However, literature indicates that new teachers are at times reluctant to seek assistance either because they are embarrassed to do so or they don't want to burden the assistance providers (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000). Furthermore, the elements encapsulate:

- participation in seminars or workshops for new teachers which are valuable in addressing the common needs of NQTs (Carroll & Simco, 2001; Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000); participation in external network of teachers;

- formative assessment or classroom observation and receiving feedback based on classroom observations. Britton et al (2000) cite different varieties of observations and their purposes for example, new teachers observing each other (as part of peer support); mentoring (a model of good practice); observing teachers in the same subject or grade (to upgrade the novice's knowledge of how to teach similar materials and broaden their teaching practices and styles), and observing teachers of other grades or subjects (to help the novice focus on classroom management and related issues without being distracted by the subject of the lesson);
- being assigned smaller classes (Wechsler et al., 2010; Fletcher et al., 2008; Fulton et al., 2005; Ingersoll &, Smith, 2004; Feiman-Nemser, 2003; Carroll & Simco, 2001; Kardos, et al., 2001);
- reduced teaching load and release time or periods of non-instructional time for novices and their mentors. The release time for the beginner could be used to observe other teachers, attend workshops, etc. while that for the mentor could be used to provide demonstration lessons, observe the new teacher lessons and documentation and attend training workshops among other things (Wechsler et al., 2010; Fletcher et al., 2008; Fulton et al., 2005; Ingersoll &, Smith, 2004; Feiman-Nemser, 2003; Carroll & Simco, 2001; Kardos, et al., 2001);
- extra classroom assistance in the form of a teacher aide (Wechsler et al., 2010; Fletcher et al., 2008; Fulton et al., 2005; Ingersoll &, Smith, 2004; Feiman-Nemser, 2003; Carroll & Simco, 2001; Kardos, et al., 2001); and,
- orientation of the new teachers to their schools. The range of issues to be covered during orientation as suggested in international literature include introduction and welcome to the school, communication of school expectations about the performance of the beginning teachers, available resources, procedures and policies (Moore & Swan, 2008; Carver, 2003; Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000). Moore and Swan (2008) suggest that teacher professional organisations could be involved in orientation to make the beginners aware of the relevant policies and procedures within the profession.

Carroll and Simco propose criteria for auditing a school's provision for induction of NQTs which highlight the elements cited above as indicators of good induction practices. However, they suggest additional indicators which are the existence of a school policy statement on

induction and professional development and a planned induction programme which is in line with the NQT's needs. Moore and Swan (2008) call the elements or strategies of induction suggested by the different authorities the Best Practices framework, and similar to Stansbury and Zimmerman (2000), classify these induction components into low intensity and high intensity strategies. The authors define low intensity strategies as those activities that are not comprehensive and require minimal effort and funding by the providers of induction. These include such strategies as orientation of new teachers, matching beginning and veteran teachers, adjusting working conditions and promoting collegial collaboration. Such activities though would have a limited impact on teacher effectiveness as they tend to focus on providing personal and emotional support and addressing issues of unfamiliar tasks and other such problems encountered by first time teachers (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000) and would lead to improved teacher retention (Moore & Swan, 2008). High intensity induction strategies according to Stansbury & Zimmerman (2000) would require considerable substantial concentration in terms of planning, time, effort and resources in order to develop and support beginning teachers. Such strategies would be the most effective (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004) and result in significant improved teacher learning and efficacy. They include the rest of the components from the earlier framework not mentioned under low intensity activities.

These support strategies are meant to help the beginner gain knowledge and competence in his/her new role and responsibilities. Carroll & Simco (2001:33), however, caution that while support strategies may be in place, the quality of the induction process is ultimately determined by such factors as:

- the school culture;
- the motivation, knowledge and skills of the mentor;
- the motivation, and level of involvement of the NQT;
- the permitting circumstances allowed by the school leadership and organisation; and
- the resources in terms of staff, time and funding.

The induction experiences of primary school teachers were considered in the context of some of the support activities proposed above. It should be noted though that a number of the suggested support activities are not feasible in the context of Zimbabwean primary schools



which are resource constrained, for example, such activities as reduced teaching load, being assigned smaller classes, periods of non-instructional time for novices and their mentors and extra classroom assistance in the form of a teacher aide. Consistent with this observation, Kauffman, Johnson, Kardos, Liu and Peske (2002) argue that schools with challenging conditions are often unable to provide the necessary guidance to beginning teachers. The question then is: What bearing would this have on the induction experiences of NQTs whose first post is at a rural school with challenging conditions?

The most cited induction support is mentoring (Davies & Slattery, 2010; Stanulis & Ames, 2009; Hellsten et al., 2009; Greiman, Torres, Burris & Kitchel, 2007; Jones & Straker, 2006; Lindgren, 2005; Edwards & Protheroe, 2004; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Vonk, 1993). Mentoring as defined by Salinitri in Hellsten et al (2009:706) is:

*creating an enduring and meaningful relationship with another person, with the focus on the quality of that relationship including such factors as mutual respect, willingness to learn from each other, or use of interpersonal skills. Mentoring is distinguishable from other retention activities because of the emphasis on learning in general and mutual learning in particular.*

Thus, mentoring is not a one-sided relationship but concedes that both the inductee and the inductor will learn from their interaction though the mentor is more experienced. Rolfe-Flett in Davies and Slattery (2010:1) define mentoring as “a process by which an expert person facilitates learning in the mentee through arrangement of specific learning experiences”. Again, this definition emphasizes the purposeful nature of the mentoring process and the general outcome of the experience which is learning.

Jones and Straker (2006) consider mentoring as being based on the belief that effective development of professional practice occurs in professional settings and in collaboration with expert professional practitioners or experienced teachers. However, Fuller and Unwin (2004) contest the concept ‘novice’ as well as equating of expertise with status and experience at the workplace. They argue that new people to a workplace play more complex roles than implied by the concept ‘novice’. The new workers may have acquired different types of skills and higher levels of knowledge prior to joining a new workplace. Fuller and Unwin (2004:41)

conclude that the new and old employees can mutually learn from each other and this invalidates the concepts of ‘novice’, ‘experience’ and ‘expertise’.

The concept of mentoring is derived from the notion of craft apprenticeship which Stolurow (1972:165) refers to as ‘model the master teacher approach’ to teacher training. In this model, the apprentice, who in this case is the NQT, is attached to an experienced teacher, that is, the master teacher or mentor. The NQT learns the master teacher’s skills, knowledge, personality and attitudes through observation, imitation, modelling and practice, thus acquiring practical skills. The idea of mentoring is borrowed from a concept in industry called ‘sitting with Nellie’ in which Nellie represents an experienced factory worker to whom new workers are attached in order to learn a particular skill through demonstration (Cullingford, 2006).

The concept of mentoring is informed by such theories as Bandura’s (1973) Social Learning Theory and the Interactionist Theory. Bandura’s theory highlights the significance of observation, imitation and modelling in learning new knowledge, skills and attitudes from significant others. The Interactionist Theory, which is derived from the ideas of Hargreaves (1976) and Keddie (1973), is based on the belief that a person is a product of interaction with significant others whom Cooley (cited by Keddie) refers to as one’s looking glass self. In short, NQTs learn good teaching practices by observing and imitating experienced teachers who they are attached to during induction. Most induction strategies/activities are constructed on the modelling principle which is an integral part of the above theories.

Williams and Prestage (2002) perceive the role of a mentor to be multifaceted and they maintain that a mentor is also a facilitator and manager. The mentor is required to monitor, teach and provide support (Williams & Prestage, 2002; Shaw, Boydell, & Warner, 1995). The functions of a mentor do not only centre on providing professional assistance and psychosocial support to the new teacher (Greiman et al., 2007), but mentors are also required to be “assessors and gatekeepers to the teaching profession” (Jones & Straker, 2006:166). This multiplicity of roles and responsibilities is a source of tension and conflicting loyalties for the mentors as they have to strike a balance between them.

Howe (2006) regards the provision of experienced, well-qualified and especially trained mentors to novice teachers as the essential facilitator in teacher education effectiveness. Research has shown that there are numerous positive outcomes of mentoring and that

mentoring plays a crucial role in supporting and socialising beginning teachers into the profession (Lindgren, 2005; Feiman-Nemser 2001b), enhancing feelings of job satisfaction and reducing feelings of isolation they may experience (Hellsten et al., 2009), reducing stress levels of beginning teachers, improving teacher efficacy and aiding the professional development of the novice (Greiman et al., 2007). According to Weiss and Weiss (1999) research has also shown that beginners who are mentored are more effective teachers in their early years in the profession as they learn from guided practice rather than trial-and error.

The main goals of mentoring are to transmit what Lindgren (2005:252) calls “many of the experiences and possibilities in the teaching profession” from veteran teachers to beginning teachers. This is because mentors are usually selected using the expertise and experience criteria. The mentoring process involves the transferring of norms, cultural values, language, philosophy, and sets of behaviours expected by a school from a veteran teacher to a beginner (Little, 1990). The mentor has an appreciation of the school culture, and in this respect, is able to utilize this knowledge to extend the experiences of the NQT. The mentor, through words and action, communicates to beginners what teaching and learning to teach in a specific setting entails (Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2009). Therefore, mentoring is critical as it can determine what novices learn from experience (Feiman-Nemser, 2001a) and also enables them to situate their new role.

Little (1990) differentiates between emotional support whose goal is to promote the novices’ sense of well-being and professional support that enhances a deep appreciation of teaching informed by theoretical knowledge. She contends that the value of mentoring lies in assisting novices to defy problems of practice and use them as an opportunity to learn rather than in ensuring a comfortable entry into teaching.

Consistent with the above line of thought Feiman-Nemser (2001b:17) argues that mentoring should go beyond emotional support and focus on what she calls ‘educative mentorship’. This entails clearly defining what good teaching and becoming a good teacher demands. The benefits of educative mentorship include its ability to empower mentors to allow new teachers to tap into and learn from their own experiences; its ability to foster inquiry which focuses on student thinking and understanding and to promote controlled dialogue about challenges, thus facilitating beginning teachers’ professional development; and above all, its capacity to make provision for novices to learn in and from practice (Hellsten et al., 2009;

Feiman-Nemser, 2001a). She sees these as the factors that separate educative mentorship from 'traditional approaches that focus on adjustment, technical advice and emotional support and 'offer short-term, feel-good support' (Feiman-Nemser, 2001b:26).

Hellsten et al (2009) assert that many of the mentorship models that have been developed are based on Hargreaves' apprenticeship model in which an expert transmits knowledge and skills to a charge. However, Hargreaves' model has been criticised for failing to take cognisance of pre-existing expertise of the mentee; discouraging the novices from challenging existing practices; encouraging submissiveness to a mentor irrespective of a mentor's expertise and impeding new approaches to teaching and learning (Hellsten et al., 2009; Jones & Straker, 2006). By implication, all the other mentorship models fashioned along Hargreaves model have adopted these shortcomings.

Anderson and Shannon (1988) propose a model that conceptualises mentorship in teacher induction as essentially a nurturing process and its functions as teaching, sponsoring, encouraging, counselling and befriending. Another model advocated by Furlong and Maynard (1993) identifies three main functions of a mentor: a collaborative teacher, an instructor (through observation and feedback) and a co-enquirer (by promoting critical reflection on teaching and learning). Glazer and Hannafin (2006) suggest yet another model of teacher induction which assesses how to prompt collaboration and collegial support in a professional teaching community. These models approach the role of a mentor in the induction and professional development of NQTs from different perspectives but they generally acknowledge the centrality of the mentor in the whole process. Orland-Barack and Hasin (2010) acknowledge the existence of diverse mentoring models. In addition, they view mentoring as a contextual activity and emphasize the connection between mentoring activities and the context in which they are implemented. They highlight that mentoring contexts are differentiated by their organisational, instructional and professional orientation towards teaching and mentoring. The authors suggest that perceptions about mentoring are influenced by contexts and that these perceptions are manifested through the language which a mentor uses to describe their function as well as how they act out their professional role (Orland-Barack & Hasin, 2010:427).

A question that has often arisen concerns the qualities of a good mentor. Various authorities have addressed this subject and provide some insights into requisite qualities of good

mentors. Stansbury and Zimmerman (2000) consider the qualities of mentors to be a demonstration of success in their own classrooms and being articulate about their practice. In support of the above views, Orland-Barak and Hasin (2010) contend that good mentors should primarily be expert teachers, rich in content, practical and pedagogical content knowledge. So, the selected support providers would need to be models of good practice. Howe (2006) and Fulton et al, (2005:22), on the other hand, view good mentors as those who are: more than ‘buddies’, able to assist the new teacher to reflect on their skills and progress, good teachers and reflective practitioners; able to work in teams as well as individually; and trained in skills of evaluation and effective ways of structuring constructive criticism in a ‘critical friend role’. Williams and Prestage (2002) point out that in order for the mentors to be able to execute their roles well, they need to have some knowledge about aims of mentorship and the needs of mentees. They also need a theoretical understanding of how beginning teachers develop professionally (Shaw et al., 1995) and to be able to afford mentees learning opportunities that will encourage their professional growth (Wang, 2001). The above views underscore the need to carefully consider the criteria for mentor selection if the goals of mentoring of NQTs are to be realised.

A recurring theme in literature on teacher induction is the need for support and training of mentors to equip them with skills and understanding of expectations as well as to develop consistent good practice. Lindgren (2005), for example, points to the need to appreciate that the mentoring role is different from the traditional role of a teacher as overseeing learning of colleagues and requires use of strategies that are relevant to adult learning and social skills. She cautions against making assumptions about mentors’ competences and points out that being an experienced teacher does not necessarily imply that one is skilled at assessing and supporting new teachers. By inference then, if mentors are to enhance teaching practice, they should be equipped with skills that make it possible for beginning teachers to learn in and from practice (Feiman-Nemser, 2001a). Such skills include the ability to proffer subject or grade specific feedback, co-plan challenging activities, assist novices in identifying areas for growth and help novices to connect practice to student performance (Stanulis & Ames, 2009). Darling-Hammond (2006) emphasizes that expert mentors within the same field as the beginning teachers would impact on their learning than non-experts.

According to Howe (2006), proper implementation of mentoring is crucial as the experiences of novice teachers are determined by the mentors’ effectiveness. Yet, Fulton et al (2005)

suggest that the mentoring process is at times poorly executed. They cite such examples of poor execution of mentoring as mentor selection that is based on convenience rather than instructional or coaching abilities, use of untrained mentors, denying mentors time to work with the mentees and lack of formal organisation of mentoring programmes. Fletcher et al (2008) give further related examples such as instances where experienced teachers may be too busy to mentor or they are provided with little or no support structures to enable them to operate effectively. Alternatively, mentors may not be willing to take up the role of supporting new teachers because this would be an extra responsibility over and above their regular workload. All these issues may render mentoring and consequently, induction, ineffective.

Besides poor execution, there are other contentious issues pertaining to the mentoring process. Feiman-Nemser (2001b) is of the opinion that because mentoring is grounded in practice and connected with experienced teachers, it may strongly influence the development of desirable professional dispositions and continuous improvement of practice. But at the same time, critiques of the concept have noted that mentors may propagate traditional and stereotyped teaching practices and reinforce norms of individualism and non-interference (Stanulis & Ames, 2009; Jones & Straker, 2006). Fulton et al (2005) are critical of the one-to-one apprenticeship-type mentoring models which reinforce the factory-era model of teaching in isolated classrooms and nurture imitation rather than understanding as the novice assimilates the practices and habits of the master. Advocates of the approach though have counter argued that while the apprenticeship model encourages simulation of the mentor's practices, it does not hinder understanding and application of underlying theoretical principles (Feiman-Nemser, 2001a).

So, while mentoring is an important element of induction support, there is a need to take heed of its possible shortcomings so as to moderate their effects. Considerable research has been conducted on mentoring and other variables that influence NQTs induction experiences.

## **2.8 Research perspectives on the experiences of NQTs**

Totterdell et al (2008) assert that three themes which are consistent in research on teacher induction are:

- goals of induction have stayed constant and research evidence indicates that well designed and managed programmes achieve these goals;
- functional induction programmes are characterised by outcome-based objectives, monitoring for progress with the monitoring guided by pre-defined, staged targets and specific objectives; and
- consistent recommendations from research include the necessity for mentor training and a need for reducing workload and stress that new teachers experience.

However, focus here is on studies that addressed aspects relevant to the experiences of NQTs during the induction period. The studies employed a wide range of methodologies such as questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The themes relevant to the current study that emerged from the empirical studies include:

- the challenges and needs of NQTs (Soares, Lock & Foster, 2008; Bubb et al, 2005; Gilbert, 2005; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Feiman-Nemser, 2003; Veenman, 1984);
- the influence of school contexts on induction experiences (Flores, 2001; Williams et al., 2001; Brunton, 2000; Kelchtermans & Ballet, 1999);
- mentoring as an induction strategy (Hellsten et al, 2009; Jones and Straker, 2007; Lindgren, 2005; William & Prestage, 2002); and
- the impact of induction (Wechsler et al, 2010:6; Soares et al, 2008; Smith & Ingersoll, 2005).

### ***2.8.1 Challenges and needs of NQTS***

The needs and challenges of NQTs are well documented in research on teacher induction. These were initially identified in a study by Veenman (1984) which established that NQTs expressed concern relating to issues of didactical competence, authority and effective classroom management. More contemporary studies show that the challenges of NQTs teachers have basically remained the same since then (Gilbert, 2005; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Feiman-Nemser, 2003; White & Moss, 2003; Flores, 2001). A study by Flores (2001) established that new teachers found their first teaching experience tiring, sudden and stressful. The participants in the study used such terms as ‘shock’, ‘jump’ and ‘unprepared’ to describe the dissonance between their expectations and reality of the classroom (Flores, 2001:139).

Romano (2008) conducted a qualitative study which prompted beginning teachers to reflect on their successes and struggles in practice. The findings of the research revealed that the most significant issues of the first year of teaching were classroom management, external policy, personal issues and content and pedagogy. Romano recommended that teacher education and induction programmes should give the said areas priority when designing support activities for beginning teachers.

Chubbuck, Clift, Allard and Quinlan's research (2001) sought to establish the needs of first years and how these are tackled. The data for the study was collected through surveys, focus group discussions and notes from planning sessions. They found that beginning teachers expressed a need for emotionally safe environments and specifically identified a need for information and supportive and informative relationships with other teachers.

Gilbert's (2005:38) survey and focus group data on what helps beginning teachers established that:

- beginning teachers profit from varied forms of professional interaction with more experienced teachers, and in particular they valued observing other teachers at work in their classrooms;
- mentoring is only one among several induction supports and there are varied approaches to its enactment; and
- the main sources of stress and frustration for NQTs are time pressures, paperwork, and non-instructional meetings.

Gilbert concludes that the challenge is to provide both emotional and professional support. The studies alluded to, in addition to indicating the needs of the novices reflect the kind of support that they find most appropriate.

### ***2.8.2 The influence of school contexts on induction experiences***

Consideration is now given to the influence of school contexts on how NQTs experience induction. Literature on teacher socialisation underscores the significance of contextual variables in the process of becoming a teacher. Carver and Feiman-Nemser (2009:324) maintain that the school culture and context as manifested through poor school leadership,



professional isolation and demoralized staff “all work to mediate and/or block thoughtful induction and mentoring” This has been corroborated by several studies, for example, Cherubini (2009), Carroll and Simco (2001) and Kelchtermans and Ballet (1999).

Brunton’s (2002) qualitative study examined the experiences of five primary school teachers in their first year of teaching in New Zealand. She established that the new teachers’ experiences were varied and mainly determined by the contexts in which they worked. Variations were noted in expectations of schools as well as roles the beginners were supposed to undertake.

Flores (2001:135) investigated the influence of biographical and contextual factors on beginning teachers’ understanding and practice of teaching. The questionnaire data from this study suggests that the workplace conditions, particularly supportive and informative leadership, have a strong impact on the ‘process of becoming and being a teacher’. The conditions are significant, not only in shaping new teachers’ professional behaviour, but they result in enhanced understanding and practice of the profession. The findings suggest that classroom and school settings also lead to a redefining of beginning teachers’ professional identity as they make decisions that enable them to fit into the specific context. Flores recommends that the support offered to new teachers during induction should be responsive to their needs and that new teachers should be provided with meaningful opportunities for professional learning and development.

A study by Williams et al (2001) examined the significance of teacher culture in the implementation of statutory arrangements for monitoring and support of NQTs in England. Their data was drawn from interviews with NQTs, mentors and head teachers. Their findings suggest that the impact of induction on NQTs is determined by the school culture or context. They found that new teachers in individualistic cultures were preoccupied with survival rather than professional growth because they do not enjoy any access to developmental activities. Such contexts would perhaps be what Bubb et al (2005:11) term ‘rogue schools’, that is, schools that not only renege on their responsibility to support new teachers, but also exploit them in unethical ways. The experiences of novices in structural collaborative cultures, on the other hand, were positive and developmental because support here is planned and regulated.

These findings of the cited studies above are consistent with observations made by Liston et al (2006) that organisational contexts vary and some facilitate the professional growth of new teachers better than others.

### ***2.8.3 Mentoring as an induction strategy***

Hellsten et al (2009) investigated the mentorship experiences of NQTs in their first teaching assignment. Their case study data revealed three types of mentoring relationship being engaged/disengaged, assigned/unassigned, and single/multiple mentors. Disengaged mentors may neglect to provide support or establish a mentorship relationship either because they are unwilling to take on extra responsibility or because the novice seems so competent that the mentor may not see a need for mentorship. They suggest that beginning teachers benefit from working with a group of mentors (the learning community model) rather than a single mentor (the apprenticeship model). Hellsten et al (2009) conclude that what matters most is not that a mentor is assigned or unassigned but rather whether a beginner is in a single or multiple mentor environments as the latter results in an expanded opportunity to learn.

Lindgren (2005) examined the mentoring experiences of seven beginning teachers in order to understand their impact on them. The interviews were conducted four times during the course of the year. Her findings confirm that, as had been revealed by previous studies, mentoring is an effective method of supporting novices. Most of the participants in the study indicated that they had benefited from mentoring but a few complained of communication problems with the mentor. Another problem that emerged was that the goals and content of mentoring had not been set beforehand and this placed limitations on the process of mentoring. A weakness of Lindgren's study though is that it only sought the views of the mentees and did not compare these with the views of the mentors. Lindgren notes the need to educate and prepare mentors for their role so as to enhance their effectiveness in supporting beginning teachers.

The necessity to address the training and support needs of mentors in order to foster development of good practice and to avoid making assumptions about mentor competences is a recurring recommendation in studies (Stanulis & Ames, 2009; William & Prestage 2002; Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2009). William and Prestage (2002) established that giving inadequate attention to mentor training needs may result in discrepancies in the quality of support, and in turn, the quality of induction experiences. They concluded that, if mentors are to function effectively, the amount of attention their training needs receive should be

comparable to that got by NQTs. Related to this, Stanulis and Ames (2009) argue that mentoring is a learned professional practice which entails studying the manner in which teachers learn, the ways of encouraging CPD and analysis of what is being learned.

Jones and Straker (2007) conducted a study to explore the professional knowledge base which informs mentors' work with trainees and NQTs. They employed Shulman's (1987) model of teacher knowledge as a tool for analysing mentor knowledge. Their findings suggest that the knowledge base of mentors in working with trainee teachers is mainly informed by their professional practice and personal experience as teachers rather than specific theories on adult learners and underlying principles of mentoring. Jones and Straker (2007:182) conclude:

*...if we are to provide quality mentoring for trainees and newly qualified teachers we need to enable mentors to free themselves from the idiosyncratic practices they have developed over years by providing access to adequate training and developmental programmes...*

It is, therefore, paramount to equip mentors with relevant knowledge and skills if they are to effectively assist their protégés learn to teach as the quality of support provided significantly determines the impact of induction on beginning teachers.

In Zimbabwe, the concept of mentoring has been mainly applied in ITE with pre-service teachers who are normally attached to experienced teachers during TP to understudy them in order to acquire some instructional skills. However, research shows that the application of the concept has been problematic. A study by Kasowe (2013) on the role of mentors in the professional development of student teachers established that mentors had a limited conception of mentoring and were not provided with guidelines on how to carry out the task. Hence they could only proffer limited assistance, support and guidance to their protégés. A study by Ndamba and Chabaya (2011) revealed that those assigned to mentor the pre-service teachers were not clear about their mentoring roles. They noted some negative practices among the mentors such as taking advantage of the presence of the student teacher to absent themselves from duty; overloading them with work which would not allow them time to observe the mentor, prepare for lessons and reflect on work covered; and, mentors offloading to student teachers subjects they did not like to teach hence denying the latter the experience

of teaching all subjects on the primary school curriculum. The impact of such practices was likely to be felt during the first teaching assignment by the beginning teachers.

Mtewa and Kwari (2003) conducted a study on the potential of resource persons appointed under the Better Schools Programme Zimbabwe (BSPZ) to mentor their peers. The programme established by the then Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture was meant to provide for the staff development of teachers through the resource teachers who were supposed to provide assistance to peers in the area of need. In primary schools, the resource teachers would receive a week long induction training through the Better Environmental Science Teaching (BEST) program which fell under the BSPZ framework and were supposed to offer subject specific support to their colleagues with the teaching of Environmental Science (ES) . The resource persons had wide ranging functions and these were: coordinating of staff development; educational consultants, training programme planners; system analysts; motivators and learning specialists; organising and conducting in-service training for teachers; maintaining resource centre infrastructure; liaising with ministry officials on in-service education issues; and producing monthly reports on in-service activities in the district (Mtewa & Kwari 2003:277). The two authors viewed the functions of the resource persons as being consistent with mentoring. The study established that the resource teachers experienced a number of problems which included resource constraints, unsupportive attitudes by teachers and school administrators, unhealthy perceptions of professional development, a closet culture characteristic of their peers (which could imply some secrecy and working in isolation), heavy workloads, lack of appropriate incentives for them and lack of guidelines (or prescribed strategy) about their work. The study concluded that the resource persons were involved in minimal mentoring in their everyday work and recommended that the potential of resource persons as mentors could be enhanced by, among other things, improving their work environments, and raising the level of professionalism among themselves, their peers and school administrators through education. This study was of significance in that it also highlighted some of the CPD initiatives in the country. The three studies cited above demonstrate the challenges of implementing mentorship in Zimbabwe.

#### ***2.8.4 The impact of induction on NQTS***

Related literature shows that there are variations on the impact of induction. The studies analysed illustrate the impact of teacher induction. Ingersoll and Smith (2004) used 1999-2000 SASS and 2000-01 TFS data to examine the impact of induction on teacher retention.

They found that regular collaboration with experienced teachers which went beyond basic induction reduced attrition rates among NQTs by 29%. They found the most effective induction programmes to be those that provided multiple supports, specifically provision of mentors from the same field, opportunities to engage in group or collective planning and collaborative activities. Similarly, three out of six studies examined by Totterdell et al (2008) showed that there is a significant correlation between induction and retention. Contrary to these findings however, a study by Glazerman et al (2010) established that generally, induction has no impact on retention. This perhaps suggests the need for induction programmes to focus on more than the basics.

Teacher induction also impacts on job satisfaction and teacher efficacy. Wechsler et al (2010:6) found that teachers who received more intensive mentoring, whose induction had a strong focus on instruction, who received a variety of induction supports and who worked in supportive school contexts reported greater improvement in their instructional practice. On the other hand, Harland and Kinder (1997) suggest several other ways in which induction could impact on NQTs. These include: changes in subject knowledge and skills; deeper pedagogical understanding; changes in confidence and self-esteem; changes in practice; more reflection; clearer rationale for actions; more skilled at managing and influencing others; greater resilience; greater ability to lead change; and, greater happiness and motivation.

A study by Soares et al (2008), however, gives some insights into some of the limitations of the induction experiences of NQTs. They examined the experiences of newly qualified teachers in England, a country where induction is a statutory requirement. They followed three cohorts of teachers through their ITE into their first teaching posts, gathering data for the study through questionnaires, telephone interviews and focus groups. Although all the recommended supports for new teachers were in place, three trends of concern emerged from the research. Firstly, the specialist backgrounds of mentors did not match that of the new teachers assigned to them. This, in the view of Soares et al (2008) would restrict the subject knowledge and subject specific support that the mentor could avail to the novice. Secondly, most participants in the study were accorded non-contact time. But this was likely to be reduced by covering up for absent colleagues, largely teaching lower ability classes and attending to coursework assignments, thus limiting time devoted to induction activities. A third major observation about the induction experiences was the unavailability of provision for meetings to review the professional progress for some participants. These participants

were, therefore, denied opportunities for professional dialogue. In addition, a significant number of participants were not observed while teaching by their mentors. Yet others were observed by other people who were not necessarily their mentors. Most importantly, feedback on lessons observed was not readily available. Consequently, the role of feedback in reassuring and developing NQTs was negated.

The various studies discussed in this section are relevant to the current study as they highlight some of the factors that impact on how beginning teachers experience induction. The next section considers some researches that have been conducted on teacher induction in Africa in general as well as specifically in Zimbabwe.

## **2.9 Research perspectives on teacher induction in Africa**

Literature reviewed shows that in Africa, teacher induction is generally a new phenomenon. Yet Africa, like the rest of the world, is concerned about the quality of education in its schools which research has shown is influenced by teacher quality. Because induction is an enabling factor for teacher quality, it becomes a very important element of teacher development.

Empirical research on teacher induction conducted in African countries such as Ghana (Cobbold, 2007), Kenya (Dawo, 2011; Simatwa, 2010; Indoshi, 2003), Lesotho (Lefoka & Sebatane, 2003) and Zimbabwe (Samkange, 2012) indicate the areas of concern for the NQTs in the aforesaid countries. Indoshi (2003) for example, found that induction of beginning teachers in Kenya is largely informal and ad hoc. He asserts that while the new teachers in Kenyan schools experience problems ranging from discipline to interpersonal relationships, no mentors are officially assigned to assist them and the senior administrators within schools who usually undertake the role of mentors are ill prepared for the task. He recommends, among other things, that formal induction programmes be put in place, that the needs of NQTs be identified so as to ensure focus in supports offered and that mentors be trained for the role. Consistent with this study, Simatwa found that NQTs are inadequately supported by their respective schools to engender professional growth. He also recommends the formalisation of induction programmes so as to ensure uniformity of support activities.

A comprehensive study by Lefoka and Sebatane (2003) established that in Lesotho, superficial professional induction of NQTs occurs in schools and that the induction focused mainly on administrative issues. Indications from the study were that NQTs experience such problems as dealing with individual needs, introducing lessons, time management, utilisation of methods taught during initial training, planning, scheming, record keeping, lack of confidence, feelings of isolation and to a lesser extent, relationships with colleagues. On the other hand, the concerns of principals centred on punctuality, administration of corporal punishment, lack of skills to handle pupils with disabilities and lack of time management skills in NQTs. Lefoka and Sebatane (2003) concluded that the concerns expressed by principals demonstrated their lack of appreciation of the needs of NQTs. They recommended the introduction of an induction programme for newly qualified teachers and the training for mentors to man such a programme.

Cobbold (2007) argues that the situation currently obtaining in Ghana is that focus is on ensuring adequate supply of teachers by increasing enrolments of candidates at teachers training colleges. However, Cobbold views this as a short-term solution especially if large numbers of those recruited will leave the profession. He, therefore, advocates for equal attention to be paid to improving teacher induction and ongoing professional development in order to reduce attrition and promote retention of new teachers.

In Zimbabwe, there is no official policy on induction of NQTs. A study conducted by Magudu and Moyo (2008) found that the modalities of induction are left entirely to individual schools and school heads to work out and induction of NQTs is delivered through ad hoc arrangements. Consistent with these findings, Hove's (2006) research on *Induction of new teachers in four schools in Zvishavane urban, Zimbabwe* established that schools generally do not make any provision for induction of new teachers and that supports such as mentoring, joint planning, team teaching, observations of lessons of experienced teachers and release time for novices are rarely employed. All this suggests that induction is not considered as an essential component of policy for fostering quality schooling and teachers. It also implies that the continuum of teacher education from initial preparation through induction and early career has remained largely undeveloped in the country.

A research by Samkange (2012) on the performance of NQTs in different areas of the curriculum in Zimbabwe made a number of observations that are pertinent to this study. His

findings revealed that NQTs perform well in the teaching of Mathematics and in co-curricular activities but experience problems with lesson planning and class management and teaching of reading and content subjects such as Religious and Moral Education, Environmental Science and Social Studies. This confirms findings of an earlier study by Magudu and Moyo (2008) which established that NQTs experience problems with planning and curriculum delivery and which again are in line with some of the concerns identified in ground breaking research on new teachers' concerns by Veenman (1984). The findings of the two local studies suggest that initial teacher education programmes do not adequately prepare pre-service teachers for example, in the area of pedagogical and content knowledge and that beginning teachers in the country, like their counterparts the world over, experience a theory-practice dilemma.

Samkange (2012) further notes that, besides inadequate initial teacher preparation, the performance of new teachers is also influenced by such factors as availability of staff development programmes (or induction activities) at school level, supervision and management. His findings indicate a prevalence of problems of indiscipline among NQTs, perennial absenteeism from duty and inadequate planning and preparation for lessons. He attributes these problems to managerial and motivational styles. Samkange (2012) suggests that School Heads have a crucial role to play in ensuring that NQTs perform to the expected standard and in mitigating their concerns. His observations concur with Brock and Grady's (1998) view that principals are expected to be instructional leaders. Carver (2003), along the same lines notes that the role of the principal in induction would be to support, develop and assess the new teachers and identify core tasks through which principals can support beginning teachers and one of these tasks is the provision of leadership for instructional development through formative and summative evaluation. Samkange recommends that school heads should identify the needs of NQTs posted to their schools and that there be a coordinated approach to the supervision of the new teachers involving senior teachers, school heads and district education officers. He also recommends allocation of resources for further training and CPD especially for NQTs.

Mudzingwa and Magudu (2013) conducted a study on the expectations and challenges of beginning teachers in three districts of Masvingo Province. The twenty four (24) participants of the study were part of a group that had just completed a Bachelor of Education (Pre-service) Primary degree programme at Great Zimbabwe University. The research established



that on initial entry into the profession, the beginners had expectations relating to the professional support they would receive, conditions in schools they would be deployed in and the type of students they would teach. However, these expectations were not realised and the new teachers found themselves working in rural areas which lacked social amenities such as standard accommodation, health facilities, mobile telephone network and reliable transport. In addition, the beginners experienced challenges relating to lack of teaching resources, being allocated unpopular tasks, undisciplined students and intolerant communities. The findings of the study were relevant but limited in that it focused on one aspect that is related to teacher induction, that is, the expectations of beginners.

In the absence of a standardised approach to induction, as implied in the studies cited above, the experiences of NQTs are bound to be varied. This suggests a need to explore the relevance of the induction experiences in the different schools to new teachers learning as well as their professional development. The findings also raise questions about the level of awareness among stakeholders on the concerns and needs of qualified teachers and the role that they can play in ensuring that the new teachers receive appropriate support to make their transition into teaching as smooth as possible.

## **2.10 Conclusion**

In this chapter, various issues that are core to induction of new teachers into the profession were explored. Induction is considered to be an important phase on the development continuum and a system wide, coherent and comprehensive training and support that continues for more than a year (Wong, 2004). Literature reviewed shows that the needs of NQTs are basically similar the world over. But how these needs are addressed is determined by the way in which induction is conceptualised, the supports that are availed to the new teacher and the contexts within which it (induction) is delivered. These factors in turn influence how NQTs experience induction, which is the subject of this thesis.

The literature reviewed reveals that little research has been conducted in a number of areas:

- The literature focuses mainly on formal induction programmes and barely gives consideration to informal induction. What are the issues in informal induction and how potent is its impact on beginning teachers?

- The literature generally acknowledges the importance of biography in the process of induction and formation of a professional identity (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 1999). An oversight however, may be that in some contexts (like that of Zimbabwe), the NQTs' biography includes years of teaching in schools without a teaching qualification prior to undergoing ITE. While such a teacher will need to be socialised into a particular school culture, the implications of the prior experience for socialisation into the profession need to be considered.
- Most of the literature tends to focus more on the influence of the immediate school environment on the novice than the influence of the wider social and political contexts.

This study seeks to contribute to existing research by also exploring the implications of some of the under-researched areas for beginning teachers' encounters in primary schools. Chapter three discusses the theoretical framework for the study.

## Chapter 3

### Theoretical framework

*Experience is not so much what happens to us as what we make of what happens to us*  
(Aldous Huxley)

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses Wenger's Communities of Practice (CoP) social learning theory, the theoretical framework that informed this study and was used to attach meaning to the data collected on the induction experiences of newly qualified primary school teachers. The theory was considered appropriate for this study because of its potential to facilitate an understanding of the experiences of NQTs and how the experiences impact on teacher learning and professional development. The chapter examines, among other things, the evolution of the CoP theory, its main principles and how it can be related to teacher induction.

#### 3.2 Defining Communities of Practice

The CoP perspective has attracted interest from several academic disciplines and occupational backgrounds, for example, organisational studies (where it has been used particularly in knowledge management) and education (Kimble, 2006; Wenger, 2006; Cox, 2005). According to Kimble (2006), the reason for the popularity of the concept is that the combination of the socio-cultural model and social constructivist theory of learning that it adopts in relation to the process of the creation and reproduction of knowledge is functional and applicable to different settings and groups. Its feasibility and popularity has resulted in the term acquiring varied and, at times, conflicting interpretations.

An array of definitions has been given for a CoP. A community of practice was initially defined as a group of people who share an interest, a craft or a practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). But this definition has been refined as the concept evolved. For example, Wenger, McDermott & Snyder (2002:4) describe a CoP as a group of people "who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an on-going basis." The main attributes of CoPs are that members

regularly interact, share knowledge, find solutions to common problems, exchange work related stories, experiences and frustrations and collaborate with each other to create joint knowledge related beliefs and values of the community (Li, Grimshaw, Nielsen, Judd, Coyte & Graham, 2009; Allee, 2000), thus fostering the development of shared identity among members. CoPs are primarily independent groups outside the formal organisation (though not totally divorced from institutional structures), and are propelled by the need to address the concerns of the members. They are self-organising groups, composed of individuals who have interacted over a long period and have developed bonds based on their work role and what they have learned through reciprocal involvement in these roles (Wenger, 2006). In short, the main characteristics of a community of practice are shared interests, shared identity and collaboration. The latter allows for exchange of ideas and fostering in members interest in being part of a community.

Wenger (1998:122) argues that not all social configurations are CoPs and what distinguish these other groups (for example, project teams, task force or social networks) from CoPs are the relations among members, goals, artefacts, institutions or historical and geographical origins. Some of the groups referred to above would, for example, place significance on quantity of interactions rather than quality of interactions as is characteristic in CoPs (Holmes 1999) and, unlike the latter, are not self-directed and self-motivated. The main goal of a CoP is to create, expand and exchange knowledge and to improve practice. Communities of Practice focus on a specific area of knowledge and with time, accrue expertise in that area (Hildreth & Kimble, 2000). They cultivate a common practice by interacting over problems and solutions and can accumulate a common arsenal of knowledge (Cox, 2005). Membership develops in the course of an activity rather than being constituted to perform a task. Also, CoPs are distinguished by their ability to transmit tacit knowledge, that is, know-how that is not easily articulated, the kind of knowledge that people possess without them being aware of it. The knowledge can only manifest itself in practice through interaction (Goffin & Koners, 2011). Effective transfer of this knowledge requires extensive personal contact, regular interaction and mutual trust. For new teachers, CoPs are repositories of craft knowledge, which Barth (2001) defines as the massive collection of experiences and learning those who work under the schoolhouse inevitably accrue. Experienced teachers in schools where novices find themselves in would have such knowledge.

The term ‘community of practice’ was first coined by Lave and Wenger (1991) in their landmark work on apprentice midwives, tailors, butchers and quartermasters and refined by Wenger (1998). The term was initially used to describe how newcomers to a community would adapt to its sociocultural practices. Lave and Wenger’s (1991) work on situated cognition focused on two main concepts, namely, situated learning, particularly in the workplace and the concept of legitimate peripheral participation. *Situated learning* is a concept that defines learning through apprenticeship. Learning of this nature is grounded in social contexts and emanates from shared work practices and interactions between the novice and the expert during which the former acquires work habits and behaviours of experts (Li et al., 2009). A CoP, in this respect, is a tool for replication of existing knowledge through involvement with significant others in ‘practice’ and, basically, a process of socialisation into knowledge and a community (Kimble, 2006; Cox, 2005). Learning in such a context is seen as social and largely a product of experience and participation in the community and in practice (Lave and Wenger (1991).

Lave and Wenger (1991) suggest that CoPs develop gradually from a process of *legitimate peripheral participation* (Smith, 2003). They use the concept *legitimate peripheral participation* (LPP) to illustrate the influence of context on human social activities on origination of practice, meaning and identity and the journey from novice to expert. In defining LPP, Lave and Wenger (1991) explain that newcomers to a group or community initially spend some time at its periphery, performing simple tasks, learning their new role and also learning about the operations of the group. But the newcomers progressively move from legitimate peripheral participation to full participation as they become more adept and are drawn into more complex tasks, activities and processes of the community, to achieve expert status after which they can also mentor newcomers (Li et al., 2009). According to Lave and Wenger (1991:29), “...learners inevitably participate in communities of practitioners and ...the mastery of knowledge and skill require newcomers to move toward full participation in sociocultural practices of a community”. It is through participation in the communities of practices that, for example, new teachers increasingly learn, develop and construct meaning and understanding of the profession, as well as their teacher identities as they learn to think, act and speak in ways that make sense in the community. In this respect, teacher induction “should be understood as a way of increasing participation in the practice of teaching, and through this participation, a process of becoming knowledgeable in and about teaching” (Adler, 2000:37 in Borko).

The two main concepts that emerge from Lave and Wenger’s initial work on communities of practice, therefore, are situated learning and legitimate peripheral participation, both of which characterise learning as a process of enculturation and construction (Borko, 2004). Their proposed model challenged the dominant cognitivist views on how and where learning occurs as illustrated in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1: The new model of learning proposed in Lave and Wenger (1991)

<b>Old model (cognitive)</b>	<b>New model (constructivism, situativism)</b>
Teaching	Learning
Classroom	In situ
By teaching	By observation (therefore social) By peripheral participation
(Individualised) pupils learn from teacher	Learning from other learners (colleagues) therefore social
Planned in a curriculum	Informal, driven by the task (though elements of apprenticeship are formal)
Learning is a mechanistic, intellectual process of transmission and absorption of ideas	Learning is as much about understanding how to behave as what to do, and is an identity change

**Adapted from:** Cox, M. (2005)

The model proposed by Lave and Wenger (1991) represents a departure from conceptualisation of learning as individual and transmission of discrete abstract knowledge as perceived by cognitivists such as Piaget (1963) to social constructivist models (for example, by Dewey (1966) and Vygotsky (1934) which view learning as social and situated. The former conceptualisation of learning neglects the tacit dimension of workplace practice (Handley, Sturdy, Finchman & Clark, 2006). In constructivist models, knowledge is viewed as being socially constructed. Similarly, the model suggested by Lave and Wenger (1991) requires beginning teachers to be actively involved in constructing knowledge within CoPs (Handley et al., 2006; Britton et al., 2000).

The concept of communities of practice was further extended by Wenger (1998) on the basis of situated learning and by borrowing theoretical aspects from education, sociology and social learning (Li, et al., 2009). Wenger (1998) gives the concept a more specific definition which Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2004) think is more applicable to school teachers as it

suggests a small field of focus. He describes communities of practice as groups of people who share a passion or concern for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly” (Wenger, 1998). His work is located in the social theory of learning perspective, whose main focus is learning as a social process and in practice. Wenger argues that learning is primarily a social process which cannot be divorced from the context in which it occurs. He maintains that we become who we are through social interactions in practice. Learning, therefore, is regarded as a social phenomenon located in the context of the lived experience and participation in the world rather than “an individual process, that has a beginning and an end, that is best separated from the rest of our activities and that is a result of teaching” (Wenger, 1998:3). The core concepts of Wenger’s (1998) theory, which are discussed below, give some insights into what learning within a community of practice entails.

### 3.3 Core concepts of Wenger’s theory

The core concepts of Wenger’s theory are *meaning, community, practice and identity*. These are essential for social participation to be described as learning. The four elements (meaning, practice, community and identity) are vital as they are transposable in their relationship to learning. These concepts are intricately linked to learning as shown in the proposed model in figure 3.1.

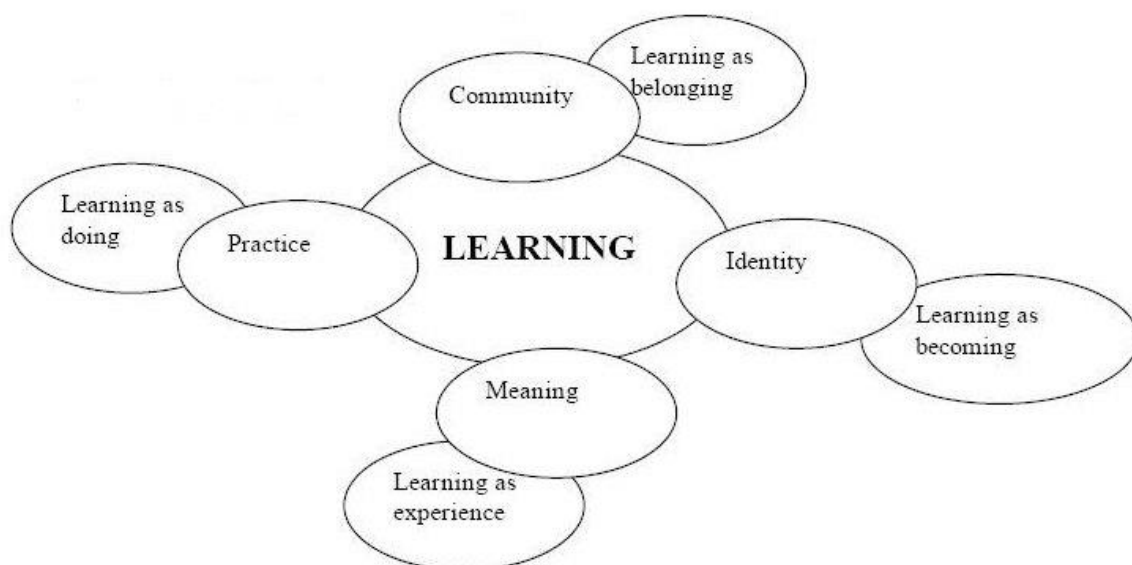
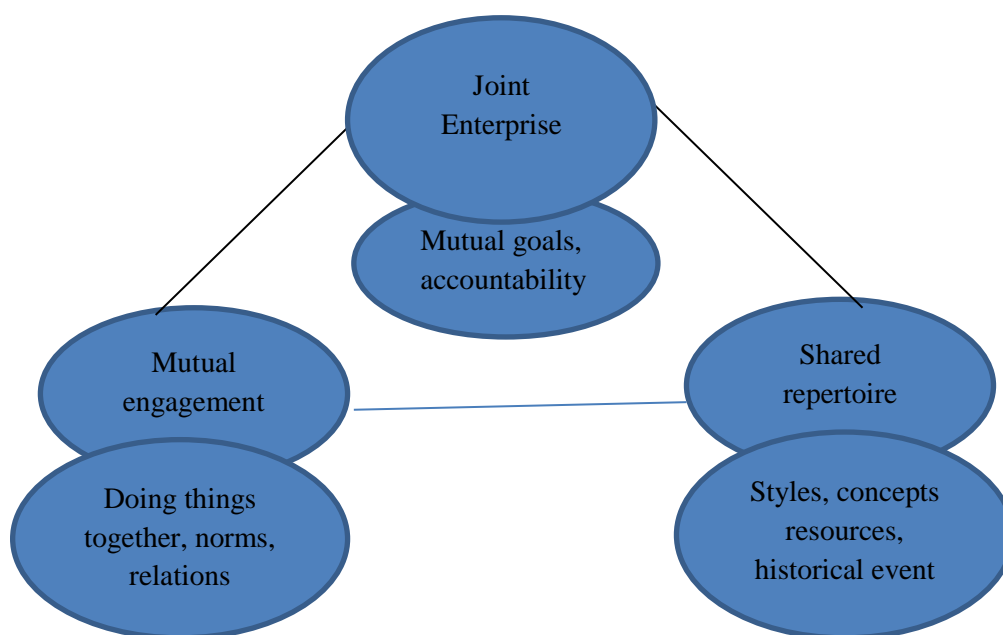


Figure 3.1: Components of the social theory of learning: an initial inventory (from Wenger, 1998: 5)

The diagram shows that central to learning is the development of meaning, practice, identity and a sense of belonging, i.e. community. The core concepts, which are explained below, shed light on what new teacher learning involves.

**Meaning:** Individuals within communities continuously try to derive and negotiate meaning from their experiences. Meaning is mainly achieved through interaction of two elements: participation and reification. Participation implies active involvement of individuals within the community and the resultant relationships with other members and the emergence of identity (Handley, et al., 2006). Reification represents the processes and artefacts employed by a community to concretise practices and abstract ideas and through which negotiated meanings are shared. According to Wenger (1998), the dual components of participation and reification complement and enable learning.

**Community** denotes the social groups within which the individual takes on worthy activities and demonstrates competencies. Mclaughin (1993:81), cited by Westheimer (2008), says that the metaphor ‘community’ draws attention to norms and beliefs of practice, collegial relations, shared goals, occasions for collaboration, problems of mutual support and collaboration. It is a source of cohesion. A community is fostered through mutual engagement, involvement in a joint enterprise, and a shared way of doing things or shared repertoire. Wenger (1998) identifies the aforesaid aspects as the three features that distinguish a community of practice from a mere group. Figure 3.2 illustrates the elements of each dimension and how the dimensions are interrelated.



**Figure 3.2:** Dimensions of a Community of Practice (Adapted from Philips, 2012)



The first dimension, *mutual engagement*, describes the way in which members of an organisation develop norms and collaborative relationships which bond them as a social entity or community. This requires active participation of members in joint ventures in order to negotiate shared understandings and to foster community cohesion. Philips (2012) observes that among secondary school teachers, the concept mutual engagement is illustrated by general norms of teaching such as the standards to which they are accountable as they make pedagogic decisions and judgements. *Joint enterprise* refers to the shared initiatives that members engage in as they respond to an organisation's needs and common goals. The joint enterprise for a school community would be, for example, that of raising pupil achievement. Yet another illustration of joint enterprise would be that of the teaching of English across the curriculum where it is the (joint) responsibility of every teacher to teach the subject. *Shared repertoire* is the set of communal processes and resources produced by a community as part of its practice and used to negotiate meanings. The shared repertoire has literal and symbolic meanings and these include routines, words, tools, ways of doing things, stories, gestures, symbols, genres, actions, or concepts (Cobb, McClain, Silva, Lambert, & Dean, 2003; Smith, 2003; Wenger, 1998). In a teacher community, this repertoire includes such things as standardised ways of interpreting and using teaching material and resources to achieve the desired learning outcomes (Cobb, et al., 2003). The above dimensions (mutual engagement, joint enterprise and shared repertoire), therefore, characterise a CoP.

**Practice:** Learning also occurs through practice which encompasses the continuous establishment of long-term relationships, the accruing of stories, and refinement of products and artefacts. Practice implies “doing in a historical and social context that gives structure and meaning to what we do” (Wenger, 1998:47). Practice, in a nutshell, means doing and is reinforced through interaction by the people involved. In relation to learning to teach, practice implies development of competencies, habits and customs (Lampert, 2010). It also denotes application of theoretical knowledge in school and classrooms where teachers and pupils interact. The theory-practice dilemma that literature (Bainbridge, 2011; Nahal, 2010; Veenman, 1984) refers to can be addressed through learning in and from practice.

**Identity:** Relates to mediated experiences of membership within a community, what Wenger (1998:215) refers to as the “negotiation of our experiences in a process of becoming, or not becoming, a certain person.” Wenger (1998) identifies five possible meanings of the term identity as follows:

- identity as negotiated experience;
- identity as community membership;
- identity as a learning trajectory;
- identity as a nexus of multi-membership; and
- identity as a relation between the local and the global.

Accordingly, learning is more than acquisition of knowledge and practice, but also entails a process of appreciating who one is and to which communities one is a member and is accepted, i.e. one's identity. The nature of an individual's participation in a workplace community influences one's perception of self. In the context of teacher induction, conceptions about one's professional identity would influence how one teaches, his or her development as a teacher and outlook about the profession (Tickle, 2000).

The four concepts of theory discussed above (community, practice, meaning and identity), according to Wenger (1998), collectively give some insights into the operations of a CoP and the implications for learning. He posits that practice and identity sustain the community and, therefore, learning (Henderson, 2012). The core concepts of Wenger's theory are used in this thesis to examine what the NQTs learn from induction experiences.

Wenger (1998) suggests fourteen indicators which can be used to identify a community of practice. These are:

- jargon and communication short cuts;
- rapid flow of information among members;
- sustained mutual relationships;
- shared ways of engaging in doing things;
- local lore, shared stories and inside jokes;
- absence of introductory preambles;
- ability to assess appropriateness of actions or products;
- specific tools, representations, and other artefacts;
- quick set up of problem to be discussed;
- acknowledging each other's knowledge and its relevance;
- mutually defining identities;

- peculiar styles distinguish membership; and
- shared discourse reflecting a certain perspective on the world.

It is, therefore, possible to verify the existence of communities of practice in schools using the above indicators as benchmarks. These indicators may be used to differentiate a CoP from what Grossman, Wineburg and Woolworth (2001) call pseudo-community, which is characterised by superficial levels of concurrence during conversations among members. Westheimer (2008) notes that while such characterisation may be considered a simplification of communities of practice as it portrays them as static, it however, facilitates the creation of a coherent framework for appreciating teacher professional communities in practice.

The main concepts of the CoP theory which have been discussed in detail in the preceding pages are summarised in the next section.

### **3.4 Underlying principles of the CoP framework**

The CoP framework is concerned with workplace learning. The framework relates learning to practice and context and focuses on individual learning and identity construction. It defines learning in terms of participation within a community of similar-minded people (Grossman et al., 2001; Wenger, 1998; Lave & Wenger, 1991). The theory proposes that learning is an outcome of belonging to a community of practice. A community of practice, therefore, can be described as a forum for social learning in which, as people interact in quest of initiatives and develop relations with each other, they learn. The collective learning results in the development of their practice in a variety of ways, for example, through problem-solving, seeking experiences of others, mapping knowledge and identifying gaps.

The theory examines the make-up of communities of practice and the process of learning within them. The key tenets of the CoP theory are:

- learning is primarily a social endeavour and an outcome of participation in practices of the communities that one holds membership to;
- learning is central to human identity (Wenger, 1998) and the process of participation results in identity formation. Construction of shared identities is an on-going process and is achieved through involvement in and supporting the practice of their

communities. The need to become central participants in a CoP spurs members to learn;

- knowledge is inherent in communities of practice, i.e. in their shared norms, values, beliefs and other ways of doing things. Real knowledge is to be found in the actions, social relations and expertise of the communities;
- learning and membership to a community are interdependent. The process of learning is accompanied by identity transformation and a change in the way one relates within the group;
- knowledge cannot be detached from practice, one cannot know without doing;
- the capacity to contribute creates a potential for learning. The context in which one participates represents a powerful learning environment; and
- the context and activities in which people learn become a fundamental part of what they learn (Borko, 2004) [paraphrased].

The CoP framework is an important tool for exploring learning that occurs among early career teachers. The perspective provides an understanding of the nature of experiences and interactions which constitute teacher learning and identity formation (Westheimer, 2008). The next section attempts to relate the CoP model to teacher induction.

### **3.5 Relating CoP theory to teacher induction**

The CoP theoretical framework has been applied to various fields. Wenger (2006) says that the concept communities of practice has impacted on theory and practice in a variety of fields and singles out education as one such field where the theory is being used, especially for professional development. The potential of communities of practice in fostering knowledge sharing (Stewart, 1996), fostering innovation and serving as the foundation of key competencies (Brown & Duguid, 1991), and sustaining transferring of best practices (Wenger & Snyder, 2000) is widely acknowledged. With particular reference to schools, the advantages of workplace learning include accommodation of different needs and learning styles, ability to tap into collective knowledge and the natural promotion of collaboration and school renewal (Imants & Klaas, 2009). These are pertinent issues in teacher learning, thus making the CoP framework relevant for analysing induction experiences of NQTs.

Schools can be considered as CoPs since they exhibit some of the features specified in the definitions by Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998). For example, schools provide constant proximity amongst members. The school, as an organisation and CoP, serves as a forum for supporting the learning and development of beginning teachers as professionals (Imants, 2003; Lave & Wenger, 1991).

The findings of some of the studies summarised in this section illustrate that literature that utilises a community of practice framework in the context of teacher learning and professional development and the importance of context in teacher learning is in existence.

A study by Grossman et al (2001) revealed that a teacher community offers a continuous context for teacher learning. The new teacher, during induction, does not only learn the professional skills, but also the culture and learning to become, that is, identity formation. Like the apprentices studied by Lave and Wenger (1991), NQTs would, during induction also learn the skills associated with the job of teaching such as curriculum delivery and lesson planning as well as more subtle skills and social aspects needed to progress from a novice to an expert. These are the very aspects that the CoP model emphasises. Teacher induction is therefore about learning in practice and developing shared thinking about teaching and learning what the teacher community within the school considers essential. For that reason, literature on teacher induction alludes to the importance of appropriate contextual fundamentals that support the new teacher adequately (McCormack & Thomas, 2003; Flores, 2001) and there has been an emphasis on the need for collegiality and collaboration in order to foster a culture of learning among teachers (Barth, 2006).

Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2004) conducted a study in England on how teachers learn and their findings established the following:

- that teachers' learning is largely located in their identities, dispositions and their relationship with each other;
- the social relations within departments largely explained the differences in learning practices between them;
- the identities and dispositions of individual teachers explained the social relations within departments; and

- the working practices and learning approaches of those teachers were influenced (both enabled and constrained) by the departmental (school) cultures.

These findings confirm the claim by Lave and Wenger (1991) that learning is social and relational. Another study by Cuddapah and Clayton (2011) investigated how a cohort could be used as a resource for new teacher support. They found that the experiences in the cohort, which was basically composed of NQTs, supported the participants in shaping their practice, meaning making, identity formation and building a sense of becoming or community. They concluded that Wenger's (1998) theory provides some valuable insights into the use of the cohort structure for the professional development of novices and that the cohort gives new teachers a third space from which to learn.

These studies demonstrate the applicability of the CoP framework to issues of teacher professional development and therefore, to this study. However, the framework has some limitations which should be acknowledged in the process of its application and these are as discussed in the next section.

### **3.6 Critique of CoP theory**

Literature highlights many positive elements of CoPs and these include:

- fostering a sense of belonging and good practice by solving problems, seeking experiences of others, mapping knowledge and identifying gaps;
- reducing the learning curve of new employees, reducing re-work and creating new knowledge;
- improved work experience as the novice has access to expertise and is part of a team, hence can get assistance with challenges and the process develops confidence in solving problems (Kerno, 2008). This, in turn, fosters professional development as it provides a forum for expanding skills and expertise, network for keeping abreast of the field, enhanced professional reputation, a strong sense of professional identity;
- CoPs are viewed as a tool for problem-solving and sense making within an organisation (Cox, 2005);
- fostering knowledge sharing, improving productivity, facilitating innovation and developing social capital (Wenger, 2006); and

- their ability to capture tacit knowledge.

Wenger (1998:83), however, cautions that CoPs “are born from learning but can also learn not to learn. They are cradles of spirits but they can also be in cages. After all, witch hunts were also community practices.” In adopting the CoP framework, it is, therefore, important to take cognisance of the fact that not all school cultures have the potential to nurture the professional growth of new teachers and that lack of appropriate support that focuses on capacity building and coherence-building may result in novices relapsing into uninspired and stereotyped teaching routines (Schollaert, 2011:13).

CoPs have been applied in different contexts such as educational theory and practice, as well as formal organisational contexts, especially in the area of knowledge management (KM). This wide application has led to what Cox (2005) calls the ‘commercialisation’ and ‘commodification’ of CoPs and a distortion of the original meaning and, at times, different and conflicting interpretations of the concept. According to Kimble (2006), some interpretations seem to overlook the original complexities and tensions between practice, participation and membership and exaggerate the positive and consensual aspects of organisational CoPs.

Lave and Wenger (1991) warn that the use of the term ‘community’ should not be taken to imply existence of harmony as the idea of apprenticeship has some implications for power relations between the expert and the novice and brings with it possibilities of conflict and disharmony. Along the same lines, McGregor (2003:127) is critical of the notion ‘community of practice’ because it underplays the important power relations that are at play in decision making and negotiation. He says while the hierarchy of power between novices and experts is clear, the potential for conflicts in the interactions is, however, underplayed. According to Smith (1999), the power relations or a weak community of practice may inhibit entry and participation. In support of this view, Carlile in Handley et al (2006:644) argue that full participation may be denied to novices by powerful practitioners, especially in situations where the novices threaten to ‘transform’ the knowledge and practices of the community that full participants have invested in. Strategies used in schools to inhibit entry and participation include membership to communities of practice being regulated by cultural gatekeepers who decide what is acceptable or not acceptable to the school culture (Cherubini, 2009). For example, in some schools, new ideas suggested by beginning teachers may be devalued by

the School Head and veteran teachers (McComarck & Thomas, 2003) and this may demotivate the novices.

Other shortcomings of the CoP theory include the fact that individuals are subsumed in the communities and they become represented by their community membership, thus fostering group thinking which may hamper individual growth and creativity. Also, although CoPs tend to develop single, domain-oriented knowledge which is very useful to members, they, however, may foster continuation of shared ways of thinking rather than sustaining growth, change and diversity, thus reinforcing existing biases and refinement of poor practices (Eraut, 2003). Feiman-Nemser (2003) observes that a new teacher may seek advice from experienced colleagues. Yet there is a risk of the veteran teacher indoctrinating him/her with attitudes, behaviour and values that they have defined as appropriate. Thus, whatever good lessons the novice may have learnt from initial teacher education may be undone by school cultures which promote reproduction of established norms and practices.

The study acknowledges that there are some shortcomings inherent within the CoP framework which makes its application problematic. To moderate these shortcomings, the study adopts Li et al's (2009) suggestion and focuses on those elements of the theory which are of particular relevance such as interaction between novices and experts, learning and sharing of knowledge and fostering a sense of belonging amongst community members. Also, the original purpose for which CoP was developed, that is, as a learning theory for self-empowerment and professional development, is still applicable to this study.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

The chapter reviewed the main tenets of the CoP theory. The theory is concerned with how newcomers to a workplace learn their roles and the impact of the context on their learning. Some of the main aspects of the theory such as meaning-making, identity formation and community (development of a sense of belonging) are the very things that are crucial to teacher induction. The emphasis of the theory on contextualised learning in practice made it an appropriate tool for enabling an understanding of the complexities associated with teacher induction. Several limitations of the theory were noted and these were borne in mind in the process of applying the framework to the study. The next chapter focuses on the research methodology employed in the stud



## Chapter 4

### Research Methodology

#### 4.1 Introduction

The primary question addressed by this study is: *What are the lived experiences of induction by newly qualified primary school teachers in Zimbabwe?* To this end, the question has been addressed theoretically through the preceding chapters. This chapter describes the methods and procedures employed in the study. It discusses the collection and analysis of data for the study, as well as the ethical considerations and trustworthiness of the study. According to Strauss and Corbin (1998:3), methodology refers to “a way of thinking about and studying social reality.” So, methodology is an approach to investigating a phenomenon. The choice of methodology is usually determined by the nature of inquiry and the information that is being sought. The research methodology that is described in this chapter was therefore guided by the focus of the study.

#### 4.2 Research paradigm

The study adopted the qualitative research paradigm which can be defined as a method of studying the significance that people attach to a phenomenon (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Along the same lines, Creswell (2008) describes qualitative research as a way of investigating and understanding the meaning that individuals or groups assign to a social or human problem. A major justification for qualitative research is that it is naturalistic and endeavours “to study people, things and events in their natural settings” (Punch, 2005:141) thus facilitating an understanding of a phenomenon in context. This approach to research is further justified by Shank and Vilella (2004:50) on the grounds that “we do qualitative research initially, not because of competing modes of understanding, but because we believe our understanding of the areas in question is too artificial or incomplete.” Hence, the qualitative approach would be useful in giving a holistic understanding of the induction experiences of NQTs in Zimbabwe.

A major shortcoming of qualitative research that has often been cited is its subjective nature which mainly arises from the fact that the researcher in this approach is the principal

instrument for data collection and analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). However, Toma (2000) argues that research with human subjects demands subjectivity rather than objectivity as this enables collaboration between the researcher and participants in determining meaning, generating findings and reaching conclusions. Such research partnerships in Toma's view, yield good qualitative data because, a researcher's deep involvement in a study renders him or her an insider who can access in-depth first-hand information about the topic under study. The reasons cited above were deemed to be adequate to justify the adoption of the qualitative approach for this study as it was felt that the positive aspects of the paradigm outweighed its limitations.

### **4.3 Research design**

A research design is basically a plan or proposal of how a study is to be conducted (Creswell, 2008; Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005; Babbie & Mouton, 2001). According to Creswell (2008), a research design is a convergence of philosophical assumptions, and distinct methods and procedures. He suggests that a researcher should take these aspects into consideration during the process of planning a study. This is because the philosophical assumptions that the researcher brings to a study influences the approach to inquiry and related methods and procedures to be used to collect data on the phenomenon being studied. Bearing this in mind, the research design adopted for this study was phenomenology, which Creswell (1998) argues is one of the main qualitative research designs. The basis of the choice of the design was the fact that the study sought to explore lived experiences (or experiences that occur in one's direct acquaintance with things [Barnacle, 2001]) of the participants. Phenomenology is concerned with such experiences (Patton, 2002; Kvale, 1996).

Phenomenology has been referred to as a philosophy, a paradigm and methodology (Goulding, 2004). Edmund Husserl, a German philosopher (1859-1938) is considered as the founder of phenomenology. Husserl viewed the individual as a conduit through "which the essential structure or 'essence' of a phenomenon may be accessed and subsequently described", hence his phenomenology is referred to as eidetic or descriptive (Priest, 2002:51). Alternative versions of phenomenology were developed by such people as Schultz, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty. However, Creswell (2006:58), citing authorities like van

Manen (1990) and Moustakas (1994), argues that the philosophical assumptions of these various perspectives:

*...rest on some common grounds: the study of lived experiences of persons, the view that these experiences are conscious ones and the development of descriptions of the essences of these experiences, not explanations or analyses.*

The different approaches to phenomenology that have emerged from these perspectives include, among others, hermeneutic phenomenology, dialogical phenomenology and empirical phenomenology. This study was guided heavily by the empirical phenomenological approach which is associated with the work of Amadeo Giorgi (1971). According to Giorgi (1997), the goal of empirical phenomenology is to describe a general or typical essential structure based on descriptions of experiences of others. Hence, the suitability of the research for this study as its goal was to describe as accurately as possible the phenomenon of teacher induction as it was experienced by the NQTs.

Phenomenology, both as a philosophy and a methodology, has been utilised in research to develop an understanding of complex issues that may explain features of an experience (Ehrich, 2003). According to Creswell (2006:57), “a phenomenological study describes the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or phenomenon.” The main concern in such a study would be the description “of what participants have in common as they experience the phenomenon” (p.57). The main aspects of a phenomenological research, therefore, are: identification of a shared experience amongst individuals experiencing the same phenomenon, establishing the universal nature of an experience and locating the essence of an experience. The description of the experience would include what was experienced and how it was experienced. Phenomenological research entails working with a small group of participants through extensive and prolonged engagement to develop patterns and relationships of meaning (Moustakas in Creswell, 2006). The researcher reduces data gathered through in-depth interviews from several participants to a central meaning or ‘essence’ of the experience (Creswell, 2006). Phenomenological research requires the researcher to be able to ‘bracket’ or set aside personal experiences and beliefs so as to understand those of the participants in the study. Bracketing, according to Caelli, Ray and Mill (2003), implies the researcher identifying and managing assumptions and presumptions

about a phenomenon in order to achieve phenomenological reduction. The feasibility of the researcher being able to be value neutral, however, is debatable.

The adoption of an empirical phenomenological research design, in addition to providing a structured approach to the study, enabled beginning teachers to speak about their lived experiences, thus facilitating the construction of an accurate description of these experiences. In Punch's (2005:142) view, the core issues in a research design are "the strategy, the conceptual framework, the question of who or what is to be studied, and the tools to be used for collecting and analysing data." In line with this stipulation, the next section answers the question: *Who is to be studied?*

#### **4.4 A Description of the study population**

The potential participants for the study were all newly qualified primary school teachers (96 of whom are 2012 graduates) who were deployed in Mwenezi District, Masvingo Province, in the past three (3) years, as well as their mentors. The characteristics of these prospective participants were as described below.

##### **4.4.1 The NQTs**

Participating NQTs, who constituted those who "have had experiences relating to the phenomenon to be researched" (Kruger cited by Groenewald 2003:52), were drawn from graduates of a three-year teacher training programme in primary education. All the eleven primary school teachers' training colleges in Zimbabwe are affiliates of the University of Zimbabwe which sets the framework of the teacher education curriculum. This curriculum is comprised of four components as shown below:

Section 1: Teaching practice (which takes up five out of nine terms of the training period);

Section 2: Theory of Education, which is comprised of Philosophy, Psychology and Sociology of Education;

Section 3: Main or Academic Study, which is a major teaching subject or area of specialisation; and

Section 4: Professional Studies. This component is divided into two subsections: Syllabus A which focuses on professional issues in general and, Syllabus B which focuses on the pedagogy of the ten subjects that are taught on the primary school curriculum.

Thus, the NQTs who participated in the study had similar training backgrounds and had received a somewhat standardised initial training.

#### ***4.4.2 The mentors***

The participating mentors were drawn from qualified and experienced teachers who had a recognised track record in the teaching profession. Owing to their experience, they would be considered as models of good practice, thus appropriate to facilitate the professional learning of NQTs. The mentors could either be ordinary experienced teachers, teachers in posts of responsibility such as Heads of Departments (HODs) and teachers-in-charge (TICs) or, in some instances, School Heads.

### **4.5 The sample and sampling**

Consistent with phenomenological research, purposive sampling was utilised to select participants for the study. Such sampling is deliberate, done with a purpose in mind (Punch, 2005) and allows the researcher to select participants with unique qualities that are under investigation (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011; Corbin, & Strauss, 2008; Goulding, 2004). It is mostly used to gain access to ‘knowledgeable people’ with in-depth knowledge about certain issues by virtue, for example, of their professional role, expertise or experience. The main concern in purposive sampling is not generalizability, but rather, “to acquire in-depth information from those who are in a position to give it” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007:115). Hence, for this study, purposive sampling enabled the researcher to select participants who had lived the unique experience of induction, were able to articulate the experience (Hycner, 1999) and, therefore, were a legitimate source of data. However, it should be noted that while purposive sampling may satisfy the study’s needs, the researcher may, unconsciously miss out on important traits or be biased in choosing a sample (Gray, 2009; Cohen, et al., 2007).

Twenty (20) participants were selected for the study. Creswell (1998) proposes that for a phenomenological study, a sample size of 5 to 25 participants would be adequate to facilitate

the development of meaningful themes and interpretations. Suggestions have been made by other authorities that sample size in qualitative research should not be so large that it impedes extraction of thick, rich data; neither should it be so small that it makes it difficult to achieve saturation (Flick, Kardoff & Steinke, 2004; Strauss & Corbin, 1998), or information redundancy (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). It was anticipated that saturation, which is a point in data collection when no new data is emerging or collection of new data does not provide new insights on the issue being studied (Mason, 2010; Corbin & Strauss, 2008), could be realised within the sample of twenty participants proposed for this study. Again, considering the resources available and the amount of data expected, factors which are pertinent in determining sample size (Payne & Payne, 2004), twenty (20) participants were regarded by the researcher as an adequate number to enable exploration of a range of perspectives and portrayal of elements of teacher induction (Englander, 2012), which was the phenomenon under study.

The sample consisted of three groups of participants. The first group of ten (10) participants were novices in their first year of teaching. The participants in this group were interviewed three (3) times during the course of the year, and in this way, evaluative data was collected as focus was on change and development of induction experiences over a period of time (Gray, 2009). Participants in this group were selected on the basis of the following criteria:

- the participants were beginning teachers in their first year of teaching;
- they had undergone a three year teacher education programme, so variations in experiences would not be attributed to exposure to different programmes;
- they had not had any experience as untrained teachers prior to initial teacher training; and,
- the participants were working in a rural setting.

Table 4.1 shows the demographic details of the NQTs who participated in this study.

Table 4.1: Demographic profiles of the NQTs

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Specialism</b>	<b>Grade taught</b>
1	F	ECD	ECD B
2	F	G T	4
3*	M	GT	5/6
4	F	GT	1
5	F	GT	4
6	F	GT	3
7	M	ECD	3
8	F	ECD	ECD B
9*	F	GT	2/1/3
10	F	GT	2

*Note: \* indicates beginners who changed classes during the course of the year and the different classes they taught.*

*GT stands for generalist teacher; ECD stands for Early Childhood Development.*

The sample represented teachers of different grade levels and specialisation and could, therefore, be representative of similarities and differences in induction experiences of the participants. The second group (consisting of five not-so-new teachers) was required to write essays reflecting on their induction experiences. For this group, it was important to establish if they had been stationed at the same school since their initial career entry into the teaching profession so as to allow for comparison of experiences in different contexts where necessary. The third group comprised five (5) mentors who were working with NQTs. This group was composed of three female Teachers-in-Charge (TICs/HODs) and two male School Heads. The main reason for their inclusion in the study was to establish how they perceived their role in the induction process and the extent to which they were equipped to play that role. This would determine their capacity to foster teacher learning. The criteria for selection of the participants were meant to ensure that they had relatively common experiences, which is a vital aspect of phenomenology (Creswell, 1998).

Gaining access or the process of obtaining permission to conduct research (Stokrocki, 1997) involved several offices. Having obtained permission to conduct research in schools from the Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture (see Appendix 10), the researcher was advised by the Masvingo Provincial Education Office that Mwenezi District had the greatest concentration of NQTs in the Province. Potential participants were then initially identified through deployment records at the Mwenezi District Education Office which showed schools to which NQTs had been deployed. The officials at the district office were considered as some of the gatekeepers who would facilitate access into the research sites, in this case, into schools (Stokrocki, 1997). Gatekeepers are defined as individuals with authority to control access to field or research site (Cohen et al, 2011; Gray, 2009; Gilbert, 2008; Punch, 2005). The District Education Office authorised school heads to facilitate the researcher's entry into schools.

Schools with at least two NQTs were identified as possible research sites in order to cut down on travelling expenses between schools by the researcher. The use of participants from different schools would allow for comparison of experiences of beginning teachers as members of different communities of practice. The researcher made a preliminary visit to these schools to identify potential participants for the study and through the school heads, to seek access to the new teachers (see Appendix 7a). During this visit, the researcher tried to gain the trust of the potential participants (both NQTs and mentors) and to explain to them the purpose of the study, its modalities, as well as its benefits for the participants. Gaining the cooperation of the participants was vital because, as asserted by Stokrocki (1997), in a phenomenological inquiry, participants are particularly important because their stories are the data that is analysed and reviewed. The consent form was made available to identified participants to sign (see Appendix 6). The group of participants who were earmarked to write reflective essays were given their task immediately. Arrangements were made with the interview group about the scheduling of the first interview session.

#### **4.6 Research instruments**

To collect data to answer the research question, the researcher mainly used semi-structured interviews, a focus group discussion and reflective essays. According to Lester (1999), the use of such inductive qualitative methods facilitate gathering of 'deep' information and perceptions. Other secondary data gathering techniques such as field notes and serendipity



(i.e. finding information by chance), were also utilised. The use of varied tools allowed for triangulation of data and, in this way, depth to the study was enhanced.

The selected data collection tools have varied strengths and weaknesses and their collective use made it possible to address the overarching and specific research questions.

#### ***4.6.1 Semi-structured interviews***

Semi-structured interviews, a major way of gathering data in a phenomenological study were a primary data collection tool for exploring the world views of the participants. Gray (2009) defines semi-structured interviews as non-standardised interviews in which the researcher may have a framework of issues and questions to be covered but to some extent ensures flexibility in question forms and the manner participants address issues. During the interview, the interviewer has the latitude to change the order and pace of questions and to introduce new questions in order to accommodate each participant's unique story and experiences (Flick, 2006). The use of an interview schedule during this type of interview facilitates focus on more specific issues and the collection of similar data from participants (Chilisa & Preece, 2005), thus the standardisation of 'meaning' (Adamson, 2004). But the schedule is just a guide and a starting point for the interview. The main strength of a semi-structured interview as a research instrument is the use of open-ended questions which enables the researcher to deeply explore different dimensions to an issue (Woods, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Semi-structured interviews allow for further probing and clarification of views. Gray (2009:373) contends that this is particularly important in a phenomenological research where the main goal is "to explore the subjective meaning that respondents ascribe to concepts or events." While such probing may steer the interview to unanticipated directions, this might still contribute to the achievement of the research objectives. Further benefits of semi-structured interviews include standardisation of some questions which result in increased reliability of data, reduction of interviewer bias (Mitchell & Joley, 2007) and provision of room for replication. Semi-structured interviews were particularly important in this study as they:

- made it possible to capture the narratives of experience (Van Manen, 1990) of those interviewed;
- allowed for dialogue and reflection (Rossman & Rallis, 2003);
- gave voice to the participants (Cohen et al., 2007);

- facilitated an in-depth exploration of the participants' experiences and how these have shaped teacher learning, understandings and practice; and
- facilitated an understanding of contextual and situational factors of experiences. This enabled the researcher to gain meaning and understanding of the experiences or to gain access to the world of experience (their life-worlds) of the participants which is the main task for the researcher in a phenomenological study (Cohen et al., 2007).

However, semi-structured interviews have such limitations as the problems associated with quantification and analysis of data obtained from spontaneous questions and the fact that they (semi-interviews) are labour-intensive. In employing semi-structured interviews as a data collection tool, the researcher adopted Seidman's (2006) format for conducting a phenomenological interview. This approach suggests three in-depth interviews with each participant in a study rather than a single in-depth. The three interviews were structured as follows:

1<sup>st</sup> interview: Focus on Life History which puts the experience into context by exploring the participants' past experiences with the phenomenon under investigation. For this study, the first interview focused on the career entry profile which included such aspects as adequacy of initial training, the perceived professional strengths and weaknesses of the NQTs, Grades taught during Teaching Practice, etc.

2<sup>nd</sup> interview: Details of Experience which involves a reconstruction of the experience. Questions asked here pertained to the induction support being received by NQTs and its adequacy.

3<sup>rd</sup> interview: Reflection on the Meaning which entails reflecting on the experience. The third interview enabled the researcher and participants to evaluate the impact of the experiences on the professional growth of the NQTs.

Knox and Burkard (2009) justify the multiple interview approach suggested by Seidman (2006) on the grounds that a topic cannot be adequately covered in one interview. They argue that the multiple interview approach has such benefits as allowing for emergence of contextual information; ensuring that vital information is not missed and that experiences are not stripped of their meaning; and, encouraging the development of a relationship between the researcher and the participant, thus facilitating greater and deeper participant disclosure.

These advantages also validated the adoption of the multiple interview approach for this study. However, the approach to interviews suggested by Seidman (2006) could have such demerits as loss of participants over time, research fatigue and over familiarity with what is expected of them.

The interview format consisted of question themes whose main purpose was to introduce the topic and to guide the interview conversations. These were used together with supporting questions which Kvale (1996:133) calls 'follow up' or 'probing' questions. The follow up questions which may be non-scripted were used as prompts to extend, elaborate, clarify, provide detail or qualify a response (Cohen et al., 2011; Adamson, 2004). According to Cohen et al (2011), probing enhances richness, depth of response, comprehensiveness and honesty which are some of the features of effective interviewing. Some of the question themes and the attendant supporting questions are as illustrated in Table 4.2 below:

Table 4.2 Question themes and supporting questions (adapted from Kvale, 1996)

Theme	Suggested supporting questions
Career entry profile- to establish to what extent the new teachers are prepared for their role.	What aspects of your initial training are you finding particularly useful in the classroom? In what areas of teaching do you think your initial training could have prepared you better?
School context/perceptions of what constitutes induction in the school	What are the school's expectations of you as a teacher? How easy is it to get assistance within the school?
Induction supports/ strategies being used	What formal induction support are you receiving? What kind of informal support are you receiving? Have you had an opportunity to discuss your professional needs with anyone in the school?
Outcomes of induction/new teachers' description of induction	What new things are you learning in your role as a teacher and from whom? Has your classroom performance improved as a result of induction?
Concerns of novices	What would you consider to be the most typical challenges that NQTs face in their work? What are the sources of the challenges? How can they be addressed?
Significance of induction to NQTs	Has induction influenced your classroom practices? How would you rate the induction process in your school?

As suggested by Adamson (2004), the questions were open to alteration during the interviews in order to cater for the linguistic and conceptual aptitudes of the participants and ensure standardisation of meaning. Questions asked yielded data that facilitated what Creswell (1998:149) calls textural description (what the participants experienced) and a structural description of the experiences (how the participants experienced the phenomenon) and that provided an understanding of the essences of the common experiences of the participants.

The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Gray (2009) underscores the necessity to capture the words of the interviewee accurately and argues that the analysis stage is rendered worthless if data has not been collected carefully. Hence, there was need to tape record vital data, not only to capture it accurately, but to also allow the interviewer to focus on listening, interpreting and give focus to the interview. Recording and transcription of interview were also necessary because these aid memory, allow for thorough examination and revisiting of responses (Seidman, 2006). The data was analysed after each interview round to check if any themes or patterns were emerging that could guide future data gathering.

#### **4.6.2 Focus group discussion**

A one off focus group discussion was used to gather follow up data. A focus group is a form of an interview in which members interact as they discuss a topic provided by a researcher.

Cohen et al (2011:436) define focus groups as

*contrived settings, bringing together a specifically chosen sector of the population, previously unknown to each other to discuss a given theme or topic, where interaction with group leads data and outcomes.*

Krueger & Casey (2000:5) on the other hand, describe a focus group study as “a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive and non- threatening environment.” So, a main feature of a focus group is the inter-participant interaction and group data and views emerge from the discussions among the participants. Cohen et al. (2011) argue that while the planned nature of focus groups makes them artificial, but the fact that the groups are deliberately planned yield such benefits as giving focus to issues to be discussed, thus giving insights that may not have been possible from other types of interviews; encouraging groups rather than individuals to express views; being economic on time; and producing substantial amounts of data in a short time. Along the same lines, Woods (2006) views a focus group discussion as a simple, efficient and practical way of getting data about things that cannot be easily observed and shared beliefs that are implicit and taken for granted, and which neither research nor respondents can define. Additional benefits of this data gathering technique, as cited by other authorities, include the:

- provision of direct data on exact issues and insights into participants' opinions and experiences (Chilisa & Preece, 2005; Morgan, 1997);
- reduced researcher control which enables focus group participants to pursue themes that are of significance to them and, in so doing, make the researcher aware of previously neglected phenomenon (Wilkinson, 2004); and
- provision of a forum for validation of views and experiences (Cohen et al, 2011; Corbin & Strauss, 2008)), discussion of issues in detail and clarification of complex questions (Woods, 2006).

Notable demerits of a focus group discussion, however, are that the emergence of a group culture and group dynamics may impede individual expression and result in suppression of dissenting voices; the discussions may be dominated by one person resulting in one voice being heard and non-participation by others (Cohen et al., 2011; Fontana & Frey, 2000). In addition, focus groups can be difficult to schedule and data gathered may be difficult to analyse and may not be generalizable.

Six (6) participants purposively drawn from the initial sample of participants used in individual interviews took part in the focus group discussion. Since this was a homogeneous group, the researcher was able to take advantage of their shared experiences (Kitzinger, 1995). Morgan cited by Cohen et al (2011) suggests several factors to consider in running focus groups and among these are the number of groups for a topic and the size of the group. He contends that a group size of four (4) to twelve participants would be ideal. So, the group size used in this study was within the acceptable range as it allowed for diversity of views. Also, that the participants were from different schools and were relative strangers enhanced the success of the group discussions (Cohen et al, 2011) as it would result in a variety of contextual issues emerging from the process.

In this study, the focus group discussions were particularly useful for following up and triangulating data gathered through semi-structured interviews, as well as generating and evaluating data from different subgroups of the population (Cohen et al, 2011).

#### **4.6.3 Reflective essays**

Reflective essays on NQTs' induction experiences were used as part of documentary evidence to support and triangulate data from other sources. These descriptions tend to be precise (Giorgi in Englander, 2012) and are useful in that they make it possible to gather data in retrospect and may provide evidence for reconstructing experiences and versions of reality (Chilisa & Preece, 2005; Atkinson & Coffey, 2004.) Reflective essays, like other documents used in educational research, may provide both witting (that which the author intends to convey) and unwitting or discreet (that which can be deduced from the document) information (Corbin & Strauss 2008; Robson, 2002). Corbin and Strauss (2008) further argue that content analysis of these can be used to answer several research questions. However, information provided in reflective essays may be biased and inaccurate and confidentiality of information may be reduced.

The instructions to the participants were as follows: *Write a reflective essay on your induction experiences in the various areas of performance as a teacher. The essay may include the following aspects:*

- *what you learned about teaching during induction and how you learned it;*
- *the kind of support received;*
- *impact of induction on classroom practices and experiences in the classroom; and*
- *your achievements and concerns during the first year in the field.*

The essays were administered with the participants of the second group once, at the beginning of the data gathering process.

#### **4.6.4 Field notes**

Field notes were used to complement the other data gathering methods. The field notes are a way of recording 'critical incidents' (Robson, 2002) and are part of a record of what the researcher hears, sees, experiences and thinks during the data collection process. They enable the researcher to reflect on the occurrences which may not have been possible when the researcher was engrossed with data collection. Adamson (2004) argues that field notes provide important details about interactions during the interview which audio-taped data cannot provide and can also be used to accommodate 'unsolicited accounts', i.e. interesting

things that may be said by the interviewee after the interview which can be a source of valuable and revealing information. Along the same lines, Groenewald (2004) says field notes are a critical tool for preserving data collected in qualitative research. So, it is imperative for the researcher to make comprehensive field notes after each interview which includes such aspects as the interviewee's non-verbal reactions to questions as the events of the interviews, the participants, influences on the events, etc. Groenewald (2004:15) suggests four types of field notes:

- Observational notes (what happened);
- Theoretical notes (an attempt to draw meaning from events);
- Methodological notes (reminders, instructions or critique addressed to one's self); and
- Analytical memos (end of field day summary or progress review).

However, because field notes are based on the researcher's personal perceptions and interpretations, this can limit the authenticity of findings.

#### ***4.6.5 Serendipity***

Serendipitous or chance data were gathered during the course of interaction with the participants and other relevant people such as the gatekeepers. The main advantage of gathering data through such informal means is that it makes the process less artificial especially when compared to a technique like the interview.

The data collection tools discussed in the preceding sections provided for varied forms of triangulation. The data collection process is discussed in the next section.

### **4.7 Data collection procedures**

The procedures considered under this section are the pilot study and the other three stages of actual data collection.

#### ***4.7.1 Pilot study***

During the preliminary visit to the schools, the researcher took the opportunity to pilot the interview guides. The pilot study served such purposes as assessing the appropriateness of the instruments; determining the understanding of the interviewees in relation to the research



question or interview items; gaining insights into ‘cultural endowments’ of participants; obtaining additional information to refine the interview instrument; and determining the length of the interview (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2012:167). The pilot study also focused on issues pertaining to the language, clarity, sequence and potential of questions to elicit rich data. Two beginning teachers and one mentor who were not part of the sample for the study were interviewed to pilot the respective schedules. The interview guides were revisited to address issues arising from the pilot study, for example, inclusion of some warm up questions like the Grades taught by the participants. In addition, there were modifications in some theme questions to provide for sub-questions that required indications on specific aspects, for example, the types of supports experienced. The researcher also used the visit to identify possible settings for interviews in the selected schools.

#### ***4.7.2 The actual data collection procedures***

The data gathering process was done in **three** stages as outlined below:

##### **Stage 1**

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten beginning teachers and five mentors to enable them to give narratives of their experiences in terms of induction of NQTs.

Three intensive interviews were conducted with the beginning teachers during the course of the year as indicated earlier. An effort was made to ensure that the interviews would be about an hour long in order to avoid fatigue and boredom. The spacing of the interviews allowed the NQTs to reflect on their understanding of the induction process. The interview guide had open-ended questions as well as possible follow-up questions. The main advantage of open-ended questions was that they provided for the interview conversation to pursue the participants’ perspectives. Development of the schedule was informed by suggestions from colleagues and other professionals.

The second interview was conducted at a time when participants had had a feel of their new role and were in a better position to reflect on and discuss their experiences more elaborately. The interview focused on school context/perceptions of what constitutes induction and induction supports available. The third interview was meant to encourage participants to reflect on and evaluate their induction experiences.

All the interviews began with an explanation on the purpose of the interview and issues pertaining to ethical considerations. The beginning teachers were given an opportunity to ask any questions they had about the study and their role. Efforts were made to ensure that the interviews are conducted in enabling environments which were free of noise and provided some privacy. Each of the interviews was tape /audio recorded after seeking permission from each participant at the onset of the interview to tape the interview. During the interview the interviewer took notes where necessary. All the interviews were later transcribed.

Additional insights into the teacher induction phenomenon were gained through a one off interview with the mentors of the beginning teachers. The interview with five mentors focused on their perceived role in the induction process as well as their views about other issues pertaining to teacher induction.

### **Stage 2**

Five beginning teachers were asked to write reflective essays about their induction during the 1 to 3 years period they had been in the teaching profession. Data emerging from the essays was used to triangulate data from the semi-structured interviews which were the primary source of data.

### **Stage 3**

A focus group discussion was conducted after completing individual interviews to validate and generate deeper insights on the experiences of NQTs. A central venue, which was one of the schools in the district, was identified for the focus group discussion session. The researcher acted as a moderator during the discussion. At the beginning of the discussion, the researcher welcomed the participants and gave an overview of the topic. She also set the ground rules on participation in the discussion, for example, all views were welcome, the need to respect each other's views and need to give each other an opportunity to contribute without interruption. During the discussion, the researcher was assisted by a colleague who took notes which were later used to verify quotes from the conversation. At the end of the discussion, participants were allowed to raise any question they had.

The next section discusses how data collected through the processes described above were analysed.

## **4.8 Data analysis process**

The research instruments used in this study yielded qualitative data. This section explains how the data collected, which consisted of interview transcripts, field notes and reflective essays was analysed. Schwandt (2000) says emphasis of phenomenological analysis should be on understanding of how the everyday, inter-subjective world is constituted. In this study, the main focus of data analysis was to gain an understanding of what induction was like for the NQTs.

Data analysis was an on-going and iterative process. Analysis of data was done after each data collection round and was repeated throughout the data gathering process. Analysis of data on an on-going basis enabled the researcher to identify and assess emerging themes which needed to be explored in subsequent interviews, to refine ideas and to avoid collecting irrelevant, unfocused, repetitive voluminous data (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007; Merriam, 1998).

The data analysis (or explication, as Hycner calls it) protocol employed in this study was a simplified version of Hycner's (1985:280-294) framework for phenomenological explication of interview data proposed by Groenewald's (2004). The five phases of data explication/analysis process he suggested are:

- bracketing and phenomenological reduction;
- delineating units of meaning;
- clustering units of relevant meaning to form themes;
- summarising each interview, validating it and where necessary, modifying; and
- extracting general and unique themes from all interviews and making a composite summary.

Below is an explanation of what each of these phases entailed.

### ***4.8.1. Bracketing and phenomenological reduction***

The process of phenomenological reduction entails the researcher bracketing out as much as possible personal meanings, preconceptions, biases and interpretations on the phenomenon under investigation in an attempt to accurately describe the phenomenon from the view point

of the participants (Moustakas, 1994; Tesch, 1992). As part of bracketing, an attempt was made to record and describe the experiences of the participants verbatim as a way of understanding the perspective of the participant on the phenomenon. This was necessary, as according to Rossman and Rallis (1998), in a phenomenological analysis, the researcher approaches texts with an open mind, seeking what meaning and structure emerges.

This initial stage of data analysis also demanded reduction and management of the data. As maintained by Bryman & Burgess (2002), analysis of qualitative data is generally problematic because the data tends to be bulky and unstructured, hence the need to organise and prioritise the data. This process entailed the researcher reading through the interview transcripts closely several times in order to make sense of and familiarise with the interviews (Creswell, 1998). During this process, the researcher wrote memos or recorded reflective notes on what was being learnt from the data collected. Rubin and Babbie (2009: 307) define memoing as “a qualitative data analysis technique used at several stages of data processing to capture code meanings, theoretical ideas, preliminary conclusions and other thoughts that will be useful during analysis.” The ideas and insights thus recorded became part of the data to be analysed. From this initial process, the researcher was able to delineate units of general meaning (Hycner, 1985).

#### ***4.8.2 Delineating units of meaning***

This stage entailed identifying and isolating those statements that were significant to the phenomenon being studied (Hycner, 1985; Creswell, 1998). The criteria used to isolate the unit of relevant meaning included the literal content, the number of times a meaning was mentioned (Groenewald, 2003) and evidence of other contextual issues (Seidman, 2006). Each interview transcript, as well as reflective essays and field notes, were analysed, thus reducing the data into units of relevant meaning (see Table 4.3). Statements relating to (a) the constituents of the novices’ induction experiences, i.e. what the novices experienced; (b) what factors had influenced their experiences of induction or how they had experienced the phenomenon; and, (c) what they learned from induction or the essences of the experience were underlined and the units of meaning listed. In this way, units of meaning which were relevant to the research questions were identified and redundant units were eliminated.

#### ***4.8.3 Clustering units of relevant meaning to form themes***

After elimination of redundant units of meaning, the researcher was left with non-redundant ones. These units of relevant meaning were examined to establish their essence. Related units of meaning were then clustered into major evidence categories or themes, abbreviating the units into codes that represented commonalities within the grouped units of meaning (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998) and which were written against the relevant category/theme (see Table 4.3). These clusters would collectively reflect experience of the phenomenon.

#### ***4.8.4 Summarising each interview, validating it and where necessary, modifying***

The identified clusters of units of meaning were summarised into a simple and coherent format as suggested by Hycner (1999). These were made available to the participants at the beginning of subsequent interviews in order to validate and verify the essence of the experience, as well as the emerging themes.

#### ***4.8.5 Extracting general and unique themes from all interviews and making a composite summary***

After the above process, a combined list of themes which were common across the participants' experiences was then developed (Groenewald, 2004; Hycner, 1999). The themes from both majority and minority voices were summarised (see Table 5.1) and synthesized into a composite description of experiences of the participants (Moustakas, 1994) (see Summary of findings in Chapter 5).

In summary, the processes of delineating units of meaning relevant to the research questions and clustering them (Hycner, 1985) resulted in the systematic categorisation and classification of data and development of codes. It was essential to re-read the transcripts several times in order to identify trends and patterns in data before deciding on coding and intended meanings (Rossman & Rallis, 2003) as “qualitative analysis depends from the beginning on astute pattern recognition” (Patton, 1999). The coding process is an important aspect of analysis of qualitative data as it assists in managing and giving shape to the large volumes of collected data and also marks the beginning of conceptualisation of the data (Bryman & Burgess, 2000). As the data was being coded and categorised, core themes were identified and discrepancies or negative cases (cases that do not fit into the identified patterns) were examined to ensure proper placement of data and categorisation. The search for contradictory, variant or disconfirming data within the data gathered assisted in

identifying alternative perspectives on emerging categories or patterns (Patton, 1999). The themes were used to construct detailed descriptions of the participants' experiences of induction which would be compared and compiled into a combined general description. To minimise intrusion of researcher bias during data analysis, efforts were made to maintain the literal data as closely as possible in the creation and development of categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The researcher enlisted the assistance of two colleagues who are experienced researchers to read through the data after which there were discussions on the categories and themes developed. Table 4.3 below is an illustration of the data explication process with a selected emerging theme in the study.

Table 4.3: An illustration of the data explication/analysis process

Participant	Interview Excerpts (Main Question: How does it feel like to be a new teacher in this school?)	Units of meaning	Clusters/sub-categories of units of meaning	Theme/category
1	The first challenge is <u>meeting new people</u> , it is <u>difficult to get to know people, the likes and dislikes (1.1)</u> of colleagues. It <u>takes time to get to know the different personalities and to know who is willing to assist you (1.1)</u> among colleagues.	-meeting new people and getting to know their likes and dislikes is a difficult process -it takes time to establish new relationships	a). Forging new relationships	1). Adapting to the new environment
2	It is difficult to be a new teacher: a new <u>school, a new community, new children and new everything, environment, (1.1)</u> so it is difficult to interact with new things... <u>you have to find someone who is open to you, (1.1)</u> So <u>it is difficult to know this person is reliable, (1.1)</u> in order to raise my own issues.	-the experience of being new in a place is difficult because there are many new things to deal with -establishing new relationships involves and building trust and confidence		
4	Being new in a place is always eeh, being new is being new... <u>if you are new at a place, sometimes you are not comfortable with trying to make new friends, (1.1) trying to cope with a new environment, (1.1)</u>	-the discomfort of coping with new environment -the discomfort of stablishing new relationships		
9	It's only that one will be desperate otherwise I would not have come to this school... <u>lack of transport, we have to walk about 7km to the main road to catch lifts, drinking water is a problem, the water from the borehole is salty and that from the river is unsafe (1.2)</u>	-the challenges associated with rural schools: lack of social amenities	b).Location of the schools	1). Adapting to the new environment.
	In the <u>temporary structures that we use as classrooms... pupils do not have anywhere decent to seat during lessons, no desks to write on...(1.2)</u> pupils write seated on the	-the challenges associated with rural schools: lack of infrastructure -the impact on the teacher and		

Participant	Interview Excerpts (Main Question: How does it feel like to be a new teacher in this school?)	Units of meaning	Clusters/sub-categories of units of meaning	Theme/category
6	dusty floors, their exercise books get dirty... <u>I put a lot of effort in preparing the charts and other teaching aids but these are destroyed by the weather elements (1.2)</u>	pupils		
7	<u>It's unfortunate that this school is in the rural areas which do not have many things. (1.2)</u> We are learning things of the modern world, these children are lagging behind very much. <u>I think some kind of technology is necessary (1.2)</u>	-challenges associated with rural schools: lack of access to educational technology		
5	<u>I think the community is not cooperative because the pupils most of the times they are absent. (1.3)</u> They are not very supportive, the community	-unsupportive community: pupils' missing school	c).Nature of communities	1). Adapting to the environment
7	<u>The community although is a challenge because here the community it seems sometimes they don't care about what is going to happen to the children at school, they don't care about the welfare of the children. (1.3)</u> <u>You will find out that children come here they don't have a ballpoint, simple ballpoint or a pencil. (1.3)</u>	-uncooperative community: Lack of interest in children's welfare; failure to provide basic learning materials		
9	<u>The problem of pupils' absenteeism (1.3) has been discussed during meetings with parents but they seem to have a different view about the issue. Some have indicated that their children assist them with work in the field, also, they have said that sometimes they leave the pupils at home while they (parents) go to water the garden, they don't seem to value education (1.3)</u>	-uncooperative community: perpetuation of the problem of absenteeism among pupils lack of appreciation of the value of education		
10	<u>I have learned that this community does not value education, they do not prioritise providing their children with basic materials needed at school such as pencils and covers and the teacher has to provide these. (1.3)</u>	-negative attitude of the community towards education -failure to provide pupils with basic school requirements - teacher using own resources to provide for pupils' classroom needs		

Each of the interviews was subjected to the above process of data explication. The data coding system employed was as illustrated below:

## 1. Adapting to the environment (Category/theme)

### 1.1 forging new relationships

1.2 location of the schools

1.3 nature of host communities

On the whole, data explication/analysis entailed searching for enduring constructs of induction and their descriptions in order to ascertain experiences of the NQTs.

The preceding sections detailed the procedures of data collection and data analysis which was vital as this may enable other people to appraise the quality of a study (Patton, 1999). The next section examines techniques that were used to enhance trustworthiness of the findings of this study.

#### **4.9 Trustworthiness of data**

Trustworthiness in qualitative research refers to the extent to which qualitative data is dependable, consistent, stable, predictable and reliable so that whenever put to test, it produces the same data (Delpont & Roestenburg, 2011). The main threats to trustworthiness in qualitative research are observer bias, which refers to invalid information which emanates from the perspective that the researcher brings to and foists on the study and observer effects, which refers to the effects of the researcher's intrusion on the setting or the participants being studied. There was need, therefore, to ensure trustworthiness of the study and the key criteria usually employed to establish validity in qualitative research are credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. These criteria are catered for through the following multiple verification techniques suggested by Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) and Babbie and Mouton (2001) among others, which were also employed by the researcher to achieve rigour and develop trustworthiness:

- **Peer review or debriefing:** This involves subjecting the design, analysis and conclusions to examination by a colleague as the study progresses (Hycner, 1999). In this study, as earlier alluded to, the researcher worked with a colleague who took notes during focus group discussions and also verified the categorisation of data;
- **Triangulation:** According to Stokrocki (1997), triangulation enhances validity by incorporating different viewpoints and methods. The collection of data from multiple methods or methods triangulation, in which various types of data (interview data triangulated with data from reflective essays, a focus group discussion and field notes)



is used to facilitate cross-data validity checks (Patton, 1999), was one way of facilitating data triangulation. Other forms of triangulation employed in this study were time triangulation, where data was collected about the same phenomenon over a period of time; space triangulation, where data were collected from multiple sites (different schools); and person triangulation where data were collected at different levels in an organisation (NQTs and their mentors). The basic purpose of triangulation is to compare the data and validate it if it cedes comparable results (Gray, 2009);

- **Member checks:** These are employed to ensure that the researcher's descriptions and analyses have been checked by the original source, allowing those from whom data was collected to verify it (source). After each interview, a summary and themes of findings were availed to participants for verification before analysis;
- **Bracketing:** This involves the setting aside of a researcher's personal understandings, views and experiences about a subject, in order to avoid adulteration of the data by researcher bias and to give the phenomena a voice (Englander, 2012; Finlay, 2009; Gray, 2009; Lester, 1999). Such a process is vital in phenomenology which views social reality as being based on individuals' experience of that reality and demands that the researcher uses the templates of the participants' world views as a basis for understanding the phenomenon under investigation. To achieve this, the researcher, prior to the interviews, listed her presuppositions about teacher induction as a way of bracketing her experiences from those of the research participants. As part of bracketing, an attempt was made to record and describe the experiences of the participants verbatim;
- **Negative case analysis:** This analysis entails searching for cases that do not fit into the main pattern. According to Patton (1999), these would be useful in providing crucial insights about subcultures and pointers on how to improve a process or programme;
- **Rich, thick description** on important aspects to provide detail to verify findings; and,
- **Prolonged engagement**, which was achieved by interviewing the NQTs more than once, as well as interacting with some of them during the focus group discussion.

In addition, the researcher tried to build rapport with participants through the prolonged engagement in order to access detailed and honest data. The above processes were used to ensure trustworthiness and reliability of data gathered for the study.

#### **4.10 Ethical considerations**

Qualitative research involves intrusion into the lives of the participants, their interests and rights. Several authorities allude to the vulnerability of participants in research, hence the need for research ethical codes to be adhered to. Vulnerability is strongest where participants' freedom is limited by social constraints, social acceptability and the experience of being victims (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). NQTs who were the participants in this study may still have been trying to gain acceptability as professionals and their participation in a research may have made them vulnerable, especially if they were operating in conservative school cultures which do not readily accommodate newcomers. In addition, some data collection techniques such as interviews which involve keeping of records on tape and which were employed by this study impinge on participants' privacy, confidentiality, and convenience and illustrate the basic ethical issues associated with research (Patton, 1990). The ethical principles and procedures followed in the design and implementation of this study were guided by the views of several authorities who have provided important benchmarks relating to the researcher's responsibility in protecting the research participants (Hammersley & Traianou, 2012; Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell, 1998).

Before the onset of the research activity, approval was sought from the University of South Africa's Research Ethics Committee to undertake the study (see Appendix 11). This process was vital as it promoted the ethical treatment of participants in the study and also compelled the researcher to consider the possible psychological risks participants might face as a result of participation in the study. Permission was sought from the Ministry of Education, Sports, Arts and Culture, the parent Ministry of all schools, to conduct research in selected primary schools in Masvingo Province (see appendices 7a, 7b and 10).

Lastly, the researcher sought informed consent, an essential principle of ethical conduct, from all the participants. This entailed providing the participants with such information as the nature, purpose and procedure of the research, the purpose to which data gathered would be put, their role in the study, why they were selected, how much of their time was to be taken by participation in the study, the voluntary nature of their participation and their right to withdraw from the research at any given point, should they so wish (Cohen et al, 2011; Gray, 2009). It was important to include justification for the involvement of participants so that it did not seem as though only the researcher would benefit from the research. For the NQTs,

benefits included feelings of importance from participation, useful feedback (Stokrocki, 1997), a better understanding of induction as a process of professional growth and being able to share their concerns with colleagues in a similar situation. Participants were assured that their identities and confidentiality would be protected through use of pseudonyms and codes throughout the study and that all data gathered would be securely kept. Those participants were requested to sign the consent form (see appendix 6). A similar approach was taken with the mentors in seeking their consent to participate in the study.

#### **4.11 Conclusion**

This qualitative study sought to understand the induction experiences of NQTs. A phenomenological research design was adopted and fifteen (15) NQTs and five (5) mentors were purposively selected to participate in the research. Data was collected through three individual interviews, a focus group discussion, reflective essays and field notes. The research yielded qualitative data and this data is presented and analysed in the next chapter.

## Chapter 5

### Research Results

#### 5.1 Introduction

This study sought to gain insights into how NQTs in primary schools in Mwenezi District, Masvingo Province in Zimbabwe experienced the phenomenon of induction. Data presented were mainly generated from semi-structured interviews and a focus group discussion with NQTs who had been in the field for less than a year, reflective essays by teachers who had been in the field for more than a year but less than 3 years and interviews with mentors. Quotations are used extensively in the process of data presentation in order to give participants a voice in the description of their experiences.

The following codes are used in this chapter to represent the different categories of participants:

- P – Participant. The participants in this category are numbered 1 to 10 and constitute NQTs with 0-1 year teaching experience.
- RE – Reflective Essay. These are numbered 1 to 5 and indicate participants with 1-3 years teaching experience from whom data were collected through reflective essays.
- M – Mentor. The mentors are also numbered 1 to 5.
- FGD- Focus Group Discussion participants.

#### 5.2 Results

The results are organised according to categories/themes that were identified as critical in giving shape to the lived experiences of NQTs. The categories illuminate (a) what the NQTs experienced (b) how they experienced the phenomenon and (c) what they learned from induction or the essences of the experience. These results are presented in an integrated manner from the data sources stated in 5.1. In a few instances, superscripted information is explained at the end of this chapter. Table 5.1 shows the categories identified and the sub-categories that coalesced to form the different categories:

Table 5.1: Data categories and sub-categories

<b>Category/Themes</b>	<b>Sub-category/cluster</b>
Adapting to the new environment	Forging new relationships The location of schools The nature of host communities
Experiences of low intensity induction strategies	Orientation of NQTs Adjusting of working conditions Opportunities for collaboration
Experiences of high intensity induction strategies	Mentoring of NQTs by veterans Observation of NQTs teaching Opportunities to observe other teachers
Concerns of new teachers	Setting and marking of tests The scheme-cum-plan Selection of content and teaching methods Performance of pupils Pupils with special needs Discipline issues
Reflections of NQTs on induction	Rating of the induction process Impact of induction on classroom practices The relative status of NQTs in schools Perceptions of NQTs about teaching

The categories/themes are presented in the order given in Table 5.1.

### **5.3 Adapting to the new environment**

This category sets the context for induction by reflecting on NQTs' experiences of acclimatising to the new environment. In particular, it considers three sub-categories related to the adaptation challenges which were identified by the NQTs. The sub-categories identified here were: (a) forging new relationships, (b) location of schools, and (c) nature of host communities (Table 5.2).

Table 5.2: Adaptation challenges of NQTs

Challenge	Participant									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Forging new relationships	√	√		√				√	√	√
Location of schools			√	√		√	√		√	
Nature of host communities	√		√		√	√	√	√	√	√

*Note:* Ticks indicate which participant experienced which challenge

Table 5.2 shows that most of the NQTs experienced at least two out of three identified adaptation challenges suggesting that they might have taken time to adapt to the new environment. The adaptation challenges are discussed in detail below.

### 5.3.1 Forging new relationships

As shown in Table 5.2, several beginning teachers spoke of finding the experience of being new in an environment daunting. The beginners identified the unfamiliar things that constituted the environment as the main source of their discomfort. One of the participants explained this discomfort as follows: *It is difficult to be a new teacher: a new school, a new community, and new children and new everything, so it is difficult to interact with new things* (P2). This view was echoed by another participant who indicated that such a situation resulted in one *feeling a bit lost or as an outsider* (P8). Being newcomers to the environment, therefore, impacted on the beginners' levels of comfort and sense of belonging. An important feature of this new environment was interaction with new people and establishing relationships particularly with colleagues. NQTs found the process of forging new relationships challenging as reflected in such statements as: *when you are a newcomer in a place you may find it difficult to relate to unfamiliar people* (P9); and, *you may not be comfortable with trying to make new friends* (P4). The new teachers highlighted reasons which contributed to making forging new relationships challenging and these included:

*Establishing new relationships entails finding someone who is open to you (and) it is difficult to know this person is reliable in order to raise my own issues* (P2).

*It is difficult to get to know people, their likes and dislikes. It takes time to get to know the different personalities and to know who is willing to assist you from amongst colleagues* (P1).

It was apparent that NQTs felt that establishing relationships did not come easily as it involved building trust, a thing which could not be achieved overnight. A reflective essay participant recounted a similar experience to that of the NQTs and stated that *as a junior teacher I found it difficult to interact with the senior teachers* (RE4). That NQTs found it difficult to establish new relationships with their experienced colleagues was also confirmed by some mentors as reflected in such statements as:

*Here and there, I feel NQTs have problems in mixing, interacting with other members of staff, interacting with the community and maybe with the pupils themselves* (M2).

*Sometimes you notice that it takes time for NQTs to get used to the group. You can see them, if they are 2, they go for some time moving as a pair and that shows that they are not fully integrated into the existing group* (M4).

This isolation of new teachers was likely to impact on how they adapted to the new environment as well as to their first assignment as teachers. A minority of beginners, however, did not indicate experiencing any problems with establishing relationships. As suggested by one beginner, this was probably because *the staff was supportive in everything* (P6).

### **5.3.2 The location of schools**

The process of integration into the new environment required the NQTs to adjust to the settings of the schools where they were deployed. All the NQTs were deployed in remote rural schools. One beginner summed up the constraints encountered in settling at the new school as follows:

*It's only that one would be desperate otherwise I would not have come to this school. There is lack of transport, we have to walk about 7 kilometres to the main road to catch lifts, drinking water is a problem, the water from the borehole is salty and that from the river is unsafe ...* (P9).

The conditions in the school were clearly not what the new teacher had anticipated and such conditions would be typical of most rural schools.

Several beginners indicated that their schools lacked requisite infrastructure such as classrooms. Some of these teachers were deployed in satellite schools<sup>1</sup> where there were no permanent structures and typically *classrooms are grass thatched pole and mud structures with mud floors which are polished using cow dung* (P6). New teachers' descriptions of conditions in such classrooms illustrate some of the associated challenges:

*In the temporary structures that we use as classrooms... pupils do not have anywhere decent to sit during lessons, no desks to write on...pupils write seated on the dusty floors, their exercise books get dirty... I put a lot of effort in preparing the charts and other teaching aids but these are destroyed by the weather elements* (P6).

*When it rains the roofs leak and conducting lessons become a problem...Because the sheds are not lockable, during weekends pupils come in and destroy the charts, this is very discouraging* (P9).

The participants found that the makeshift and substandard infrastructure presented a host of problems which made normal classroom operations very difficult. A reflective essay participant also made reference to being *given one of the oldest classrooms with no floors, no doors and no window panes* (RE4) and the fact that this affected pupil attendance, especially in winter. The new teachers felt that such conditions were de-motivating and in the words of one of them: *It can be demoralising. You would think that since we are beginning teachers, we would be deployed into schools that would motivate us* (P6). This particular beginner further noted that, *if one remains in a school like this one, it's not only de-motivating but if I were to eventually transfer to a better school I would find it difficult to perform to the expected standard*. Hence this highlights the possible consequences of working in poor school environments, one of which could be loss of touch with what normal teaching ought to be. The NQTs' accounts about the state of infrastructure was corroborated by a mentor at a satellite school who explained that, *a major challenge for NQTs is adaptation to the environment because they come to an environment which may be different from what they expected. Like in our case, we don't have many ordinary classrooms and the teacher has to adapt to that kind of environment* (M5). Clearly, NQTs posted to such schools might have experienced some kind of reality shock because of the conditions prevailing in the schools.



Some NQTs deployed in established schools<sup>2</sup> also made reference to shortage of classrooms. However, in such schools, the problem mainly affected Early Childhood Development (ECD) classes where pupils would learn in the open. One new teacher explained: *we have been without a classroom since the beginning of the year. This means that my ECD class has to concentrate on outdoor activities, yet there are some activities which require to be done indoors* (P1). The absence of a classroom to operate from would be constraining for the new teacher as it would not be possible for the teacher to expose the pupils to a balanced curriculum. That in established schools ECD classes were the most affected by shortage of classrooms was, to the new teachers, indicative of a negative attitude towards ECD. One beginner commented: *At the Teaching Practice (TP) school, ECD was regarded as very important as it was understood to be the foundation of the primary level course. At this school some teachers think that there is nothing serious that is done in those classes* (P8). The problem of schools' negative attitudes towards ECD was echoed by another participant who felt the School Heads in Mwenezi district contributed to the situation by not demonstrating that ECD was important. This was unlike in the district where the participant had done practicum as highlighted in the following statement:

*The leaders here they don't know what is ECD. They still have the derogatory language of zero Grade. I don't think this area is doing some workshops with leaders like other districts where Headmasters already have too much knowledge about ECD* (P7).

This negative attitude to ECD spilled over to parents who would *sometimes make their children miss school when it is cold because they believe that learning proper starts at Grade 1* (P8). To counter this negative attitude towards ECD, the new teacher requested that the school puts a policy in place that stipulates that a child who did not attend Grade zero (i.e. ECD B<sup>3</sup>) should not be admitted for Grade 1. In her view this was necessary because having pupils who did not attend pre-school in a Grade 1 class *disadvantages those who attended Grade zero who will be ahead of their counterparts who didn't in terms of learning* (P8). This, in a way, demonstrated that the new teachers could be agents of change in schools.

Some new teachers cited another way in which the location of schools impacted on their work in the classroom, namely, the shortage of teaching and learning aids. One of them lamented: *It's unfortunate that this school is in the rural areas which do not have many things. We are learning things of the modern world, these children are lagging behind very*

*much. I think some kind of technology is necessary (P7). Another beginner also noted: we are far from shops, it's not always easy to source media (P6). Similar sentiments were expressed by a mentor who observed that the school did not have the materials that the new teacher needed because here we are in a rural area we lack most of the things (M5). By implication, the location of schools made it difficult to access the requisite educational technology and other related materials and this affected the operations of the new teachers in the classroom.*

Other adaptation issues raised by a few NQTs related to the nature of accommodation they were allocated and the general living arrangements. On the issue of accommodation, one new teacher had initially indicated that the house allocated to him was run down and rat-infested. He however, later indicated that *they have managed to renovate the house (P7)*. A mentor added her voice on the issue of accommodation problems in rural schools and commented: *we have limited accommodation in the school and most NQTs find accommodation arrangements here unsatisfactory and complain about it (M1)*. The other issue raised by one beginner pertained to the set-up in rural schools whereby teachers stay within the school premises. The teacher explained:

*When you are teaching in the rural areas... you have to interact, even after work you have to meet those people that you work with... Unlike in urban areas where after work one can do his/her own thing, here we form a village. This means you have to learn to work together well and to also appreciate that people are different (P4).*

This teacher did not seem to be comfortable with such an arrangement and seemed to imply that interacting with the same people even after work demanded a lot of effort in as far as interpersonal relationships were concerned. The sentiments of this teacher were echoed by a mentor who stated that *we live in a fenced secluded place so there is the issue of socialising with those within the fence (M3)*, thus implying that good interpersonal relations were particularly important in such set-ups.

Indications are that some NQTs found conditions in the schools they were deployed inhospitable. This was bound to result in them struggling to adapt to their new environments and maybe choosing to opt out at the first opportunity, thus resulting in high teacher turnover in rural schools.

### 5.3.3 *The nature of host communities*

Most NQTs (see Table 5.2) had challenges with issues that emanated from the nature of host communities. One NQT described the communities as *not cooperative and not very supportive* (P5). According to the new teachers, the attitudes of the communities manifested themselves through the high incidences of pupil absenteeism as well as non-payment of school fees or levies which resulted in pupils being turned away from school, thus further contributing to the problem of absenteeism as well. One beginner noted: *It's impossible to have a full class attending school every day, there has to be a pupil who is away each day, it's like the pupils take turns to miss school...* (P8). Confirming this challenge, a mentor stated that *children do not come to school every day, they have got their own problems at home* (M5). The reasons for absenteeism not related to non-payment of school fees were further elaborated on by two new teachers who cited such reasons as: *pupils assisting parents in the fields or being left at home while they (parents) go to water the garden (or) are away to attend to various issues, at times the child is said to have a headache, and at times, no reason is given for missing school (P10); and, attending the numerous church meetings or camps which are characteristic of Apostolic sects<sup>4</sup> that are dominant in this area* (P5). One new teacher who made a follow-up on pupils who were perennially missing school in their homes learned from some parents that one reason for absenteeism could be *that there was no snack for the child to take to school*. The teacher advised such parents *to pack even porridge or sadza<sup>5</sup> in a lunchbox for the child to eat at school* (P8). The new teachers generally felt that the reasons advanced for pupils' absenteeism did not justify missing school. Hence, typical conclusions amongst themselves as teachers were that *in this area, education is not regarded as important, it's like the area caught up late on the idea of schooling* (P6) and *the parents here they are a bit difficult, they don't care about school* (P7). One beginner indicated reluctance amongst teachers to rationalise with pupils about the consequences of missing school because of fear of a backlash from the community: *the child tells you that his/her mum made her miss school. But you can't reprimand the child in case the parent takes offence and visits the (school) office to complain about it, so you have to be careful about how you treat such cases* (P8). The new teachers felt that their hands were tied and, therefore, they could not address an issue that was crucial to effective performance in the classroom by both teachers and pupils.

On occasions when pupils were excluded from school for non-payment of school fees, teachers would be left with depleted classes. One beginner, referring to such occasions, stated

that *sometimes you are left with very few pupils in class, you may be left with 3 or 4 pupils out of 40* (P7). Some NQTs expressed reservations with the whole idea of schools turning away pupils for non-payment of fees as indicated by such statements as:

*We sometimes emphasise on sending away children to collect school fees. You see, these are hard times sometimes. Yes, we can say the school needs money to do these things, but it's good that the parents should be the ones to be talked to, not the children* (P7).

*I have a Grade 2 pupil who just stopped coming to school...if pupils are regularly excluded from class for non-payment of fees, they cease to appreciate the value of education. But is it proper for a child to drop out of school at Grade 2?* (P9).

The beginners felt turning away pupils for non-payment of school fees was tantamount to penalising pupils for a problem that was not of their own creation. The exclusion of pupils from school seemed to create some moral dilemmas for the teacher as it could lead to some pupils dropping out of school at a tender age. One beginner suggested that exclusion of pupils from school was a violation of children's rights and that School Heads *really don't know the rights of the children* (P7). But a mentor was of the view that *some things that they* (NQTs) *learn at the college may not go down well with the school policies* (M5), suggesting that the new teachers were too idealistic in their approach to some practical issues affecting schools such as the issue of school fees alluded to above.

From the perspective of NQTs, pupils' absenteeism created an additional dilemma of how to make up for the lost time. A new teacher explained that lessons would continue even when classes were depleted:

*The time children are being sent away, I am left with 6, 9 or 12, I won't stop teaching. When they return I will be done with a topic and it becomes a problem how to assist them to make up for the lost time... you are forced to go back to some things that you will have covered* (P7).

Indications are that teachers would ultimately move around in circles in their teaching in order to ensure that those pupils who frequently missed school were exposed to the key concepts that had been covered in their absence. One beginner commented:

*...absenteeism among pupils impedes the teacher's work, I cannot move forward or make any progress. As a result, I fail to cover work planned for the term...I cannot leave some work uncovered because Grade 7 examinations are based on work done during the 7 year course (P6).*

For the beginners, pupils' absenteeism for whatever reason had a number of implications which could not be ignored. Another dilemma was that in some cases, *pupils may disappear when fees are demanded only to resurface at the end of the term for test (P9)* yet they would have missed out on most of the work covered. In the words of one new teacher, *schools still expect to get high standards (but) obviously they (pupils) fail (P7)* and this would leave the teacher in a lurch. Another beginner complaining about pupils' absenteeism commented: *I cannot stand pupils missing school. Pupils who miss school know that I punish them for that, I don't like pupils who miss school. That's the worst for me (P8)*. So, NQTs generally found it difficult to deal with pupils' absenteeism and its implications and seemed to have been frustrated by the whole issue. Their frustration was confirmed by one mentor who noted that her protégé *couldn't understand the issue of pupils' absenteeism, especially where to begin teaching a child who has missed school for a whole month and then returns (M1)*. Another mentor also acknowledged the inability of NQTs to handle the problem and explained that *absenteeism affects even the teacher, especially new teachers who are not familiar with the problem... when some children are absent this retards her progress and also demoralises the new teacher (M5)*. However, the same mentor went on to suggest that at times the new teachers overreacted on the problem of pupils' absenteeism, and observed: *they (NQTs) may take some things for granted, that can be a challenge to a person who does not know the community. May be she can even scold the child and yet at times it's not necessary (M5)*. It would seem that the mentor was of the view that although absenteeism affected all teachers in schools, experienced teachers had a better capacity to handle the problem. The issue of pupils' absenteeism could in a way have introduced the new teachers to some of the practical challenges generally faced by rural schools. But at the same time, it could have made it difficult for them to adapt to their new roles and schools, through induction could have equipped the new teachers with skills to confront that perennial constraint.

A few NQTs spoke about their encounters in the classroom with pupils who they viewed as experiencing parental neglect. In the words of one beginner: *it seems sometimes they (parents) don't care about the welfare of the children* (P7). Some indicators of lack of parental concern about the welfare of children identified by the NQTs were, firstly, some children coming to school while dirty and unwashed or even unwell:

*Some pupils may come to school without having taken a bath or while they are ill. Parents do not check on their children before they leave for school, they just instruct them to bath and go to school so they may miss any problem that the child may have* (P10).

A second indicator was failure by parents to provide basic school requirements yet *at times both parents could be alive but are just not willing to do their part* (P5). One beginner felt that these examples were indicative of the fact that *the community does not prioritise providing their children with basic materials needed at school or their welfare* (P10). In trying to find a solution to this problem, one beginner would *summon such parents to the school and talk to some of them and in some cases there has been an improvement* (P7). But some new teachers considered the issues raised above as abdication of responsibility by parents which meant that they would *also work as parents to these children and assist them with the required materials* (P10). The new teachers found that because *parents are not doing their part* (FGD), this put them in a dilemma as teachers were required by circumstances to adapt to infinite roles to moderate consequences of the oversights. But one beginner thought that at times school heads were to blame for the situation because: *they do not emphasize to the parents when they hold their meetings that this school belongs to you the community so the parents decide to be aloof but at the expense of the child* (FGD). The participant was of the view that parents might not always be to blame for not taking interest in what was happening to their children at school because they might not have been afforded the opportunity to get involved in the issues affecting the school in the first place. Hence, the parents might have lacked a sense of ownership of the schools.

On the whole, most NQTs found the process of adapting to their school environments challenging. This was attributed to factors such as the complexity of forging new relationships, limitations related to the location of the schools and peculiarities of host communities. All of these factors could have compromised the social and professional wellbeing of NQTs.

## 5.4 Experiences of low intensity support strategies

This category was characterised by a consideration of support activities that are not comprehensive and limited in terms of their content, and require minimal effort and funding by the providers of induction who in this study are the schools. The low intensity support activities discussed here are orientation of new teachers, adjusting working conditions and opportunities for collaboration. Table 5.3 is a summary of the low intensity strategies that were experienced by the beginning teachers during their induction year.

Table 5.3: NQTs' experiences of low intensity induction strategies

Low intensity strategy	Participants									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Orientation of new teachers		√	√	√				√		
<b>Opportunities for collaboration:</b> Matching veteran and beginning teachers	√	√	√	√	√			√	√	
Promoting collegial collaboration		√	√	√	√		√		√	√
Staff meetings	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
<b>Adjusting working conditions</b> Class allocation	?	?						?		?
Co-curricular assignments										
Provision of resources	√			√				√		

*Note:* 1. The tick (√) indicates induction strategies experienced by each NQT

2. A question mark (?) indicates participants who did not raise an issue with class assignment.

### 5.4.1 Orientation of new teachers

The orientation exercise would normally be undertaken a week before the beginning of the school term and would entail formal introductions to the school community, the curriculum and school in general. Table 5.3 shows that less than half of the NQTs indicated that they had received some orientation. These new teachers tended to speak of orientation that typically involved being *introduced to the school and other teachers* (P2) or *just welcoming me...showing me where to stay, telling me some school rules* (P4). But there were also some variations in issues focused on by different schools as orientation. For example, in some schools, emphasis of orientation was on school routines and for one NQT the information received was *about the school day, what time school starts, after lunch time there are some activities* (P8); and for another, the information about *holiday duties and how the duties are done* (P4). In another instance, orientation focused on interpersonal relations and aspects of actual classroom teaching. This new teacher described issues covered during orientation as pertaining to *how I should operate within the school parameters, how I should interact with the community, how I should improve my teaching since these pupils are different from my Teaching Practice (TP) experience, not harassing pupils and interacting with other teachers and sharing problems with them* (P3). Many of the aspects mentioned by new teachers as part of the focus of orientation were also confirmed by some mentors who indicated that the process in their schools focused on *things like...hard work, that teachers should be punctual, and abide by the rules and regulations that govern profession, that is, the Statutory Instrument* (M5); or, such aspects as *expectations at the station, the code of conduct that is expected by the Ministry, issues like dressing, the record books that are expected, ethics like punctuality, and maybe the hierarchy in the administration system* (M2). One mentor further elaborated on the focus of orientation and stated that it included:

*...the social aspect...because in these rural set ups, those people around us or even the parents of the children, we have to try by all means to get closer to them so that when we have problems with the children we have to communicate with them...when it comes to work, there are some things which do not happen at other schools, we try and discuss all these things with them* (M3).

It would seem that the orientation focused on social and professional expectations of schools and that in some instances there were indications of emphasis on peculiarities in cultures of schools. Another mentor further noted that it was particularly important to focus on Statutory



Instrument (SI) of 2000 (the Public Service policy document governing the conditions of service of civil servants, including teachers) *because some of these people when they come into schools they are not very much aware of the statutory instrument and they won't have any knowledge about communication channels, their job profile or duties of a teacher* (M3). Yet another mentor added that *some of the things which are being done by these teachers are out of hand* (M2), perhaps indicating that NQTs were prone to professional misconduct. The mentors felt that new teachers generally lacked knowledge of the Statutory Instrument that governed their conditions of service, hence there was need to pay particular attention to it during induction so as to forearm them. During the focus group discussion session, some NQTs confirmed that they lacked knowledge of the stipulations of the said instrument, for example, *the requirement that you can complete leave forms when you need to be away for a few days to attend to urgent personal business*. As a result at times, in the words of one beginner, they were *short-changed because of lack of knowledge about such procedures* (FGD).

Some beginners felt that the orientation provided was not comprehensive and might not have furnished them with crucial information. A beginner commenting about the limited orientation noted:

*Maybe he (the School Head) introduced me to the school and other teachers, but not to other issues like expectations, activities and problems/limitations within the school. I had to ask, where are the toilets, where do you get some water to drink and where is the master timetable?* (P2).

Another beginner suggested that the orientation process was perfunctory and elaborated: *I received the orientation from the Deputy Head and it took about 10 minutes. I had gone into his office and as I was about to leave, he said "this is our school and it's like this. You are expected to start work at 7.30"* (P8). Such an approach to orientation may have given the new teachers an impression that the school did not attach much importance to the induction process.

The majority of NQTs did not allude to having received any orientation. One new teacher specifically described the experience of not being provided with orientation and having to stumble upon very vital information:

*I wasn't formally introduced. Some of the things, I had to meet them on the way then I would be told. For example, there was an issue of teacher's files with personal information, I didn't know about that. But there was one time when that file was wanted and I didn't know the information, so that is when I was told there is need for a personal file (P5).*

Another NQT who did not receive orientation noted that the process was vital because he was not familiar with the community so it would be vital for the school to make him aware of *the culture, the expectations, the behaviour of the people around, because I come from a different area (P7)*. It was apparent that the new teachers who were not provided with orientation felt that they might have missed out on vital information.

What emerges is that a few new teachers did receive orientation (see Table 5.3). However, the emphasis of the orientation provided tended to lack uniformity as different schools emphasised different issues. In this way, the orientation might not have addressed all the issues that were pertinent to the beginners. There were also indications that most beginners did not receive any orientation at all and might have been deprived of much needed information to give them direction as they embarked on their new role.

#### **5.4.2 Adjusting working conditions**

This subcategory reflects on how working conditions of NQTs were adjusted in order to make their transition into schools as smooth as possible. Issues identified which related to adaptation of working conditions were class allocation, co-curricular assignments and provision of resources.

##### **a) Class allocation**

Several new teachers indicated that they were assigned classes that they were not comfortable with. One of those affected by class allocation was an ECD specialist who had been allocated a Grade 3 class but felt that although the grade fell within his area of specialisation, he *should have been doing my work with small children (P7)*. The other affected new teachers were generalists who were allocated ECD classes (i.e. Grades 1 to 3 which cater for children between the ages of 5 to 8 years) which they did not feel quite competent to teach. A new teacher explained that the main consideration in class allocation was that: *I replaced a teacher who was teaching Grade1, everyone had schemed for their Grades and couldn't*

*scheme afresh, so I had to take Grade 1s (P4). One mentor confirmed the modalities of class allocation and stated that a new teacher would be assigned whatever class was without a teacher at the time of their arrival at a school. This same mentor explained that sometimes the teacher is not comfortable with the assigned class but we have no option...(because) normally new teachers come after we have done our class allocation (M4). The mentor viewed this approach to class allocation as more of gap filling than class allocation (M4), (perhaps acknowledging that the manner in which the exercise was undertaken was not ideal), but emphasised that we don't allocate teachers to a class as a way of giving them a punishment. There did not seem to be much room for negotiation over the issue as indicated by the mentor's statement above and such statements from NQTs as: it's my first time to teach that Grade, but I was told, if you don't know anything you can ask another Grade 1 teacher or you can ask the Head of Department (HOD)(P4); and I cannot handle Grade 3s but he (the Head) told me that's what was there and I would have to learn to work with that (P6). The NQTs could have expressed reservations about taking some assigned classes but these reservations do not seem to have been heeded. Most of the beginners affected by this approach to class allocation professed lack of knowledge of methods appropriate for use, especially with ECD classes. One of them explained: I didn't learn much about Grade 1s, so it's a little bit challenging, I can't sing some music (i.e. recite children's rhymes), I am just coping with Grade 1s (P4). Such sentiments could suggest that the teacher was not performing at optimal levels. A generalist teacher who had been assigned a Grade 3 class further elaborated on challenges experienced:*

*Grade 3 is a transitional class. The pupils are coming from ECD proper and cannot cope with such tasks as composition writing. When I teach a lesson on composition writing, most of them tend to write disjointed sentences rather than compositions. For some of them it's the problem of hand to eye coordination, it takes them time to complete a writing task and not every pupil is able to complete the written work within the stipulated lesson time. I find it difficult to adhere to the timetable with my class (P6).*

The new teacher felt that the assigned class had multiple teaching and learning issues which were difficult to address. This particular teacher concluded that *being given such a class would be a disadvantage to pupils (P6)*. Three of the reflective essay participants confirmed finding the classes that they were assigned on entry into the profession, which were ECD

classes, to be challenging. One of them spoke of *giving pupils work which was not of their level* (RE1). The new teachers, in a way, recognised that inappropriate class allocation would work against pupils' learning as they lacked the competencies to handle such classes.

Another beginner reported on being allocated a class that was renowned in the school for being *a problem class with many unruly pupils, especially the boys (who) miss school or play truant, many of them hide their books and do not do the written work* (P5). Indications are that the new teacher found handling the assigned class difficult and she stated that she *really needed some help with the class*. During the focus group discussion, some NQTs expressed their perceptions about the class assignment process in their schools and claimed that:

*A new teacher is usually assigned the worst class, a dead class which they (experienced teachers) killed totally and that no other teacher within the school would accept to take because there is no hope of achieving anything with the pupils* (FGD).

The NQTs felt that their being assigned such classes was deliberate and that perhaps they were being taken advantage of because they were new. A yet peculiar case pertaining to the issue of class allocation was the constant changing of teaching assignments for two beginners during the course of the year, whereby one of the teachers *was shifted from one grade to another, initially allocated a Grade 3 class, then given Grade 1 and in the 3<sup>rd</sup> term taking Grade 2* (P9). The beginner thought that such constant changes might not enable one *to keep track of their progress* (P9). Participant 3 reported a similar experience and having his teaching assignment changed midway through the course of the first year in the field.

Clearly, some novices lacked the confidence and the abilities to handle some of the assigned classes and this was a source of frustration for the affected teachers. One of them summed up the whole problem of inappropriate class allocation as follows: *when you get to a school and you are just given a class, it's difficult, you may talk to the children yes, but getting down to the actual teaching will be difficult* (P6), implying that a new teacher might not be able to achieve much with a difficult class assignment.

#### b) Co-curricular assignments

All NQTs indicated that during their first year of teaching, they were assigned co-curricular responsibilities just like the experienced teachers. They were not exempted from participation

in order to allow them extra planning time (see Table 5.3). They alluded to being involved in at least two co-curricular activities, these being supervision of general work and other activities such as *coaching netball* (P1) *coaching soccer* (P3 & P7) and other games, *assembly duty* for all participants, and *being in charge of the school choir* (P6 & P9). The modalities of assigning these responsibilities (except assembly duty which was mandatory for all teachers) seemed to be consistent in most schools and involved being asked *if I was good at any other thing like sports* or *which areas I can help* (P4). The new teachers would then indicate which areas they were comfortable with. NQTs generally viewed these duties as part of their work.

Some NQTs made reference to achievements realised through sporting and other co-curricular activities. In such instances, the new teachers led school teams and choirs that won in competitions, thus boosting the images of their schools. Accounts from new teachers about their contributions included:

*I took the school choir to the area agricultural show and we won that competition* (P6).

*The school was invited to entertain guests at an agricultural field day and my pupils recited a poem and provided music and all went well and the school's name was promoted. I am also in charge of Music and the school choir* (P9).

*In soccer I told them, primary school children playing soccer have got difficulty in holding their positions. So let's emphasize on holding positions* (P7).

*I was coaching the volleyball team which I took up to district level competitions* (P10).

It would seem from these accounts that beginners felt that they brought varied skills into schools and that their participation in these activities gave them a sense of identity and belonging as they would represent their schools at various events. One new teacher indicated that from participation in sports competitions *I learned about commitment to one's duties, the teachers devoted a lot of time and energy in preparing for the competitions* (P4). This beginner realised that participation in co-curricular activities presented an opportunity for NQTs to learn from experienced colleagues.

A few NQTs related some negative experiences pertaining to issues of co-curricular responsibilities. One new teacher found the assigned manual work task (i.e. attending to the nursery and the orchard) not age appropriate for her class and was of the view that *the work should be done by older boys who are in Grades 7 and 6 where there are some male teachers* (P2). For another beginner, the challenge was lack of knowledge about the games she had been asked to coach as well as an assigned committee responsibility. The teacher explained:

*You may be expected to coach netball, volleyball or women's soccer, yet I am not familiar with the rules of these games... You may be assigned a task like being a health master when you don't even know what that responsibility entails.* (P9).

The beginner suggested that new teachers should be allowed time to understudy experienced colleagues to learn about different responsibilities and noted, *that way, you don't get unwarranted criticism from colleagues for failing to perform a task well as such things are very demoralising* (P9). The new teacher recognised the possible implications of failing to carry out the assigned tasks well. The same new teacher alluded to being assigned other extra responsibilities. For example, she was asked to take charge of the school choir and to participate in sports and gardening duties and she explained:

*...these activities are supposed to be done by all teachers but the old guard does not always attend yet the new teacher cannot be absent and this can be burdensome. Also, I am in charge of the school choir and there is no one who assists me with that task, yet as a new teacher you would need that kind of assistance* (P9).

The beginner may have felt overloaded with co-curricular responsibilities and such an arrangement could have made one feel the burden of being new. However, the beginner could not request for any relief with some of the activities. She was of the view that new teachers *should be seen to be participating in all events that take place in the school and not make excuses because if you show that you have problems with work, you won't portray a good picture* (P9). The NQT in this instance might have been concerned about self-image and the need to gain acceptance from colleagues. A participant reported a similar experience through a reflective essay whereby she was assigned multiple co-curricular activities. She observed that this meant that *I was not having enough time to teach my class* (RE1). Another reflective essay participant thought that the reason why new teachers were assigned these

responsibilities was because *they have no power over anything that happens in the school* (RE3), perhaps meaning that their views were disregarded. It would seem that in the area of co-curricular activities, NQTs were at times taken advantage of by their experienced colleagues who offloaded their responsibilities on them.

Some new teachers alluded to being marginalised when it came to competitions at higher levels. The basis of this perception was, for example, the decision by a school to assign an experienced teacher to take charge of a team which had been successfully coached by a NQT for a sporting competition as explained here: *I was an athletics coach here and I took almost 7 pupils to inter-district competitions. But unfortunately, I had to hand them over to somebody for the zonal competitions* (P3). Having put a lot of work into preparing the team for the competition, the new teacher might have felt that such side-lining would be difficult to justify and this would probably dampen the spirits of the NQT involved. In a related case, a NQT mentioned being denied opportunities by experienced colleagues to assume responsibilities in sporting activities and stated: *In allocation of duties like in sport, you may not be considered for significant duties for higher level competitions even if you are good at that activity because you are a junior* (P5). Such kind of treatment would negatively affect the beginners' integration into school communities as suggested by the comment that *you feel accepted and as an asset to the school if you are allocated a duty* (P5). The marginalisation of NQTs in some school activities was confirmed by a mentor who stated that:

*If a new teacher is good in netball or soccer, the old members will feel that they are more superior and the new member cannot come and challenge and say I can do this better. You see them (NQTs) being far away from the old members and when you ask the old members about it they say the new members do not seem to be willing to take over* (M4).

It would seem that the main motivation for exclusion of new teachers from involvement in some school activities was the desire by experienced teachers to protect their positions and interests. However, this could only result in the alienation of the beginners. One of the NQTs was of the view that schools should not discriminate against inexperienced teachers in allocation of positions of responsibility because *we can learn from whatever is happening* (P5).

One new teacher recounted experiences of unbecoming behaviour displayed by some veteran teachers during sporting events: *In sports, they (experienced teachers) will be drinking during the course of the games. They will be shouting, they will talk vulgar (use obscene language) I told them, “you are drinking, but you are not supposed to be drinking because this is part and parcel of work”* (P7). The beginner regarded such behaviour as unprofessional and might have been disillusioned by the failure of veterans to be role models. Such behaviour from veteran teachers might have challenged the ideals that the new teacher held about the profession.

In summary, NQTs seemed to be contributing significantly in co-curricular activities as shown by their achievements in sport and music competitions. Although this meant that they would not be allowed extra time for lesson preparation, participation in these activities was an essential part of introducing beginners to the various dimensions of being a teacher. However, it is in co-curricular activities that NQTs felt that they received unequal treatment just because they were new and this may have been detrimental to their successful induction into the profession.

#### c) Provision of resources

The majority of NQTs revealed that the schools where they were posted were resource constrained and some schools could hardly provide even basic teaching and learning materials. They stated that schools would make efforts to provide basic materials required by the teacher such as manila, ball point pens and markers. But according to one beginner, *these are not enough, they (schools) are always crying about funds* (P10). Experiences of new teachers with shortages of teaching and learning materials in schools are highlighted in such statements as:

*Pupils do not have adequate material...There was a time when UNICEF provided exercise books but these are now finished and pupils are supposed to bring books from home* (P5).

*You will find out that children come here and they don't have a ball point pen or a pencil... half of them, no ball point pens* (P7).



*My main problem is finding materials to use when teaching, simple items like chalk are not readily available, exercise books are a problem (P9).*

*I have asked for stationery and they say they do not have any for the whole term. I discussed this with the School Head and other teachers and they said “this school is different from what you know” (P3).*

The new teachers, it would seem, found it difficult to deal with the shortages of basic teaching and learning materials and the failure by parents to provide their children with required materials. Yet the message seemed to be that the teachers should get used to such shortages. One mentor confirmed the shortage of materials in schools and the perceptions of new teachers about the issue and noted: *shortage of teaching and learning materials is a serious challenge because when they (NQTs) train, they are not trained with that in mind, what they come to face on the ground (M5)*. Indications, therefore, are that NQTs may have found it difficult to come to terms with shortages of basic requirements in schools because the situation on the ground was far from the ideal that they had anticipated.

A consequence of the shortage of materials, in the words of a new teacher was that *most pupils in my class do not write their work once the exercise book donated by UNICEF is used up, you will be teaching but with some pupils just seated (P5)*. It emerged during the focus group discussion that it was possible for some pupils to go for a term without a pen or exercise book. But the new teachers were aware of their responsibilities in the classroom and the consequences of letting pupils not do any written work as articulated in such statements as:

*It’s painful because a pupil may have the potential but will be just seated in class unless a fellow pupil lends him a pen (FGD).*

*It’s (i.e. lack of exercise books and ballpoint pens) an issue which affects the teacher at the end of the day because the pass rate gets back to the teacher (P5).*

*As you teach, you would want to see some proof of the impact of your teaching and if you are making any difference (P9).*

The same sentiments were expressed during focus group discussions where NQTs indicated that pupils' written work was one of the aspects assessed during the Resource Based Management (RBM) process (the newly introduced staff appraisal system) and if pupils failed to do the written work it may *seem like there is nothing that is happening and the teacher goes to class to sit and not to teach* (FGD).

The NQTs spoke of having to devise strategies so as to address the issue of shortage of classroom material as illustrated by such statements as: *I would give some pupils exercise books which I would personally buy as I did my monthly shopping* (P9); and, *I decided that as I did my personal shopping at the end of the month, I would use any change to buy pens* (P7). Another teacher's solution was for pupils to *just use one exercise book, they (pupils) share Shona and English in that book* [sub-dividing an exercise book to accommodate written work for two subjects] (P5). The new teachers felt that these strategies were practical solutions to problems encountered in the classroom.

A few NQTs (see Table 5.3) indicated that their schools provided the basic supplies needed in the classroom, for example, *teaching aids, stick stuff, and even newsprint* (P8); *manila, or chalk or duster* (P4); and, *paints and charts, the new ECD syllabus which helped me in scheming and some kits* (P1). In some instances though, the same beginners would still complain of shortage of resources in other areas. For example, the latter participant spoke about absence of age appropriate and child friendly toilets in the school:

*The toilets in the school are not age appropriate and they are not adequate, you can spend a lesson waiting for pupils to have a chance to use the toilet...the holes for the Blair toilets are big, I have to accompany the pupils to the toilet* (P1).

By implication, the challenge of shortage of resources in schools manifested in different ways and in each instance demanded the teachers to extend their roles.

Generally, as reflected in Table 5.3, it would appear that limited effort was made to deliberately adjust the working conditions of the NQTs to ensure their smooth transition into schools, even where this was possible. The new teachers had to work with whatever conditions prevailed in the schools just like the other teachers. Some NQTs were allocated classes in accordance with what was convenient to the school rather than their competencies;

they were expected to participate in all co-curricular activities and in some instances, even to do more than the veteran teachers; and lastly, they had to adjust to the poverty of the rural schools and learn to work with minimal resources.

#### ***5.4.3 Opportunities for collaboration***

This subcategory reflects on opportunities afforded to NQTs during induction to engage with experienced colleagues as part of providing support to them. These collaborations seem to have been a dominant induction activity as most of the new teachers spoke of being assisted by other teachers. The cluster of topics considered here is matching beginning and veteran teachers, promoting collegial collaboration, and general staff meetings.

##### **a) Matching beginning and veteran teachers**

The majority of NQTs (see Table 5.3), reported experiencing the matching of beginning and veteran teachers, an approach which one participant described as involving *asking and following other teachers* (P2). It would seem that NQTs turned to informal networks for professional guidance because of lack of access to formal support as indicated by one of them who explained: *I received very little formal assistance (and) I don't want to be seen to be bothering the Head* (P9). The new teachers were purposeful in selecting veterans to partner with and one of them explained that the modalities of the selection process involved approaching *individual teachers whom I think are knowledgeable for assistance, and those who are very outgoing* (P9).

The NQTs were of the view that their veteran partners were sources of invaluable information and knowledge on a variety of issues, for example: *what is accepted and what is not accepted within the school, that as teachers you should not quarrel in the presence of pupils and that there is some type of dressing which is not accepted by the community* (P9); and, *relating with each other within the school, even with the community (villages) around us, (and information about) things that I am not familiar with because they are experienced* (P1). The new teachers found such matching vital in making them aware of the schools' and community's expectations so as to ensure that they would not become misfits in their new environments. The matching, it would appear, was also important in the construction of the new teachers' professional identity.

The NQTs also alluded to taking advantage of the multiple opportunities for interactions with experienced colleagues to share information and solutions on challenges encountered in the classroom and learning about the profession. Opportunities cited by the beginners included:

*During sporting activities (we) exchange notes about what is happening in your class, for example, if you have had a problem with teaching a certain concept, you can consult experienced teachers how best to go about it (P8).*

*After sports, as I prepare for the next day's work, we interact and at times they comment about what I will be doing (P1).*

*At lunch meetings we just talk about general work, how we are going to handle our children, just to share our duties and if there are any announcements, we do that during lunch hours (P4).*

During such forums as well as school assemblies which in most schools were conducted at least once a week, it would seem the new teachers learned to interact as well as to cooperate with other teachers on various issues related to their work. One beginner stated that matching of beginning and veteran teachers was important even in addressing social problems. The new teacher, who like several other NQTs only started receiving her salary several months after assuming duty and initially experienced financial problems explained: *I ask some of those people, who are friendly, can you give me some maize meal, can you give me some salt? The major problem is financial need, the school, maybe should help the new teachers while they wait for the salary (P2).* Such a problem as cited above would affect the new teachers' well-being and make settling in difficult.

It would seem that matching of beginning and veteran teachers was largely informal but it was important, especially in the absence of formal support. Indications are that at times the beginners worked with several veteran teachers rather than a specific individual and were thus able to benefit from multiple perspectives to navigate around the issues of professional and social concern.

b) Promoting collegial collaboration

Collegial collaboration refers to teamwork between beginning and experienced teachers which is facilitated through existing school structures, for example, grade level teams where there is coordinated instructional planning. The NQTs reported the existence of two departments or sections in their schools. The first one, the ECD section would house ECD B classes together with grades 1 to 3 and would normally be headed by a Teacher-in Charge (T.I.C). The second one, the junior section would house grades 4 to 7 and would be headed by a Head of Department (HOD). In addition to these structures, one mentor mentioned that *we normally have our own subject panels* (M3) which would also provide for collegial collaboration.

Most NQTs made reference to experiencing collaborations within sections as reflected in such statements as: *I was collaborating with the deputy headmaster, who is also teaching grade 3 and the grade 2 teacher* (P7); *I was to ask another teacher who was teaching grade 4 last year* (P2); and, *I may approach the other senior grade 4 teacher* (P5). The new teachers identified varying crucial pedagogic issues which were addressed through collegial collaborations which included: *planning, because we knew planning and scheming, now this time we are doing scheme-cum-plan* (P7); *some of the books like teachers' books we share* (P3); *in setting tests, when I need to know how to formulate the questions and to confirm if test items are standard* (P9); *you get a few tips from others, they tell you how to handle Grade 1s* (P4); and in general, *if I have questions concerning what I'm teaching at that particular moment* (P5). Most of the issues identified were crucial pedagogical issues that beginners needed to be proficient and confident with in order to function effectively in the classroom. Collegial collaboration was also important in fostering teamwork as acknowledged by one beginner who indicated: *I learned to work as a team* (P4). However, some of the issues that the new teachers claimed to have been addressed through collegial collaboration, for example, scheming and setting and marking of tests, were to be brought up again by the same participants as concerns.

NQTs indicated that they had contributions to make in the mutual relationship with colleagues as they were able to share some professional knowledge and skills. Statements from beginners illustrated the various contributions made, for example: *some experienced teachers have learned from me how a chart should be written* (P10); *they were not being taught about children's rights, now, we were mainly taught about children's rights first* (P7);

and, *I have shared with the other grade 4 teacher knowledge about using media and using other things to deliver lessons* (P2). One new teacher mentioned giving a civic education lesson during school assembly and stated: *I was advising them, when we are raising the flag, we are supposed to sing the national anthem, also, to be in the right place in the right time* (P7). So, the new teachers in some instances might have acted as resource persons and bearers of new knowledge and they might have felt that some of the knowledge brought reflected current trends in education.

Collegial collaboration was, therefore, experienced by beginners in various forms (see Table 5.3). Such collaborations were not only valuable in improving classroom practices but also in fostering a sense of community in the NQTs.

#### c) Staff meetings

All NQTs mentioned attending general meetings (see Table 5.3), which, in most schools are usually held at the beginning and end of each term. However, indications are that in a few schools, meetings were also held as and when the situation demanded. One beginner spoke of staff meetings being held on Mondays and Fridays as well as, *let's say, the head left for a meeting, she updates us* (P4). In another school a beginner indicated that *when there is some feedback to be given to teachers or when something happens or there is a problem in the school, a meeting is held to address the issue* (P9). One NQT was of the view that such meetings were essential because that's *where we get some ideas on how to get on with your job*. This view could have been reinforced by the nature of some of the issues addressed during such meetings. Some new teachers mentioned the Resource Based Management (RBM), the newly introduced performance appraisal system, as an item that featured prominently in their staff meetings. As stated by one NQT: *we have had several meetings to discuss how the RBM works so most of our meetings have been about the RBM* (P9). In this respect, staff meetings were a forum for dissemination of crucial information. Other issues addressed through staff meetings included: *the Head telling us about the requirements of the official records and that we should attend to our duties and made us aware of the Public Service regulations* (P10); *how we scheme and other books that we write like English notes and Science notes* (P4); and *we discussed the pass rate for the term and compared it to that of previous terms* (P8). The issues cited by the NQTs as being covered during staff meetings suggest that the meetings were vital sources of professional learning for the beginners too. With regards to the focus of staff meetings, a mentor revealed that: *In staff meetings we*

would discuss issues in general and said the issues would include school expectations such as teachers to do their work, imparting knowledge to the children and ensuring that the school achieves a high pass rate as well as issues of standards of tests to be set by teachers (M1). Another issue that was at times addressed through staff meetings, according to another mentor, related to indiscipline among teachers. The mentor explained that:

*At times even if someone commits a chargeable offence, it doesn't create proper working relations, it's difficult to point out that Mr So and So what you are doing is bad, but you sort of generalise in gatherings like when we have staff meetings (M2).*

What emerges is that staff meetings were employed to address a variety of procedural and instructional issues and would, therefore, have been of some benefit to the NQTs.

On the whole, two low intensity induction strategies, namely, orientation of new teachers and creation of opportunities for collaboration were to some extent employed during induction. However, adjusting of working conditions proved to be problematic for schools, especially in aspects of resource availability and assignment of classes.

## **5.5 Experiences of high intensity induction strategies**

This category is a reflection of induction strategies employed that would require substantial concentration in terms of planning, time, effort and resources in order to develop and support beginning teachers. Such strategies would result in significant improved teacher learning and effectiveness. The high intensity support strategies featured here are mentoring by an experienced teacher; regular formal and informal observation of NQTs', teaching; opportunities to observe other teachers; mini courses and workshops addressing common concerns; joint planning; and, providing release time. Table 5.4 is a summary of the high intensity support strategies as they were experienced by the NQTs.

Table 5.4: Participants' experiences of high intensity induction strategies

High intensity strategy	Participants									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mentoring by an experienced teacher	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?
Regular formal and informal observation of NQTs' teaching		√√√	√√	√√√			√√		√√	√√√
Opportunities to observe other teachers lessons				√						
Mini courses and workshop addressing common concerns		√√		√	√√	√√			√	√
Provision of release time										
Common planning with other teachers										

*Note:* 1.A question mark (?) has been placed against mentoring as an induction activity because the people who assisted the NQTs were not mentors in the true sense of the term

2. (√) indicates induction strategies experienced by participants and their frequency

### 5.5.1 Mentoring of a beginning teacher by an experienced teacher

Mentors for beginning teachers would normally be officially appointed and be trained to provide effective support. They would also receive timetable relief to allow them to work with NQTs in the classroom. All the NQTs reported that they were not assigned mentors per se, (see Table 5.4), but received assistance from senior school administrators such as the School Heads and Teachers-In-Charge (TICs)/Heads of Departments (HODs). In this study, these senior administrators were considered as the mentors for the NQTs. All the supposed mentors of the NQTs were not specifically trained for the task and this was serendipitously confirmed by a school head who stated that *they (mentors) do not have training as such, some of them have been in these posts of TICs for some time so they are quite aware of the requirements*. It would seem the criteria for selection of HODs and TICs who in turn would mentor new teachers in their sections was their work experience. The mentors also undertook



the task by virtue of being Heads of sections that the NQTs were working in and this was indicated by one mentor who stated: *I mentor (supervise) her because I am the TIC of the Infants (ECD) section that she operates in (M1)*. The same arrangement was also serendipitously confirmed by a School Head who explained:

*The moment we deploy someone say in the Infants Department (i.e. ECD section), we tell the HOD to ensure that all the requirements he or she needs are met... issues like planning, how we handle lessons. The HODs work with those teachers for a relatively long time.*

What comes through is that there were no formal mentoring arrangements for the NQTs. Yet one beginner felt that it was important for the NQTs to be attached to *knowledgeable teachers* who would provide them with professional support as this would ensure that *they* (beginners) *would have someone to refer to if they have a problem (P9)*. Hence, the participant thought it was important to have someone specific to go to for help. The participant further indicated that it was rather difficult for the new teacher to approach just any teacher in the school for assistance as not all veteran teachers could appreciate that NQTs were still learning to teach and might make assumptions about their competencies thus *may expect only good things from you*.

Another issue that emerged was that there were no guidelines to enable those who might encounter beginners in their line of duty to mentor them systematically and effectively. Again, this was serendipitously confirmed by a School Head during a preliminary visit to one school who indicated that the school did *not provide written guidelines as such but oral guidelines to say you get these issues when you get a NQT in the department, this is how we assist the new teacher*. The absence of guidelines may explain why some mentors seemed to have limited, and in some instances, inadequate and ill-defined notions of their role in supporting the new teachers as demonstrated by such statements as:

*My role is just to assist them with what they need and also to let them know how our department runs... to try to bring them to reality actually so that they see what it is on the ground than the theory they used to get at college (M5).*

*My role is to enable the NQT to adapt to the situation in this school, to suit the environment (M1).*

*Normally I just take myself as a mentor, a teacher (M3).*

*I have to make sure that the new teacher is comfortable and to make sure that she has to fit in with the old staff that has been operative (M4).*

In cases where the School Head was the mentor, a limitation identified by one participant was the inability to separate the roles: *It's difficult to separate my administrative role and mentoring role (M4)*. This suggests that there was a possibility of administrators expecting too much from the beginners and overlooking that what the NQTs probably required most at that stage was support to grow professionally rather than appraisal for proficiency.

The majority of NQTs were teaching ECD classes and it emerged that their supposed mentors were not specialists in that area. The non-specialist mentors were aware of their limitations in providing professional support to new ECD specialist teachers as demonstrated by such statements as:

*My main challenge is that because I'm not an ECD specialist, I may give the NQT inappropriate advice, she may be afraid to tell me that my advice is inappropriate in relation to what she was taught at college because she is younger than me...In this school we have never had qualified staff for ECD, we have no knowledge of ECD (M1)*

*I am trained as a general teacher and she is an ECD specialist. Some of the things you may see as a general teacher might not augur well with the person and she says no, we specialised like this, we are supposed to do this (M5).*

Clearly, the mentors felt that they lacked the requisite specialist knowledge about ECD to provide meaningful induction to the new teachers and were not confident of their role in the process.

In instances where School Heads took sole charge of induction of NQTs as obtained in some schools where participating teachers were drawn from, this arrangement again had its own

problems. For example, new teachers indicated that *he (School Head) is busy because most of the times he is away attending meetings, that's why I have said that he had no time to sit down with me to give me some induction. But he did emphasize that he will have time (7); and, work was tight on his side (P5)*. The new teachers appreciated that their supposed mentors were overwhelmed by work, but still hoped that they might spare some time in their busy schedules to assist them. One School Head confirmed this constraint in mentoring new teachers and explained: *time is the main challenge, (because) we have meetings...at times you assign members like the deputy head or so, they are also taking their classes. I also take a class... (M2)*. It would seem that because the School Heads were preoccupied with other work commitments the new teachers whom they were supposed to mentor would work with minimal guidance in the classroom and their needs would not be effectively attended to.

In instances where HODs or TICs had NQTs under their charge, the latter acknowledged receiving assistance on a variety of issues. Examples of such assistance included: *I was told by the TIC when I asked about the format of the scheme-cum-plan that I should include aims (P8); the TIC helps with professional issues such as scheming, planning in relation to teaching (P1); she assisted me on lesson delivery, even scheming. I had a problem with syllabus interpretation in ChiShona and she helped me (P10)*. The new teachers appreciated the assistance received. They seemed to have received guidance mainly with scheming and this might have been an indication of an area of need for them. One beginner reported getting assistance with background information about the pupils *because the TIC is from this area (P7)*. Also, it would seem that TICs acted as link persons between the new teacher and the School Head as indicated by such statements as: *the TIC actually was coming to ask me any problems I am facing when I am doing my work and any time I raised my problems she would take the problem right to the Headmaster and they were going to rectify (P7); the TIC helped in ensuring that we were allocated a classroom...because there was no ECD classroom (P8)*. NQTs who were under the charge of TICs seemed to have generally received more assistance than those under School Heads. In addition, their mentors seemed to have played a multifaceted role in ensuring that the wellbeing of the new teachers was promoted. But their task as mentors appears to have been constrained by the fact that they lacked the requisite knowledge about mentoring. In addition, they had full teaching loads and were not provided with release time, thus leaving them with inadequate time to attend to the needs of NQTs.

### ***5.5.2 Regular formal and informal observation of NQT's teaching***

This subcategory reflects on the implementation of lesson observations as an induction support to enable mentors or any relevant person to observe the new teachers in action as well as to assess their teaching documents. This would facilitate identification of the beginning teachers' areas of strength and weaknesses. The majority of new teachers spoke of being formally observed teaching either by the school head and/or by the HOD/TIC. The frequency of the observations varied from teacher to teacher (see Table 5.4), with one beginner indicating having been observed five times (*twice by the Head and thrice by the HOD [P2]*); two having been observed thrice each (P4 & P10), while three reported having been observed twice each (P3; P7 & P9). Formal lesson observations, therefore, do not seem to have been consistently conducted for most of the NQTs who experienced this induction strategy.

NQTs reported that the feedback received from lesson observations identified some areas of strengths and those that needed attention. A mentor confirmed that the focus of feedback was on *strengths and areas to improve* (M2). One beginner stated that the mentor's comment about a lesson observed was that *your marking is right, you are doing the right work* and he was also commended for *teaching grade 3s in English* (P7). Such feedback may have boosted the new teacher's morale as well as informing him what he was doing right. The NQTs mentioned that some of the areas highlighted by mentors as needing attention included: *to increase some charts, help pupils to participate and assist some individual pupils who are not writing well* (P2); *to make use of more media and to give them homework and morning work* (P3); *to ensure that every lesson has an introduction* (P10); *to improve on linking the syllabus with the textbook* (P4); *to mark corrections regularly* (P7); and *to improve when teaching. I was teaching Social Studies, then he said that the lesson was like a ChiShona lesson, I was translating* (code switching ChiShona/English) (P4). Other areas of weakness noted by mentors were that lessons by NQTs *were not child-centred* (M2) and that *the new teacher would rush through concepts and pupils would have problems with grasping some concepts* (M1). The feedback received by NQTs about their teaching clearly touched on pertinent classroom issues. But one beginner felt that if the feedback from the mentor was largely negative *you feel like you are doing nothing* (P4), implying that there was need for the feedback to also identify more positive aspects of the new teachers' lessons as well.

Several NQTs expressed some misgivings about feedback received from mentors and there were indications that they might not have benefitted much from it. For example, one beginner

who might have found the feedback not informative enough to provide the required guidance commented that the mentor *hasn't said anything much about my teaching, the only feedback that I received was that I was doing well* (P9). Another new teacher noted that increasing charts in the classroom as suggested by the mentor was difficult because *I have to buy my own because the school does not provide charts and stationery in general* (P2). Yet another beginner questioned the practicality of the suggestions made by the mentor in relation to employment of oral work:

*He (the mentor) emphasizes on oral work very much...I was following the syllabus, collaborating it with the textbook, he was emphasizing that you must sometimes ignore the textbook and drill them (pupils) on oral work. It's like at college we were told you should take the syllabus and interpret it in collaboration with the textbook because they were tried and tested* (P7).

The beginner in this instance disagreed with the mentor's observations and might have felt that the approach to teaching suggested by the mentor was not practical. It emerged during focus group discussion that another new teacher had had a similar experience and had been advised that for Grade 3s to be able to read and write, *there should be a lot of oral work*. But the participant concluded that *the strategy does not work because the pupils are not proficient in English so how can they have a dialogue in that language?* (FGD).

Several mentors confirmed that at times there were differences in perspectives between them and the new teachers arising from their feedback on observed lessons. The source of the problem in the view of some mentors was that some NQTs tended to be overconfident about their knowledge and to underrate the knowledge of experienced teacher. This is shown in such comments from mentors about NQTS as: *they tend to claim that they know more than those who are experienced* (M2); *they may not take advice given by those whom they think have been in the field for too long; they think they are bringing in new information and the information that you may have as a supervisor could be rather stale to some extent* (M5); and, *some of them are not all that welcoming to the ideas, they are not all that accommodating* (M3). One of the mentors suggested that the *too much of I know* attitude displayed by new teachers *tends to sort of disrupt the smooth running of the system in a way* (M2). The sentiments from the mentors and the NQTs seemed to imply that there was some animosity between the beginners and their experienced colleagues.

Some beginning teachers indicated that they had not been observed teaching at all during the course of the year. One beginner stated that *so far no one has observed my teaching but other teachers in the school have been assessed* (P1). Another beginner highlighted during the focus group discussion that: *I have seen the senior teacher supervising those in his section, that is, grades 4-7. Our TIC has not supervised us but has done book inspection and written some comments* (FGD). Hence, the lack of observation became especially noticeable for beginners in situations where teachers in another section in the same school were being supervised but they were not. This could have given the impression that schools did not prioritise the supervision of NQTs yet they needed assistance most. Again, the situation became more noticeable, for example in the case of P5 where two other beginners in the same school were observed teaching but the said participant was not. One new teacher noted that regular monitoring was necessary so as *to have areas of weakness identified and this would also serve as a reminder should one begin to relapse into identified areas of weakness* (P1). Another beginners' account was that *the headmaster had promised to assess our lessons at the beginning of the term...but it's still hanging* (P5). Some months later the same participant was still waiting to be observed teaching and stated: *I was informed that I will be observed anytime now but this hasn't happened yet*. Clearly, the NQTs expected to be observed teaching and that this did not happen might have been an omission for them. A reflective essay participant confirmed that *some schools do not supervise inexperienced teachers yet the supervision will help them improve in their teaching* (RE3). Some new teachers who had not been observed teaching appreciated the consequences of such a situation and lamented: *I don't know if I'm in the right direction or not. I need someone to tell me where I'm wrong, where I'm right* (P5); and, *I would have wanted to have my teaching observed so that my areas of weakness can be identified* (P1). Such sentiments could have been a reflection of the importance that the new teachers attached to having their teaching observed and having their work monitored in general and their disappointment when that was not done. One beginner went on to note that lack of monitoring might make teachers slack and not work and suggested that *if a teacher gets to school knowing that there are strict controls and there are standards to be achieved, you put your all into your work, but if you find that there is room for laxity, you work in line with what is happening around you or imitate the work culture that is around you* (P8). In a way, the beginner felt that the work culture that a new teacher eventually adopted would be influenced by that which was obtaining in a school. The same sentiment was expressed during the focus group discussion when a participant, although referring to use of teaching and learning aids commented that, *if you move around the*

*classrooms you will find that NQTs have charts, others, they don't care about these charts...we are going to copy the other experienced members (FGD).* This, in a way, suggested that there were some negative implications arising from the failure by schools to monitor new teachers' work.

A few NQTs reported experiencing informal lesson observations. For one beginner this involved impromptu visits from whereby *during the morning, the Head can come to my class and say, after work he wants to see some work on the board (P3).* Another beginner reported that in his case, *the Headmaster comes to check on me (P9),* thus suggesting some form of informal observations. Other forms of informal observation emerged during the focus group discussion as indicated in such statements as:

*They (School Heads) will move around when you are teaching; the Head pretends to be visiting the toilet and hovers around; and, in our set up where we are using sheds which are not roofed, the TIC uses the middle shed in a block of 3, when I am teaching, sometimes she asks her class to be quiet and listens to how I am conducting my lesson (FGD).*

The informal observations might have been meant to ensure that professional standards were adhered to in the classroom. But the unconventional manner in which the observations were conducted might have created some suspicion among the new teachers about the intentions of one who was monitoring them. One new teacher was of the view that School Heads would not get a correct picture of the new teacher's competencies through such observations and commented that *they (School Heads) don't know that we are not perfect, we need to be helped here and there (FGD).*

The employment of informal monitoring was confirmed by several mentors who indicated that they made casual visits to classrooms of NQTs as shown in the following utterances: *I visit and just sit and watch, to see what is happening, what are the problems with this teacher (M2); I sometimes go and find out what's happening, see the lessons and we discuss what will have transpired (M5); and, I observed her orally. I would listen to her teaching from my own classroom, then after the lesson I would approach her and comment on the lesson that I had listened to (M1).* It would seem mentors felt that such approaches to lesson observations

enabled them to accomplish the task of identifying the strengths and weaknesses of NQTs and that they might not have seen anything amiss in their use.

The majority of NQTs indicated that their work was also monitored through regular checking of scheme books, pupils' exercise books and other teaching records such as the class register, test record, individual record book, remedial and extension books. But of these records, the most cited were the scheme-cum-plan in particular, as well as the pupils' exercise books. The new teachers' experiences with this form of monitoring are reflected in such statements as: *every week, teachers should give some books to the headmaster, especially plan books* (P3); *at the beginning of every term, we have to come already schemed for the term and we evaluate weekly. The School Head would like to see the records every Monday* (P5); *he (the School Head) often checks my records to see if I am doing my work. He asks for all records, that is, schemes of work, register, test record, individual record book, remedial and extension books* (P9); and *the Head conducts exercise book supervision* (P2). The new teachers were aware that they were expected to keep all records up-to-date and at hand as inspection of these could be used to determine whether or not they were doing their work. One mentor confirmed the accounts from NQTs about inspection of teaching records and stated: *we observe lessons and exercise books, we also observe the plan books and other records of work* (M4). This was further corroborated by another mentor who added that *with exercise books you need to produce reports here and there as early as possible* (M2). Thus, for the latter mentor, it was important to set the new teacher on the right path early by providing written feedback. However, some new teachers seemed to question the purpose of inspection of teaching documents and exercise books. For example, one beginner mentioned that after submitting the teaching documents and pupils' exercise books to the school head, *I have not received any feedback... I thought I would get the feedback at the beginning of the term but nothing has been said yet but other teachers received theirs.* (P6). For the new teacher, the lack of feedback may have meant that the exercise in document inspection had not been seen to its logical conclusion and that there was a dichotomy somewhere in the process. Another beginner indicated that the only comment from the School Head on teaching documents submitted for inspection was that *it seems I am the fastest among the teachers in putting the records in place* (P9). This new teacher in particular, might have found the comments uninformative. Yet another beginner was of the view that inspection of records in her school was not regular and stated that, *the records may be asked for during first week of the term and no one monitors what you are doing thereafter...I keep my record books up to date just in case*



*someone from the District offices visit the school, not because the school is strict (P8). Focus group participants also indicated that every week the records are just stamped to show that they are up to date and that you are evaluating. This is meant for the supervisors when they come, they will see that the headmaster is at least doing his work (FGD). From the perspective of the new teachers, checking of records by the school administration tended to be a formality because the main objective of the exercise appeared to be fulfilment of an administrative requirement rather than guiding teachers in their work.*

### **5.5.3 Opportunities for NQTs to observe experienced teachers' lessons**

Observing experienced teachers' lessons would be important as it would enable the beginning teachers to understand how to apply certain techniques in their own classrooms. However, a large majority of NQTs indicated that they had not been afforded opportunities to observe veterans teaching (see Table 5.4). The only beginner who reported having experienced this induction strategy conducted the observations covertly and informally as explained:

*Sometimes I go to grade 1 to observe Mrs E teaching...I listen to her teaching. I just stand outside (the experienced teacher's classroom) then I hear what she is saying. Normally, if I don't know a certain topic, I just listen to her teaching. I just go outside then I hear what she is saying or just pass by... (P4).*

The reason advanced by the NQT for use of this strategy of informally observing another teacher's lesson were that *everyone is busy and now that I am qualified, you can't find another teacher to be on your side telling you what to do. So, you just have to listen then you can imitate what she is doing if she is good (P4)*. It would seem that there were no formal provisions in the school for observing other teachers' lessons and the new teacher found eavesdropping to be a useful strategy for learning how to handle some problematic aspects of teaching. This same sentiment was expressed by another beginner who was reluctant to seek assistance from veteran teachers for the reason that, *I don't know how he/she can take it. Maybe he/ she can say this not a qualified teacher (because I) want to ask more questions (P2)*. It would appear that the beginners felt that observing other teachers' lessons was not something that would be done by certified teachers and they were concerned about the professional image they would portray if they openly indicated their needs. That NQTs were at times reluctant to indicate their professional needs was confirmed by two mentors who commented: *It appears they (NQTs) are not very free to raise some of their requirements*

(M1); and, *Sometimes they (NQT) face challenges but if they don't disclose them to us we feel they are ok (M4)*. By implication, the needs of the beginners could remain unattended unless the NQTs themselves made schools aware of them.

The NQTs stated that because there were no opportunities to observe experienced teachers' lessons, *every teacher does his/her own thing in their classroom (FGD)*, perhaps implying that there was an element of working in isolation. However, some of them felt that observing veterans teaching was important as this would facilitate learning how to teach. This was demonstrated by such statements as: *it (observation of veterans' teaching) would be useful to see how others are teaching (P10)*; and, *I am not an island, so to perfect my work, I have to learn from this and that (P7)*. Concerning specifics of what they expected to learn from lessons taught by veterans, the new teachers singled out application of some teaching methods and how to relate with pupils: *I want to learn how pupils relate with the teacher, how to use group work with ECD classes and the kind of media to use (P1)*; and, *usually you get to know how to differ teaching methods... sometimes I can learn from somebody how to interact with these pupils (P3)*. The new teachers, in a way, thought that working in isolation would not foster their professional growth and that observing other teachers' lessons would be one way of addressing their shortcomings.

#### **5.5.4 Mini training courses or workshops addressing common challenges**

The purpose of mini training courses would be to address common classroom problems, thus providing the relevant support. Most NQTs (see Table 5.4) mentioned having attended workshops during their first year of teaching. Most of the workshops attended by NQTs were school-based and focused on teaching issues such as *scheming and planning (P2)*, *setting and marking of examinations (P5, P7 & P10)* and feedback from a colleague who had attended a workshop on *Performance Lag Address Programme (PLAP)<sup>6</sup> (P4)*. One school-based workshop alluded to was on *acts of misconduct* and *RBM* and therefore focused on pertinent administrative issues. Some new teachers acknowledged that they found the workshops useful and cited benefits relating to issues of teaching records, some regulations governing their conditions of service and assessment of teaching and learning in one subject area as shown by comments such as:

*I was in need of knowledge on how to scheme and how to plan so it helped me a lot. On the acts of misconduct, we learned about them during our TP but I had forgotten (P2)*

*The workshop was for all teachers in the school...it was quite relevant because in Mathematics, I didn't know how the test papers should be structured (P5).*

Though the workshops were not specifically targeted at them, NQTs appreciated them probably because they addressed some of their needs. The externally organised workshops that a few new teachers attended tended to focus on co-curricular activities. Some of them attended, for example, *a Music workshop where we were being taught the current set piece and a field events (athletics) judges' workshop (P6)* and *the Education through Sport programme (ESP) workshop (P9)*. Indications are that the new teachers found the workshops on co-curricular activities beneficial as well. One beginner observed during the FGD that the knowledge and skills acquired from Athletics and Music workshops are *the benefits I would take with me if I were to transfer from this district*.

The conducting of school-based workshops was alluded to by a mentor who mentioned staff development workshops which focused on *issues like syllabus interpretation, some teaching methods...testing and evaluating (M2)*. Another mentor, referring to representation of schools at external workshops explained: *whenever we hear that there is a syllabus interpretation workshop, for example, we try by all means to have one of our members going there to attend so that when they return, they will give us updates of what is expected (M3)*. The mentor was of the view that such a teacher could be a resource person in the school and assist other teachers who may have problems with specific teaching issues. This was attested to during the focus group discussion where a new teacher indicated being *assisted with marking and setting of tests by some teachers in the school who had attended workshops on setting and marking of tests and they would assist all the other teachers in the school (FGD)*.

However, one NQT suggested that beginners were not afforded equal opportunities to attend externally organised workshops. The beginner commented that, *it's like external workshops are only meant for particular experienced teachers, there is a lot of learning that occurs at workshops (P5)*. This new teacher felt that NQTs were being unfairly treated with regards to attendance of external workshops and were missing out on any learning that might occur there. The same view was confirmed during focus group discussions where participants concurred that NQTs were being short-changed when it came to attendance of external workshops and explained:

*NQTs are usually asked to attend workshops which are local either at their schools or at neighbouring schools (i.e., organised by schools' clusters<sup>7</sup>), which require them to walk to the venue and have no monetary benefits, and which are usually poorly planned, whereas senior teachers attend workshops which would involve boarding of buses (FGD).*

It also emerged that a primary justification provided by schools for assigning NQTs to attend workshops that involved walking long distances was that they *are still young and can, therefore, walk* (FGD). But it would appear that the new teachers considered such an explanation as inadmissible.

Related to the issue of training workshops two beginners (P2 & P5) observed that they could benefit from the expertise of the veteran teachers and suggested that *senior and experienced teachers can mount demonstration lessons so that we learn how they go about it* (i.e. teaching). Some mentors in turn acknowledged the need for demonstration lessons in schools as a possible induction activity. One of them commented that *there is need for demonstration lessons by experienced teachers where they would show even how to introduce lessons* (M1). Two other mentors (M4 & M5) claimed that their schools employed demonstration lessons as an induction activity but this was not confirmed by the beginners. It would appear that demonstration lessons were a potential way of supporting beginners which would not demand much resources as schools could use existing resources in the form of veteran teachers.

On the whole, it would seem that the high intensity strategies experienced by NQTs in this study were formal observation of NQTs' teaching and mini courses (workshops), both of which seem to have been employed sparingly. Mentoring was not formal and any monitoring that the NQTs received through this strategy, just as with the other strategies employed above, was basically what other teachers in the schools were getting from school administrators. Other high intensity strategies such as the provision of release time, common planning with other teachers in the grade and opportunities to observe other teachers' lessons do not seem to have been implemented.

## 5.6 Concerns of NQTs

This category is characterised by concerns identified by NQTs which could have been addressed through training courses or workshops as well as induction in general. The concerns highlighted by NQTs were setting and marking of tests; selection of appropriate content and teaching methods; the scheme-cum-plan; pupils' performance; pupils with special needs; and, discipline issues. Table 5.5 reflects the concerns broached by the new teachers.

Table 5.5: A Summary of NQTs' concerns

Concern	Participants									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Setting and marking of tests		√			√				√	√
Selection of appropriate content and teaching methods	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	
The scheme-cum-plan	√	√		√	√	√	√	√		
Pupils' performance	√		√			√	√	√	√	√
Pupils with special needs	√		√			√				
Discipline issues	√	√		√	√	√	√			

*Note:* A tick (√) indicates a concern raised by a participant

Table 5.5 shows that all NQTs had one concern or another, though some had more concerns than others. For example, P1 and P6 appeared to have more concerns than the rest of the participants and P4 and P10 seemed to have the least concerns. The concerns raised by the NQTs are discussed below.

### 5.6.1 Setting and marking of tests

Some NQTs (see Table 5.5) reported that they had experienced challenges with the setting and marking of tests. They attributed the lack of skills to handle this aspect of teaching to

lack of exposure (i.e. not being afforded adequate opportunities to practise during TP) and inadequacy of initial training as shown by statements as:

*A new teacher may not know how to set and mark tests because during Teaching Practise this task was done by mentors (P10).*

*In setting tests, I have consulted with other teachers to confirm if my test items are standard because I didn't have experience of test setting (P9).*

*The mentor during TP is eager to do all the activities, giving work, marking, so the student teacher will only sit (P2).*

The aspects of test setting that other new teachers found challenging were: *coming up with the required number of test items, for example, 50 questions for the grade 7 content paper and how to choose standard questions (P2); the questioning technique, how to formulate standard questions (P10); and even how to mark as a teacher (P5).* During the focus group discussion, one participant spoke of being *assisted with marking and setting of tests assisted here and there (FGD)* and indicated getting assistance with the same aspect. It would seem the issue was not adequately addressed by the schools and clearly, the new teachers faced varied challenges related to setting and marking of tests. One beginner suggested that there was *need for a bit of training on how to do all those things (P10)*. Perhaps, this was where workshops could have been employed as an intervention measure.

### **5.6.2 Scheme-cum-plan**

Several NQTs (see Table 5.5) indicated that they had experienced problems with coming up with a scheme-cum-plan (i.e. a composite document). The problem, in the words of one beginner emanated from the fact that, *at college, the lesson plans and scheming were done separately but here the two are combined, we have a scheme-cum-plan (P4)*. This view was invariably echoed by other new teachers who mentioned that *at college we were taught scheming and planning but in the schools they insist on a scheme-cum-plan (P1, P2, 7 & P8)*, thus suggesting a disconnect between ITE and expectations in schools. Some beginners singled out the stating of aims and objectives in the scheme-cum-plan as being problematic and this was demonstrated by such statements as: *it is difficult for me to do scheme-cum-plan writing objectives for Maths, English, where do I get some objectives, for content subjects (P2)* and *the school expects that the scheme-cum-plan should have both aims and objectives, I*

*don't know where to write the aims and where to write the objectives* (P8). The skills that the new teachers struggled with here were basic but essential to teaching and the problem seemed to go back to what they had been taught at college. If the new teachers lacked these skills, would they then be able to deliver the lessons effectively? Some mentors confirmed that the new teachers experienced challenges with the scheme-cum-plan because this was a deviation from what they were taught during initial training. This is reflected in statements such as:

*At college trainees would have been taught to scheme and plan separately, but when they come into schools we now have a scheme-cum-plan...for some of them to realise that we now have weekly objectives, it becomes a problem* (M3); *some of the records they (NQTs) find in schools might be challenging to them* (M5); and, *some of them come from their different colleges with different approaches, so we also have to ensure that they do something that has to meet the school standards* (M2).

One mentor suggested that initial teacher education institutions should teach trainees about the scheme-cum-plan and not scheming and planning as separate entities *because it doesn't apply anywhere* (M3) and was not consistent with expectations and practices in schools.

The manner in which the issue of the inability by some NQTs to compile the scheme-cum-plan was approached differed from school to school with one school holding a workshop and another only addressing the issue during an end of term staff meeting. In some cases, beginners mentioned that *the Head showed me how it is done* (P4); or that, *I had to see from the teacher's books and practise* (P2). Some new teachers though, seem to have been baffled by the responses to their concerns about the scheme-cum-plan and the reluctance by schools to address the issue decisively as reflected by comments such as:

*The Head mentioned that the school expects a scheme-cum-plan but indicated that since at college we had been taught scheming and planning separately, if I couldn't produce a composite document I could continue to do what I was used to...(then on further inquiry) I was advised to check what other teachers are doing* (P8).

*The senior teacher who was in charge while the Head was on leave showed us how to scheme and we schemed following that. But this term when the Head returned he said this is not a proper way of scheming...You are told after scheming that you didn't do it*

*properly yet you would have copied the format from teachers who are currently in the school system (P5).*

*I requested for a scheme-cum-plan from other teachers in my school and I was told no one in the school had such a document. I had to go to a neighbouring school to borrow a scheme-cum-plan and learn how it's done. I am using that and the Head has not said anything about it, but one of the teachers told me that what I was doing was scheming and not scheme-cum-plan (P6).*

In the absence of precise guidelines on how to compile the document, one beginner stated that the result was that one would resort to *doing whatever you think is appropriate* (P8). The issue of the scheme-cum-plan also came up during focus group discussion where one participant indicated continued problems with compiling the document and stated: *I still cannot compile a scheme-cum-plan properly, we have never really been shown what an appropriate scheme-cum-plan should look like, so I have continued to do that which was said to be inappropriate because I don't have the information* (FGD).

New teachers generally felt that their concerns about the scheme-cum-plan had not been adequately addressed because they did not receive the required assistance despite indicating their needs. Schools seemed to be aware that NQTs needed to be guided with the scheme-cum-plan and issues of planning in general as demonstrated by one mentor's statement that *some of them come from their different colleges with different approaches, so we also have to ensure that they do something that has to meet the school standards* (M2). But all the same, schools did not have any specific guidelines on the scheme-cum-plan in place and the new teachers might have remained at a loss as to how to proceed in compiling the document.

### ***5.6.3 Selection of appropriate teaching methods and content***

A large majority of NQTs (see Table 5.5) indicated having challenges with the choice and application of appropriate methods of teaching. Some of the challenges cited included using *one method of teaching which is not appropriate* (P3); a difficulty with *use of group work in ECD classes* (P1); *the need to know more about dramatisation because that method allows for pupil involvement in a lesson and development of language* (P8); *the need to know the best approach of teaching children... it is difficult to apply some of the things we were taught* (P7); *I had some challenges of delivering lessons* (P2); and, *at times there are some aspects*



*that I don't quite know how to handle* (P8). From these indications, it would seem that individual new teachers had challenges with application of specific methods which they felt were crucial and lesson delivery in general. That some NQTs were at times ill-equipped to teach was confirmed by one reflective essay participant who described himself as *a non-competent teacher* (RE2). Along the same lines, a mentor observed that *graduates coming out colleges these days seem to be ill-trained* (M1). Some mentors pointed at a lack of certain teaching skills among NQTs as reflected by such comments as:

*Some of them they just come they fail even to interpret their syllabuses, so they also need that assistance* (M5). (This issue was also noted by M2 & M3).

*Most of them are rather theoretical and it appears they don't have adequate practice in handling their lessons* (M2).

*They (NQTs) have a lot of theory which they cannot translate into practise, they may have the content but they are unable to deliver it well and poor language skills as reflected by what they write* (M1).

What emerges above is that mentors in the main questioned the efficacy of initial teacher education programmes and also attributed the shortcomings among the beginners to the theory-practice gap.

On the issue of lesson content, a new teacher indicated experiencing problems with selecting appropriate content from textbooks and attributed this problem to the fact that *the college didn't teach me to take that content in the textbook* (P2). Another beginner professed encountering challenges with *how to handle certain topics in some subject areas* (P5), which may have been an indication of lack of mastery of content. Two others beginners specifically reported experiencing problems with the teaching of content subjects such as Social Studies and Religious and Moral Education. For one of them, the challenge was that no written exercises were provided in Social Studies and Religious and Moral Education textbooks *and you have to construct your own questions and it is difficult if you don't know how to do it* (P2). The other one just indicated that *a new teacher may need assistance with a subject like Religious and Moral Education* (P9). The new teachers, it would seem, found content

subjects difficult to teach either because they lacked mastery of content or skills to select content and set written work.

An aspect that some NQTs identified as difficult to teach was writing of English compositions. One beginner stated that, *the teaching of English composition writing is a problem area for me and the pupils still have a long way to go* (P5). Another one indicated finding teaching Grade 3s how to write compositions problematic and stated that, *even if you give the class a picture to study they cannot construct 2 to 3 lines* (P6). For yet another teacher, the challenge was *with marking of compositions* (P2). The new teachers here were able to identify needs which required to be addressed if they were to be effective in the classroom.

#### **5.6.4 Pupils' performance**

Most NQTs (see Table 5.5) expressed dismay with the poor performance of some pupils and their inability to master concepts. Beginners' statements which characterised their impressions about the pupils' performance included: *these pupils they are passive, I may need assistance with the pupils' performance, it's dismal* (P3); or *I'm dealing with young children who are generally slow in understanding concepts* (P10). Beginners also highlighted specific learning challenges among the pupils, for example, *the inability of pupils to understand concepts especially in Environmental Science (ES) and 12 out of 30 pupils in my class cannot read* (P6); and that *some pupils can't read at all, in grade 3... they can't write properly* (P7). They went on to indicate how helpless they felt in tackling the pupils' learning challenges even with what they considered to be basic tasks and commented:

*I don't know if you have such a large number of pupils in a class who cannot read, how do I handle such a problem?* (P6).

*It's quite difficult to remedy children who can't read, who can't write at Grade 3 level* (P7).

It would seem that at times poor performance by pupils in even what the beginners considered to be basic learning tasks resulted in them doubting their own competencies as well and losing confidence. In the words of one beginner: *What makes one to lose confidence*

*is, if one teaches a topic and realise that most of the pupils didn't understand, one tends to think that the problem could be with you as the teacher (P8).*

The new teachers spoke of how colleagues offered them advice on how to deal with the issue of poor performance by pupils. The advice cited by the beginners included: *to give slow learners less challenging written work and with pupils who cannot read, to go back to phonetic sounds and start teaching them word building from there (P6); and that this is a different school, these pupils won't perform to your expectations even if you work hard (P3).* The kind of advice proffered to the latter participant could imply that the other teachers had given up on the pupils in the school and could influence the beginner to do the same. In one instance though, a beginner indicated that the TIC went beyond giving advice and helped with remediation of some pupils in the new teacher's class. The beginner explained that the TIC *had to come and take other children for reading lessons at Grade 1 and Grade 2 (i.e. the levels the pupils were operating at) and I would be doing another remedial for those who can try to read (P7).* This kind of arrangement would have provided some relief for the new teacher and made him feel supported. What comes through though in these cases is that the beginners lacked skills to deal with the pupils' poor performance in the classroom and they needed assistance in order to handle that challenge.

The NQTs tried to identify the causes of poor performance among pupils so that perhaps they would find solutions to the problem. Some of them felt that the main cause was *absenteeism*. In addition to absenteeism, one new teacher attributed the problem of pupils' performance to what he termed a *shaky system that the school uses to select pupils into a Grade (P3)*. The participant explained that this was a practice whereby *pupils are taken from Grade A to Grade B to Grade C without considering their performance*. Another scenario was, when a new pupil joined the school no verification would be carried out to establish the Grade the pupil had been at the previous school. The information provided by the parents would just be accepted, for example, *that the child has been doing Grade 7, even if he or she is not able to write his name, they just put him in Grade 7*. The participant was of the view that a teacher receiving such a child in their class would bear the brunt of the practice *because he is supposed to teach Grade 7 content yet there is a Grade 1 pupil and this puts a lot of pressure on the teacher (P3)*. The beginner regarded such a practice as untenable and observed that school heads would be reluctant to change it for fear of attracting the wrath of the community for you *don't know how the community will accept that*. This approach to enrolment of pupils

might have served to demonstrate to the beginner the extent to which schools might go to maintain good relations with communities around them.

Another practice which NQTs felt contributed to poor performance in end of year tests (2013) and which was brought up during the focus group discussion was the setting of tests for the schools at cluster level. One participant explained that while the schools emphasized that *you should follow the syllabus, interpret the syllabus, teach the children according to the syllabus, the tests that were given to children from the cluster, the cluster never ever considered the syllabus, of which Grade 2 was given tests which were Grade 5 oriented and they did nothing except zeros, twos* (FGD). This problem was corroborated by another participant who commented: *This happened especially in Mathematics, it will seem like teachers failed to do their work... We now don't know whether we taught or not, the Grade tests, especially in Mathematics, the tests were not for Grade 3 level and pupils failed dismally* (FGD). The NQTs felt that the tests set were generally above the level of the pupils and that those who had been tasked to set them had not adhered to the syllabi of the different Grades. In their view, this was in contradiction to the expectations spelt out to them by schools. The NQTs thought that the wholesale failure by the pupils could be viewed as a reflection of the teacher's competencies, which really put them in a dilemma. The beginners wondered how the parents who had been struggling to pay school fees (a problem which schools seemed not to be sympathetic to), would take their children's high failure rate. One participant commented: *they (the school administration) were forcing the parents to pay school fees and the arrears and they did. And now, come the results, they are a complete total failure, next year they (parents) will not pay fees* (FGD). Such sentiments could be, in a way an indication of awareness among the new teachers that schools were accountable to the local communities and had to deliver to their expectations.

On the whole, NQTs were concerned about the poor performance of the pupils in their classes and their incapacity to come up with solutions to address this problem. But they were also concerned about some practices in schools which they felt contributed to poor performance.

### **5.6.5 Pupils with special educational needs**

A few NQTs (see Table 5.5) spoke of encountering pupils with special educational needs either in the form of *physical disabilities such as hearing impairment* (P1) or *learning difficulties* (P3 & P6) in their classrooms. They found it challenging to cater for such pupils

in mainstream classrooms as this resulted in a situation that one beginner described as having *different classes in one*. The beginner explained: *When I give tests at the end of the term it's apparent that within the same class I have 3 groups of pupils, some operating at Grade zero level, some at Grade 1 and yet some at Grade 3 level* (P6). Consequently, pupils with special needs would lag behind in the learning process as the new teachers generally did not feel equipped to assist the pupils. The NQTs suggested the need to set up or revive special classes in their schools so that pupils with special educational needs *can have an opportunity to learn* (P6).

### **5.6.6 Discipline issues**

The majority of NQTs (see Table 5.5) spoke of experiencing problems with class control. One new teacher who initially experienced class control problems with a Grade one class because, in her view, the pupils were not used to the formal learning set-up and its protocols, commented: *The pupils were not used to the formal learning setup and taking instructions...it was like each pupil would be doing his/her own thing during lesson time, they couldn't figure out what we were doing* (P1). Various other explanations were also provided by NQTs about the causes of the problem of class management and these included a lack of respect for the teachers because they were new in the school or because of their gender:

*When you are new, pupils do not listen to you as much as they would do to a teacher who has been in the school for some time* (P4).

*There are some pupils who do not respect the authority of lady teachers... during TP we were under the mentor and class control wasn't an issue because it was someone else's class* (P5).

*There are pupils who cannot pay attention, who are ever fidgeting and who even if you threaten them with corporal punishment, they will not change* (P6).

One new teacher was perturbed by the general indiscipline among pupils and bemoaned the fact that the pupils are *not concerned about school, they don't tuck in their shirts like little children, they don't listen and they don't know what a teacher is* (P7). The challenge of class control among NQTs was confirmed by a mentor who observed that new teachers needed assistance with *even handling the children that they work with* (M5) and a reflective essay

participant who confessed, *I had difficulties in handling the class alone* (RE3). The beginners were frustrated by the challenge of class control and this can be gleaned from such statements as: *you may get to a point where you feel you cannot handle the class any more* (P5), *it was hard for me to control the whole class* (P4) and *the pupils are a hard nut to crack* (P7). Clearly, NQTs felt that they were incapacitated to address issues of class control which might have made their classroom operations difficult and they thus needed assistance in that respect.

The new teachers spoke of strategies employed to address the problem of class control. In one instance, a strategy employed involved the intervention of the school authorities and the affected beginner stated that *the Head visited my classroom to check on the problem pupils, one of the pupils was asked to bring his parents* (P5). The other strategies alluded to entailed the new teachers taking varied initiatives to address the problem and these are reflected in statements such as:

*I introduced some rules because some of them work with threats... I am learning to give pupils some duties, when I was new I couldn't, I would be shy to tell pupils what to do, now I can allocate duties to pupils and manage the class* (P4).

*I ask the class monitor and group leaders to check who are not writing, who are not submitting their books for marking and who are making noise and I have made a duty roster* (P2).

*Once in a while I chide them because if I leave them to do what they want the other pupils may think that is the correct way of behaving and start to imitate it* (P6).

One NQT spoke of having learned to *be firm*, and ensuring that there is *a difference when I am just talking about things in general and when the teacher is talking about serious issues* (P4). The beginners recognised the importance of being able to maintain discipline as this would make their work in the classroom less stressful and it was one way of stamping authority. As one beginner put it, *as a teacher you should maintain discipline among pupils so that you enjoy your work and pupils listen to you* (P1). In a way, the new teachers used whatever strategies they felt worked with their classes and it would seem one such strategy was ensuring that pupils were made aware that they too had responsibilities in the classroom.

One beginner alluded to pupils reporting him to their parents after he *tried to instil discipline in them* (P7) using unorthodox means. The School Head had to intervene and assure the parents that what the teacher had done was *part of discipline and that a teacher has to be tough for a child to be upright* (P7). Another participant, through a reflective essay confirmed having a similar experience after trying to discipline pupils by administering corporal punishment. The participant reported that *that the parents were coming to the school complaining that I was beating their children* (RE1) and the school administration had to intervene to resolve the issue. Such reactions from parents could have made the new teachers aware that there were certain ways of instilling discipline that were beyond their jurisdiction. The researcher also noted in her field notes the employment of unorthodox means of class control where a new teacher (P8) threatened to beat up some rowdy pupils in her presence. Schools, through induction could have familiarised the new teachers on the regulations pertaining to how to handle issues of indiscipline among pupils.

In summary, indications are that NQTs had varied areas of concern with the more prevalent one being issues of selection of content and teaching methods, pupils' performance, the scheme-cum-plan and class control (see Table 5.5). Both the beginners and schools felt that some of the concerns could be attributed to problems relating to initial teacher preparation.

## **5.7 Reflections of NQTs on the induction process**

This category focuses on the reflections of NQTs on the induction process they had gone through. The issues reflected on by the new teachers were rating of the induction process, impact of induction on classroom practices, the relative status of NQTs in schools and their perceptions of the teaching profession.

### **5.7.1 The rating of induction process**

This sub-category was meant to enable the new teachers to reflect on the adequacy of the induction that they had been exposed to. A few NQTs rated their induction programme as adequate and described it as *good* (P1); and, *ok* (P10). However, most beginners either indicated that they had not been inducted or found the induction process to be inadequate as reflected by such statements as: *I did not get any formal induction, the induction I got was grapevine information* (P3); *the school doesn't provide any induction* (P9); *the induction process in this school has a lot of loopholes* (P5); *the induction I received in this school was*

*inadequate (P6); they need to panel beat on induction of new teachers (P7); and, induction here is very poor especially when I compare it to what happened when I joined the school where I did TP (P8).* Focus group participants generally felt that there had been hardly any induction and one participant remarked, *I was never inducted...they seem to take me as someone who should just be given a Grade to teach (FGD),* implying perhaps that the beginner was perceived as a seasoned teacher who knew it all. For the majority of the NQTs, therefore, the induction received was below expectations. Their most important source of learning during this period had been typically *from other teachers or knowledge from college.* Some NQTs went on to suggest that the duration of induction could be *two years maybe (P2)* or one year. The justification of the duration of the process was that, *it's a long and very important process (P5); so that the school can assess your progress (P10); and, after a year a new teacher should have an idea of what he/she is doing (P1).* One beginner suggested that *induction should be a continuous process involving constant monitoring of the NQT (P8),* perhaps pointing to the importance attached to induction and the fact that it is a process rather than an event. However, other beginners felt that the duration of induction should be *1 or 2 weeks (P6); 2 months (P7); or 3 weeks or a month (P9)* and the justification for this was that the new teacher would be able to learn a lot during that period. Despite these differences in opinion about the duration of induction, the new teachers felt that induction was vital. This is attested to by statements such as: *If schools could find time for induction, this would make life easy for NQTs (P5); I think new teachers may lack knowledge about some things and schools need to teach them these things (P6); and, induction ensures that you don't learn from mistakes (i.e. trial and error) (P9).* The new teachers, therefore, appreciated the importance of induction in enabling teacher learning.

A few mentors spoke of their schools providing induction to NQTs and its duration being, for example, one to two hours in one school and one day in another. One wonders what the schools intended to achieve with the beginners in that short period. Several mentors, on the other hand, confirmed that their schools were not providing any induction to NQTs and indicated that the new teachers were encouraged to seek assistance from colleagues whenever the need arose. One mentor explained the school's position on the issue: *At this school we don't have an induction programme... we tell them that if there are any problems they should come and be assisted by whoever is knowledgeable (M5).* Along the same lines, another mentor stated, *we don't have a specified period for induction, he or she (NQT) learns as we go along and we keep on saying, refer to your workmates (M4).* In these instances, the new



teachers could approach any experienced teacher in the school, thus confirming what NQTs had maintained that they were basically being assisted by other teachers. Several reasons were advanced for lack of provision of induction in schools. One mentor's explanation was:

*We have discovered that these NQTs are not comfortable to work in these environments (rural). You induct a teacher today, tomorrow, he tenders a transfer letter, those who are still here, they are here because they are failing to go where they want to (M4).*

For this school, the high turnover among beginning teachers in rural areas did not justify provision of induction programmes for them. In fact, the mentor seemed to indicate that the school was particularly frustrated by the high turnover among new teachers (the reason why beginners were labelled by experienced colleagues as 'ma hit and run' [FGD], because they were likely to transfer from disadvantage schools at the earliest opportunity). As a result, the school had adopted the attitude that simply said *alright, you will learn from others...we cannot change the environment (M4)*. Another justification for not conducting induction according to one mentor was that:

*Someone from college (NQT) says they, (i.e. the school) are wasting my time, I know all these, I have done all these (and), we have members who have been in the system, they will echo the same thing that they are wasting your time (M2).*

It would, therefore, seem that the possibility of negative attitudes and resistance from NQTs and the possible influence of colleagues against the process discouraged schools from providing induction.

Some mentors instead alluded to the efforts made by the district education office at Mwenezi to provide induction to the new teachers, suggesting why schools might have been casual about their responsibility in this respect. The mentors explained:

*I also need to mention one induction course that was done by the district office. They invited all members who have 1 to 4 year experience. I think they talked much about the conditions of service, all the necessary requirements, the expectations of a teacher when he joins the Ministry [of Primary and Secondary Education] (M1).*

*At times they are asked to go to the district office at Mwenezi there and the School Inspectors just discuss with them (M5).*

*The district office also has another programme for induction, so the district also carries that out (M3).*

One of the mentors commenting on the supposed example set by the district office on teacher induction added: *I would also suggest, that at school level, we have a similar exercise, but that exercise as I have said, the problem is of time (M3).* This participant highlighted yet another excuse why schools could not provide induction and perhaps a lack of appreciation of the need for schools and the district office to complement each other's efforts in the process. That the district office was at times involved in induction was serendipitously confirmed by an official who mentioned that the issues that were covered during the sessions included administrative and professional issues such as the Public Service regulations, the Official Secrecy Act, issues pertaining to leave and discipline among teachers, the teacher's role, the role of the School Head, participation of civil servants in politics, etc. Indications were that the team from the district office that was supposed to conduct induction would be composed of a District Education Officer (DEO), School Inspectors and personnel from the Human Resources section. The official, however, pointed out that during the year that this study was conducted the district office had not been able to mount any induction sessions due to a number of constraints. This was confirmed by the NQTs who participated in the study, none of whom seemed to have attended an induction workshops held at district level.

### ***5.7.2 The impact of induction on classroom practices***

NQTs also reflected on changes in their practice that had occurred during the course of the year as a result of induction. Some NQTs alluded to their classroom practices having improved and the factors that had positively impacted on such practices.

*Pupils seem to be able to grasp concepts much faster. If you give them real media and some pictures they are able to understand what you are talking about (P1).*

*As I develop lessons, I identify shortcomings to be rectified in subsequent lessons as well as appropriate lesson activities (P8).*

*I am using different teaching methods, initially I may have been using very limited media but now that I am used to the environment, more media is available...now I tend to repeat concepts as a way of reinforcing them and I no longer overload pupils with work...The kind of pupil we have require that the teacher should be very patient, the teacher needs to take them through the paces slowly until they understand... (P9).*

It would appear that some beginners felt that their classroom practices had improved in various respects during the induction year as a result of changes in approaches to teaching as well as reflection on lessons taught. For one of the beginners, another professional lesson learnt related to the timing of the introduction of certain skills to pupils: *I realise that with the present ECD B class we left teaching of fine motor skills, teaching pupils to use a crayon or pencil until too late, we should have started in January in the first term (P8).*

Not all NQTs though thought that they had experienced some professional growth. One beginner stated that *the activities that I have been exposed to were not about the classroom but about the documentation and the teaching profession in general (P2)*. Hence, this participant found the activities that they were exposed to rather too general to significantly impact on classroom practices. Another one indicated, *there are some things which are needed so that the teaching will be adequate (P5)*, perhaps implying that the beginner did not feel they were yet proficient in their work. A focus group discussion participant stated, *I would say I haven't grown much and I still need more assistance* and felt that this was evidenced by the errors that they continued to make in the classroom.

Related to the issue of improvement of classroom practices, NQTs reflected on their interactions with pupils in their classrooms. Several beginners spoke of the significance of the teachers having intimate knowledge of pupils' backgrounds and not to make assumptions about why pupils might not be behaving as expected. They cited some situations whereby on further inquiry about a given pupil, a teacher could discover that the manner in which the pupil was behaving would be a manifestation of an underlying problem as explained below:

*Sometimes....when you inquire why a pupil is not writing given work you are told "I don't have a pen or an exercise book" When you ask further why a pupil doesn't have such basic school materials, you discover that the pupil is an orphan (P5).*

*If a child comes to school late, I have to ask why they are late. Sometimes the chores that the pupils are required to do at home before coming to school result in them arriving at the school late...In some instances a pupil may sleep in class and you may learn that the child has not eaten and is hungry (P10).*

The new teachers found that understanding pupils' backgrounds was part of establishing relationships which could make it possible for them to assist the pupils. In the words of one beginner, *the pupils have different problems which require different solutions and if you are sociable with them they get close and begin to confide in you and you intervene where you can (P4).*

### **5.7.3 The relative status of NQTs in schools**

The new teachers here reflected on their perceived status in schools in relation to their experienced colleagues. Some NQTs emotionally spoke about not being accorded the same status as their experienced colleagues in various respects. For example, one new teacher gave an account about being required to walk from the satellite school to the mother (or main) school (8km away) for two continuous weeks to invigilate Grade 7 examinations as well as to escort students from her school to that examinations venue. The explanation given for the beginner being the only one involved in the exercise was that *there was no one else who could walk that distance and that I was the youngest person in the school (P6)*. The new teacher could not understand the reasons advanced considering that there were other teachers in the school who could have taken turns to perform the task at hand. The NQTs thought that the fact that they were not viewed as being of equal status to other teachers also manifested through trivialisation of their professional knowledge and views. For example, two beginners spoke of being *taken as a blank slate (P2)* and not being *listened to in meetings, because if you have got an input, it can just be rejected (P7)*. The latter participant suggested that schools could acknowledge that new teachers were professionals by consulting them about professional issues and not just *drilling on the way you should do things as if I am a temporary (untrained) teacher (P7)*. During the focus group discussion, NQTs also spoke at length about the lack of acceptance as professionals and lack of recognition as certified teachers. This was captured in such statements as:

*There can be a problem of this disease called seniority, it may mean that we know everything, we are seniors, the juniors they don't know anything (FGD).*

*You are a junior teacher, you are just like a student teacher because you are still learning (FGD).*

*The new teachers are not empty vessels, they may possess certain knowledge that experienced teachers may not necessarily possess (FGD).*

*Here they don't accept that we know and we are specialists, they just think what they were trained is good for everybody now (FGD).*

The new teachers felt that they were treated as lesser professionals because of lack of experience. During the focus group discussion, some new teachers also spoke of being puzzled by the manner in which the veterans in schools expressed a lack of confidence in their competencies. One beginner explained: *Experienced teachers have no confidence in NQTs, you may have a bright pupil removed from your class and be given a dull one; and, they usually move their children from some classes especially if these are being taken by new teachers (FGD).* A participant who indicated to have taught at two schools in the same number of years confirmed that NQTs were not taken seriously as professionals in schools and commented that, *some school administrators underrate us new teachers pointing out that we are inexperienced and know nothing (RE3).* This undervaluing of their professional knowledge seems to have been a source of discouragement for the new teachers.

A few new teachers also expressed some dissatisfaction with the manner in which their social problems were handled by schools. One of them reported being reprimanded for taking a day off to attend a funeral of a family member and observed that, *some teachers are allowed to be away for a whole week, yet when I miss only one day from work because you are attending a funeral on your return you are whipped (verbally).* Another one gave an account of how she was denied permission to attend her husband's graduation ceremony and asked to *complete leave forms yet as I speak a colleague was granted permission to be away for a week to attend her sister's wedding (P6).* These issues, to the beginners, suggested that schools were insensitive to social issues affecting them and also pointed to preferential treatment of their experienced colleagues. They went on to observe that new teachers were denied time off, yet according to one focus group participant, the Public Service regulations (SI of 2000) allow teachers twelve leave days a year to attend to urgent private issues. One beginner was of the view that the way in which they were being treated in schools *is unfair and it seems NQTs are*

*not considered as human beings* (FGD). The participants went on to suggest that NQTs should be made aware of what their rights in schools are as teachers, because *we don't feel we have the rights if we are just thrown in schools* (FGD). This, in a way, implied that the district education authorities who were responsible for deploying the new teachers into schools needed to make follow-ups to check on how the NQTs were settling down.

It also emerged that whenever there were social conflicts in schools, the NQTs were the scapegoats. A FGD participant remarked that *if there is a problem in the school, fingers are first pointed at the new teachers* (FGD). This was confirmed by a NQT who stated that *if you are a newcomer it is easier to be blamed because the old-timers know how they relate* (P3). One of the participants indicated that the labelling of NQTs as the cause of strife in schools stigmatised them to an extent that it would negatively impact on their work and commented: *it's not proper, you may continue with your work but you will have been affected by being labelled as a source of problems in the school* (FGD). The new teachers, it would seem, felt that they were discriminated against, and maybe even alienated. It also emerged that the alienation of some teachers in schools *results in formation of cliques, teachers will form groups according to when they joined the school and there is no harmony amongst these groups* (FGD). In the face of such challenges, one beginner pointed out that *NQTs need first of all to be just accepted as teachers for them to feel comfortable* (P7). The sentiments from the new teachers here might have been an indication of a problem of interpersonal relationships within schools. From these accounts, it would appear that the NQTs were vulnerable and always at the receiving end of some negative situations in their new stations.

#### **5.7.4 NQTs' perceptions of the teaching profession**

This sub-category was meant to make the NQTs reflect on their first contact with the classroom after certification and whether their expectations of the profession had been affirmed. It emerged that the beginners' reactions to their first teaching assignment were varied. One beginner spoke of finding teaching *exciting and it makes me learn new things* (P10), while some found joy in *having a classroom where I could stand before pupils and teach, being in charge of my own class* (P1); and again, *having my own class without a mentor* (P2). Yet at the same time the latter participant spoke of finding it *difficult to know how I can start with teaching in my own class* (P2). This sentiment was echoed by another beginner who stated that *when you are a new teacher you find it difficult to get started and may be at a loss on how to communicate concepts to pupils* (P8). Along the same lines, a

reflective essay participant's remark about the first teaching assignment was: *I was not well-equipped to handle the job successfully, I needed staff development workshops and assistance from colleagues* (RE3). Such mixed sentiments from the new teachers might imply that while there was a sense of fulfilment amongst some of them upon realising that they were qualified professionals, there were also some elements of disillusionment as the gravity of the task before them sank in.

The new teachers reflected at length about their expectations of the teaching profession and the reality on the ground which they might have experienced during induction. Indications were that many of them had chosen teaching as a career because they simply loved the profession and felt that they could contribute to the well-being of the country's children through participation in education. This was demonstrated by reasons given for career choice by NQTs, for example: *I chose teaching as a career because I want to help those children, maybe the nation by educating the children* (P2); *I love working with young children* (P9); and, *I wanted to help the children shape their future* (P5). One beginner though stated that the reason for the career choice was that *there is security in teaching, especially in the public sector, there is security unlike in the private sector* (P3). Such a reason for career choice could be indicative of the participant's perceptions and expectations about the profession. The beginners' were able to compare their expectations with what they had actually experienced during induction as reflected in such statements as:

*I thought the role of a teacher was to impart knowledge. I thought a teacher was a respected person and would have a comfortable life* (P1).

*When I joined teaching I thought there was more talking, but now I can see that there is more of writing in preparing, evaluating, marking. I didn't know how much paperwork there was. We normally think that teachers teach and go home, you won't be knowing that there will be some records to keep* (P4).

*Teaching is a challenging job but with time I think I may fit in slowly, but it's a bit challenging* (P5).

*I thought I was going to be doing my profession in areas where people really want education, they know what is education, where they would help me, I would help them, where we will work as a community not as rivals (P7).*

*I thought teaching was easy, but I realise you need to ensure that pupils have understood, the objectives have been attained or pupils have not mastered. So it's not an easy thing. Before I joined, I thought teaching was just about talking and telling pupils...and them understanding. But it's quite different, you have to work hard for pupils to understand concepts (P8).*

*I thought a teacher was someone with extra knowledge, someone with more knowledge than all the other people and if you approached a teacher with a problem, you would be assisted. I now realise that a teacher doesn't have knowledge about everything and that there are certain things that he/she can learn from other people (P9).*

*I thought pupils would have the zeal to learn and be educated and that the parents and community would want to see their children educated and be something in life. But in this community it's different, they do not value education...I thought in the times we are living in people would value education, so I do not quite understand this community (P10).*

The above statements indicate that by the end of the first year in the field, participants had come to the realisation that their previously held perceptions about the teaching profession might have been limited and that the profession was more complex and demanding than they had initially thought. The complexities related not only to classroom issues but also to the nature of the communities they found themselves working in.

## **5.8 Summary of results**

This summary considers the results in relation to the research questions cited in Chapter 1. On the nature and scope of induction received, what emerges from the results of the study is that NQTs were exposed to very limited low intensity and high intensity induction strategies and that whatever support they received was not tailor-made for them but was incidental in that it was what the veteran teachers were also receiving. Of the low intensity strategies, the



most commonly experienced were provision of opportunities for collaboration, followed by orientation of new teachers, but the latter was not fully exploited. The third low intensity strategy, which is adjusting of working conditions of NQTs, proved to be problematic because of the inability by some schools to make special arrangements to assign beginners classes they were comfortable with as well as their incapacity to provide required resources. However, the beginners generally did not seem to mind lack of adjustment of working conditions in relation to co-curricular activities, particularly sport and seemed to have been actively involved in these. But, some voices amongst the NQTs indicated that it was in the area of co-curricular activities that their relative status in schools was most felt as they appeared to have been subjected to unequal treatment in the schools.

High intensity induction strategies were barely experienced by NQTs. The strategies that seem to have been employed to a limited extent are observation of beginners' teaching, (which was, however, not done on a regular basis), training workshops as well as a semblance of mentoring. But the latter was not employed in a conventional manner as there was no formal appointment or training of mentors and the task was performed by school administrators in their usual line of duty of supervising all teachers in their schools. The other two high intensity strategies, that is, opportunities to observe other teachers and provision of release time, were barely employed. So, on the whole, NQTs had limited exposure to high intensity strategies as compared to low intensity strategies.

The nature of the induction that the NQTs received was influenced by a variety of factors. Firstly, induction seems to have been influenced by school cultures and environments. In some schools where NQTs were posted, induction strategies that were dominant were those that entailed collaboration between beginners and veteran teachers. This gave an impression of the existence of cultures of collaboration or contrived collegiality in schools. However, data showed that the collaborations were at a superficial level as the issues of power relations in the schools compromised the realisation of authentic collaborations. The nature of induction also seems to have been affected by lack of capacity of the schools to provide for induction. This resulted in schools not accentuating the activities that could have significantly impacted on the new teachers' learning and professional development. For example, it emerged that the process of mentoring of NQTs was grossly flawed as there were no specifically assigned mentors. In addition, those who were supposed to mentor the new

teachers lacked the requisite credentials and could not provide the necessary support and guidance.

Most schools did not seem to fully appreciate their roles in the induction of NQTs and that the new teachers were not ‘finished products’ and needed to be supported professionally. There was little effort on the part of schools to identify and address the concerns raised by NQTs such as the scheme-cum-plan, class allocation and setting and marking of tests. This limited appreciation of their role in induction was also evidenced by the amount of time that the schools devoted to the induction process. It manifested in the manner in which schools approached other issues that could have promoted the professional growth of new teachers such as regular observation of the new teacher, availing free time for planning, and adjusting working conditions of beginners. So, it would seem that the induction the beginning teachers in this study experienced was largely informal induction and schools had generally reneged on their responsibility to induct the beginners.

Some NQTs indicated that the induction experiences of their first year of teaching had impacted on their classroom practices, thus their professional growth. The lessons derived from the experiences included improvising where there was a shortage of teaching materials, class control, appreciating the multifaceted role of the teacher and the importance of teamwork. The lesson cited also included knowledge of expectations of the community, for example, in relation to the dress code and approaches to disciplining of pupils. The question though is whether what was learned contributed to their professional growth and if this has resulted in substantive change in practice. It should also be noted that there were some NQTs who indicated that they had not learned much professionally from their induction experiences and still needed to be assisted.

The areas identified by the NQTs as of concern and which could need attention during induction were:

- the issue of how to compile the scheme-cum-plan;
- selection of appropriate content and teaching methods;
- setting and marking of tests;
- dealing with pupils’ absenteeism;

- issues of discipline among pupils and class control; and
- unequal treatment of NQTs in schools and their lack of knowledge about their conditions of service.

Persistent issues and challenges in the induction of NQTs that emerged from the data are:

- absence of an official policy on induction which makes it possible for schools to default on their responsibility of inducting new teachers;
- the lack of capacity of schools to provide induction due to a number of reasons, for example, lack of knowledge and appreciation by schools of the needs of NQTs;
- resource constraints which made adjustment of working conditions for the new teacher difficult;
- the adequacy of initial teacher training and in particular the efficacy of the partnership in training of teachers between teacher education institutions and schools; and
- unsupportive host communities which made the work of the new teachers difficult.

On the whole, NQTs' descriptions of their experiences indicate that essential components of induction were missing and that the first year of teaching was not easy for them. Some new teachers seem to have been frustrated and dispirited by their experiences as reflected by use of epithets such as *demotivated*, *demoralised* and *discouraged* to describe their experiences. However, some of them were still able to contribute as bearers of new knowledge and skills in their schools, thus acting as resource persons.

### **Notes**

<sup>1</sup> *satellite school: these are the makeshift schools which are mostly found in resettlement areas. They are not formally registered with the Ministry of Education, Arts, Sport and Culture. Hence, they have no budgetary allocation and fall under the administration of an established school (mother school) which is registered and has a substantive School Head and which is located elsewhere within the same district. Satellite schools normally lack basic infrastructure that would qualify them to be classified as formal schools, for example, standard classrooms, teachers' accommodation, etc. At the time of the study, there were a total of 64 satellite schools in Mwenezi district, which was about half of the schools in the district.*

<sup>2</sup>*established school: a school with the requisite infrastructure and which is registered with the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture. Such school usually have been in existence for years*

<sup>3</sup>*ECD B: The pre-school class which is meant to prepare 4 to 5 year old children for formal schooling, i.e. for Grade 1*

<sup>4</sup>*Apostolic sects: African indigenous churches which target exclusively African converts. They blend African Traditional Religious and Christianity with emphasis on the Old Testament teachings. They emphasize healing (whose focus is on African issues, e.g. witchcraft) as well as prophecy.*

<sup>5</sup>*sadza: The staple food in Zimbabwe which is prepared from maize meal*

<sup>6</sup>*Performance Lag Programme: A programme designed to address a lag in performance among pupils which is perceived to be a product of the problems experienced in the education sector since the onset of economic meltdown in 2006/7.*

<sup>7</sup>*school cluster: a group of 3 to 6 schools in an educational district which works together to share ideas. The functions of a cluster are to organise workshops, setting and marking of examinations, mounting of demonstration lessons. At the time of the study, there were 8 such clusters in Mwenezi district.*

## Chapter 6

### Discussion of results

#### 6.1 Introduction

The results of this study were presented in the previous chapter under a number of themes emerging from the induction experiences of the NQTs. This chapter reflects on the results in relation to the literature and theory on teacher induction which were discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 respectively. The discussion of the findings attempts to address the research questions identified in Chapter 1, which were considered as central to deconstructing the induction experiences of the NQTs who participated in this study. The issues emerging from the results are pertinent for the development of teacher induction programmes and a policy for the country.

#### 6.2 Nature and scope of induction experiences

The first objective of the study was to examine the nature and scope of the induction experiences that the beginning teachers are being exposed to. Literature reviewed concedes that the transition from teacher education to the field and the first year as a teacher is very difficult (Long, et al, 2012; Schollaert, 2011; Wang et al., 2008; Kelchtermans & Ballet, 1999; Bartell, 1995; Veenman, 1984). This has been attributed to the fact that NQTs are not yet proficient in teaching and should be supported through induction programmes as they learn to teach (Totterdell et al., 2008; Cherubini, 2007; Howe, 2006; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; McCormack & Thomas 2003). A study by Lewin and Stuart (Cobbold, 2007), however, shows that some low-income countries, namely, Ghana, Lesotho, Malawi, Trinidad and Tobago do not have formal induction policies which would make it mandatory for schools to have induction programmes in place. The modalities of induction in such countries are left to the whims of individual schools. Zimbabwe falls in the category of countries referred to above. The results of this study established that any induction that occurred in the country's primary schools was largely informal and incidental and here and there, NQTs were exposed to supports that might result in some professional learning. Such arrangements are consistent with what Feiman-Nemser (2001a) refers to as induction by default.

The results of this study suggest that although there was no formal induction, there were some induction activities that the NQTs experienced. Literature on teacher development suggests essential components of induction that would ensure that the goals of the process are realised and which also constitute best induction practices (Bartell, 2005; Carrol & Simco, 2001) and classifies these into low intensity and high intensity supports (Moore & Swan, 2008). An analysis of the data showed that the NQTs here experienced limited low and high intensity induction supports and to varying extents in the different schools. Of the low intensity induction supports that the NQTs experienced, the most dominant was the provision of opportunities for collaboration which involved mainly learning from other teachers (who could be considered as unassigned mentors) and other sources in the environment. Two of the three forms of collaboration that were prevalent, namely, the general support which the NQTs received from veterans, (which could be equated to matching of beginners and veterans), and matching with other co-grade teachers, seemed to be more sustainable. This might have been because the veterans were readily accessible to the beginners, which was vital, especially in the absence of formal support. It would appear that the matching of beginners with other co-grade teachers was particularly fruitful as the beginners received guidance with Grade specific teaching issues and practical knowledge that they needed in order to be proficient and confident with to be able to function effectively in the classroom.

The significance of the peer support sessions similar to those experienced through collaborations lay in that they might have been an indication of the existence of Wenger's (1998) communities of practice (CoPs) in schools. The peer support sessions allowed the beginners to interact, cooperate and solve problems within a safe environment (Portner, 2001). Data suggests that the beginners were able to exploit the multiple opportunities for interaction with experienced colleagues, for example, during co-curricular activities, to engage in professional dialogue as well as to establish relationships with the veterans. It would seem, therefore, that the experienced colleagues whom the NQTs interacted with influenced their classroom practices as well as the construction of a professional identity. This is consistent with one of the tenets of the CoP theory which proposes that learning and membership to a community of practice are interdependent and that the process of learning is accompanied by identity transformation and a change in the way one relates within the group (Borko, 2004). The collaborations between beginners and veterans therefore facilitated learning and fostered a sense of community as relationships with peers made new teachers feel that they were members of a 'community of practice' (Kessels, 2010). According to

Barth (2001), CoPs are repositories of craft knowledge, that is, the massive collection of experiences and learning those who work under the schoolhouse inevitably accrue. Experienced teachers in schools that novices found themselves in would have command of such knowledge. However, it should be noted that much of the input by veterans was uncoordinated and unsystematic. Hence, the potential of the collaborations as experienced by NQTs in this study in serving as a foundation of key competencies and sustaining transferring of best practices as alluded to in reviewed literature and the theoretical framework (Wenger & Snyder, 1999) is an issue that would need further interrogation.

A common feature on the schools' calendars which the NQTs seemed to consider to be a source of learning were the general staff meetings that in most schools were held at least twice a term (i.e. at the beginning and end of each school term). Though the meetings were meant for teachers in general and not specifically for NQTs, the latter found the wide range of administrative and instructional issues covered during the meetings to be pertinent. The staff meetings might have provided another forum for the NQTs to get to know the professional community, the school climate and the leadership better and to learn about practice because of the nature of interactions involved. But, because in most schools the meetings were not held on a regular basis and their duration was limited and focus tended to be general, this might have limited their intensity in covering specific concerns and needs of NQTs.

The data suggest that the NQTs valued the collaborations, not only because they were able to learn from them but also because this afforded them with an opportunity to contribute new knowledge and visions to their schools. According to Fuller & Unwin (2004:41), such collaborations also demonstrate that the new and old employees can mutually learn from each other. This resonates with one of the key tenets of the CoP theory which states that the capacity to contribute creates a potential for learning (Borko, 2004). The development of reciprocal relationships between the beginners and their experienced colleagues might have served to boost the self-esteem and professional image of the NQTs. But as will be alluded to later, the reciprocity was regulated. Consequently though, the new teachers alternated between feeling being accepted and being unaccepted in the schools and this could have constrained the impact of collaborations as an induction support.

The data revealed that a few NQTs received some orientation when they initially joined their respective schools but the majority of them were not exposed to this support activity. This is contrary to research which cites orientation as one of the most prevalent low intensity induction support in schools (Moore & Swan, 2008) and is perhaps a reflection of the general trend in the provision of induction in this study. The NQTs who were exposed to orientation acknowledged the importance of the process in introducing them to some social and professional issues, and to some extent, to the cultures of the schools. But indications are that the orientation was rather superficial and not systematic as different schools tended to emphasize certain aspects and not the whole range of orientation issues as suggested in international literature (Moore & Swan, 2008; Carver, 2003; Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000). The duration of the exercise and its focus on limited issues might have reduced the potency of orientation in enabling the NQTs to adjust to their new environments. As mentioned earlier on, the majority of NQTs did not receive any orientation at all. What comes through from the data is a failure by the affected beginners to access vital information and basic induction support. Consequently, they had to plunge into their new role without the requisite knowledge and information about the operations of the schools and their role expectations among other things. Clearly, such an arrangement might have worked against the integration of the NQTs into the new environment.

Another low intensity induction support that is suggested by literature is adjustment of working conditions of NQTs in order to make their lives less stressful (Moore & Swan, 2008; Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000). Three possible areas of adjustment of conditions stood out in this study and these were class allocation, availability of resources and participation of NQTs in co-curricular activities. Data here suggest that no deliberate efforts were made to adjust the working conditions of NQTs and where they might have found the conditions ideal, this might have been by default rather than design. With regards to class allocation, it emerged that more than half of the beginners had issues with the classes that they were assigned to. The issues about class allocation ranged from being assigned challenging classes in terms of pupil performance and discipline as well as classes that were outside their areas of specialisation. The beginners viewed the inappropriate class allocation as a deliberate ploy to frustrate them as some of the classes were renowned in the schools for being problematic. Bubb and Earley (2006) equate the practice of deliberately allocating NQTs challenging class assignments and other such assignments to initiation rites that gangs subject their new members to prove their worth. The main consideration by schools in class allocation seemed



to be convenience (what one School Head described as gap filling, i.e. assigning a new arrival any class which did not have a teacher) rather than the competencies of the new teachers. That the beginners felt incapacitated to handle the assigned classes might have frustrated them, dented their professional image and confidence, hence their effectiveness in the classroom. This resonates with Howe's (2006) observation that inappropriate class allocation might be harmful to the beginners and the children they teach rather than being supportive. Again, the fact that the professed challenges of the new teachers with the teaching assignments went unheeded by schools might have signalled a lack of sensitivity to the beginners' professional needs and consequently, an inability to make provision for them.

An additional dimension to the issue of class assignment which affected two participants pertained to the repeated changing of teaching assignments during the course of the first year in the field. Renard (2003) suggests that first year teachers should be kept in the same grade level for two to three years to allow them to become seasoned before changing teaching assignments. The changing of teaching assignments was clearly destabilising for the NQTs and could not have afforded them an opportunity to get to know the pupils and their needs as well as to gain important experience. On the whole, the above issues related to class allocation reflect the adaptation challenges experienced by the beginners that might have made their entry into the profession a rough ride.

For all the NQTs, the schools they were posted to were under-resourced schools and were not in a position to effect adjustment of working conditions by providing teaching and learning materials to support the beginners. It emerged that some of the beginners found that this presented dilemmas as they were ill-prepared to deal with the shortages. This echoes what Stansbury & Zimmerman (2000:7) say that "beginning teachers especially suffer when classrooms are not adequately stocked with desks, textbooks, supplementary materials and basic supplies." While the shortage of resources might have affected all teachers, NQTs felt their effects more than the veteran teachers who, because of experience, would probably have the capacity to handle such constraints better. The shortage of resources might have been an obstacle to professional learning (McCormack & Thomas, 2003) as there was a risk of the new teachers being distracted from the main task of learning to teach as they concentrated on how best to ameliorate the resource constraints. In addition, it should be noted that, although the resource constraints might have made it difficult for the NQTs to execute their duties effectively, at the end of each term they would be appraised on the basis of their work output,

including pupils' performance (things that were beyond their control). On a more positive note though, the resource constraints might have compelled the beginners to learn to improvise and to be resourceful in order to ensure that the core business in the classroom was realised.

The results of this study revealed that at initial entry into the profession, the working conditions of the NQTs were not adjusted and they assumed full teaching responsibilities and participated in multiple co-curricular activities which included supervision of manual work and sporting activities and committee assignments just like their experienced colleagues. This is contrary to suggestions made in some literature that adjustment of working conditions of beginners through minimising co-curricular activities could make their life less stressful (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2008). Indications, however, are that the majority of the beginners did not deem the full-scale responsibilities to be stressful and seemed to regard such co-curricular activities as part and parcel of being a teacher. This was probably because, where co-curricular activities were concerned, the new teachers were allowed choice of activities to participate in and they might have opted for those activities that were of interest to them. The question though is whether this situation was tenable since the new teachers are considered to be in the process of learning to become teachers and improving their practice (Tickle, 2002; Kelchtermans & Ballet, 1999). In addition, for the beginners to assume full-scale responsibilities would imply performing the function before fully comprehending or identifying with the new role (Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008). All the same, the new teachers highlighted their success stories in co-curricular activities and their achievements with the various teams that they were in charge of. These achievements might have offset those areas which the NQTs were experiencing problems with in the classroom. Also, participation in co-curricular activities might have contributed in giving a sense of belonging as it enabled them to experience the other dimensions of the school environment, provided an opportunity for the beginners to prove themselves as well as an avenue for self-actualisation. However, there was a possibility that even where the new teachers did not voice concern about overloads, this might have taken a toll on their professional learning as the workloads would not allow them time to effectively plan for their work. In a few instances though, involvement in co-curricular activities seems to have been problematic as some beginners indicated that they were delegated co-curricular activities that were unfamiliar and that there was uneven distribution of co-curricular responsibilities in their schools as the experienced teachers

assumed lesser responsibilities. In a way then, such beginners were taken advantage of by veteran teachers.

In summary, it would appear that the experiences of the NQTs with some of the low intensity induction activities largely resonates with views in literature on teacher development about induction being considered as a rite of passage (Flores, 2001). According to Renard (2003:63), this process of initiation is captured in the horror stories of the first year of teaching which veterans often relate and which include "...teaching from a cart with no classroom of their own; being given unwanted duties; and being expected to cheerfully put up with a situation because they are the lowest on the totem pole." On the whole, the benefits accruing to NQTs from their experiences of low intensity induction activities seem to have been limited. This was because schools did not take a systematic approach in the providing induction supports and did not seem to be sensitive to the needs of the new teachers.

Literature on teacher development makes reference to best induction practices being comprised of several high intensity activities which would be the core of induction programmes and translate into comprehensive induction experiences for the novices (Welchsler, et al., 2010; Smith & Ingersoll, 2005). Results of this study revealed that, the high intensity supports that were experienced by NQTs to some extent were formal observations of their teaching and staff development workshops. With regards to being observed teaching, more than half of the participants indicated having experienced this induction support. It emerged though that this support was implemented sparingly and that the lesson observations were not conducted on a regular basis for the majority of the new teachers. This lack of consistency would have hampered sustainable support hence constricting the function of this activity in enhancing the teaching skills of beginners.

Related to lesson observations as an induction support was the issue of feedback received by the NQTs as a follow up. Data revealed that the NQTs had diverse views about the benefits of feedback from lesson observations. Some beginners acknowledged the importance of the feedback in highlighting the areas in which they needed support. Consistent with this, literature underscores the strong impact of adequate feedback on professional development and its role in addressing the strengths and weaknesses of the new teacher (Kessels, 2010), and reassuring NQTs (Soares et al., 2008). But one dissenting view was that the feedback was overly critical and that it might have been necessary to also identify more positive

aspects of the new teachers' lessons in order to encourage them as well as not to diminish the role of the feedback. What this seemed to highlight was the need for the mentor to be more supportive, the significance of appropriate evaluation of the novices' professional practice and the need for evaluations to be constructive rather than critical (Totterdell et al., 2008). In other instances, some NQTs questioned the validity and practicality of suggestions made by mentors in their feedback. But Tickle (2000) and Kelchtermans and Ballet (1999) suggest that one of the things that beginning teachers learn to do when they take charge of a class is to balance contradictory views regarding their practice with the culture of their specific school, their personal expectations and the general professional norms. While the issues raised by the beginners might be a reflection of a development of their reflective skills about their practice, they might also serve to highlight the complexities of professional socialisation. The issues served to draw attention to the other functions of mentors which are that they are also required to be "assessors and gatekeepers to the teaching profession" (Jones & Straker, 2006:166). At the same time, the issues raised highlighted the dilemmas faced by the mentors in balancing their multiple roles and responsibilities in inducting NQTs.

Data revealed that some NQTs were not observed teaching during their first year of teaching. These new teachers were cognisant of the value of lesson observations as a tool for formative evaluation and their validation as professionals. Indications are that, because they were not observed teaching, the beginners might have felt that they were groping in the dark in as far as their work in the classroom was concerned. This was yet another missed major support which was likely to militate against the professional learning of the beginners.

Within this study, a few NQTs experienced some informal forms of observation of their lessons by School Heads and TICs. The NQTs appeared to perceive such observations negatively as the unconventional manner in which they were conducted (which could be likened to snooping) created suspicion about the motives behind the exercise. The manner in which some of the observations were conducted might have been indicative of school cultures which were characterised by lack of openness. This approach to informal observations raises questions about their value considering that the observer would not be in full picture of the proceedings in a classroom and might probably miss out on the fine points of the lesson. Consequently, the observer might not be able to critique a lesson monitored in this manner meaningfully. It also raises questions about the long-term implications especially for building of relationships based on trust in schools.

A strategy for monitoring teachers' work which was widely utilised by School Heads regardless of whether they were mentoring the new teachers or not was the weekly inspection of teaching documents such as scheme books and pupils exercise books. These documents would be part of the shared repertoire, i.e. the tools and artefacts that are indicative of the existence of CoPs in schools (Wenger, 1998), that are referred to in the theoretical framework. The involvement of School Heads in their capacity as leaders was consistent with their roles in induction, one of which is to support, develop and evaluate new teachers in a variety of ways (Carver, 2003). Since the records were checked on a regular basis, they could have been employed as a valuable tool for supporting the work of NQTs in particular. However, it emerged that the NQTs did not place much weight on document inspection and that they questioned the purpose of the exercise as it was not always accompanied by feedback. The beginners were of the view that because the records seemed not to be scrutinised to determine whether learning was taking place and to inform instruction, their inspection was, therefore, a formality and ritualistic. Flores (2001) argues that the school culture or workplace conditions play a significant role in shaping new teachers' practices and attitudes to teaching. By implication, perceptions of keeping of teaching records as a formality could work against fostering of reflective practices and the ability to plan for effective teaching and learning amongst the NQTs. It could engender undesirable work habits which schools as communities of practice might find difficult to reverse as the teachers gained experience. This is consistent with Wenger's (1998:83) views about a shortcoming of his theory that CoPs "are born from learning but can also learn not to learn." It is evident that monitoring and supporting new teachers through teaching records was not effectively employed here. But monitoring of records is one support which, though not given prominence in literature on teacher induction and not comparable to traditional supports like mentoring and lesson observations, its potency in supporting NQTs could be further explored as it appears that schools in the country are amenable to it.

Research suggests that NQTs during induction should be afforded opportunities to observe experienced teachers teaching, which would serve such purposes as to provide a model of good practice; to upgrade the novice's knowledge of how to teach similar materials and broaden their teaching practices and styles; to help the novice focus on classroom management and related issues without being distracted by the subject of the lesson; and, to provide peer support (Britton et al., 2000). But the results of this study revealed that, except for one beginner who informally conducted the observations by eavesdropping on a fellow

teacher's lessons, the rest of the NQTs did not experience this induction support. That this beginner opted to eavesdrop on a colleague's lessons might have been a cry for support by an individual who was aware of their own shortcomings and that there were various sources of learning in the school. Kessels (2010) argues that observing other teachers may result in new insights as good practices might be modelled by experienced teachers. Consistent with this view, the NQTs generally acknowledged the value of observing veterans teaching in the process of learning to teach and the negative implications of not having experienced this support for their professional growth. The potential benefits of observing veterans teaching identified by the beginners might have been a reflection of their own learning needs. The fact that the NQTs were not afforded opportunities to observe experienced teachers' lessons affirms the question about the efficacy of collaborations between teachers which was raised earlier and suggests that there was an element of the new teachers working in isolation.

The NQTs in this study experienced some school-based workshops as well as externally organised ones at district level to a limited extent. They acknowledged the importance of school-based workshops especially in addressing some of their teaching concerns as well as procedural issues they were not familiar with, for example, issues of setting and marking of tests as well as issues of Public Service regulations respectively. This is consistent with literature which highlights that an induction support that would be valuable in addressing the common needs of NQTs would be mini courses and workshops (Carroll & Simco, 2001; Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000). However, it emerged that workshops were not conducted on a regular basis and that schools in the main did not take time to conduct needs analysis of the NQTs' requirements in particular before conducting the workshops. Hence the workshops might not have ensured sustained learning. As will be alluded to later, the beginners expressed several concerns that could have been addressed through such workshops, thus indicating some unattended needs. The externally-organised workshops attended by a few new teachers focused on co-curricular activities. Again, the beginners found such workshops vital in that they addressed the knowledge and skills gaps that they might have had in some activities. Such workshops might have served to emphasise to the new teachers the importance of a teacher's work even outside the classroom. On the whole, workshops appear to have been employed sparingly as an induction activity.

International literature widely documents mentoring of a beginner by an experienced teacher as the most essential component of induction programmes (Davies & Slattery, 2010; Stanulis

& Ames, 2009; Greiman et al., 2007; Jones & Straker, 2006) whose goal is to ensure that during the early years in the profession, the beginner learns from guided practice rather than trial-and-error (Feiman-Nemser, 2003). Contrary to these views, NQTs in this study were not assigned mentors as such but were assisted by senior administrators, for example, HODs/TICs and School Heads. But the implications of this arrangement need to be considered. For example, would the senior administrators be able to separate their administrative functions from the mentoring ones? Would they be able to play the role of a 'critical friend' (Howe, 2006) considering that a few beginners in the study expressed some reservations about seeking assistance from authority figures and the School Head in particular? That the heads of sections also acted as mentors seemed to have been based more on convenience rather than on specific criteria. Fulton et al (2005) view arrangements where mentor selection is based on convenience rather than instructional or coaching abilities as well as use of untrained mentors as poor execution of the mentoring process. The senior administrators, by virtue of their positions, would supervise all teachers in their sections. But, Lindgren (2005) points to the need to appreciate that the mentoring role is different from the traditional role of a teacher as overseeing the learning of colleagues. The fact that the heads of sections would supervise all the teachers under them suggests that there might have been no differentiation in the guidance provided to NQTs and that given to their experienced colleagues and that the beginners were treated like expert teachers. This could have had implications for the intensity and efficacy of the support proffered to the beginners. Again it raises questions about whether the administrators would be able to differentiate between the assessment that they subjected the beginners to from that which they subjected the experienced teachers. According to Fletcher et al (2008), the evaluation system for novices should be differentiated from that of veteran teachers so as to allow the beginners some room to learn without necessarily being preoccupied with the assessment aspect. Also, the fact that the mentors were not specifically trained for the task raises questions about the quality of mentoring rendered to the NQTs. What all this points to is the influence of the context (which might not have accentuated the value of mentoring of NQTs) on perceptions about mentoring of NQTs, an issue that is noted by Orland-Barack and Hasin, (2010). It also highlights the fact that in this study, mentoring might not have been applied in its truest sense and what the beginners were exposed to might be termed mentoring by default.

What emerges from the above discussion is that the high intensity induction supports experienced by the beginners were not only limited in nature but also in intensity as the

supports were partially implemented. The NQTs found themselves in schools which barely proffered purposeful support and were characterised by inadequate formal structures devoid of deeply held values and mechanical appointment of mentors (Kardos et al., 2001). Hence, the induction provided to most of the NQTs in this study could be deemed to have been grossly inadequate. This could have a bearing on the transition of the beginners into the profession and their development as professionals. In support of this, Jones and Stammers in Williams and Prestage (2002) observe that working with inadequate support networks can be discouraging and can result in the beginning teachers failing to appreciate that the challenges that they encounter in the classroom are not unique to them but common to most beginning teachers.

### **6.3 Factors that influence the nature of induction**

The second objective of the study was to determine the factors that influence the kind of induction that NQTs get. According to Carroll & Simco (2001:33), the quality of the induction process is ultimately determined by such factors as: the school culture; the motivation, knowledge and skills of the mentor; the motivation, and level of involvement of the NQT; the permitting circumstances allowed by the school leadership and organisation; and the resources in terms of staff, time and funding. Findings here suggest three major influences on induction, namely, the school culture, knowledge and skills of the mentor and the motivation and level of involvement of the NQT and their role is examined below.

#### ***6.3.1 The school culture***

Data shows that school cultures influenced the manner in which the NQTs experienced induction into the profession in one way or another. This demanded that the beginners be able to adapt to specific school cultures. The cultures of schools were expressed through beliefs, attitudes and behaviours that distinguish a school and manifest through the way in which people treat and feel about each other, the extent to which people feel included and appreciated and rituals and traditions reflecting collaboration and collegiality (Kardos, et al., 2001; [www.schoolculture.net](http://www.schoolculture.net)). It emerged that schools encouraged collaborations between NQTs and their experienced colleagues. Such an arrangement is supported by Feiman-Nemser, (2003) who argues that the successful induction of beginning teachers into the professional cultures is dependent on the collegial collaboration of supportive school communities. However, the collaborations appear to have been implemented at a superficial



level and there didn't seem to be much room for constructive professional dialogue as NQTs appear to have been considered as not possessing any notable knowledge and views. In addition, schools did not seem to appreciate the professional confidence displayed by the NQTs and regarded this as a display of arrogance. Yet in some instances, the beginners appeared to have been more knowledgeable about trends in education. For example, while schools seemed to over-emphasize proficiency of pupils in the use of the English language, the Language Policy (2006) and the new Constitution of the Republic of Zimbabwe (2013) both make provision for primary school children to be taught in their L<sub>1</sub> or their mother tongue. The uncompromising stance adopted by some mentors in response to the observations made by NQTs about the validity and practicality of suggestions made during feedback on lesson observations might highlight the existence in schools of what Kardos et al (2001) refer to as established patterns of professional practice which are characteristic of veteran-oriented culture. Such a stance, according to research, could foster in new teachers an inability to challenge existing practices, encourage submissiveness and impede new approaches to teaching and learning. Consistent with this, Eraut (2003) notes that CoPs could foster shared ways of thinking rather sustaining growth, change and diversity, thus reinforcing existing biases and refining poor practices. However, this would be a negation of the purpose of the induction phase which, according to Killeavy (2006), is meant to provide a support space for new teachers to properly take the time to analyse and consider their practices and engage in critical dialogue with their colleagues.

Indications are that NQTs felt that generally, their experienced colleagues seemed to be dismissive of their professional knowledge and skills and did not to take them seriously as professionals. This is consistent with McCormack and Thomas' (2003) view that the ideas of NQTs may be devalued by School Heads and veteran teachers and that this may demotivate them. The beginning teachers used such terms as 'temporary or unqualified teachers', 'blank slates', 'student teachers' or 'empty vessels' to describe the perceived perceptions of experienced colleagues about them and it was apparent that they found such labels profoundly discomfoting. The perceived lack of professional confidence in beginners by experienced teachers was further expressed through such practices as withdrawal of bright pupils or children of teachers (i.e. colleagues' children) from classes assigned to NQTs. While the new teachers may have not reached the same level of competence as their experienced colleagues, they felt that they deserved to be acknowledged as professionals. In support of these views, Tickle (2000) cautions that focusing on the deficiencies of novices as

compared to their experienced colleagues results in missed opportunities to exploit the latter's enthusiasm and willingness to be innovative in their teaching. Likewise, the lack of professional recognition and appreciation of NQTs and their moderated status as teachers in schools was a source of frustration for them. It impacted on their self-esteem and self-efficacy and ultimately, their socialisation into the profession and their performance in the classroom.

It emerged that the NQTs were in the main concerned about the patterns and quality of their interactions with their experienced colleagues which appeared to be dictated by the interests and habits of experienced teachers (Fulton et al., 2005). These interactions were crucial as according to Kardos et al (2001:251), the success or failure of the novice in the new role depends, not only on possession of knowledge and skills but also on the quality of their interactions with colleagues. The findings here revealed three areas through which the patterns of these interactions manifested and which were the basis of the concerns registered by the beginners. A case in point was about a new teacher being overloaded with co-curricular, committee and other responsibilities while the veterans did not take up their fair share of these responsibilities. Renard (2003) likens this experience to learning to teach on the run that does not give the new teachers adequate time to become effective classroom practitioners. The beginner found it difficult to complain about the uneven distribution of responsibilities for fear of portraying a negative image of self, fomenting conflict and not being accepted by experienced colleagues. Renard (2003) echoes the beginner's stance and states that if the new teachers fail in such contexts, they are deemed to be inadequate and if they complain, they are said to be 'unprofessional'. The decision taken by the novice not to complain about being overloaded with responsibilities might also have been influenced by the need to be accepted by the veterans. The need to be accepted appears to have been paramount for the beginners and in some instances, prevented them from asking for assistance from experienced colleagues in case this was interpreted as a sign of being underqualified, which would impact negatively on their work. It would appear that being accepted by colleagues was part of the process of acquiring a professional identity which is viewed as entailing the novice seeking and negotiating membership to a community of educators and which might require the new teachers to prove their worth first to earn this affiliation (Kelchtermans & Ballet 1999; Bullough, 1997).

Other negative experiences related to co-curricular responsibilities pertained to what some new teachers perceived as a lack of recognition of their contributions and abilities and exclusion from assuming positions of responsibility in sporting activities, even where for example, they had demonstrated an ability to coach a specific sport. It would seem that the main motivation for marginalisation of new teachers in sporting activities was the desire by experienced teachers to protect their positions as they might have felt threatened by the new skills brought in by NQTs. While the veterans appeared to be hospitable and friendly and there were signs of collaborations with beginners here and there, when it came to issues that threatened their interests, they would retreat to their authentic cultures. Consequently, the beginners felt alienated and that they were not fully accepted in the school communities and this might have negatively impacted on their integration into their school communities. This resonates with an observation by Nault (2007) that there might be tensions between the new teacher's expectations and those of other players within the school, which in turn may undermine the harmony that is a precondition for the development and consolidation of a teacher's identity.

The pattern of interactions also manifested in issues relating to workshop attendance. Results of the study revealed that the NQTs recognised the significance of workshops as a professional development activity. But the beginners felt that they had unfair access to attendance of external workshops (at provincial and national levels) which they perceived to be a preserve for veteran teachers, while they were confined to attending locally organised workshops at cluster level that at times required them to walk to venues and in addition were usually not well organised. Schools, though, maintained that teachers who represented them at workshops would act as resource persons, thus sharing the acquired knowledge with their colleagues. What emerges from these exchanges is a polarisation of teachers and indications of the micro-political realities of schools (the strategies and tactics used by individuals and groups in an organisation to further their interests), (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 1999) an aspect which the new teachers would require to be empowered to adapt to. It was evident that there was need for the new teachers to develop some organisational literacy, i.e. a part of organisational socialisation that involves the acquisition of knowledge about the life and politics within the school and the ability to read and comprehend the situations that they meet (Blasé, 1998:549). The lack of organisational literacy might explain why the new teachers found it difficult to accept the set patterns of interactions with their colleagues which seemed to call for them to accept to be treated as underdogs. Again, this might account for why the

beginners initially found it difficult to establish relationships, to build trust with people in their new environments and to break into the professional circles (Schein, 2004). Yet, these relationships were essential as the beginners needed some support networks in order to cope with the unfamiliar environment.

In summary, the NQTs generally perceived the way they were treated in different areas of interactions in their schools as ‘discriminatory’. They tended to view themselves as being vulnerable, voiceless, and powerless and without rights, at times as scapegoats whenever there was disharmony in their schools and in a nutshell, underdogs in schools. What this serves to illustrate is the process of socialisation of the beginners into schools as organisations and the kinds of praxis shock they could be experience. Kelchtermans and Ballet (1999) affirm that the praxis shock of beginning teachers does not only relate to pedagogical or didactical issues at classroom level, but also to teacher socialisation in the school as an organisation. In addition, these experiences serve to highlight the impact of schools cultures on NQTs as well as the potential that cultures have to alienate the beginners from the environment and to hinder them from operating effectively (Frykolm, 1998). They illuminate the issues of power relations and some of the strategies employed by schools as CoPs to inhibit entry and participation of newcomers (Smith, 1999). Carlile in Handley et al (2006:644) in critiquing the CoP theory observe that novices might be denied full participation by powerful practitioners especially in situations where the novices threaten to ‘transform’ the knowledge and practices of the community that full participants have invested in. Clearly, the experiences of the NQTs highlighted the complexities and tensions between practice, participation and membership which maybe inherent in CoPs (Kimble, 2006) and how this could impact on the integration of beginners into the workplaces.

### ***6.3.2 Characteristics of mentors***

The results revealed that several issues impacted on the capacity of mentors to play a strategic role in helping the NQTs in this study to adapt to the profession move towards competence, proficiency and even expertise (Kitchen, 2006; Carrol & Simco, 2001). The supposed mentors of the NQTs were selected mainly on the basis of experience, which would have qualified them for the posts of responsibility as HODs/TICs in the school administrations. But literature identifies motivation, knowledge and skills of mentors as factors that would determine the kind of induction that a NQT receives. As mentioned earlier on, that these factors were not taken into consideration implies that from the onset, the

mentoring process was flawed. Furthermore, the criteria for the selection of the mentors did not make any provision for their training as it was assumed that their experience qualified them for the task. Lindgren (2005), however, suggests otherwise and underscores the need for mentors to be trained for the task and cautions that being an experienced teacher does not necessarily imply that one is skilled at assessing and supporting new teachers. Data suggests that because the mentors were not trained, they were generally not able to articulate their role in inducting the beginners and lacked knowledge about aims of mentorship and the needs of mentees as well as skills and strategies appropriate for working with adults (Williams & Prestage, 2002; Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000). Local research has shown that the experienced teachers who are tasked to mentor pre-service teachers in Zimbabwe's primary schools are generally not clear about their role (Kasowe, 2013; Ndamba & Chabaya, 2011) and it is assumed that the same situation obtains for the mentoring of NQTs. An additional limitation was that the specialist backgrounds of the TICs who were supposed to mentor the NQTs did not match that of some of the new teachers assigned to them as the said mentors were not Early Childhood Development (ECD) specialists. Research has shown that such appointment would restrict the subject knowledge and subject (or Grade) specific support that the mentor avails to the novice and that expert mentors within the same field as the beginning teachers would impact on their learning more than non-experts (Stanulis & Ames, 2009; Darling-Hammond, 2006). Consistent with this view, some TICs who had beginners who were ECD specialists under their charge professed that they felt incapacitated to provide grade specific support to the NQTs and that they were not confident of their role in the process as they lacked the requisite specialist knowledge. Such mentors might not have been certain whether what they were doing was correct and effective hence might not have been able to offer meaningful guidance to the NQTs. The situation was even more complicated in instances where some of the beginners who were generalist teachers were allocated ECD classes and assigned mentors who were also non-specialists in that area as well as this could have been a case of the blind leading the blind. By implication, the mentors did not possess relevant credentials which would enable them to communicate to beginners what teaching and learning to teach in their specific settings entailed (Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2009), create learning opportunities (Feiman-Nemser, 2003) and assist the beginners to defy problems of practice (Little, 1990), and in a nutshell, promote their professional growth.

Within this study suggest, it emerged that heads of sections that were charged with the responsibility to supervise NQTs in the course of their daily duties (i.e. mentors) were not

provided with any guidelines on how to undertake the task. This implies that the goals and content of mentoring were not determined beforehand (Lindgren, 2005) and this might have led to discrepancies in the quality of support afforded to the beginners, and in turn, the quality of induction experiences (Williams & Prestage, 2002). The mentors' role appears to have been further compromised by the fact that they had full teaching loads and were not provided with release time. But given the situation in schools in Zimbabwe where there is no facility for relief teachers, providing release time mentors during the school day would have been unfeasible. This might have denied them adequate time to pay attention to the needs of NQTs, to respond to their day-to-day crises and provided survival tips (Britton, et al., 2000). On the whole, the experiences of the beginning teachers of mentoring in this study might have been what Glassford and Salinitri (2006) describe as beginning teachers being socialised into a mediocrity that works in limited ways but retards continuous learning. What this suggests is a need, not only to provide guidelines, but also for an induction curriculum which would provide a framework of what is to be covered during induction in order to ensure systematic and sustained support of the beginners. It also calls for an approach to mentoring that would take into account the limitations of our context which might hinder the application of the concept of mentoring of beginners along the lines suggested in international literature.

### ***6.3.3 Motivation and level of involvement of the NQTs***

The process of becoming a teacher partly depends on the interaction between person and context (Carrol & Simco, 2001), implying that where the context is not ideal, the process of learning to become a teacher turns out to be problematic. An analysis of how the motivation and level of involvement influenced the induction experiences of NQTs revealed that initially, some of them expressed satisfaction with their new role, probably because they were excited about taking full charge of classes. In addition, many of them had chosen teaching as a career out of love for the profession. But indications are that they became demotivated as they were increasingly exposed to the challenges of the new environments. This is consistent with a phenomenon that Ryan (1986:11) terms 'the curve of disenchantment', a trend that could be attributed to the new teachers' losing their initial enthusiasm as the demands and challenges of the job become a reality and survival becomes the main goal (Feiman-Nemser, 2001b; Bullough, 1997). For most of the beginners though, there was never a honeymoon period right from the point of entry into the profession. The data suggest that there were several factors which made adaptation of the beginners to their new environments difficult, negatively impacting on their levels of motivation and consequently the process of learning to

become a teacher. Literature on teacher induction makes reference to NQTs experiencing a ‘reality shock’ on their initial entry into the profession which is attributed to the role demands of the job (Nahal, 2010; Howe, 2006; Veenman, 1984). In Zimbabwe, an additional cause of the ‘reality shock’ were the conditions in the schools that most beginners were deployed to after initial training which they found to be far from the ideal and not what they had anticipated. The conditions in most rural schools were confirmed by a study by Chidakwa, Jonga, Mandizha and Makoni (2008) which showed that such schools are poorly resourced in terms of infrastructure such as teachers’ accommodation, classrooms, toilets and communication and their location, which would make it difficult to access basic amenities. The results of this study revealed that the morale of beginners in these schools was dented as shown by use of such terms as ‘demotivated’, ‘discouraged’ and ‘demoralised’ used in the descriptions of their feelings about their new stations. Clearly, the conditions in the schools were not conducive to teacher learning and ultimately impacted on the NQTs’ social and professional levels of comfort and well-being. This suggests a need for teacher education institutions to consider exposing student teachers to more than one school environment during Teaching Practice (TP), one of which would not be what they consider to be a model school, so as to minimise the effects of a reality shock induced by being deployed to resource constrained rural schools.

The NQTs appear to have been further demoralised and frustrated by a number of other factors relating to practices in the local communities and the schools. On the one hand, they found it difficult to cope with the demands placed upon them by what they viewed as lack of cooperation and abdication of responsibility by the communities in such issues as curbing of unwarranted absenteeism among pupils and failure to provide basic learning materials. On the other hand, the new teachers could not understand the strategy of excluding pupils from classes adopted by schools to ensure payment of school fees they were owed, which they felt demonstrated a lack of sensitivity to the plight of the pupils. Such a stance in their view, compromised the ability of schools to fulfil their fundamental function, that of facilitating teaching and learning. The new teachers could have viewed tolerance of some of the issues that are mentioned above as normalisation of the abnormal. The unfamiliar and dichotomous situations in teaching created several dilemmas for the NQTs. The dilemmas cited were, how to proceed with their work while some of the pupils would not be able to participate in all classroom tasks because they didn’t have the required materials; how to make up for lost time with pupils who perennially missed school; what to do with pupils who only turned up for

end of term tests yet they would have missed school for the large part of the term but at same the time the school would rate the teacher's performance on the basis of the pass rate of their class; and, how to deal with one's conscience when a pupil is forced to drop out of school at a very tender age. These were some of the dichotomies and ordeals of their environments that the new teachers had to adapt to and which to some extent challenged their ideals as teachers as well as testing their resilience.

#### **6.4 The schools' conceptualisation of their role in teacher induction**

The third objective of the study was to explore Zimbabwe's primary schools' understanding of their role in inducting the beginner teachers into the teaching profession. Several key findings were noted in relation to schools' conceptualisation of their role in induction of beginners. First, it would seem that schools were reluctant to own up to their responsibility as the key players in nurturing the professional growth of NQTs and believed that they had a subsidiary role to play and the Initial Teacher Education (ITE) institutions or the district office were leading players in that process. Admittedly, these stakeholders would be partners in the induction process, but the district office, for example, could only address limited general professional issues while the context specific issues which pertained to the day-to-day functioning of the new teachers could only be addressed within schools. Hence, schools needed to appreciate the centrality of their role in teacher induction and professional development since the beginners would be directly under their charge.

Second, it also emerged that some schools had a limited conception of the process of induction and what they called induction was really orientation, a process which Feiman-Nemser et al (1999) say is narrow and diminishes the role of the induction in fostering quality teaching and learning. That what schools provided was more consistent with orientation than full-fledged induction was demonstrated by the length of the period, which some schools claimed to have devoted to it, which ranged from a few hours to just days. By implication, the duration of the induction indicated by schools could have compromised the content, intensity and quality of the induction proffered (Glazerman et. al., 2010). In addition, an evaluation by NQTs of what schools construed to be induction demonstrated that the exercise was grossly inadequate and flawed. This is reflected by the beginners' descriptions of the induction process as *having loopholes, needing panel beating and very poor*. From these evaluations, it



would appear that the NQTs were clear about the professional issues that they expected schools to guide them in.

Third, it was evident that schools generally thought that because the NQTs were certified teachers, they were finished products and were equipped to take up all classroom tasks. They failed to recognise that ITE focuses on the core of teaching aimed at providing minimum requirements of a programme and that new teachers emerge from ITE programmes having only acquired a basic competence profile (Frykolm, 1998). The lack of cognisance of this fact was evidenced by the paucity of guidance and support proffered to the NQTs as well as the constant reference made by school administrators and mentors to what they viewed as the shortcomings of ITE. Such perceptions about the scope of ITE were contrary to what is highlighted by research that it is erroneous to consider NQTs as finished products that only need to refine existing skills and to treat their learning needs as inadequacy of training because there are some aspects that cannot be learned outside the teaching settings and which can only be learned on the job while teaching (Feiman-Nemser, 2001a; Kessels 2010).

It was apparent that schools were aware that the NQTs they were working with were experiencing a theory-practice gap and were not in touch with some realities of the classroom situation, a dilemma which is highlighted in literature on teacher induction (Bainbridge, 2011; Nahal, 2010). But despite this awareness, it would appear that schools did not put interventions in place to moderate the effects of the theory-practice gap and this again might have been a demonstration of a lack of appreciation of their role on the teacher development continuum. This reluctance to take up their role might explain why the many teaching concerns indicated by the latter went unattended and schools only paid lip service to provision of staff development workshops for the beginners. Many of the concerns raised by the NQTs were practical teaching issues that could have been addressed within the contexts of the schools by helping the beginners to be able to link the 'text' of pre-service preparation to the 'contexts' of classrooms (Feiman-Nemser et al., 1999). Consistent with this, Gees cited by Rosaen and Schram (1998) reiterate that the process of becoming a teacher involves an interaction of 'learning' and 'acquisition' of the teaching culture with the 'learning' being the theoretical aspect that is usually covered in training colleges while the 'acquisition', which tends to be practical, would be covered in schools through induction and other related professional activities. The results of the study suggest that the 'acquisition' aspect, the sustaining of the professional learning of beginning teachers, was the key that schools were

missing and failing to facilitate. This represented another missed opportunity by schools to provide to beginners with a strong professional base at a time of greatest receptiveness and willingness to learn and develop (Flores, 2007).

The data showed that at times schools stipulated expectations to be complied with by teachers but would fail to provide guidelines on how the expectations were to be realised. One such instance was the issue of the scheme-cum-plan where schools insisted that the failure by NQTs to compile the document as per their specifications reflected a mismatch between what the new teachers were taught during ITE and expectations in schools. While this might have illustrated lack of communication between the two stakeholders in setting out standard practice (Allen, 2011), it also demonstrated that the schools' expectations about the document were ill-defined and at times inconsistent. The new teachers, up to the end of their first year in the field, indicated that they were incapacitated in as far as compiling a scheme-cum-plan was concerned. In a way, this underscored a failure by schools to provide the necessary professional leadership to the beginners. That lack of professional leadership and support led to beginners either turning to informal networks (which schools seemed to somehow encourage, thus encouraging formation of communities of practice) but whose solutions might not have been exactly what the schools demanded or an over-dependence on knowledge from initial training which was not context specific. The lack of professional leadership also resulted in what one beginner described as *doing whatever you think is appropriate*, implying the adoption of trial and error approaches which were likely to become entrenched in the teachers' repertoire of strategies unless interventions were made early in the profession (Schollaert, 2011). The above approach is at times referred to as 'swim' or 'sink', a phenomenon whereby new teachers who are not adequately supported adapt to realities of the situation by adopting whatever strategies enable them to survive the immediate demands of the classroom even if these do not promote good teaching practice (Brunton, 2002). The other danger of such a situation which emanates from lack of appropriate support that focuses on capacity building and coherence-building, according to Schollaert (2011), is that it might result in novices relapsing into uninspired and stereotyped teaching routines. What all this highlights is that it is essential for schools to come up with induction arrangements that take into account the needs of the NQTs even in the absence of an official policy on induction in the country. It also points at a lack of continuity between ITE and other stages on the teacher development continuum. Clearly, there is a need to strengthen the partnership between schools and ITE institutions in the professional

development of teachers so as to bridge the theory-practice gap and foster the efficacy of beginning teachers as well as to ensure that there is no break on the teacher development continuum.

Lastly, the data indicate that a common phenomenon in rural schools in Mwenzi District which are resource constrained was that of high turnover among NQTs. Related to this issue, international literature alludes to the phenomenon of high attrition rates among new teachers in such countries as the United States of America and the United Kingdom due to a lack of support and a sense of well-being (Ferguson-Patrick, 2011; Nahal, 2010; Fulton et al., 2005; Smith & Ingersoll, 2005; Darling-Hammond, 2003; Levine, 2001). The explanation for the turnover here lay in the fact that schools with challenging conditions are often unable to provide guidance to beginning teachers (Kardos et al., 2001). Hence, the schools in Mwenzi were unable to afford support which could encourage NQTs to opt to remain in the district. But in addition to the constraints noted above, some schools did not give induction support because they believed that the high turnover among NQTs did not justify provision of such support. This justification and lack of motivation might be a reflection of paucity of knowledge about the goals of induction and the role of schools in facilitating the development of NQTs into effective professionals who can help students to improve their capacity to learn (Fulton et al., 2005). Research has established that students who are assigned an ineffective teacher at any point during their school career might lag as much as one year behind peers taught by a more effective teacher (Fulton et al., 2005; Wong, 2004). One cannot help to wonder if the perennial poor performance of pupils in rural schools in public examinations could be partly attributed to shortcomings of CPD initiatives in the country.

It is apparent from the above discussion that schools experienced various limitations that might have made it difficult for them to provide for induction of NQTs. The absence of an induction policy in the country may account for the lack of appreciation of the significance of induction as a component of the professional development of teachers as well as the requisite knowledge on how to provide for the process by schools. Most schools where the new teachers were deployed could easily fall into a category that Bubb et al (2005:11) term 'rogue schools', that is, schools that not only renege on their responsibility to support new teachers but also exploit them in unethical ways. Clearly, there is a need to empower schools to take their place on the teacher professional continuum in order to ensure continuity of the teacher development process and institutionalisation of the concept of CPD in the country.

## **6.5 Lessons derived by NQTs from induction experiences**

The fourth objective of the study was to explore the lessons that NQTs teachers derived from their induction experiences, in other words, what difference the induction experiences made, the impact of the experiences or what meaning the beginners made of their experiences. Feiman-Nemser (2003) summarises three things that new teachers need to learn on initial entry into the profession, and these are: learning to teach, the process of enculturation and curriculum implementation. The findings of this study suggest that there were mixed feelings among beginners about the lessons derived from induction experiences but what some of them cited as lessons included elements of the three things referred to above.

Some NQTs indicated an awareness of the importance of being able as teachers to facilitate understanding of concepts and pupils' learning. They specifically cited the role of teaching and learning materials as well as employment of particular teaching methods in enabling pupil learning. Also cited as an improvement in classroom, was the ability to reflect on lessons taught and use of this as a basis for improvement in subsequent lessons, as well as an appreciation of the learning needs of pupils (taking pupils through the paces). The areas cited might have been those in which the NQTs felt confident and competent in by the end of their first year of teaching, thus indicating they had experienced some professional growth. The impact of induction experiences on classroom practices here though appears to be limited when compared to the possible outcomes identified by Harland & Kinder (1997) (Chapter 2). The impact also appears to have been limited especially in the light of the number of NQTs teachers who reported to have derived some positive lessons from their induction experiences. Clearly, the impact of the experiences seem to have been restricted by the absence of specific programmes for teacher induction in schools which, as indicated earlier on, led to induction being incidental, thus implying the same for teacher learning.

Another lesson from the induction experiences of the new teachers indicated by data was the need to appreciate the importance of knowledge of the backgrounds of the pupils and the sensitivity that is demanded of the teacher during interactions especially with vulnerable pupils. This was because some of the habits that teachers could view as misconduct could be a result of pupils' home circumstances that they had no control over. For example, a pupil could perennially report for school late because they stayed with a grandmother and had to attend to house chores before attending school. In addition, the NQTs clearly learned to be

resourceful and to take the initiative in finding solutions to problems encountered in the classroom and to adjust to the infinite roles of a teacher. This underscored a concern by the new teachers about the welfare of the pupils. It also highlighted a realisation among them that all stipulated classroom activities would have to be undertaken despite the constraints experienced as ultimately, the teacher would be held accountable for the performance of the pupils which would be reflected by their grades in end of term tests. The NQTs recognised the need to engage and counsel parents so that they could play an active role in the education of their children. They also acknowledged the need to be aware of the dispositions and expectations of the communities they worked in as a critical element of their work as this impacted on their practices and experiences. What all this reflects is the processes of enculturation into and adaptation by the beginners to some of the many sides of teaching.

For some new teachers, the lessons of the first year of teaching pertained to acquisition of the knowledge about policies and procedures relating to their conditions of service. It emerged that the NQTs basically lacked knowledge on the professional code of ethics for teachers. In a few cases, the beginners were only exposed to the regulations that governed their conditions of service after experiencing what they considered to be a raw deal in their schools or when they faced possible repercussions of breaching the code of ethics. The beginners also alluded to lessons about asserting one's authority as a teacher and this is discussed in detail later. Indications are that they also appear to have learned about the importance and complexities of interpersonal relationships with key players in schools which if not properly handled could be a source of stress and burnout (Liston et. al., 2006; White & Moss, 2003). They appreciated the importance of establishing good relations with colleagues as they recognised their role in supporting their transition into the profession. At the same time, they recognised the need to be able to stand up against adversities encountered in schools, the need to be resilient in the face of challenging environments, and this would have been indicative of development of personal competencies.

The lessons cited by the beginning teachers related to both classroom teaching and organisational socialisation and reflected the core concepts (community, practice, meaning and identity) which Wenger (1998) in his CoP theory (see chapter 3) says are central to learning. The question that needs further interrogation though is whether what the NQTs professed to have learned resulted in substantial professional growth and change in practice. The teaching issues identified in the next section as concerns of NQTs suggest otherwise. The

limited professional lessons cited are consistent with findings of a study by Smith & Ingersoll (2005), which suggested that basic induction has limited impact on teacher learning and efficacy. In this study, the induction tended to be less than basic and an insignificant impact of the induction experiences on the professional learning of the NQTs might not be inconceivable.

## **6.6 Areas that seem to require greater attention during induction**

The fifth objective of the study was to establish the areas that seem to require greater attention during induction. Nault (2007) states that induction ends when the new teacher has adapted to the environment and routine tasks, attained a certain level of confidence and competency to function efficiently in the school, and when the teacher has reached a level where (s)he is more preoccupied with enhancing practice and pedagogic flexibility. The results of this study showed that by the end of the first year in the field, most of the NQTs still needed to be supported through induction as they cited different job-related concerns, which highlighted that they had not yet attained the levels of operational proficiency described above. This is consistent with views in literature which indicate that new teachers need three to four years to achieve competence and several more years to achieve proficiency (Bartholomew, 2007; Feiman-Nemser, 2003; Ferguson-Patrick, 2011) and that the essential task for beginning teachers in their first three years of teaching is to build on ITE experiences (Liston, et al, 2006).

The concerns articulated by the NQTs were varied and the most significant ones appeared to be selection of appropriate content and teaching methods, the scheme-cum-plan, pupils' performance, discipline issues, setting and marking of tests and pupils with special needs. This echoes findings of a study by Veenman (1984) and other more contemporary studies which confirmed more or less similar concerns among NQTs though perhaps classified differently (Samkange, 2012; Romano, 2008; Gilbert, 2005; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Feiman-Nemser, 2003). In relation to the selection of appropriate content and teaching methods, three key findings were noted, namely, challenges with application of teaching methods and lesson delivery in general, lack of mastery of subject knowledge and skills to set assessment exercises for content subjects and teaching of one specific aspect-writing of English compositions. The issues identified here suggest that the NQTs had problems especially with curriculum delivery. The NQTs recognised that the identified aspects were

central to the demonstration of teacher knowledge and skills and that challenges with handling these would compromise their effectiveness. On the scheme-cum-plan, the NQTs perceived the problem with this document as a reflection of a lack of congruency between ITE programmes and expectations and practices in schools. They were also critical of the inability of schools to provide explicit guidance on how to compile the document which they placed a lot of weight on. The challenges expressed by NQTs were indicative of an absence of basic and yet essential teaching skills and underlined the need for professional support in order to improve their efficacy in the classroom. However, what also stands out here is the lack of opportunities for joint planning, an activity that literature considers as an important component of induction support (Moore & Swan, 2008; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Carroll & Simco, 2001).

The data indicated that the NQTs were generally disappointed by the poor performance of some pupils in their classes. What comes through is that the beginners lacked skills to deal with the pupils' poor performance in the classroom and that they were frustrated by their inability to impact on pupils' learning which gave rise to feelings of inadequacy. This is consistent with Gold's (1996) observation that the challenges that beginning teachers often encounter may result in feelings of low self-esteem, stress and at times even burnout. Along these same lines, one beginner indicated that the poor performance of pupils led to the loss of confidence in one's ability as a teacher, meaning that this was taken to be a reflection of the teacher's pedagogical competencies. It would appear, therefore, that the beginners needed assistance in order to be able to deal with the poor performance of pupils and that this frustration of teaching might again have made integration into the profession difficult. Other problematic aspects identified by some NQTs were the setting and marking of tests and catering for pupils with special needs in mainstream classrooms. The new teachers acknowledged that the skills of setting and marking of tests were critical aspects of their work but claimed that they had not been exposed to these during TP, implying that they had not been afforded ample opportunity to practise teaching during the practicum. A few beginners also acknowledged an inability to assist pupils whom they perceived to have special needs while at the same time attending to other pupils in the mainstream classroom. These results serve to reaffirm a lack of some basic teaching skills, the theory-practice gap which meant that the beginners were not equipped for varied possible situations in the classroom and the need for schools to devise interventions to address the shortcomings of the beginning teachers.

Furthermore, the NQTs appear to have struggled with classroom management and discipline. They attributed the problem to lack of preparation to take control of a class during initial teacher training as well as not commanding respect of the pupils. The new teachers recognised the importance of asserting their authority in the classroom as well as devising strategies for dealing with the class management problems, not only as a way of ensuring an environment that would facilitate learning but also to ensure that they would enjoy their work. It emerged that strategies employed by the beginners basically entailed the teachers establishing rapport and relationships with pupils and in one instance, enlisting the assistance of the School Head. In another instance, though, a new teacher employed an unconventional method of instilling discipline (i.e. corporal punishment) and this might have been due to lack of knowledge about the code of ethics of the profession. All these issues reflect a struggle for survival in the classroom by the beginners.

Stansbury and Zimmerman (2000) note that at times some NQTs are reluctant to make their support providers aware of their problems and request for help either because they are embarrassed and concerned about their professional image or they do not want to burden them as well as for fear of being construed as failure (Fletcher et al., 2008). Consistent with these views, the data here suggested that while the beginners indicated many pedagogical concerns, they did not always seek assistance because they were afraid that experienced colleagues might misconstrue this as an indication of ignorance and being under-qualified. But this preoccupation with portrayal of a positive image might have been at the expense of their professional learning as the beginners' needs could remain unknown and unattended.

The concerns raised by the beginners in this study highlight the fact that the beginners might not have appreciated how unpredictable and complex teaching could be until confronted by the reality of the tasks in the classroom (Nahal, 2010). They also might have not anticipated the scope and demands of their role, for example, decision making, negotiation for meaning and reflection in action (Crasborn, Hennissen, Brouwer & Kothagen, 2008). The beginners' concerns suggested an element of disillusionment with the profession, a struggle for survival and that they were not confident with their abilities and needed systematic support to ensure that they became effective classroom practitioners. The concerns raised bring to question the issue of adequacy of ITE programmes in the country in general because some of the issues should be basics covered during initial training. The concerns might also have been indicative of the beginners' areas of need which schools might use as a basis for the introduction of



induction programmes. Furthermore, the idea of a Career Entry Profile (CEP) suggested by Carroll and Simco (2001) might be significant in identifying the beginners' areas of need and providing a starting point for assisting the beginners instead of schools making assumptions about the new teachers' certification being proof of their proficiency in teaching.

## **6.7 Persistent issues and challenges in teacher induction**

The sixth objective of the study was to identify the persistent issues and challenges in teacher induction in Zimbabwe. The main issues emerging from the findings were lack of an induction policy, mentoring of beginners, resource constraints, and efficacy of the partnership between teachers' colleges and nature of local communities. Literature shows that many countries recognise the significance of induction in improving teacher quality and retention and have made induction mandatory for the acquisition of Qualified Teacher Status (Totterdell et al., 2008; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; McCormack & Thomas 2003; Darling-Hammond, 1999). Contrary to this, in Zimbabwe, as noted earlier, there is no formal induction policy and schools are left to their own designs in deciding what supports to avail to the NQTs. Data revealed that this absence of a policy might have made it possible for schools to default on their responsibility of inducting new teachers despite the fact that the school as an organisation and CoP should serve as a forum for supporting the learning and the development of beginning teachers as professionals (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Imants, 2003). Unfortunately, the lack of induction support could render the outcomes of pre-service preparation ineffective and contribute to the 'washout' of training as NQTs' learning would not be reinforced in their first appointment (Veenman, 1984). It was evident that there is need to empower schools with knowledge to provide induction as well as a need for an induction curriculum for NQTs which would ensure a systematic approach to the process.

According to Howe (2006), the proper implementation of mentoring is crucial as the experiences of novice teachers are determined by the mentors' effectiveness. But the data here raise issues about the efficacy of the current mentoring arrangements for the NQTs in primary schools in the country. The shortcomings of mentoring noted earlier on need to be addressed and proper and structured mentor support programmes need to be put in place if mentors are to play a strategic role in the professional development of the new teachers and pre-service teachers. Indications were that the issues that need to be addressed in this respect ranged from mentor selection to empowering them for the task through training. The

necessity to address the training and support needs of mentors in order to foster the development of good practice and to avoid making assumptions about mentor competences is a recurring recommendation in several studies (Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2009; Stanulis & Ames, 2009; William & Prestage 2002) and Zimbabwe could take a leaf from these recommendations.

The wide range of instructional concerns raised by NQTs evokes questions about the adequacy of initial teacher education programmes in the country and the preparedness of NQTs to take up teaching responsibilities. The results of this study suggest that there is a need to re-examine the efficacy of the partnership between teachers' colleges and schools in the professional development of teachers as there seems to be a disconnect between the two stakeholders. This is consistent with international literature which notes that the partnership between schools and ITE colleges remains weak and ineffectual (Allen, 2011). But the literature also notes that there are multiple benefits accruing from a partnership between schools and ITE institutions, for example, its potential to bridge the theory-practice gap, opening up of opportunities for the sharing of knowledge and skills between the partners, and renewal of the settings that are part of the partnerships (Stephens & Bolt in Allen, 2011). It is in recognition of these benefits that the data raise issues about the need for the partnership between the institutions referred to above to be strengthened in order to ensure that the new graduates from teachers' colleges have the basic competence profile. This would enable the NQTs to handle crucial classroom tasks during their first teaching assignment and ensure that the message transmitted to the NQTs by the stakeholders to teacher education is consistent.

A recurrent theme in this study was that of lack of resources. This problem is cited as a dilemma in literature on teacher induction (McCormack & Thomas 2003; Kardos et al., 2001). Clearly, most of the schools where the NQTs were deployed were grossly under-resourced and this made adjustment of their working conditions difficult, thus restricting the work of NQTs. What seems to come through is that it might not be possible for schools which are already resource-constrained to set aside resources specifically for induction. How, then, would they ensure a soft landing for NQTs in these schools so that they could learn to become teachers and opt to remain there despite the adversities of the environments? The resourcefulness, resilience and commitment demonstrated by the new teachers in addressing the shortages in the classroom could be used by schools as a starting point to work out solutions to the problem. The NQTs also acknowledged that while at times local communities

appeared uncooperative and did not seem to appreciate the role of schools, this could have been because schools might have made parents feel like outsiders and not stakeholders in schools and the education of their children. This could be attributed to poor school leadership, an issue that this thesis though did not explore.

## **6.8 Conclusion**

The discussion of the results of this study have highlighted that NQTs in Mwenezi District were being introduced into the teaching profession with little or no systematic professional support. Where schools availed any professional support assistance at all, this was meant for the generality of teachers and not specifically tailored for NQTs and was provided on a piecemeal basis. Hence, the assistance did not specifically address the needs of the new teachers and NQTs did not get the induction support that they required in order to develop as professionals.

The lack of induction (i.e. when the NQTs are left to their own devices) might largely be attributed to the absence of a policy on induction of new teachers which would make it mandatory for schools to support the new teachers. The absence of such a policy meant that schools were left to their whims in inducting the beginners and schools generally did not take up this challenge. The absence of a policy on induction creates a missing link on the professional development continuum of teachers in the country. According to literature, lack of induction results in narrow professional development because the new teacher will be preoccupied with survival and they learn through trial and error what strategies work but might not understand why those strategies work or how they can be improved. This is further supported by Bubb and Earley (2006) and Brunton (2002) who observe that the consequences of inadequate or inappropriate support that narrowly focuses on survival support for new teachers, are rusty teachers who, if they do not leave the profession, will work below potential and that the long-term impact of this would be generations of children who come into contact with such teachers not learning as they should. The question that needs to be addressed in the light of the above observations pertains to how the gap created by the missing link (i.e. induction) on the professional development continuum would be made up for if the country is to ensure its elementary schools are manned by proficient teachers. The next chapter, concludes the study by providing an overview of the thesis as well as drawing up conclusions of the study and related recommendation.

## Chapter 7

### Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

#### 7.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the results of the study which reflected the experiences of NQTs of induction into the profession during their first year of teaching. This chapter wraps up the study and presents the conclusions which have been drawn from the research findings, the implications of these for practice as well as suggestions for further research.

#### 7.2 Summary

This empirical phenomenological study investigated the induction experiences of NQTs in Mwenezi district in Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe. The specific objectives of the study were to:

- examine the nature and scope of the induction experiences that the beginning teachers are being exposed to;
- determine the factors that have a bearing on the nature of induction NQTs receive;
- explore Zimbabwe's primary schools' understanding of their role in inducting the beginner teachers into the teaching profession;
- explore the lessons that beginner teachers derive from their induction experiences;
- establish the areas that seem to require greater attention during induction; and
- identify the persistent issues and challenges in teacher induction in Zimbabwe's primary schools.

In a nutshell, the study mainly sought to establish (a) what the novices experienced, (b) how they had experienced the phenomenon, and (c) the essence of the experiences in the process of their induction into communities of practice which were the primary schools. An overview of the different chapters of the study whose purpose is to recap on the issues raised in the thesis and how they addressed the objectives is provided below.

Chapter 1 basically provided a context to the study by introducing the research problem and briefly examining the concept of teacher induction and some perspectives about it. The study

was motivated by a desire by the researcher to understand how a perceived gap in the teacher development continuum in the country was being addressed. The gap emanated from the fact that since 1980, Zimbabwe has been mainly concerned with training of adequate teachers to meet the demand created by a rapid expansion in the education sector. This in turn entailed expansion of the teacher education sector. But, in the process of expanding teacher education, some compromises were made as resources were channelled to quantitative rather than to qualitative expansion in ITE (Dzvimbo, 1986). One such compromise could have been the neglect of induction support for NQTs, which would have resulted in the continuum of teacher education from initial preparation through induction and early career has remained largely undeveloped. The study, therefore, sought to provide some insights into the everyday experiences of NQTs during the induction period and the effectiveness of these experiences in fostering professional knowledge and practices of the beginners. It is distinct in that it gives the beginners a voice to relate their stories and to raise issues that are pertinent for the smooth transition of NQTs into their new work stations. The thesis attempts to address a gap in research on the subject as there is a dearth of literature on new teacher induction in the country. The findings will contribute vital knowledge and inform education policy makers and school administrators on the potential of teacher induction to improve teacher efficacy and quality. In addition, the findings might provide a framework for debate amongst education practitioners, administrators and policy makers on the subject, especially on the provision and quality of induction and how this process could be improved for the benefit of all stakeholders. Lastly, the research might provide a basis for improving pre-service teacher education (PRESET) and in-service teacher education (INSET), processes which are important in ensuring teacher quality and ultimately impact on the quality of education in any given country.

In Chapter 2, literature related to teacher induction was reviewed. The chapter focused on various aspects that are core to induction and in particular explored such concepts as the role demands of NQTs, teacher socialisation, school culture, induction supports or strategies, the place of mentoring in the induction of NQTs and developmental stages of teachers. The literature reviewed showed that the needs of NQTs are basically similar the world over (Cobbold, 2007 [Ghana]; Flores, 2007 [Portugal]; McCormack & Thomas [Australia], 2003; Feiman-Nemser, 2001 [USA]; Tickle, 2000 [UK]). But how these needs are addressed is determined by the way in which induction is conceptualised, the supports that are availed to the new teacher and the contexts within which it (induction) is delivered. Different

perspectives on teacher induction were, therefore, explored to determine how the concept has been played out in different countries. The literature revealed that comprehensive induction programmes are usually distinguished by several strategies or best practices which could be categorised as high intensity or low intensity depending on their impact on teacher learning and that the most prominent induction support is mentoring. The various theoretical perspectives on teacher induction that emerged in the literature reviewed provided some insights into current thinking about the phenomenon as well as a framework for examining teacher induction in Zimbabwe.

Chapter 3 mapped out the theoretical framework which afforded lenses through which to consider and understand the induction experiences of the NQTs, that is the CoP framework suggested by Wenger (1998). Wenger's theory is concerned with how newcomers to a workplace learn their roles and the impact of the context on their learning. Some of the main aspects of the theory such as meaning-making, identity formation and community (development of a sense of belonging) are the same as those that are crucial in teacher induction. The emphasis of the theory on contextualised learning in practice made it an appropriate tool for enabling an understanding of the complexities associated with teacher induction. Some indicators of the existence of a CoP suggested by Wenger (1998) were apparent in schools where participants for this study were drawn from, limited though these might have been. For example, jargon and communication short cuts; ability to assess appropriateness of actions or products; specific tools, representations, and other artefacts; quick set up of problems to be discussed; mutually defining identities; and peculiar styles recognized to distinguish membership. Also evident in this study were some of the shortcomings of CoPs alluded to in literature. For example, the complexities and tensions between practice, participation and membership (Kimble, 2006) and the implications of the idea of apprenticeship for power relations between the expert and the novice which brings with it possibilities of conflict and disharmony (Lave & Wenger, 1991). That the above aspects were manifest in the study confirms the appropriateness of the choice of the CoP framework for understanding how the new teachers experienced the phenomenon of induction.

Chapter 4 focused on the research methodology. This study falls within the qualitative paradigm which seeks "to study people, things and events in their natural settings" (Punch, 2005:141) thus facilitating an understanding of a phenomenon in context. It adopted an

empirical phenomenological research design because of its ability to facilitate a focus on the lived experiences (or experiences that occurs in one's direct acquaintance with things (Barnacle, 2001) as well as to facilitate a search for the essence of the experience under investigation. The adoption of an empirical phenomenological research design, in addition to providing a structured approach to the study, enabled beginning teachers to speak about their lived experiences, thus ensuring the construction of an accurate description of the experiences. Qualitative data were collected from 20 participants comprising of 10 NQTs who were fresh from college, 5 beginners with experience ranging from 1 to 3 years and 5 mentors. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews with NQTs and mentors, a focus group discussion with NQTs, reflective essays written by beginning teachers with some experience in the profession and serendipitously. Data analysis was inductive and the protocol used for analysis was a simplified version of Hycner's (1985) framework for phenomenological analysis of interview data applied by Groenewald's (2004). Several verification techniques which included different forms of triangulation, peer debriefing, prolonged engagement, negative case analysis and member checks (Creswell & Plano Clark 2011); Babbie & Mouton, 2001), were employed to achieve rigour and ensure trustworthiness of the study.

The findings of the study were presented in Chapter 5 in which the rich and thick data that had been ceded were reduced into five themes which summarised the experiences of the beginners and addressed the research questions. The themes were as follows:

### **Theme 1: Adapting to the new environment**

The subcategories under this theme were forging new relationships, location of school and nature of host themes. The findings revealed that most NQTs found the process of adapting to their new environments challenging because of the complexities associated with the factors cited above.

### **Theme 2: Experiences of low intensity induction strategies**

The subcategories that formed this theme were orientation of new teachers, opportunities for collaboration and adjusting of working conditions. The findings established that two low intensity induction strategies, namely, orientation of new teachers and the creation of opportunities for collaboration were to some extent employed during induction of the

beginners. However, adjusting of working conditions proved to be problematic for schools especially in aspects of resource availability and assignment of classes.

### **Theme 3: Experiences of high intensity induction strategies**

The subcategories under this theme were mentoring of a beginner by an experienced teacher, regular formal and informal observation of NQTs' teaching, opportunities to observe other teachers, provision of release time and joint planning.

### **Theme 4: Concerns of NQTs**

Indications were that NQTs had varied teaching areas of concern with the more prevalent one being issues of selection of content and teaching methods, pupils' performance, the scheme-cum-plan and class control. Both the beginners and schools generally felt that some of the concerns could be attributed to problems relating to initial teacher preparation. However, it was apparent that schools were not doing their part to mitigate the concerns raised by the beginners.

### **Theme 5: Reflections of NQTs about induction**

This theme focused on reflections of NQTs on the induction process they had gone through. The issues reflected on by the new teachers related to rating of the induction process, impact of induction on classroom practices, the relative status of NQTs in schools and their perceptions of the teaching profession.

The findings under the five themes were synthesized in Chapter 6 to address the research questions. The conclusions derived from the findings and recommendations are discussed below.

## **7.3 Conclusions and recommendations**

The data identified several issues that require attention in order to ensure that the experiences that NQTs are exposed to during induction facilitate their professional learning. These issues together with recommendations, which also touch on ITE, are presented below.

### ***7.3.1 Induction policy***

The absence of a formal policy in Zimbabwe which would make it mandatory for schools to proffer induction to NQTs, as well as provide a framework for the process was a persistent



issue in this study. This had a bearing on how issues of induction were handled in schools. Lack of a policy mainly contributed to the largely informal and haphazard manner in which the NQTs experienced induction into the profession. It meant that schools and the district education authorities did not have any guidelines on how to conduct induction and in the absence of these, the decision on whether or not to provide for induction rested entirely with schools. This made it possible for schools to either do whatever they thought could pass as induction or to just ignore the process.

This suggests a need for the government to formulate a policy on induction of NQTs which would make it mandatory for schools to provide and ensure uniform and sustained support for novices. It is imperative to involve all the stakeholders in the process of policy formulation to ensure their buy in as well as raise awareness among them about the significance of induction of NQTs and their role in the process. Such a policy would provide some guidelines and an induction curriculum for district education offices, schools and mentors to adhere to as well as stipulate the length of the induction period.

### ***7.3.2 Empowering schools to provide induction***

The primary schools in Mwenezi District demonstrated lack of in-depth knowledge and appreciation of the significance of induction of NQTs. In addition, they displayed a lack of capacity to take up their place on the teacher development continuum and to support NQTs' professional growth. This was evidenced by the treatment of schools of the NQTs as finished products and the fact that they saw no need to have any special arrangements for the provision of professional development opportunities for NQTs and adjustment of their working conditions. These factors could ensure teacher learning and effectiveness in the classroom as well as their well-being. Schools, therefore, failed to provide the requisite professional leadership and to fully exploit even the supports that lended themselves well to their contexts.

Clearly, there is need for schools to take their place on the teacher development continuum. However, for schools to be able to do that, there are several issues that need to be addressed. First, there is need to equip schools with the necessary know-how and skills to offer the necessary induction. Second, it is necessary to ensure that the leadership in schools is capable of providing for professional learning and development of teacher quality in a variety of ways, encouraging collaborative work cultures, building relationships and creating school

environments that are conducive to teacher learning. Third, there is need for a marked change of attitudes in schools toward new teachers and their induction needs. Lastly, it is necessary to address the issue of shortages of basic resources which distract schools and teachers from their core business of facilitating teaching and learning. This might require the schools to engage parents seriously so that they can be convinced to prioritise the education of their children as well as viewing local schools as part of community property.

### ***7.3.3 Meeting the needs of NQTs***

The findings of the study highlighted the encounters of NQTs with the dichotomies and constraints of their school environments and cultures which made integration into these difficult. The picture that emerges is that of NQTs experiencing their first year of teaching with hardly any formal induction support and being left to their own devices. Hence, they had limited positive experiences and a few opportunities for professional growth. While here and there NQTs seemed to have experienced fragments of professional development activities, these do not seem to have significantly impacted on their practice. Indications were that no special provisions were being made to address the needs of NQTs and that there was no differentiation in the support activities provided to NQTs and those for their experienced colleagues (where schools offered these) despite the fact that the needs of the two groups are likely to be different. It is also evident that the development needs of NQTs were not being met by schools as evidenced by the numerous unaddressed concerns which the beginners were grappling with and with which they needed assistance at the end of their first year in the field. In addition, even where the needs of the beginners were known like in the instances relating to class allocation and the scheme-cum-plan, nothing much seems to have been done to attend to them. It also emerged that there were some induction strategies which were not just part of the school cultures, for instance, beginners being afforded opportunities to observe the veterans teaching and mentoring of NQTs. The experiences of the first year of teaching for the beginners, therefore, appear to have been characterised, to some extent, by working in isolation and by different forms of the praxis shock and struggle for survival in the various arenas of their schools. Consequently, morale among NQTs was generally low and there was an element of disillusionment with the profession.

In the light of these observations, schools could take several distinct measures to meet the needs of the NQTs and to ensure that they provide the necessary guidance and supports. It is proposed that:

- schools should move away from the idea of one-size-fits-all support and treat NQTs and experienced teachers as separate groups when it comes to provision of professional development activities in order to allow for focus and intensity of the support proffered to beginners;
- the professional requirements of NQTs be identified when they initially enter the schools and be continuously reviewed during their first years of teaching in order to ensure that they are supported in ways that promote development. Schools could adopt the idea of a Career Entry Profile (Carroll & Simco, 2001) to establish the strengths and weaknesses of NQTs and use this as a starting point for supporting the beginners; and,
- NQTs should be afforded opportunities to observe veterans teaching and as well being observed teaching too on a regular basis.

The other concerns persistently raised by the NQTs pertained to inappropriate class allocation and the inability to compile the scheme-cum-plan in accordance with the expectations of schools. With relation to class allocation, findings revealed that assigning a beginner a class that they are not comfortable with worked against not only teacher learning and efficacy but also against the learning of pupils. To address this concern it is proposed that:

- NQTs should be assigned classes that they feel they are competent to teach so that they can operate at their optimum. This implies that class allocation with teachers who are already in the schools at the end of the school year could be tentative and be finalised at the beginning of the first term in the following year when the beginners join the respective schools;
- schools should avoid assigning generalist teachers to teach ECD classes as they lack the specialist knowledge to handle such classes and this results in the new teacher struggling with many teaching issues in the classroom;
- in relation to the scheme-cum-plan, schools need to be clear about the format and details of that document and then guide the novices on how it should be compiled. There could be arrangements for joint planning with other co-Grade teachers as well so that the work that the new teachers plan for does not differ from that being done in other similar Grades.

The NQTs found their new work environments hostile and felt that they were alienated and unwelcome in schools and that they were not recognised as professionals. Such perceptions impacted on their self-esteem and sense of belonging. To correct these conceptions, it is recommended that schools should recognise the special abilities that the beginners may possess in co-curricular activities by allowing them to co-lead sport teams at various levels of competition. When it comes to teaching issues, NQTs should be allowed to be resource persons in staff development workshops so as to share their knowledge as well as to have their ideas critiqued. In a nutshell, they should be given opportunities to participate in all school activities without being discriminated against as it is through participation in communities of practice that they would learn how to become teachers.

#### ***7.3.4 Mentoring of beginning teachers***

The findings of the study suggest that the NQTs would have benefitted from mentoring as they would have someone specific to provide them with professional guidance and support during their formative years in the profession. However, there was no framework for mentoring of beginners in schools. In addition, the schools seemed to lack the capacity to mentor NQTs given the constraints (noted in chapter 5) that schools in Mwenzi district have to cope with. This suggests a need for approaches to mentoring that would take the realities of the context into consideration. It is therefore recommended that:

- every NQT be assigned an official mentor in order to ensure that they are provided with systematic guidance;
- School Heads and their Deputies should be excluded from the day-to-day task of mentoring because of their many responsibilities which do not allow them ample time to attend to the needs of the NQTs. It should also be noted that mentoring of beginners by school administrators could result in a clash of interests which might arise between administrative and mentoring duties and which could impinge on the relationship of the school administrators with the mentees;
- there be some structured mentoring in the primary schools. The responsibility of mentoring of NQTs rests mainly with selected trained ‘anchor mentors’ of varied specialisms in education at primary school level. These would be anchors in the sense that they would be the main source of formal and expert support for the beginning teachers and this would ensure that the beginners benefit from the induction exercise.

The anchor mentors could be TICs/HODs and/or selected experienced teachers of different Grade levels and should be able to proffer Grade specific and subject specific assistance to NQTs;

- the anchor mentors be afforded formal training to equip them with supervisory skills to undertake the task. They, in turn would staff develop the other teachers in the schools to equip them with basic skills of mentoring to enable them to assist the beginners they would interact with since collegial collaboration and support appeared to be common practices in this study;
- the anchor mentors be afforded release time to work with the NQTs. Because there is no provision for relief teachers in primary schools to assist teachers with special responsibilities, it is necessary to work out modalities of creating the release time required not just by the mentors, but by the NQTs as well. For example, the mentors and beginners (and their classes depending on the scheduled induction activity), could be periodically exempted from some co-curricular activities such as supervision of manual work or sporting activities to allow them time to focus on issues of induction. Such time could be used for such activities as observing the beginner teaching by the mentor, observation of the mentor teaching by the new teacher, provision of feedback and mentoring dialogues in general;
- the work of mentors be monitored by the school administration to ensure that they are providing the required support. The mentors could periodically give reports to the administration about the work done with NQTs;
- regular workshops for mentors and mentees be held at district level and cluster level in order to sustain skills development for both parties. The personnel at these levels should be equipped to conduct the workshops. It is envisaged that the personnel at district level will have been trained at national level to enable them to train mentors in their districts for the task; and,
- Universities which offer in-service programmes for teachers should consider programmes in mentoring. The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education should recognise such qualifications and pay incentives to teachers who will be involved in mentoring.

### ***7.3.5 Strengthening of the partnership between schools and ITE institutions in teacher development***

Findings raise issues about the efficacy of the partnership between schools and ITE institutions in the training of pre-service teachers. Although under the current teacher education model in Zimbabwe, student teachers spend five terms out of nine of their training period in schools, thus suggesting a heavy involvement of schools in ITE, there seems to be a weak partnership between schools and ITE colleges. This is evidenced by the contradictory messages and expectations communicated to students teachers about teaching by schools and colleges, for example, in issues relating to the scheme-cum-plan and teaching of writing English compositions. Again, student teachers do not seem to be accorded ample opportunities to practise teaching by their mentors during TP so as to enable them to acquire the requisite practical knowledge and competencies. This becomes manifest when they take charge of their own classes after certification. It would appear, therefore, that schools and ITE institutions are not complementing each other in the training of pre-service teachers.

Clearly, there is need for schools and ITE institutions to work out a common vision for teacher education and transmit a common message to would-be teachers. It is, therefore, proposed that schools and teachers' colleges be involved in coming up with the curriculum for pre-service teacher education programmes. This would require institutions to dialogue with schools as they construct and periodically review the ITE curriculum. Universities and teacher training colleges should conduct regular training workshops with key personnel in schools to apprise them on current trends in education. In addition, it is imperative that the TP stint effectively prepares the beginners for the reality of the classroom and that during TP the student teachers or the would-be beginning teachers are exposed to all facets of classroom work so that they do not fumble when they eventually take full charge of a class after certification. Again, ITE institutions need to consider exposing the student teachers to more than one school environment, not just what they view as model schools, during practicum. This could prepare the would-be teachers to work in disadvantaged schools after certification and to appreciate differences in school cultures.

### ***7.3.6 Exploiting existing structures to provide induction support***

Claims were made by schools about the existence of some structures for professional support within them which did not seem to be fully functional but could be exploited in the provision of teacher induction. Such structures include subject panels, which are composed of

specialists in the subjects offered in primary schools and school clusters which are a feature of educational districts, both of which are supposed to be forums of exchanging and sharing ideas and skills among beginners and veteran teachers. The members of subject panels are supposed to attend external workshops related to their subjects and to be resource persons in their schools. The functions of the clusters are varied and include conducting workshops for schools which fall under them to address the concerns of teachers, provide a forum for sharing ideas, establishing resource centres and setting and marking of midyear and end of year tests for the schools. However, indications are that these structures are not being effectively exploited and lip service is paid to their existence and functions. These structures could be useful in complementing efforts to induct NQTs.

It is suggested that formal arrangements should be put in place for subject panels to be involved in the induction of NQTs especially in supporting beginners where specific needs have been identified, for example, problems alluded to relating to the teaching of content subjects. The subject panels in schools could intervene through staff development workshops and demonstration lessons targeted at NQTs. The subject panels should be visible in their schools and in this respect, their members who would have attended workshops on various aspects of teaching at district, provincial or national levels should be seen to be the resource persons that they are supposed to be and facilitate the staff development of other teachers in their schools.

The school clusters could also be actively involved in the provision of induction of NQTs through workshops for NQTs, for their mentors as well as workshops for both mentors and mentees. The workshops would furthermore provide the NQTs with opportunities for networking with other beginners, share common problems and explore solutions to these as well as exchange ideas about issues that affect them.

### ***7.3.7 Induction strategies which are amenable to the Zimbabwe context***

A number of induction strategies appeared to be amenable to the Zimbabwe context but were not fully exploited, for example, observing NQTs teaching and providing feedback which do not seem to have been done on a regular basis; inspection of teaching and learning documents on a weekly basis but portraying the exercise as a formality; common planning which did not seem to happen in schools yet the beginners had problems with planning; and, paying lip service to provision of staff development workshops and demonstration lessons. Some of these activities would not call for much in terms of resources except time and it is the

contention of this thesis that it is possible for schools to create time to fully exploit such activities to provide for induction.

In that respect, it is proposed that staff development workshops and demonstration lessons be made part of the features of schools' termly calendars in order to support and sustain new teacher learning and teacher professional development in general. Document inspection, which seems to be a common practice for monitoring teachers' work, could be employed particularly to foster beginning teachers' knowledge and skills of articulating the teaching and learning processes. To make document checks a potent induction support, it is proposed that administrators demonstrate that inspection of teaching and learning documents is not just a formality. This could be achieved by ensuring that each time teaching and learning documents are submitted, they are meticulously examined so that they are used to provide some insights into areas of the teachers' strengths and shortcomings. The issues that the mentors or administrators could note and comment on during the inspection of plan books include the general ideas and lesson content, teaching strategies to be used and areas that need improvement. The implementation of observations made could be then followed up on the following week when the documents are presented for inspection again. In this way, the NQTs could be encouraged to be more reflective about their practice even at planning stage which in turn would impact on the quality of lesson delivery.

It is also recommended that school administrators and mentors explore strategies for informal observations of NQTs' teaching that are user friendly, could be employed to foster confidence and be a tool for establishing cordial relationships with the beginners.

### ***7.3.8 A framework for the induction of NQTs in Zimbabwe***

Considering all the observations that have been made above, this thesis proposes a framework for teacher induction that provides for multiple supports of NQTs and also accentuates induction practices and structures that are conceivable in the Zimbabwean context. The practices that could be given prominence here include document inspection; highlighting the role of clusters in districts in conducting workshops for NQTs and their mentors and in providing a forum for networking for the beginners; making subject panels more visible; strengthening the role of orientation so that it is comprehensive, becomes more than a day's event and is used to provide a firm foundation for the integration of the beginners into the schools. Figure 7.1 below shows the suggested NQT induction framework for Zimbabwe.



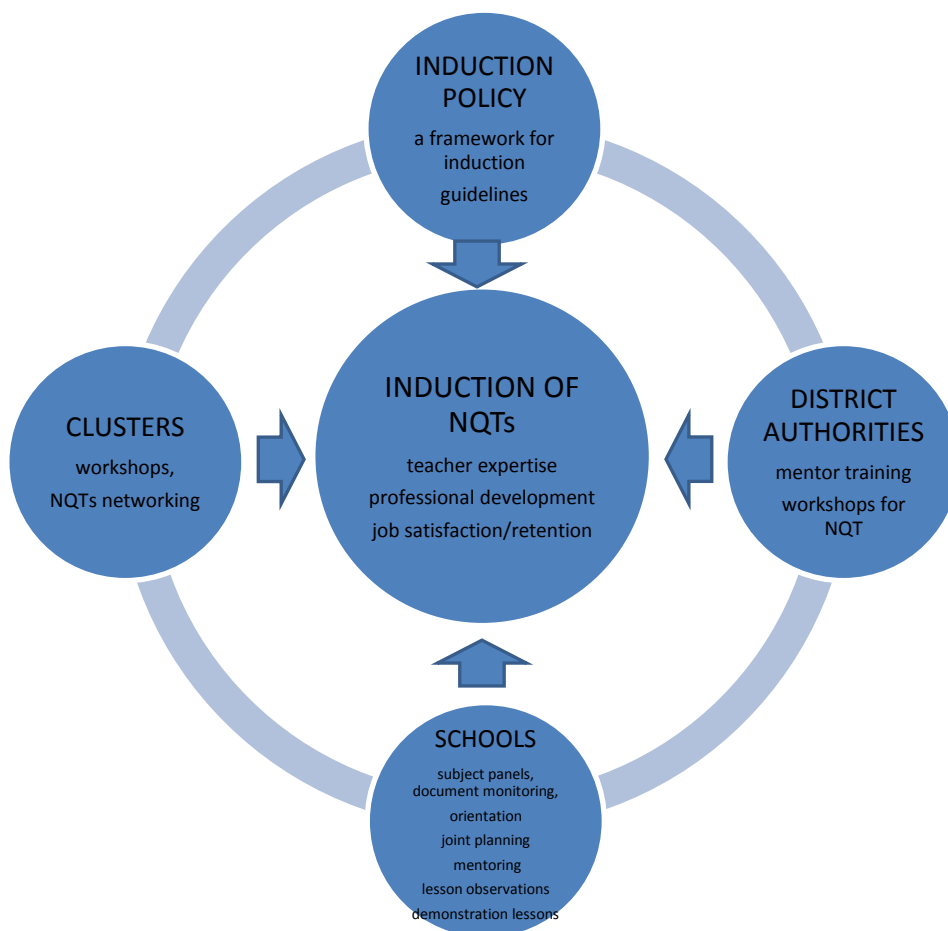


Figure 7.1: A proposed framework for induction of NQTs in Zimbabwe

In the proposed framework, induction of NQTs, which is the central theme, would be supported by several components, namely, the induction policy, district authorities, schools and clusters. The policy would inform how the three providers of induction namely, schools, clusters and district authorities are to conduct induction. The three would complement each other in the provision of induction but with the school taking a leading role and the clusters and district offices supporting the schools' efforts. The role of school clusters in teacher induction is highlighted because the clusters are a feature of education districts in the country which could be exploited to induct beginners. The induction activities accentuated under schools are those that seem to be feasible in the Zimbabwe context. It is hoped that the proposed framework would make it possible for schools to offer systematic and sustained support to NQTs.

#### **7.4 Recommendations for further research**

This study was confined to a small sample of new teachers and geographical area in Mwenezi district and future studies could be broader in terms of the two aspects identified. In addition, the other issues that emerged but did not receive adequate attention in this study and which are recommended for further research are:

- Mentoring of NQTs in schools
- The potency of document inspection as a strategy in the induction of NQTs
- Ways of strengthening the partnership between schools and ITE institutions in teacher education
- The impact of micro-political realities of schools on the professional learning of NQTs.

#### **7.5 Conclusion**

This chapter summarised the conclusions emanating from the findings and recommendations based on these conclusions. The study established that a lot remains to be done to institutionalise the concept of teacher induction in Zimbabwe and that there is need for schools to provide systematic induction support to facilitate the process of addressing the diverse learning needs of NQTs. It identified several issues that need to be attended to in order to facilitate the institutionalisation of the concept of induction in Zimbabwean primary schools. These issues are, the need for an induction policy; the need to capacitate schools to handle induction, the pertinent needs of NQTs, employing mentoring as a support for NQTs, the need to strengthen the partnership between schools and ITE institutions in teacher preparation, maximising existing structures in the provision of induction and the need to exploit induction strategies that are amenable to the Zimbabwe context. The study also suggested a framework for induction of NQTs in Zimbabwe which takes into account the identified issues. It is hoped that the recommendations made will go a long way in bridging a gap in the teacher development continuum in the country.

## **Reflections on the study**

As I come to the close of my research journey, I feel the process would be incomplete without reflecting on the knowledge and experience I acquired from it. After interacting with the NQTs and the other participants, I believe I emerged from the study a richer person professionally and academically. The process of in-depth research helped me to hone my research skills, gain some insights into important issues relating to teacher professional development, to widen my research interests and to appreciate the joys and challenges of undertaking a project of this magnitude. In addition, I was able to reflect on the Bachelor of Education in-service programmes that institutions like the one I work for offer and where these fall short in addressing the needs of teachers in general. This made me to consider the nature of modules that could be included in the programmes to equip the in-service students with practical knowledge and skills that they might require to undertake various roles in schools, for example, mentoring.

When I embarked on the study, I could not fully relate to the issues that affect NQTs during their first teaching assignment that are documented in literature. I assumed that because as students the NQTs spend a substantial part of their training period in schools, during their first teaching assignment they would be on familiar terrain and would not have problems settling in their work stations. But the issues that emerged during the course of the research pertaining to their reception in schools, conditions of service and resource constraints suggested otherwise and were heartrending. I gained some insights into the day-to-day issues affecting new teachers and I found the commitment and resilience that they showed in the face of the various adversities in schools quite humbling. Some of the issues that emerged might have required the attention of Teachers' Professional Associations but no mention was made of them during the study. This made me wonder whether these associations should not have some input in the induction of new members to the profession, and whether they should not be more visible in safeguarding the interests of the novices in particular. These are question that need to be pursued further.

I was struck by the transformation and the impact of the experiences of the first year of teaching on the new teachers – the sense of accountability, the sensitivity about their identities as teachers and the development of some kind of wisdom on how to survive in the schools, what could be called becoming 'streetwise' (i.e. a realisation of the need not to take

things for granted and standing up for themselves to protect their interests). Finally, I found it reassuring that at the end of the data collection process, some NQTs indicated that they had benefitted from participating in the study and that this had made them reflect on pertinent issues relating to their work and stations. Likewise, a School Head who was also a mentor confessed to having been compelled to revisit how the school was handling new teacher induction as a result of our discussion. This to me showed that the study had not been in vain and that it could generate and contribute to a debate on induction of NQTs in the country.

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## APPENDIX 1

### Interview guide for NQTs

#### Interview # 1

1. What grade do you teach?
2. What were your reasons for choosing teaching as a career?
3. **Do you think you are adequately equipped to teach as expected? Explain your answer.**
  - What aspects of initial training are you finding particularly useful in the classroom?
  - In what areas of teaching do you feel your initial training could have better prepared you in?
  - How are you finding teaching?
4. **How does it feel like to be a new teacher in this school?**
  - What does the school expect from you as a teacher?
  - How did you learn about these expectations?
  - Is there a common understanding among teachers in your school about how teachers should conduct their work?
5. **What kind of formal support are you receiving in the school as a new teacher?**
  - In what ways has this support helped you as a beginning teacher?
  - Have you had an opportunity to discuss your needs with anyone within the school? If so, explain the nature of the discussion. If not, with whom would you want to discuss your needs?
  - Have you participated in any induction activities? Explain your answer,
6. **How often do you interact professionally with other teachers within the school?**
  - What have you learned from the interactions?
7. **What do you think is the role of the School Head in your induction?**

Thank you for your time. Do you have any other comments about what we had been discussing?

## APPENDIX 2

### Interview guide for NQTs

#### Interview # 2

1. Are you enjoying your work?
2. **Describe the induction activities that you have participated in since we last met.**
  - How well does the current support address these needs? Explain.
  - Have you had an opportunity to discuss your needs with anyone within the school?  
Explain the nature of the discussion.
  - Does anyone monitor how you are teaching?
  - Have you received any feedback about your teaching since we last met?
3. How easy is it to get assistance within the school? Explain.
4. What would you say are the needs of a NQT in their first school?
5. **What new things are you learning in your new role as a teacher and from whom are you learning them?**
  - What do you feel you still need to know about actual classroom teaching?
  - What other activities do you think would assist in addressing the needs of new teachers?
  - Has your performance in the classroom improved since the last time we met?
  - What are you finding difficult, what are you finding easy?
6. **What successes have you experienced so far as a teacher?**
  - What contributions would you say you have made to the school so far?
7. Do you have any other issues you wish to discuss with me about induction of NQTs?

Thank you for your time. Do you have any questions or comments you would like to make?

## APPENDIX 3

### Interview guide for NQTs

#### Interview # 3

1. How are you finding your work?
2. **What were your expectations of teaching before joining the profession?**
  - How do these expectations compare with the reality on the ground?
4. **What would you say are the most memorable moments of your first year in the profession:**
  - a) your best moments?
  - b) your worst moments?
5. **In your opinion, how can schools assist newly qualified teachers?**
  - what should be the duration of the assistance.
6. **Has induction influenced how you teach? Explain.**
  - What new things did you have learned in your new role as a teacher during the course of the year?
  - What have been the most important sources of your professional learning throughout the year?
7. **What would you consider to be the typical challenges that newly qualified teachers face in their work?**
8. What contributions have you made to the school and community?
9. How would you rate the induction process in your school?
10. What would you say was the core of your induction into the profession?

Any comments or questions you may have? Thank you for your time.

## APPENDIX 4

### Interview guide for mentors

1. What is the duration of the induction period in this school?
2. **What mechanisms are in place to support NQTs deployed to your school?**
  - What does the school expect from its teachers?
  - How are NQTs informed about the school's expectations?
  - Are the new teachers able to meet the school's expectations?
3. **What would you say are the typical challenges faced by NQTs?**
  - How are the challenges being addressed?
4. In your view, how can NQTs be best supported to ensure a smooth transition from student to teacher?
5. **What criteria is used to select mentors for NQTs?**
  - Does the school provide guideline on induction?
6. **What do you see as your role in the induction of NQTs in your school?**
  - What challenges do you face in fulfilling this role?.

## **APPENDIX 5**

### **Focus group discussion guide**

1. What do you understand by teacher induction?
2. What is the significance of induction for a NQT?
3. What were the main elements of your induction into the teaching profession?
4. Which of the elements did you find relevant?
5. What would you consider to be the main challenges that you faced during the first year of teaching
6. How could you have been best supported during this period?
7. Do you have any comments you might want to make about the issues we have been discussing?

I want to thank you all for having taken your time to participate in this study. I wish you the best in your career. Thank you.

## APPENDIX 6: Informed consent form

**Principal Investigator:** Snodia Magudu

**Topic of study:** Induction experiences of newly qualified primary schools in Zimbabwe

You are invited to participate in a study on *Induction experiences of newly qualified primary schools in Zimbabwe*. You were identified as a prospective participant in this study because you are a newly qualified teacher. I am conducting this study as part of a Doctoral programme in Didactics with the University of South Africa. Kindly read this form carefully before accepting to participate.

The procedures of the research for participants will be as follows:

- teachers in their first year of teaching will participate in three scheduled individual semi-structured interviews over a period of two terms;
- teachers who have been teaching for more than a year will be required to write a reflective essay;
- mentors will be involved in one scheduled individual interview; and
- selected beginning teachers will participate in a focus group discussion.

Individual interviews and the focus group session are expected to last about an hour. With your permission, the interviews will be audio-recorded for the purpose of post interview transcription.

Records pertaining to this study will be kept confidential and securely. Your privacy will be protected by use of pseudonyms throughout the study. Participation is voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any point during its course should you wish to do so.

To the best knowledge of the researcher, there are no risks associated with this study. It is hoped that your participation in the study will provide some insights into how newly qualified teachers may be supported to ensure a smooth transition into schools as well as their professional growth.

The researcher conducting this study is **Snodia Magudu**. If you have any questions pertaining to the study you may contact me on **+263 772 367 998**.

### STATEMENT OF CONSENT

I have read and understood the information and everything has been clarified to me. I consent to participate in the study.

Please place a tick in the appropriate:

I, -----, consent to have my individual interview and focus group discussion audio-taped.

I, -----, do not consent to have my individual interview and focus group discussion audio-taped.

Signature of participant..... Date.....

Signature of researcher..... Date.....

## APPENDIX 7a

### REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Great Zimbabwe University  
P. O. Box 1235  
Masvingo

28 February 2013

The Provincial Education Director  
Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture  
Masvingo Regional Office  
Wigley House  
P. O. Box 89  
Masvingo  
Zimbabwe

Dear Sir/Madam

#### **RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

I am a Doctoral student with the University of South Africa. I am requesting for permission to conduct research in selected primary schools in Mwenezi district to collect data for my studies.

The title of my thesis is *Induction Experiences of Newly Qualified Teachers in Zimbabwe*. The research will entail individual and focus group interviews with primary school teachers and their mentors. The information gathered will be treated with strict confidentiality and used only for the purpose of the study.

Before the onset of data collection, I intend to make a preliminary visit to schools to explain to prospective participants the nature of the study and their role. The participants have the right to withdraw from the research activities at any given point of the research.

It is hoped that the information gathered from the study will provide some insight on the nature of support that newly qualified teachers require on initial entry into the profession.

Yours faithfully

Snodia Magudu (Ms)

**APPENDIX 7b**  
**REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

Great Zimbabwe University  
P. O. Box 1235  
Masvingo

28 February 2013

The Permanent Secretary  
Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture  
P. O. Box Cy 121  
Causeway  
Harare  
Zimbabwe

Dear Sir/Madam

**RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

I am a Doctoral student with the University of South Africa. I am requesting for permission to conduct research in selected primary schools in Mwenezi district to collect data for my studies.

The title of my thesis is *Induction Experiences of Newly Qualified Teachers in Zimbabwe*. The research will entail individual and focus group interviews with primary school teachers and their mentors. The information gathered will be treated with strict confidentiality and used only for the purpose of the study.

Before the onset of data collection, I intend to make a preliminary visit to schools to explain to prospective participants the nature of the study and their role. The participants have the right to withdraw from the research activities at any given point of the research.

It is hoped that the information gathered from the study will provide some insight on the nature of support that newly qualified teachers require on initial entry into the profession.

Yours faithfully

Snodia Magudu (Ms)



## APPENDIX 8

ALL communications should be addressed to  
"The Provincial Education Director for Education  
Sport and Culture"  
Telephone: 263585/264331  
Fax: 039-2632610



ZIMBABWE

Reference:

Ministry of Education Sport and Culture  
P.O Box 89  
MASVINGO

4 March 2013

**The Secretary**  
**Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture**

**Att: Mr Muzawazi**

**RE: PERMISSION TO CARRYOUT AN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH :**  
**SNODIA MAGUDU : PHD STUDENT: UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA:**  
**MWENEZI DISTRICT :MASVINGO PROVINCE**

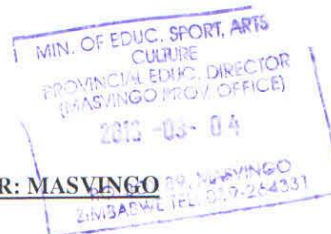
The above matter refers.

The bearer Magudu S. , is a PhD student at the University of South Africa is seeking permission to carry out research in selected Primary Schools in Mwenezi District, Masvingo Province.

**Topic : Induction Experiences of Newly Qualified Teachers in Zimbabwe**

The application is supported therefore permission is sought.

**C.T. DUBE**  
**PROVINCIAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR: MASVINGO**



## APPENDIX 9

### GREAT ZIMBABWE UNIVERSITY



Faculty of Education  
P.O. Box 1235  
Masvingo  
ZIMBABWE  
Tel 263 039-253504  
Fax 263 039-252100

Off Old Great Zimbabwe Road  
MASVINGO, Zimbabwe  
Email: [education@gzu.ac.zw](mailto:education@gzu.ac.zw)

28 February 2013

The Permanent Secretary  
Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture  
Ambassador House  
Kwame Nkrumah Ave  
P.O Box CY 121  
Causeway  
Harare  
Zimbabwe


Dear Sir/Madam

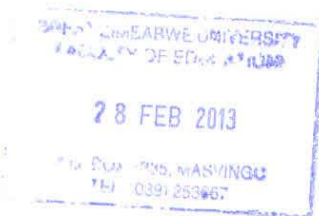
**RE: CONFIRMATION OF MS. S. MAGUDU'S EMPLOYMENT AND RESEARCHER STATUS**

This letter serves to confirm that Ms. S. Magudu is a lecturer at Great Zimbabwe University in the Faculty of Education. She is currently pursuing doctoral studies with the University of South Africa and requires permission to conduct research in selected primary schools in Mwenezi district, Masvingo Province.

Kindly assist her in securing permission to conduct research.

Yours faithfully

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. A. Chindanya  
Dean Faculty of Education



# APPENDIX 10

all communications should be addressed to  
"The Secretary for Education Sport and Culture"  
Telephone: 734051/59 and 734071  
Telegraphic address : "EDUCATION"  
Fax: 794505/705289/734075



Ref: C/426/3  
Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts  
and Culture  
P.O Box CY 121  
Causeway  
Zimbabwe

MS MAGUDU  
GREAT ZIMBABWE UNIVERSITY  
BOX 1235  
MASVINGO

## RE: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH

Reference is made to your application to carry out research in the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture institutions on the title:

INDUCTION EXPERIENCES OF NEWLY  
QUALIFIED TEACHERS (PRIMARY) IN  
ZIMBABWE

Permission is hereby granted. However, you are required to visit the Provincial Education Offices responsible for the schools you want to involve in your research for assistance and permission to work with schools.

It would be appreciated if you can provide a copy of your final report to the Ministry since it is instrumental in the development of education in Zimbabwe.



I. Gweme  
FOR: SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE

## APPENDIX 11



### Research Ethics Clearance Certificate

This is to certify that the application for ethical clearance submitted by

**Magudu S [47243058]**

for a D Ed study entitled

**Induction experiences of newly qualified primary school teachers  
in Zimbabwe**

has met the ethical requirements as specified by the University of South Africa  
College of Education Research Ethics Committee. This certificate is valid for two  
years from the date of issue.

Prof CS le Roux  
CEDU REC (Chairperson)  
[lrouxcs@unisa.ac.za](mailto:lrouxcs@unisa.ac.za)  
Reference number: 2013 SEPT/47243058/CSLR

25 September 2013



**APPENDIX 12: Classroom blocks at a satellite school**



**APPENDIX 13: A classroom block at a satellite school**





## APPENDIX 14: Pupils at play at a satellite school



**APPENDIX: 15 Pupils in a satellite school classroom**





**APPENDIX 16: A conventional classroom block at a satellite school**



## **CURRICULUM VITAE: SNODIA MAGUDU**

Ms Snodia Magudu is a History/Social Studies lecturer at Great Zimbabwe University, Faculty of Education, in the Curriculum Studies Department and has been involved in teacher education for over 20 years. She joined the Department of Curriculum Studies, a department which mainly offers in-service degree programmes for practising teachers, in 2004. From 2010 to January 2014, Ms Magudu was chairperson of the Curriculum Studies Department. In that role, she oversaw a review of the programmes offered by that department to make them relevant to the needs of the different stakeholders.

Prior to joining Great Zimbabwe University Ms Magudu lectured at different primary teachers' training colleges. During that period, she participated in the development of the pre-service Teacher Education curriculum which came with the changes in the teacher education models in the country. As a college lecturer she was a History/Social Studies external assessor for some colleges on behalf of the Department of Teacher Education, University of Zimbabwe. This further exposed her to issues relating to teacher professional development.

She has co-authored and published articles on teacher induction and Social Studies and other issues in referred journals. She has also authored a chapter in a forthcoming book on Teaching Methods. Her research interests are in teacher professional development, citizenship education and children's rights.