

**STUDENT TEACHERS' TEACHING PRACTICE EXPERIENCES IN
SELECTED PRIMARY SCHOOLS
IN THE TSHWANE SOUTH DISTRICT**

by

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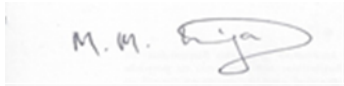
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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my sister **Maphuti Ivy Tsebe**, who used every resource she had to raise me.

What you wished was to see me succeed.

Your strength inspired me this far, and therefore, I dedicate this to you.

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ABSTRACT

Teaching practice is an integral component of teacher training. It provides student teachers with experiences in the actual teaching and learning environment. This qualitative case study explored student teachers' teaching practice experiences in selected primary schools in the Tshwane South District. Eight student teachers were purposively selected from four public primary schools in the Tshwane South District. This study was guided by self-determination theory of the interpretivist perspective. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Collected data was transcribed and arranged into codes and themes using the thematic data analysis method. The study established that regardless of the positive experiences of many student teachers, some experienced challenges such as late delivery of study material, delayed placement confirmation letters by the Teaching Practice Office, finding placement schools and support from module lecturers. It was also revealed that at school level, of the eight student teachers, six were welcomed and felt motivated, while the other two did not feel welcomed and were despondent. Some student teachers were also challenged by a lack of class management skills in overcrowded classrooms, completing teaching lessons on time, daily attendance register signatures by mentor teachers and supervisors' support. Based on the findings, it is recommended that the university ensure that services such as study material delivery, attending to student queries and allocating supervisors are done on time. It is concluded that a committee that oversees the placement of student teachers between universities and schools should be established at each school.

KEYWORDS: Experiences, mentor teachers, primary schools, overcrowded classrooms, student teachers, teaching practice, supervisors, University of South Africa

KAKARETŠO

Tlhahlo ya borutiši ke karolo ye bohlokwa ya tlhahlo ya baithuti ba go ithutela borutiši. E fa baithuti ba go ithutela borutiši maitemogelo a tikologo ya mmannete ya go ruta le go ithuta. Nyakišišo ye ya khwalithethifi e nyakišišitše maitemogelo a tlhahlo ya borutiši a baithuti ba go ithutela borutiši ka dikolong tša praemari tše di kgethilwego ka Seleteng sa Borwa sa Tshwane. Baithuti ba seswai ba go ithutela borutiši ba kgethilwe ka maikemišetšo go tšwa dikolong tše nne tša praemari tša mmušo ka Seleteng sa Borwa sa Tshwane. Nyakišišo ye e be e hlahlwa ke teori ya go ikemela ya pono ya bohlatollo. Datha e kgobokeditšwe ka dipoledišano tše di sego tša rulaganywa gabotse le tshekatsheko ya ditokomane. Datha ye e kgobokeditšwego e ile ya ngwalwa le go rulaganywa ka dikhoutu le dikgwegwe ka go šomiša mokgwa wa tshekatsheko ya datha ya merero. Nyakišišo e hweditše gore ka ntle le maitemogelo a mabotse a baithuti ba bantši ba go ithutela borutiši, ba bangwe ba itemogetše ditlhohlo tša go swana le kabo ya morago ga nako ya didirišwa tša thuto, mangwalo a tiišetšo ya tiegišo ya go bewa ga baithuti tlhahlong ke Kantoro ya Tlhahlo ya Borutiši, go hwetša dikolo tša go bea baithuti tlhahlong le thekgo go tšwa go bafahloši ba dimotšulo. Go utolotšwe gape gore maamong a sekolo, go baithuti ba seswai ba go ithutela borutiši, ba tshela ba bona ba amogetšwe ebile ba ikwele ba na le tlhohleletšo, mola ba bangwe ba babedi ba ikwele ba sa amogelwa ebile ba itlhobogile. Baithuti ba bangwe ba go ithutela borutiši gape ba ile ba itemogela tlhohlo ya go hloka mabokgoni a taolo ya diphapoši ka diphapošing tša borutelo tše di tletšego kudu, go fetša dithuto tša go ruta ka nako, go saena ga diretšistara letšatši le letšatši ke barutiši ba e lego baeletši le thekgo ya baokamedi. Go ya ka dikutullo, go šišinywa gore yunibesithi e kgonthiše gore ditirelo tša go swana le kabo ya matheriale wa thuto, go šogana le dipotšišo tša baithuti le go aba baokamedi di dirwa ka nako. Go phethwa ka gore komiti yeo e hlokomelago go bewa ga baithuti tlhahlong gare ga diyunibesithi le dikolo e swanetše go hlongwa sekolong se sengwe le se sengwe.

MANTŠU A BOHLOKWA: Maitemogelo, barutiši ba e lego baeletši, dikolo tša praemari, diphapoši tša borutelo tše di tletšego kudu, baithuti ba go ithutela borutiši, tlhahlo ya borutiši, baokamedi, Yunibesithi ya Afrika Borwa

MANWELEDZO

Ngodwedzo ya u funza ndi tshipiḁa tsha ndeme tsha u gudela u funza. I ḁetshedza vhadededzi vha matshudeni tshenzhemo kha vhupo ha vhukuma ha u funza na u guda. Ngudo heyi ya khwanthithethivi yo wanulusa tshenzhemo dza ngodwedzo ya u funza kha vhadededzi vha matshudeni kha zwikolo zwa phuraimari zwo nangiwaho kha Tshiḁiriki tsha Tshipembe ha Tshwane. Vhadededzi vha matshudeni vha malo vho nangiwa hu na zwo sedzwaho khazwo u bva zwikolo zwiḁa zwa phuraimari zwa muvhuso kha Tshiḁiriki tsha Tshipembe ha Tshwane. Ngudo heyi yo endedzwa nga thiori ya vhuḁikumedzeli ha vhathu kha u ḁalutshedza zwithu zwa ngudo. Data yo kuvhanganyiwa nga kha inthaviwu dzi songo tou dzudzanywaho na musaukanyo wa maḁwalwa. Data yo kuvhanganywaho yo ḁwalululwa na u dzudzanywa nga dzikhoudu na thero hu tshi shumiswa ngona ya u saukanya data ya thero. Ngudo yo bveledza uri zwi si na ndavha na tshenzhemo yavhuḁi ya vhadededzi vhanzhi vha matshudeni, dziḁwe khaedu dze dza tshenzhelwa dzi ngaho sa u lenga u ḁetshedzwa ha matheriala a ngudo, u lenga u vhewa na maḁwalo a u khwaḁhisedza nga Ofisi ya Ngodwedzo ya u Funza, u wana u vhewa zwikoloni na thikhedzo u bva kha vhagudisi vha modulu. Ho dovha ha wanuluswa uri kha ḁeveḁe ya zwikolo, zwa vhadededzi vha matshudeni vha malo, vha rathi vho ḁanganedzwa na u pfa vho ḁuḁuwedzea, ngeno vhaḁwe vhavhili vho pfa vha songo ḁanganedzwa na u pfa vha si na fulufhelo. Vhaḁwe vhadededzi vha matshudeni vho dovha vha vha na khaedu nga u sa vha na zwikili zwa u langula kiḁasi kha kiḁasirumu dzo ḁalesaho, u ḁwala ngudo dza u funza nga tshifhinga, u saina redzhisiḁara dza u vha hone dza ḁuvha ḁiḁwe na ḁiḁwe nga vhadededzi vhane vha khou eletshedza na thikhedzo ya vhaḁoli. Zwo ḁisendeka nga mawanwa, ho themendelwa uri yunivesithi i vhone zwauri tshumelo dzi ngaho ḁḁisedzo ya matheriala a u guda, u dzhenela u vhudzisa ha mutshudeni na u avhela vhaḁoli zwi itwa nga tshifhinga. Ho pendelwa uri komiti ine ya lavhelesa u vhewa ha vhadededzi vha matshudeni vhukati ha dziyunivesithi na zwikolo zwi fanela u bveledzwa kha tshikolo tshiḁwe na tshiḁwe.

MAIPFI A NDEME: tshenzhemo, mudededzi wa mueletshedzi, zwikolo zwa phuraimari, kiḁasirumu dzo ḁalesaho, vhadededzi vha matshudeni, ngodwedzo ya u funza, vhaḁoli, Yunivesithi ya Afrika Tshipembe

ACRONYMS

ATP	Annual Teaching Plan
B.Ed.	Bachelor of Education
BA	Bachelor Arts
BSc	Bachelor of Science
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
CEDU	College of Education
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DCCD	Directorate for Career Counselling
DHET	Department of Higher Education Training
DSAR	Directorate Student Affairs and Registration
FET	Further Education Training
FP	Foundation Phase
GDE	Gauteng Department of Education
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IP	Intermediate Phase
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
LoLT	Language of Teaching and Learning
MRTEQ	Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications
NPFTED	National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa
NQF	National Qualification Framework
ODL	Open Distance Learning
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate in Education
REQV	Relative Education Quality Value
SACE	South African Council of Educators
SAQA	South African Qualification Authority
SDT	Self-Determination Theory
SP	Senior Phase
ST	Student Teacher

TP	Teaching Practice
TPO	Teaching Practice Office
UNISA	University of South Africa
WIL	Work Integrated Learning

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CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Teaching practice (TP) is an integral component of teaching qualification. For many students who want to pursue careers as teachers in the future, learning the necessary skills and taking on the challenges of the educational profession are crucial. These skills are acquired within the teacher education programme by explicitly exposing student teachers to intensive teaching practice during their studies (Koross, 2016:77). Teaching practice, according to Abongdia, Adu, and Foncha (2017:50), provides student teachers with the opportunity to apply their own teaching philosophies, theories and understandings. It allows student teachers to experience their know-how in the teaching and learning profession, converting their educational theories and policies into practice. Onyebukwa-Nwanoro (2017:30) states that the need for a sound professional education is a significant and critical factor involving effective teacher training for productive teaching and teaching practice.

As a qualified teacher, who graduated from the University of South Africa (UNISA), the researcher experienced several challenges during her TP. These experiences included looking for a placement school for TP. Most of the schools where the researcher conducted her teaching practice also had student teachers from other universities who were placed by those universities. However, schools were not aware of UNISA students coming for teaching practice. Schools did not take UNISA students seriously and there was no formal introduction to the staff and the learners. Msangya, Mkoma and Yihuan's (2016:118) study asserts that the perceptions expressed by student teachers regarding teaching practice experiences show that the UNISA teaching practice programme has some shortcomings. To support this, Mokoena (2017:130) emphasised that schools that act contrary to principles and methods endorsed by the UNISA Teaching Practice Office (TPO), may expose student teachers to unfavourable circumstances that may affect their ability to acquire valuable experience.

The researcher chose this study to identify areas affecting the UNISA student teachers on teaching practice in four selected primary schools in the Tshwane South District.

The study's findings may advance the understanding of promoting social interaction and encourage stakeholders to seek better approaches, strategies, and techniques to improve teaching practice in the Tshwane South District primary schools. Moreover, this may motivate student teachers to fully engage in their teaching practice and perceive the teaching practice experience positively. Furthermore, this could motivate placement schools to support and take full responsibility for creating a conducive environment for student teachers during their teaching practice. Additionally, the findings might help the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and UNISA to improve their teaching practice policies to prepare future teachers to deliver quality education to learners. This study may also be a benchmark for researchers who want to investigate the same topic. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore the student teachers' teaching practice experiences in selected primary schools in the Tshwane South District.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

Teaching practice (TP) is widely regarded as a crucial part of student teachers' professional development. As indicated by the South African Norms and Standards for Educators (DoE, 2000:18), TP aims to ensure that student teachers are exposed to the complexities and richness of the teacher's reality. The practice enables the teacher to determine whether the correct career choice is made.

According to the Teaching Practice Manual (2008:7), the general aim of TP is to assist student teachers with the:

- Acquire technical, social, and physical general academic experience in teaching.
- Acquire practical experience from everyone they are likely to contact by activity participation in the responsibilities assigned by the school.
- Bring the student teacher directly into real-life teaching context.
- Undergo teaching practices to be able to meet the requirements of becoming a qualified professional teacher.

Mangope, Otukile, Dinama and Kuyini (2018:58) argue that TP remains one of the essential ways in which student teachers are exposed to real teacher experiments to provide them with the necessary pedagogical skills. Therefore, the voice of student teachers is crucial for understanding their experiences to ensure that current and future teachers have a better understanding of the profession. However, despite its importance, Du Plessis (2020:9) notes that if student teachers do not gain the skills they need while in training, they may find teaching overwhelming during teaching practice.

The two most offered teaching qualifications in South African Higher Education are a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) and a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) Degree. For students to be admitted into the PGCE programme, they first need to have obtained a 360 credits qualification and graduated with their first degree. The duration of PGCE is one year in contrast to the B.Ed. Degree of four years' duration. These two qualifications comprise four phases. The first phase is called the Foundation Phase (FP), which involves the year of reception (Grade R) and Grades 1, 2 and 3; the second phase is called the Intermediate Phase (IP), Grades 4,5 and 6; the Senior Phase (SP) Grades 7, 8 and 9 is the third and the Grades 10, 11 and 12 for Further Education and Training (FET) is the fourth phase. Students may either participate in a comprehensive four-year B.Ed. Degree programme at a certain point or combine two phases, for example, the Intermediate and Senior phases. For example, those who choose to teach learners between the ages of six and nine will enrol for a B.Ed. Degree FP and those who choose to teach learners between ten and twelve will enrol for B.Ed. Degree IP. When students wish to teach learners between the ages of thirteen and fifteen, they should enrol in B.Ed. Degree SP. Finally, students who wish to specialise in B.Ed. Degree FET will teach learners from sixteen years old and upwards.

The Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) (2008) has conducted programme audits at UNISA to improve the quality assurance of the PGCE and B.Ed. Degree programmes. The report highlighted the following areas which needed improvement: the selection of schools, student teachers' placement, monitoring and mentoring training during the student teachers' teaching practices, and assessment of teaching

skills. Based on the HEQC (2008) report the researcher explored the student teachers' experiences during teaching practice in the Tshwane South District.

1.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Mertz (2017:2) states that a theoretical framework is a lens through which the researcher observes and approaches the research. In other words, the theoretical framework frames what the researcher sees and what others may not see. Mertz (2017) argues that it guides the various parts of the study so that the effect can encompass the study. This study is informed by Self-Determination Theory (SDT) developed by Deci and Ryan (1985). SDT starts with the belief that people have basic psychological needs for autonomy, relatedness and competence. Ryan and Deci (2017) claim that these psychological needs are present throughout people's lives. In the context of this study, autonomy refers to a supportive learning environment whereby student teachers have a choice and freedom of expression. Competence refers to how student teachers perceive their capacity to measure success. Consequently, relatedness is about interpersonal relationships; for example, how student teachers feel connected to their peers and mentor teachers. Motivation concerns of student teachers who have the desire or ability to pursue goals and complete tasks.

The theory of SDT and how it relates to this study is discussed in more detail in Chapter Two.

1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Teaching practice has become a challenging experience for UNISA student teachers. Most student teachers encounter placement challenges in schools and a lack of support from the university during their teaching practice. Mokoena (2017:130) indicates that the consistency of UNISA teaching practice systems continues to deteriorate with the rising number of student teachers in schools and the required staff support. Du Plessis (2017:9) indicates that student teachers need a great deal of support from their university. If they have not acquired the necessary skills during their training and teaching practice, they might find teaching overwhelming once they enter

the teaching profession. Due to the challenges experienced by student teachers in distance learning, Walters-Archie (2018:868) affirms that student teachers may be exposed to a sense of loneliness, isolation and disconnectedness during their teaching practice. Nkambule and Mukeredzi (2017:6) maintain that student teachers can often plan, teach and assess work in honest and professional ways through guidance support and rigorous practices from their universities and placement schools.

Most research focuses on the importance of and the supervision of TP and ignores other student teachers' issues while they are important elements in the programme. For example, the researcher has noticed that student teachers struggle with Information and Communication Technology (ICT) issues. Some student teachers still have difficulty accessing teaching and learning materials due to inadequate resources at placement schools. Although student teachers prepare for teaching practice, Yarkwah, Arthur and Takramah (2020:30) posit that they still encounter challenges that deter them from deriving the maximum benefit from the teaching practice programme. Koross (2016:80) warns that if these challenges are not addressed, student teachers' perception of the teaching profession may be affected and their performance during teaching practice may be poor. Another concern relates to class management; it has been observed that student teachers struggle to manage classes due to overcrowding and poor school infrastructure (Maseko, 2022:168). In addition, Mokoena (2017:128) reiterates that some student teachers are also being rejected at placement schools when requesting permission to conduct their teaching practice, which frustrates student teachers.

Although numerous researchers have studied student teachers' teaching practices, little research has been conducted on their experiences in township primary schools such as the Tshwane South District, Gauteng Province. Yarkwah, Arthur and Takramah (2020) conducted a study on challenges faced by mathematics education student teachers during macro-teaching practice. The study concluded that student teachers' challenges were visible and should be addressed by relevant bodies. Likewise, Koross's (2016) study on student teachers' experiences during teaching practice and its impact on their perception of the teaching profession revealed that student teachers' challenges were related to the geographical distance of schools, workload, supervision and mentoring. Du Plessis and Marais (2013:210) warn that if

challenges experienced by student teachers are not addressed, they can trigger anxiety, fear of the unknown, failure to complete all their obligations, and even frustration.

The researcher contends that this study is unique and adds to the ongoing discussion on teaching practice in this field based on several research findings. Firstly, no similar research has been done on the experiences of UNISA student teachers in the Tshwane South District primary schools in the Gauteng Province. Filling in the gap, the study increases the collection of knowledge on this topic. Secondly, this research is carried out in township schools where UNISA student teachers, who are frequently ignored in research, have received less attention. Therefore, the aim of this study was to explore the student teachers' teaching practice experiences in selected primary schools in the Tshwane South District.

1.4.1 Main Research Question

This study sought to answer the following main research question:

What are student teachers' teaching practice experiences in selected primary schools in Tshwane South District?

1.4.2 Sub-questions

From the main research question, the following sub-research questions emerge:

- How do student teachers plan for placement at schools?
- How do student teachers prepare for class teaching?
- What documents are used to facilitate the student teachers' teaching practice process?
- What strategies do student teachers use to mitigate any frustrations?

1.5 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

Considering the main research question, this study aimed to explore the student teachers' teaching practice experiences in selected primary schools in the Tshwane South District. The study aimed at exploring the planning and preparation of teaching practice, documents used to facilitate the process, and the strategies used to mitigate any frustrations.

The objectives of this study are to:

- investigate how student teachers plan for placement at schools.
- explore how student teachers prepare for class teaching.
- discover the documents used to facilitate the student teachers' teaching practice process.
- identify strategies student teachers use to mitigate any frustrations.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

McCusker and Gunaydin (2019:8) indicate that research methodology includes the whole process of research namely, the paradigm, research approaches, research design, research methods, sampling techniques used and data collection and analysis. Almalki (2016:2) describes research methodology as approaches or procedures researchers employ when performing some sort of investigation or study as they are focused on identifying, explaining and forecasting phenomena.

1.6.1 Research Design

Siu (2020:2) defines research design as a structure for conducting research. Furthermore, Siu (2020) adds that research design describes the procedures that must be followed in order to obtain the information required to address the research problem. When conducting research, qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods approaches can be used (Creswell & Creswell, 2018:60). Creswell and Creswell, (2018) add that the research may employ a case study, phenomenology, narrative biography, grounded theory, or ethnography research design, depending on the

methodology employed. For this study, the researcher employed the qualitative approach with a case study design underpinned by the interpretivist paradigm.

1.6.1.1 Research paradigm

The interpretivist/constructivist paradigm was the most appropriate paradigm to underpin this study. Given the purpose of this study, this paradigm supported the need for the student teachers' interviews and document analysis in this context, facilitating the insights of participants who have undertaken teaching practice. Funa and Talaue (2021:257) suggest that the goal of the interpretivist researcher is to obtain an understanding of complex situations. This paradigm also allowed the researcher to understand the environment in which the participants conducted their TP.

1.6.1.2 Research approach

Creswell (2013) defines a research approach as plans and procedures for research that span the decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis. It involves the interaction of philosophical assumptions, design, and specific methods. The qualitative approach was relevant since the present study sought to explore the student teachers' teaching practice experiences in selected primary schools in the Tshwane South District.

1.7 RESEARCH METHODS

According to McGregor (2018:3), the word method is derived from the Greek word *methodus*, which means "way of inquiry or examination". McGregor (2018:3) states that method, in effect, refers to researching or inquiring into something by going after or pursuing it, particularly in line with a plan. It entails applying techniques, procedures, and tasks systematically, logically, and ordered manner. In the context of research, McGregor (2018) indicates that research methods are the step in the research process where researchers build tools, apparatus, or procedures or gain site access (if applicable), procure a sample, and then collect and evaluate data from that sample. On the other hand, Behar-Horenstein (2018:2) argues that research methods can

bring to the forefront knowledge about phenomena that are not understood or that have not been explored.

The following section discusses the selection of participants, data collection techniques and data analysis process.

1.7.1 Sampling Techniques

The researcher adopted a purposive sampling technique since it is described as a careful selection of members of the community who are likely to provide the best information for the study (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013:314). Furthermore, Savin-Baden and Major (2013) state that purposive sampling is a strategy in which settings, persons, or activities are selected deliberately to provide information that cannot be obtained from other sources. The UNISA student teachers registered for the B.Ed. Degree and PGCE programmes and placed at four primary schools within the Tshwane South District in Gauteng Province were purposively selected. A total of eight student teachers participated in this study. Five were registered for the B.Ed. programme, while three were registered for the PGCE programme. Three B.Ed. student teachers were female and two were male. Two female and one male student teachers were registered for the third-year level of the B.Ed. programme while others (female and male) registered for their final year. Two PGCE student teachers were female, while one was male.

The selection of participants is fully discussed in Chapter 3.

1.7.2 Data Collection

According to Flick (2018:18), data collection refers to the selection and production of linguistic (or visual) material used to study and comprehend phenomena, social contexts and individual and group experiences. Additionally, Flick (2018) argues that data collection is used to discover and describe issues in the field and procedures. Data collection may be based on verbal communication, listening, observation and analysis of visual, aural or digital phenomena. Qualitative data collection can include

single or multiple methods. In this study, the researcher used semi-structured interviews and document analysis to collect data.

1.7.2.1 *Semi-structured interviews*

O'Reilly and Dogra (2017:3) describe semi-structured interviews as a qualitative technique that requires the researcher to have a list of questions ready; however, it allows the participants to determine the interview path. While the interview can take any shape, depending on the flow of the conversation, Durdella (2019:10) advises that researchers can plan for what will happen in fieldwork settings, bringing consistency to data collection efforts. The interview procedure was guided by an interview schedule that included a set of pre-planned open-ended questions. The application of open-ended questions allowed participants to provide detailed information about their experiences. Five B.Ed. and three PGCE student teachers were interviewed in this study.

1.7.2.2 *Document analysis*

Billups (2021:3) describes document analysis as a systematic procedure for assessing and evaluating documents to elicit meaning and gain knowledge. Furthermore, Billups (2021) states that document analysis contains data that the researcher must interpret within the context of the study's focus. The researcher analysed student teachers' daily attendance registers, indemnity forms, placement forms, and timetables.

1.8 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

According to Ghosh (2017:2), data analysis is a process of applying analytical practices to arrange, evaluate, assess, present and interpret data. The thematic data analysis method, proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006), was employed to analyse the collected data. The researcher followed the six steps of analysing data, namely: familiarisation with data, generating codes, constructing themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and writing a report.

The data analysis process is described in Chapter 3 (*cf.* Subsection 3.4.3).

1.9 MEASURES FOR TRUSTWORTHINESS

Trustworthiness is the term used for measuring the quality of research in qualitative research (Mishra & Alok, 2017). The researcher used four criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985:296-300), namely credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability to validate the study.

1.9.1 Credibility

Farmer and Farmer (2021:17) state that credibility refers to the believability of the study, where the researcher accurately describes and interprets the participants' understanding of the phenomenon. To determine the accuracy of the findings of this study, member checks were carried out by returning the analysed data to participants to determine their accuracy and credibility. Peer debriefing was also used as another strategy to determine the credibility of the study. Peer debriefing helped the researcher in being truthful with data analysis. Developed themes were sent to the supervisor for debriefing and verification.

1.9.2 Transferability

Billups (2021:9) indicates that transferability refers to when the researcher provides sufficient detail about the research process, participants and environment so that readers of the findings can decide if the findings are applicable. The findings of the study are not transferrable to other contexts due to the unique experiences of each participant and their social context. However, the methods used in this study could be applicable in similar cases which may produce different results. Thick descriptions of the research methods as well as the research findings, were provided in this study to allow applicability to other research studies.

1.9.3 Dependability

According to Farmer and Farmer (2021:18), dependability refers to the steadiness of results through time. The researcher ensured dependability in this study by using an audit trail. Billups (2021:8) states that an audit trail is a framework of the research

process that outlines the detailed procedural records that the researcher must maintain. Field notes and raw interview data were kept throughout the study. The researcher also used triangulation by using a tape recorder, taking thorough notes throughout interview sessions and using document analysis to guarantee that no data were missed.

1.9.4 Confirmability

Billups (2021:9) defines confirmability as the degree to which other researchers may affirm or refute the findings of the investigation. In addition to the features and preparedness of the research, to confirm the results from the study, the findings were based on the experiences and thoughts of the participants.

1.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Prior to the beginning of this study, two ethical clearance certificates were issued by UNISA to conduct the study (*cf.* Appendix A and B). The researcher sought permission from the district office to conduct the study in four public primary schools. The district gave the researcher access to schools to collect data (*cf.* Appendix C). Consent forms of the participants were also secured (*cf.* Appendix E). The aim of the study was clearly explained to the participants. Confidentiality was assured to participants. Participants were also informed that they were free to withdraw from participation. To protect participants' identities, the researcher used pseudonyms.

1.11 CLARIFICATIONS OF KEY CONCEPTS

Key terms are clarified for the purpose of this research.

1.11.1 Student Teacher

Munjita (2019:9) describes a student teacher as a higher learning institution student who is placed at a school during teaching practice under the supervision of a qualified teacher to be graded for the programme in education. For the purpose of this study, a

student teacher refers to a student who is enrolled in either the B.Ed. or the PGCE programmes.

1.11.2 Experiences

Spickard (2017:2) describes experiences as things that present themselves to people directly with ideas, opinions, feelings and meanings. This study's experiences refer to the positive and negative feelings student teachers experience during teaching practice. Munjita (2019:12) indicates that experiences refer to student teachers' understanding of interactions with teaching practice and processes that contribute to their knowledge development. In this study, experiences refer to student teachers' pleasant and unpleasant feelings and what they encounter during teaching practice.

1.11.3 Primary School

According to the Department (DBE, 2011:89), the term primary school is referred to a school that offers Grades R-7. Okonkwo, Oladejo, and Alimba state that primary schools offer educational and learning activities to learners in basic reading and writing skills. Okonkwo et al. (2022) add that primary school learners are between the ages of six and twelve. For the purpose of this study, primary schools are schools that host student teachers during their teaching practice (Okonkwo et al., 2022:180).

1.11.4 Teaching Practice

Teaching practice, according to Mubita Kalimaposo, Mundende, Sikayomya, Milupi and Haambokoma (2022:1), is described as a period when student teachers spend teaching at placement schools as part of their training. On the other hand, Onyebuenyi, Onovo and Aniako (2022:2) describe teaching practice as a form of work-integrated learning (WIL) that is defined as a period when students are working in the relevant industry to receive specific in-service training in order to apply theory to practice. In the context of this study, teaching practice refers to a period in which B.Ed. and PGCE student teachers are placed in schools in order to conduct their teaching practice.

1.11.5 Mentor Teachers

Jafar et al. (2021:633) state that mentor teachers are experienced teachers who assist, offer guidance, advise, and provide counselling services to student teachers during their teaching practice. Additionally, Munjita (2019:14) explains that a mentor teacher is a teacher at a placement school responsible for helping, supporting and guiding a student teacher who is doing his/her teaching practice. In this study, mentor teachers refer to experienced teachers who the principal assigns to provide guidance and support to student teachers during teaching practice at placement schools.

1.11.6 Supervisor

Ode, Iloakasia, and Maduka (2020:6) refer to a supervisor as an experienced teacher who is responsible for assessing and evaluating student teachers during teaching practice. In addition, Jafar et al. (2021:633) define a supervisor as someone who the university appoints to visit and assess student teachers at placement schools. In the context of this study, the supervisor refers to the person who is assigned by the university to assess student teachers at placement schools during teaching practice.

1.11.7 University of South Africa

The University of South Africa (UNISA) is an Open Distance Learning (ODL) institution which provides educational opportunities for part-time students who often cannot access full-time and campus-based higher education. Former Vice-Chancellor and Principal of UNISA Barney Pityana (2009:7) explains that ODL is a form of a model of education promising to tackle the ongoing problem of restricted access to higher education. UNISA seeks to bridge the gap between institutions and students, between academics and students, between geographical, cultural, social and educational and communicate context between students and individual students (UNISA, 2008). UNISA in this study, is defined as a higher learning institution in which the student teachers are enrolled for the B.Ed. Degree and PGCE ODL programmes.

1.12 CHAPTERS DIVISION

The study is comprised of the following chapters:

Chapter 1: Orientation of the study: provided an overview of the study. The chapter presented research areas such as the introduction, the background of the research, theoretical framework, clarification of the concepts, problem statement and research questions, the research aims and objectives, research methodology, measures of trustworthiness, ethical considerations, division of chapters and summary of chapters.

Chapter 2: Student Teachers' teaching practice experiences and theoretical framework: reviews the literature relevant to the study. This chapter aims to analyse and report on previous studies on a similar topic. The chapter discusses TP in international countries, followed by the South African context. Self-determination theory is the theoretical framework that underpins this study and is examined in this chapter. South African policies that are aligned with TP are also discussed. The chapter elaborates on literature based on the experiences of student teachers. Planning for TP is also discussed broadly and strategies used by student teachers to mitigate their frustrations during TP are discussed. The chapter concludes with a summary.

Chapter 3: Research design and methods: describes the study's methodology in more detail. This chapter contains the rationale for empirical research, research design and methods. Measures of trustworthiness and ethical consideration are explicitly explained. The chapter ends with a summary.

Chapter 4: Data analysis and interpretation: offers an in-depth analysis of the findings and presents a discussion and interpretation of the findings. This chapter covers participants' biographical information, interviews and documents analysis and interpretation. Lastly, the chapter ends with concluding remarks.

Chapter 5: Summary, Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations: concludes the study by providing a discussion of findings and recommendations. Limitations of the study, avenues of further research and concluding remarks were discussed.

1.13 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter provided an orientation to the study. It provided the background of why the study was conducted, exploring the student teachers' teaching practice experiences in selected primary schools in Tshwane South District. The next chapter presents in detail the contextual factors and theoretical framework of student teachers' experiences during TP.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The overview of this study is presented in Chapter 1. A review of the literature on the planning and preparation of teaching practice, documents used to facilitate the process, and the strategies used to mitigate any frustrations and theoretical framework are discussed in this chapter. The international, national and local literature was studied in order to understand the phenomenon under study. McGregor (2018:3) describes a literature review as an assessment and a critical, evaluative report on information found in the literature relating to a specific area of study. A literature review has two purposes - firstly, a literature review can be used to create a picture or portrait of prior information that has been gathered around a topic, bringing the researcher and readers up to date on the current state of the research. Secondly, researchers use a literature review to discover findings that are closely related to their research topic (McGregor, 2018:4).

2.2 TEACHING PRACTICE IN INTERNATIONAL COUNTRIES

As indicated earlier (*cf.* Chapter 1, subsection 1.2), teaching practice provides student teachers with experience in the real teaching and learning environment. The concept of student teaching practice, according to Nkabule and Murekedzi (2017:1), is globally based on the training of teachers before the service in diverse schools and with students in different contexts. Nkabule and Murekedzi (2017) argue that teaching practice promotes the development of knowledge, professionalism and a sense of efficiency in the performance and interaction of student teachers. Ifeoma (2016:83) explains that teaching practice is when student teachers implement the various learning experiences they have gained in the lessons and theories they have learned. In many countries, there is a slight difference between the types of teaching practice structures.

According to Musingafi, Dhliwayo and Namusi (2019), when Zimbabwe achieved its independence in 1980, student teachers were regarded as apprentices under the

guidance of experienced teachers. Due to the high demand for teachers in Zimbabwe, there was a paradigm shift in 1982. The government was forced to hire student teachers as full-time teachers with their own classes because of the overcrowding crisis (Musingafi et al., 2019:78). As the availability of teachers grew, student teachers were again supervised and taught by experienced, qualified professionals at the end of the 1990s. The Zimbabweans used what is called the 2-5-2 model for teaching practice. With this model, student teachers are placed at the training college for the first two terms. They then spend five school terms at a host school doing teaching practice. During the final two school terms, student teachers return to the training college to prepare for their final examinations (Musingafi et al., 2019:78).

In Canada, the teaching practice consists of three distinct components: pre-training, first placement and professional year of practice (Dan & Liu, 2021:7). In total, pretraining is 120 hours, consisting of 40 hours starting in the second year. The first placement is four weeks, while twelve weeks are allocated for the remaining two professional years. However, Dan and Liu (2021:6) state that teaching practice is six to eight allocated weeks in China. Student teachers usually begin with their teaching practice when nearing the end of their undergraduate qualification (Dan & Liu, 2021).

Ulla (2016:237) explains that in the Philippines, three major educational governing bodies have responsibility for the implementation, development and surveillance of the country's education programme. The Department of Education monitors both public and private institutions. According to Ulla (2016), the two agencies, the Commission of Higher Education and the Department of Education, collaborate to improve teacher education in the country. All higher learning institutions' programmes, curricula, and performances are monitored, evaluated, and set by the Commission of Higher Education. The Department of Education, on the other hand, establishes student teaching curriculum standards and strategies for both the Bachelor of Science in Education and the Bachelor of Elementary Education programmes. In other words, the Department of Education has no authority over the teaching curriculum in the Bachelor of Arts programme; instead, the programme is evaluated by the Commission on Higher Education. If Bachelor of Arts students choose to teach in public schools, they must first complete the teaching certification consisting of eighteen units of technical

teaching courses. After passing the license examination for teachers, students should apply to become teachers in government schools (Ulla, 2016).

In Ghana, final-year College of Education students are required to complete a 12months teaching practice in practicing schools within the colleges' catchment areas as part of their professional development leading to the award of a Diploma in Basic Education Certificate (Assafuah-Drokov, Mensah, Yin & Baah, 2018:146). AssafuahDrokov et al. (2018) claim that a student teacher's credential is forfeited if they fail to complete or pass teaching practice. Student teachers are required to complete ten months of rigorous teaching experience in primary and junior high schools during the twelve-month programme and return to their respective colleges at the end of the tenth week to study for and write their final examinations in the eleventh and twelfth months (Assafuah-Drokov et al., 2018).

This means that, while different institutions use different teaching practice programmes, they all have the same goal: to enable student teachers to demonstrate specific competencies they should have developed at various stages of their training.

2.3 TEACHING PRACTICE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Several studies on teaching practice in South Africa have been conducted by researchers such as Segoe and Dreyer (2015), Mokoena (2017), and Du Plessis (2020). Teaching practice helps student teachers develop teaching skills while exposed to real situations in the school and the classroom. The Department of Education Norms and Standards for Educators (2000:12) notes that the teaching practice provides an authentic context where student teachers can experience the complexities and wealth of a teacher's realities. Similarly, Mangope et al. (2018:58) argue that teaching practice is one of the essential ways for student teachers to be exposed to actual experiments by teachers to offer them the necessary pedagogical skills. Mangope et al. (2018) maintain that it is thus crucial for student teachers to understand their experiences to ensure better results for existing and future teachers.

The teaching practice allows student teachers to see whether they have chosen the right career (Yarkwah et al., 2020). However, Masood, Siddiqui, and Arif, (2022:132)

argue that geographical distance occasionally reduces teaching practice despite its significance. In this regard, Assafuah-Drokov et al. (2018:146) argue that as student teachers continue to practice, they can be faced with challenges in their placement schools, like loneliness, poor and unequal teacher competence, and a poorly centralised teacher education system.

Student teachers must obtain an undergraduate qualification related to teaching to qualify as a teacher in South African universities. The Postgraduate Certificate Education (PGCE) and the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degree are the two most common teacher education qualifications offered by South African Higher Education institutions. South African schools' qualifications consist of four school phases, the Foundation Phase (Grades 1 to 3), Intermediate Phase (Grades 4 to 6), Senior Phase (Grades 7 to 9) and Further Education and Training (Grades 10 to 12), as mentioned earlier (*cf.* Chapter 1, subsection 1.3).

The University of Pretoria, North-West University and the University of Johannesburg offer full-time teaching programmes. According to Mpofu and Maphalala (2018:3), the University of Pretoria offers a PGCE programme whereby student teachers are involved in a ten-week teaching practice, at least two weeks of teaching practice is specified by North-West University and eight to ten weeks' teaching practice by the University of Johannesburg.

The teaching practice model, followed by the South African Higher Institutions is the placement of student teachers at a variety of schools in segments over four years of study. It is anticipated that school experience, also known as Work Integrated Learning (WIL), will enable student teachers to experience the diversity of education in functional schools across the country (Mokoena, 2017:122). WIL should be officially supervised, monitored and evaluated by lecturers and external supervisors. However, Mokoena (2017:122) shows three connotations in the teaching practice: the practice of teaching skill and the student teacher's role, the scope and complexity of a student teacher's school experience, and as realistic aspects aside from theory. In terms of education policies, institutions of higher learning which provide training for teachers in South Africa must ensure that students are placed in schools where they engage in the teaching reality and participate in the broader context of the school (DHET), 2015).

2.4 SOUTH AFRICAN POLICIES ON TEACHING PRACTICE

Policies governing teaching practice in South Africa are as follows: National Qualification Framework (NQF), the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (MRTEQ), and the National Framework for Teacher Education.

2.4.1 The National Qualification Framework Act 68 of 2008

The National Qualification Framework (NQF) Act 68 OF 2008 sets minimum standards in accordance with its aim and level for various types of teacher qualifications. The policy sets out clear guidelines for higher education institutions for the design of academic and vocational training programmes for student teachers and outlines the basic competencies required of newly qualified teachers. The NQF is designed to classify, register and publish approved national qualifications by the South African Qualification Authority (SAQA). Under the sub-framework of higher education, education training is being addressed. According to Parker and Walters (2008:74), the NQF consists of three components: general knowledge and theory, general and professionally relevant practical skills, and the required work experience. This means that these components making up the teaching qualification may be studied and assessed separately at various locations. The student teachers' achievements are formally recorded, and the standard or qualification unit consisting of specific sets of components is certified.

2.4.2 Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications

The MRTEQ framework guides the scope, depth, and stringency of South Africa's Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes. This framework is the key principle that describes requirements for admittance, exit results, or competencies that student teachers demonstrate when they are new teachers (DHET, 2015). This policy is based on a theoretical and practical combination of competent learning. According to Carl and Strydom (2017:2), competent learning entails the acquisition, incorporation, and implementation of various forms of information.

In terms of teaching practice, the MRTEQ policy needs student teachers to have in-depth, concentrated, or specialised knowledge, as well as practical skills that will enable them to apply it in a variety of settings in schools (DHET, 2015:12). Student teachers should develop a paper-based portfolio and focus on their learning experiences during teaching practice at the school (Carl & Strydom, 2017:2). The MRTEQ system aims at developing graduate attributes of student teachers so that they are thoroughly qualified by the time they become credentialed teachers (Nomlomo & Sosibo, 2016:8).

2.4.3 National Framework for Teacher Education

The South African Ministry of Education indicates that new recruits to the teaching profession can enter the teaching trade in two ways. Firstly, a B.Ed., a qualification which has 480 credits and is on NQF level 7. The B.Ed. The degree has a Relative Education Qualification Value (REQV) 14 and leads to the South African Council of Educators (SACE) registration. Secondly, a student who obtained an acceptable initial degree, for example, a Bachelor of Arts (BA) and Bachelor of Science (BSc) will enrol for a one-year post-graduate education certificate (PGCE) for teaching method which has 120 credits and is equivalent to NQF-Level 7 (South African Ministry of Education, 2006). The certificate has a REQV of 14 and contributes to the registration of the SACE. The teaching practice is compulsory for all the above qualifications.

2.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A theoretical framework, according to Baier (2019:7), is a conceptual model for theorising or making a rational understanding of the relationships between several factors that have been established as being important to the problem. A theoretical framework establishes which questions the study must address and how scientific methods can be used to answer them (Baier, 2019). According to Parson (2018:4), a theoretical framework seeks to categorically incorporate main data components, such as topics, and concepts that can be analysed. The main ideas in this research are further explained by the self-determination (SDT) theoretical framework, which allows readers to understand the researchers' concepts and assumptions.

2.5.1 Self-Determination Theory Perspective

In this study, the experiences of student teachers in teaching practice are viewed in the context of the Deci and Ryan (1985) SDT through which various motivations are discussed. In recent research, this theoretical perspective has been used in the field of education (Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier & Ryan, 2007). Deci and Ryan (1985) are the main proponents of the SDT. According to these researchers, the theory started with an experimental analysis of the impact of environmental experiences on intrinsic motivation and progressed from there to a large motivational theory of personality, both inductively and deductively.

Deci and Ryan (2000:68) identify SDT as a method for studying human motivation and personality that uses traditional empirical methods while also stressing the importance of human's developed inner resources for personality formation and behavioural self-regulation. According to Deci and Ryan (2000), SDT focuses on qualitative rather than quantitative variations in motivation. SDT is a general theory of human personality and motivation dealing with how an individual interacts with and is influenced by their social environment (Legault, 2017:1).

2.5.2 SDT Psychological Needs

This section discusses three psychological need types: autonomy, competence and relatedness. Ryan and Deci (1985:10) state that students' performance will improve when these psychological needs are fostered during teaching practice.

2.5.2.1 *Autonomy*

Autonomy is a type of functioning that is correlated with feelings of volition, congruence and integration (Ryan & Deci, 1985:10). According to the authors, autonomy is characterised as a sense of voluntariness and is thus distinct from independence or self-reliance.

In this regard, individuals may be autonomously or heteronomous dependent, independent or interdependent depending on the context and actions involved. Only

some deliberate acts are completely self-regulated or autonomous, according to SDT, whereas others are governed by external powers or relatively unintegrated facets of one's personality (Ryan & Deci, 1985). As a result, a student teacher's acts can be performed without a sense of volition or self-approval.

2.5.2.2 Competence

Competence is one of the most studied topics and is generally regarded as a key component in motivating behaviour. Competence refers to the fundamental need to feel inspired and master what one specialises in (Ryan & Deci, 2000:58). That is, student teachers should feel confident in their ability to function efficiently within important life contexts, such as their teaching practice. According to Ryan and Deci (2000), competence is thwarted in situations where challenges are experienced, negative feedback is prevalent, or interpersonal factors such as person-focused criticism and social comparisons reduce or weaken feelings of superiority and effectiveness.

2.5.2.3 Relatedness

According to Ryan and Deci (1985:11), the third psychological need is relatedness, which refers to a sense of social connection. Relatedness often involves feelings of belonging and meaning (Ryan & Deci, 1985). SDT argues that the inherent growth trends of student teachers and innate psychological needs form the basis of their self-motivation and integration of personality and the conditions underlying these positive processes (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Thus, the own curiosity and interests of student teachers can be powerful instruments for promoting the desire for learning. In other words, student teachers seek to develop and understand themselves by integrating new experiences and developing their needs, desires and interests. When students feel cared for by their peers, mentor teachers and supervisors, they are more likely to feel connected.

2.5.3 Types of Motivation

Several studies such as those by Buzdar, Mohsin, Akbar & Mohammad (2017) and Indrawati and Musyarofah (2019), have been conducted about the motivation of student teachers during teaching practice. Indrawati and Musyarofah (2019:216) state that motivation is the process that encourages an individual to achieve his or her goal. Additionally, Buzdar et al. (2017:74) state that motivation provides individuals with the necessary force for directing and empowering their energy and passion leading them to greater satisfaction and academic performance.

Despite the challenges faced, student teachers must remain motivated to successfully complete their teaching practice. From the SDT point of view, student teachers perform better when they are motivated. Thus, the teaching practice performance of student teachers is vital. According to Buzdar et al. (2017:76), academic performance greatly impacts students' determination and motivation. The authors add that students fail to be granted admission to a higher level when their academic performance is poor. In other words, when student teachers are not motivated to perform better in their teaching practice, they will certainly fail their teaching practice modules. The SDT further posits that student teachers may become motivated because of the overwhelming experience they have during their teaching practice. The practical experiences of student teachers are crucial in their training. Msangya et al. (2016:118) cautioned that the interpretation of experiences shared by student teachers indicates that some of the programmes have certain flaws. Msangya et al. (2016) also emphasise the importance of the student teachers' informative answers to their teaching practice experience, which must be acted upon to make the experiences fulfilling and satisfying.

The following section explores three types of motivation postulated by the SDT intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation.

2.5.3.1 Intrinsic Motivation

According to Deci and Ryan (1985), intrinsically motivated students are guided from within. They display signs of having psychological needs to be competent, have the

desire to learn, can try learning experiences on their own and complete tasks in order to satisfy their desire to learn more. The degree of interest and the essence of the task is often affected by intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000:56). It can be fostered intrinsically when there is an interaction between individuals and activities. Legault (2016:1) states that intrinsic motivation refers to the inherent satisfaction or enjoyment of behaviour. Legault (2016) adds that intrinsically motivated action is not dependent on any results that are distinct from the behaviour. Intrinsically motivated activities are pleasant and purposeful in nature and are pursued not as a separable object of value but for inherent reasons (Legault, 2016:2).

The term intrinsic motivation is used by Hendeijani, Bishachk, Arvai and Dugar (2016:4) to refer to the performance of an activity for its innate concern for the fun and satisfaction of the activity. Vansteenkiste et al. (2018:31) argue that activities are intrinsically driven by the appealing and interesting content they are carried out. Fishbach and Woolley (2022:342) note that many tasks are not intrinsically interesting or stimulating in an academic environment; therefore, student teachers cannot always rely on their intrinsic motivation to foster education. Fishbach and Woolley (2022) maintain that to help a student teacher to desire academic success, it is crucial to have a thorough awareness of the different motivations they may have. Intrinsically motivated student teachers have a strong cognitive need to learn and appreciate their surroundings, as well as a good sense of self and what they are doing.

Meanwhile, Ng (2018:4) posits that intrinsically motivated student teachers are willing to expand their perception, have a sense of purpose, have beliefs that a goal will be achieved, practice and persevere, learn more about the subject and engage in self-directed learning. As a result, intrinsically motivated student teachers are led from within and have self-generated motivation for work. They do not rely on the encouragement of those in their group to motivate them to complete their mission. The more student teachers are inspired, the more responsible they feel for their behaviour. This type of motivation is linked to internals, such as the happiness and pleasure derived from an activity.

According to Ryan and Deci (2000:56), intrinsic motivation must be done to get intrinsic pleasure without inevitable consequences. In the teaching process, the students'

interest is an important factor in determining the scope and direction of their continuing studies and should be considered in the intrinsic scope of incentives. Di Domenico and Ryan (2017:2) argue that incentives for self-determination strengthen the motivation behind it and that the absence of those incentives is destructive of the reason. Factors that may undermine student teachers' motivation include lack of communication from the university, lack of feedback from supervisors, lack of mentoring teachers, and little support from lectures responsible for those practical modules about teaching practices.

Adaptation to a new environment is a challenge experienced by many. Wiegerová and Lukášová (2021:66) mentions that student teachers need to adapt to the school environment. They add that the school environment might be linked to certain risks at the start of attendance of student teachers. Mutual cooperation between placement schools and the university is a phenomenon that needs greater focus. In this regard, the teaching practice office (TPO) can play an important role in addressing these concerns. In the process of professionalisation of a future teacher, it is important that student teachers believe in the meaning and importance of their profession.

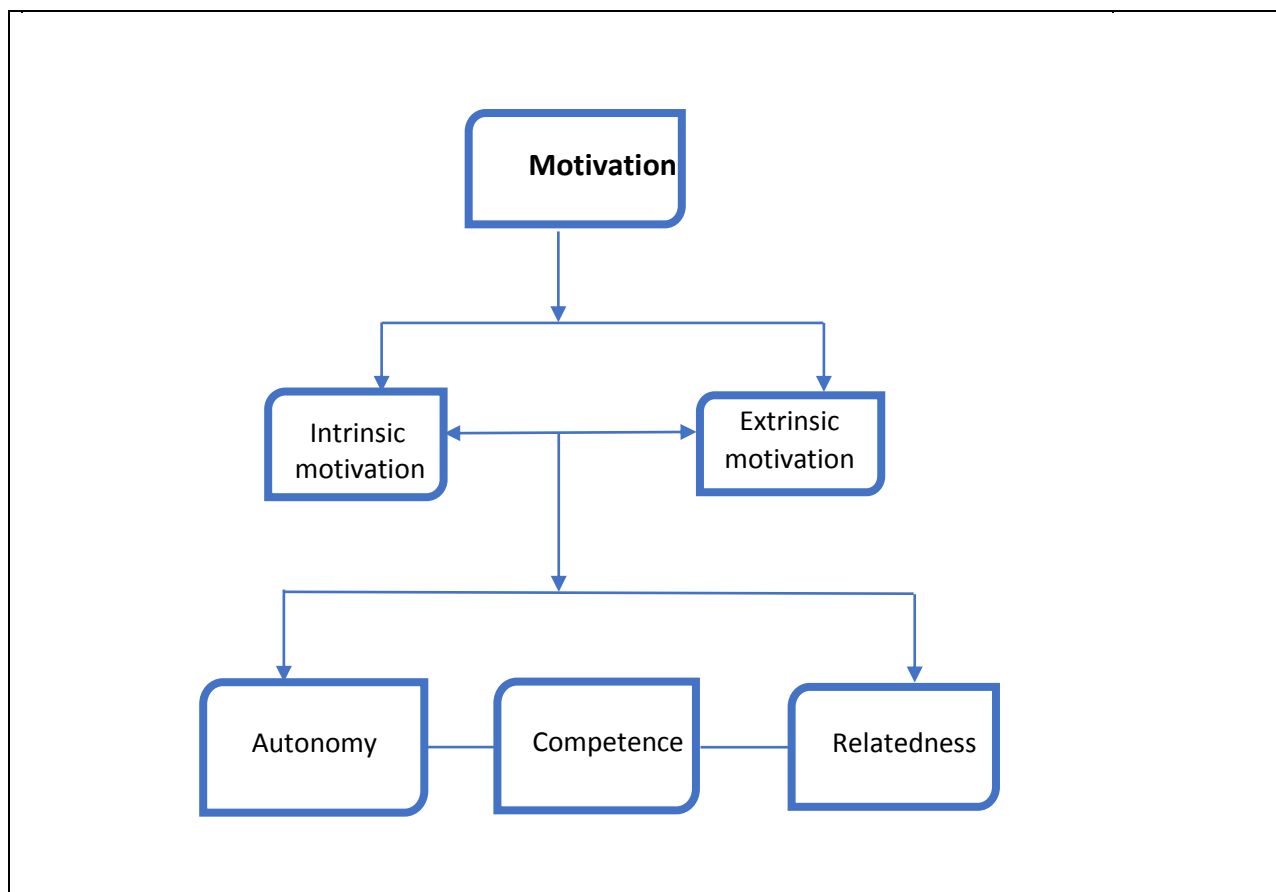
2.5.3.2 Extrinsic Motivation

Ryan and Deci (2000:60) indicate that extrinsic motivation is a motivation that is necessary when a task is performed to achieve something satisfactory. This contrasts with intrinsic motivation, meaning that a task takes place for pleasure rather than value. Externally driven behaviours can therefore vary from how highly independent student teachers are (Ryan & Deci, 2000:65). Although many researchers and theorists claim that extrinsically motivated behaviours are not autonomous, Deci and Ryan (1992) maintain that those behaviours can be independent. Hence, they believe that behaviour can be affected by extrinsic influences at first but can ultimately become autonomous.

The extent to which extrinsic motivation is independent varies significantly according to SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2000:60). Student teachers, for example, who do their teaching practice exclusively to escape sanctions, are extrinsically motivated by the distinct objective of avoiding sanctions. Conversely, student teachers working in their selected

profession because they presume it can help them succeed are extrinsically motivated because they do that for their practical benefit and not because they enjoy it. Serin (2018:192) agrees and explains how extrinsic motivation represents a form of strengthening that can improve the performance of students while seeking to learn. In other words, extrinsic motivation can excite students with low motivation levels. Serin (2018) points out that extrinsic motivation helps to develop adequate behaviours, and not to disrupt students, for example, by performing tasks in the classroom.

Student teachers who are extrinsically motivated set their success expectations based on social norms and traditions, according to Buzdar et al. (2017:75). As a result, they are more social and polite. In other words, lecturers should take advantage of these extrinsically inspired student teachers' tendencies to strengthen and enhance their teaching practice results. Legault (2016:2), on the other hand, contends that not all extrinsic motivation is created equal and that certain types of extrinsic motivation feel more self-endorsed and self-concordant than others. Extrinsic motivation is a broad category of motives that vary in their autonomy, or how often they are based on an internal perceived locus of causality and sense of personal volition rather than being a one-dimensional construct. Legault (2016) attests that even if an activity is not pleasant or enjoyable and, therefore not intrinsically motivated, it can be internally regulated rather than extrinsically controlled. Extrinsically motivated student teachers, according to Lepper and Malone (2021:260), are typically uncertain of themselves and their own abilities, are not imaginative, rely heavily on external pressure or support, and have little desire to develop their knowledge beyond the fundamental elements. They do nothing that is not anticipated of them. Figure 2.3 illustrates the psychological needs based on the self-determination theory.



(Source: adapted from Deci & Ryan, 1985)

Figure 2.1: Psychological needs based on self-determination theory.

The above diagram illustrates the continuum of self-determination theory. Three psychological needs that foster student teachers' motivation during teaching practice have been explicitly explained (*cf.* Section 2.5).

2.6 TEACHING PRACTICE AND MOTIVATION IN OPEN DISTANCE LEARNING (ODL)

Teaching in open distance learning (ODL) is a topic that has long been studied. Research conducted by Mokoena (2017) on teacher preparation in the field of ODL shows that the way teaching practice is planned presents conceptual and educational challenges. In this regard, several institutions are abandoning the supervision system because of organisational problems because of the various problems faced by ODL (Mokoena, 2017:124). Difficulties in the field of teaching through ODL include student

teachers' placement at schools, support during school visits, relationship building with all stakeholders, assessment processes and insight (Maseko, 2022).

However, even in an ODL context, student teachers engage in teaching practice and need to be motivated to ensure that the effectiveness of the teaching practice prepares them for their entry into the teaching profession. Buzdar et al. (2017:74) argue that motivation, which Makki and Abid (2017:38) describe as a theoretical construction used to describe behaviour, gives student teachers the strength to direct and empower their energies and passion for improved academic satisfaction, and in this case, for ensuring a successful time in the classroom during teaching practice.

One of the ODL institutions in South Africa is the University of South Africa (UNISA). The teaching and learning process at UNISA differs to that of other residential institutions or universities in that there is a physical distance between the student and the university. The word distance at the ODL institution, according to UNISA (2008), means that most students interact at a distance, mostly in a digital format, with the university. UNISA students are responsible for the planning and efficient time management of their own studies, as they do not attend daily classes. This does not mean, however, that the students are alone.

However, Nsamba and Makoe (2017:92) argue that distance affects both learning and education, it contributes to the isolation and disorientation of students and reduces their motivation, involvement and attribution levels. Ryan and Deci (2000) suggest that extrinsic motivation is a way of enhancing the performance of students during the programme. Serin (2018:192) also argues that extrinsic motivation can inspire enthusiasm among students with a low level of motivation. At the same time, motivation from outside can help develop suitable learning behaviours. Masood et al. (2022:131) argue that understanding the student teachers' experiences will help lecturers and school-based teachers to recognise what is favourable and effective during the teaching practice period.

2.6.1 Student Teachers' Experiences during Teaching Practice

Experience is referred to by Vyas and Van der Veer (2005:1) as a process whereby users construct eventual experience within the setting afforded by the environment. The student teachers' practical experience is crucial for the preparation of qualified teachers. The perceptions voiced by student teachers regarding their teaching practice experiences indicated that the programme has some deficiencies that make the experience stressful (Msangya et al., 2016:118). Student teachers have raised issues relating to school placement and the supervisory process. The insightful responses of the student teachers about their teaching practice experience are very important and must be acted upon to make the experiences fulfilling and satisfying (Msangya et al., 2016).

The study conducted by Ulla (2016:246) found that during teaching practice in the Philippines, student teachers did not have enough time for exposure in the classroom and practise teaching as they were obliged to finish other course requirements. Ulla (2016) revealed that student teachers felt that the module lectures and supervisors should monitor, help, and teach them how to develop teaching materials for class use. Student teachers revealed that knowledge of planning, preparing and develop teaching materials in the class is an important skill that should be learned. Student teachers further said that the lack of skill in planning and preparing a lesson and developing teaching materials can lead to ineffective teaching (Ulla, 2016:246).

2.6.2 Support from Stakeholders

As an ODL institution, UNISA has introduced several programmes to promote student support, such as e-tutoring, lecturers, and counselling. Joubert and Snyman (2017:128) define e-tutoring as a form of teaching in an online context that provides personalised guidance in situations where regular face-to-face contact between lecturers and students is not viable. E-tutoring is aimed at promoting meaningful learning experiences for UNISA student teachers so that they can benefit from positive learning experience. as students and their lecturers are physically distanced, in the ODL context, support services are critical so that communication via different technologies is facilitated to ensure student success.

To ensure optimal student support systems, UNISA has installed Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure at 34 teacher centres throughout the country, in partnership with the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) to provide online access for student teachers in public schools. The teacher centres also aim to provide support to enhance the quality of teaching management systems and enable student teachers to become technologically knowledgeable teachers (UNISA, 2020:20).

The College of Education (CEDU) at UNISA has established a Teaching Practice Office (TPO), whose main function is to ensure that all registered student teachers are placed in their respective schools where they choose to do their teaching practice. However, student teachers should be professionally supported by their mentor teachers and supervisors during their teaching practice periods, which aligns with Du Plessis's (2020:9) argument that student teachers require a great deal of teaching aid and guidance from mentor teachers.

2.7 PREPARATION AT PLACEMENT SCHOOLS

Prior to the beginning of the actual teaching practice, student teachers are required to plan for placement at schools. Placement schools in the context of this study refer to the schools where student teachers are being placed for the duration of their teaching practice. In terms of the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa (NPFTED) (2007), student teachers must be placed in schools that have been identified as excellent places of teaching and learning. In other words, student teachers need to be placed in schools that will complement their theoretical training experience and where student teachers will gain valuable experience in day-to-day operations during their teaching practice. However,

Mokoena's study (2017:128) shared student teachers' frustrations regarding their placement in approved schools. Some student teachers blamed the UNISA TPO, which did not respond to their queries timeously. Mokoena (2017:128) indicates that communication breakdown with the TPO frustrated the students, especially if they were unable to identify good schools for their practice teaching close to where they live.

2.7.1 Motivation during Placement at Schools

Reception of student teachers by placement schools is crucial because it contributes to how student teachers perceive teaching practice. A study conducted by Yarkwah et al. (2020:34) on teaching practice found that student teachers were not always welcomed and were not respected by other staff members. Liu, Li and Zou (2019) affirm that this type of experience is likely to cause low levels of efficacy and reduces the chance of intrinsic motivation for student teachers. Therefore, it becomes difficult for student teachers to perform as they feel isolated and alienated. Additionally, Yarkwah et al. (2020) indicate that student teachers felt insignificant when they were excluded from participating in school activities. Buzdar et al. (2017:75) found that student teachers' contribution to teaching practice was generally low due to unwelcoming placement environments.

According to Abongdia et al. (2015:51), placement schools allow student teachers to learn more about teaching and learning. Abongdia et al. (2015) add that student teachers acquire valuable experience in practice and teaching and knowledge of applying different educational theories in the teaching and learning context. Furthermore, placement schools allow student teachers to participate in a structured and supported school life. Student teachers feel intrinsically motivated to learn when they feel supported by the staff during teaching practice. In agreement, a study conducted by Frommelt, Schiefele and Lazarides (2021) on teacher enthusiasm, supportive instructional practices, and student motivation in mathematics classrooms revealed that students who reported stronger mastery goals were those that perceived support for autonomy, competence, social and relatedness.

2.7.2 Choosing Schools for Teaching Practice

SDT indicates that students should feel more self-reliant and have greater autonomy regarding their sense of choice which relates to enhanced intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Student teachers are afforded opportunities to experience themselves as autonomous and if genuinely, meaningfully connected to other persons, then development progress will be optimal. Student teachers should therefore identify and be placed at schools within their geographical vicinity for their teaching practice. This

would eliminate the challenge of accessibility, as found by Assafuah-Drokov et al. (2018:147) who reported that student teachers in Ghana walk long distances to placement schools.

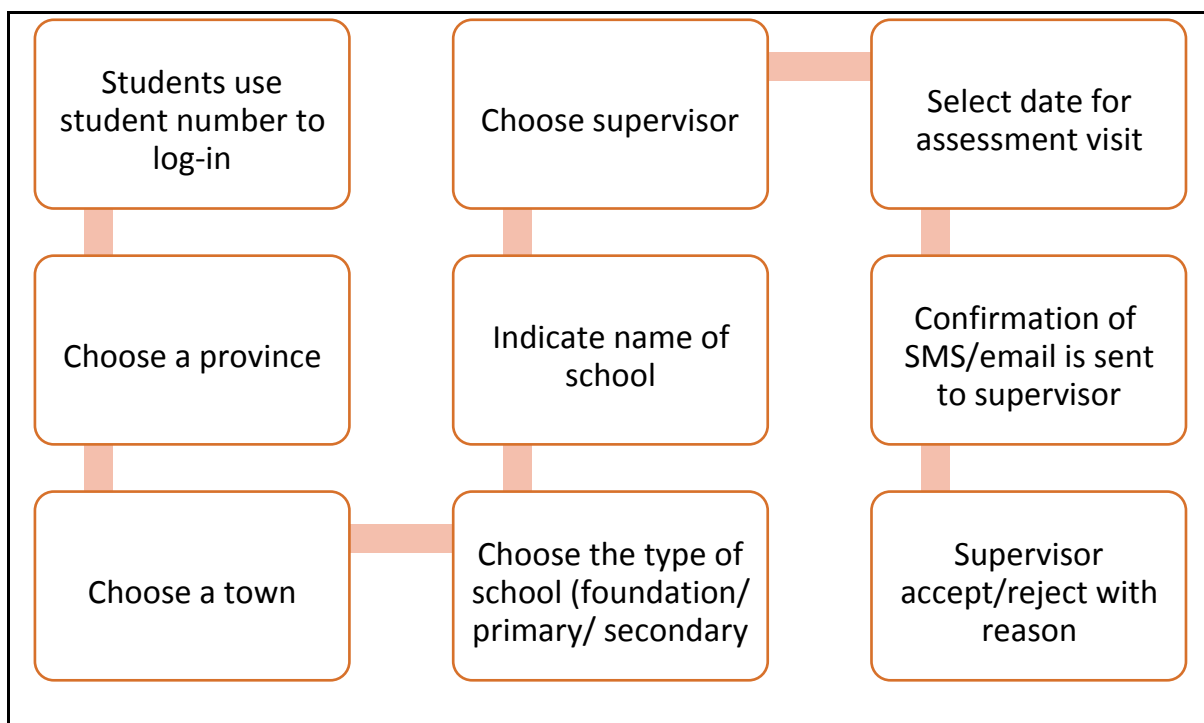
There are processes and procedures set by UNISA (2015:1) that student teachers should follow before they commence their teaching practice. Documents such as placement forms, indemnity forms, attendance registers, and class timetables are used by student teachers during teaching practice. UNISA advises students to first download the placement form (DSAR25/27) from the university website before registration. According to UNISA (2015), the DSAR25/27 form should be completed by the student after identifying the school which would allow them to do their teaching practice. The form must have a chosen school stamp and start and finish dates of teaching practice. UNISA (2015) further advises student teachers that when they complete the online form, they should add information provided from their completed and stamped DSAR25/27 forms during the registration period. UNISA emphasises that this should be done regardless of whether registration is done at regional offices or at home. Thus, students are urged to send their DSAR25/27 form to the relevant office after the university has confirmed their registration.

Indemnity forms are forms that student teachers sign to declare that they will adhere to the rules and regulations of teaching practice as set out by the TPO and attendance registers are used to monitor the daily attendance of student teachers.

Once at school, class timetables help student teachers to know which class they need to attend, the subject taught and at what time.

A study conducted by Msangya et al. (2016:117) on teaching practice experiences for undergraduate students found that there are many enrolled student teachers who were unable to secure placement at schools. UNISA (2015) maintains that students will be placed immediately in schools and supervisors will be allocated to them if they follow the teaching practice guidelines and procedures effectively. However, Mokoena (2017) mentions that one issue facing UNISA's TPO is placing more than 20 000 students in approved teaching practice schools each year. Given the large number of students who must be placed each year, Mokoena (2017:130) proposes that the

university implement an online placement system that allows students to position themselves with the click of a computer or cellphone button. In addition, Mokoena (2017) advises that UNISA should enter into an arrangement with the Department for student teachers' placement at different schools. The proposed system online placement proposed by Mokoena (2017) is illustrated in Figure 2.2.



(Source: adapted from Mokoena, 2017).

Figure 2.2: Proposed online student placement system

2.7.1.1 Supervision during teaching practice

Supervision, according to Musingafi et al. (2019:77), describes the act of assisting and evaluating the success of student teachers. Ifeoma (2016:85) claims that the aim of student-teacher supervision during teaching practice is to ensure that the teaching practice is successful. Ifeoma (2016) adds that the difficulty of supervision issues necessitates the use of qualified experts to link theory and practice. Educating students with special needs and people with low incomes and presenting classes, administration, and liaising with parents are not simple tasks for student teachers (Ifeoma, 2016). It is, therefore, crucial for student teachers to be presented with the opportunity to be supervised during teaching practice. In support of the above view,

Heeral and Bayaga (2018:95) affirm that supervisors have a significant impact during teaching practice on the performance of student teachers.

According to Indrawati and Musyarofah (2019:214), supervisors should ensure that student teachers acquire a diagnostic capacity for their own performance so that even after university education, they can improve further. Teaching practice supervisors are responsible for developing relationships with schools and regional officials, as far as possible, and recruiting, training, and supporting school-based mentoring teachers (Indrawati & Musyarofah, 2019:214). Students are supervised during their studies by either a UNISA faculty member or an external UNISA supervisor (Maja & Motseke, 2021).

Student teachers should be visited by their supervisors during the teaching practice period. Supervisors need to provide student teachers with technical assistance and continuous professional feedback so that they know they are on the right track with guidelines suggested by the university when conducting teaching practice. UNISA recommends that student teachers should be visited twice by their supervisors to offer them professional support, while school-based mentors should evaluate 10 classes of student teachers (Segoe & Dreyer, 2015:17). However, Kembo (2017:115) indicates that when student teachers require support and advice from their supervisors, they usually do not get it, and this limits student teachers engaging in critical discussions with their supervisors where inputs could help them grow professionally. UNISA (2008) stipulates that the supervisors should schedule sufficient time to visit the student teachers at schools, see all students assigned to him/her, analyse the presentation of the student, meet with the mentor teacher or the principal to review the presentation and determine whether further support is required and complete the student evaluation form within a week of the visit to the school and return it to the TPO.

A study conducted by Carl and Strydom (2017) indicates that student teachers acknowledged that supervisor feedback is very helpful. Feedback is important at this point so that student teachers can learn by reflection. Sethusha (2020) emphasises that feedback is the combination of knowledge and understanding between key school players. Supervisors can become critical partners in the teaching and learning

process, whereby student teachers receive feedback at different levels that might contribute to the reconceptualisation of learning and lifelong learning.

2.7.1.2 Mentor teacher support during teaching practice

Indrawati and Musyarofah (2019:214) define a mentor teacher as an experienced teacher assigned to assist student teachers while doing their teaching practice in placement schools. The mentor teacher usually teaches the subject or the class/phase in which the student teacher is specialising. Mentor teachers track, supervise, assess, and evaluate student teachers' work during teaching practice (Indrawati & Musyarofah, 2019:214). Al Qahtani (2015) revealed that mentorship is derived from the formal working environment rather than formal tertiary education. Abongdia et al. (2015:51) support this approach, which is designed to promote good practice among mentor teachers and student teachers to ensure that they become good teachers in the future.

Mentor teachers play a crucial role in helping student teachers to apply their knowledge and effectively practice their skills in real teaching situations. According to Jafar et al. (2021:633), mentors play a role in helping student teachers to relate the knowledge of educational theory that they learn at the higher institute of learning to the placement schools with learners in the classroom. They implement the knowledge in classroom management and manage their self-learning to adapt to the authentic learning environment in schools (Jafar et al., 2021). Mokoena (2017:125) reiterates that mentor teachers should play a mentoring and supporting role for student teachers, not as an institution or remuneration provider, but as a means of engagement with their profession. Again, lecturers should encourage a good relationship between the mentor teachers and student teachers so that they can gain confidence and self-assurance, which are essential to their career progression (Du Plessis, 2020).

However, Thaba-Nkadimene (2017:209) claims that student teachers face challenges with mentoring in schools because many mentor teachers do not offer adequate professional guidance or perform their duties in accordance with UNISA guidelines. According to Al Qahtani (2015:150), lacking access to a suitable mentor is the primary cause of poor career growth and advancement.

Assafuah-Drokov et al. (2018:151) found that mentor teachers usually fail to take responsibility for teaching by adding their teaching workload to the student teachers. The implication is that some student teachers were dissatisfied with the heavy workload they were required to complete after hours, such as scoring, testing, student assessments, and lesson planning allocated by the mentor teachers.

2.7.1.3 Assessment of teaching practice

Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process. Yahya, Mansor and Abdullah (2017:891) assert that assessment is a significant component in the process of teaching and learning because it demonstrates the teachers' skill and performance in the classroom. Donald, Lazarus and Moola (2014:117) argue that one should keep track of why assessment is done and how it affects further education, in other words, its purpose and effect. Although an assessment is designed to test student skills, it is also useful as the principle of learning evaluation for learning growth.

Nyewe and Booi (2018) show that there is a need for greater clarity on how student teachers should develop and produce portfolios that reflect the practice of teaching. The assessment of student teachers in the classroom by institutional supervisors and school mentors is one of the most important aspects of their teaching practice. Increased coordination between schools and institutions will boost mentoring and result in a more productive evaluation process. Yahya et al. (2017) state that an assessment by a mentor shows not only what a student teacher has achieved, or how he/she has performed but also what must be done to grow professionally.

Mpofu and Maphalala (2018:2) affirm that student teachers must be subjected to assessment standards from the beginning of their teaching careers because they are essential to their performance and professional development. This means that student teachers are more likely to be inspired and prepared to take on more interesting assignments and value learning activities.

2.7.1.4 Class management

Class management is one of the key aspects of the professional development of student teachers. However, managing and controlling the class is one of the challenges that student teachers face during teaching practice. Student teachers are expected to make their classes safe and encouraging for learning. Das and Chowdhury (2019:3894) argue that if there is a large number of learners in the class, there is a problem with class management. A study conducted by Ulla (2016) found that controlling learners' noise and dealing with misbehaviour are some of the issues student teachers face during teaching practice. In another study, Assafuah-Drokov et al. (2018) found that poor seating arrangement of learners in classes leads to challenges in class management. If these challenges are not addressed, thus, student teachers might struggle with reinforcement of class management and learner participation (Assafuah-Drokov et al., 2018).

2.7.3 South African School Calendar

The South African school calendar is a very important tool in planning and preparing for teaching practice by student teachers. The school calendar helps the student teachers to know the opening and closing dates of schools in South Africa and to prepare for their examinations. When setting the teaching practice calendar, Yarkwah et al. (2020:37) advise that the teaching programme calendar be set so that it does not coincide with significant school months, such as June and October, when teachers prepare learners for important exams. Schools perceive this period as crucial for their learners, so they are hesitant to hand over their classes to inexperienced student teachers.

2.7.4 UNISA Provisional Exam Timetable

Based on the above discussion, it is important to note that student teachers should also consult the university exam timetable when scheduling teaching practice. Kangai (2016:13) suggests that higher learning institutions should ensure that students receive their learning materials early to be able to plan their studies and design their timetables according to the overall schedule of the programme. This will help student

teachers schedule their teachers' practice and consider that they are also registered for other modules.

2.8 PLANNING FOR CLASS TEACHING

This section discusses how student teachers prepare for class teaching at placement schools. The lesson planning, presentation, access to resources, and time constraints are discussed.

2.8.1 Lesson Planning and Presentation

Lesson planning is a key factor for successful teaching practice. Ode et al. (2020) claim that lesson planning is related to determining the prerequisites for successful action, such as learners' learning prerequisites, learning activities, or material availability to decide on a specific course of action.

Student teachers' competence is influenced by their ability to plan and execute actions required to achieve a desired outcome and their persistence with teaching tasks. Sethusha (2020:212) states that student teachers are expected to be guided by the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (DBE, 2011) when planning their lessons. Planning is key for effective teaching and learning as the lesson plan is a road map offering a detailed description of the purpose of the lesson, teaching strategies, assessment activities, teacher and learner activities, and more guidance on how the lesson is expected to unfold. When preparing, student teachers should, among other things, state lesson objectives in behavioural and measurable terms, as well as sequenced instruction, and in addition, student teachers need to be prepared to adapt the lesson and respond to individual learners' needs, if necessary (Sethusha, 2020). During lesson planning and preparation, student teachers should be able to demonstrate knowledge of the curriculum and pedagogy. Ulla (2016:246) warns that a lack of lesson planning and presentation skills can lead to inefficient teaching and learning.

2.8.2 Access to Resources

Access to resources is essential for effective teaching and learning in schools. This means that schools should have libraries that are equipped with Learning and Teaching Support Materials (LTSM). Onyebuenyi et al. (2022:11) indicate that for student teachers to become competent, they should be provided with teaching and learning resources, but they should also have access to office facilities, such as computers, printers and photocopiers to create their own LTSM, which will make teaching and learning effective. Student teachers' knowledge of effective teaching practice autonomy can be enhanced when there is adequate provision of technological facilities (Aniako et al., 2022), as these technological facilities play a significant role in attaining the goals and objectives of teaching practice.

However, according to Okekweo (2021), South African schools still have no libraries or learning equipment and have a severe shortage of textbooks. Students become frustrated when there are no resources available, making teaching and learning challenging. This presents difficulties for student teachers because the presence of libraries assists the student teacher in accessing LTSMs which enhance the lesson and may address challenges of classroom management and control, as well as learner discipline (Okekweo, 2021). Masood et al. (2022:137) found that in some schools with no libraries, student teachers sought assistance from neighbouring schools to make copies of worksheets and other Learning and Teaching Support Materials (LTSM) for learners.

Regarding planning, these issues make it difficult for student teachers to design lesson plans and access additional support material for learners' tasks. Abongdia et al. (2015:51) argue that the lack of resources frustrates student teachers and makes teaching practice difficult.

2.8.3 Time Constraints

Das and Chowdhury (2019:3885) state that the time spent by student teachers at school is referred to as the teaching practice period and in the context of this study, it refers to the period the student teacher spends in placement schools. A study by

Assafuah-Drokov et al. (2018) indicates that the limited time for teaching practice is a challenge student teachers face. In a study conducted by Msangya et al. (2016) at Sokoine University of Agriculture focusing on undergraduate student teachers in the Faculty of Science and Department of Education's teaching practice experiences, it was found that the late beginning of teaching practice led to supervisors being unable to handle many students due to a lack of planning and preparation (Msangya et al., 2016).

UNISA student teachers are required to spend at least five weeks at school for B.Ed. practical module and ten weeks for the PGCE practical module. The teaching practice should thus occur from February to September of each year. This means that the university expects the student teachers to complete their teaching practice within this given period. Coffie, Doe and Tabi (2021:268) suggest that not allocating sufficient time for teaching practice will affect the benefits student teachers are supposed to gain from the programmes.

Table 2.1 below represents the different teaching qualifications and the duration of teaching practice modules in place at UNISA.

Table 2.1: Duration of teaching practice modules at UNISA

Name of Qualification	Module Code and Duration of Teaching Practice			
B.Ed. (Early Childhood Development/Foundation Phases)	TPF2601 (Five weeks)	TPF2602 (Five weeks)	TPF3703 (Five weeks)	TPF3704 (Five weeks)
B.Ed. (Intermediate Phase)	TPN2601 (Five weeks)	TPN2602 (Five weeks)	TPN3703 (Five weeks)	TPN3704 (Five weeks)
B.Ed. (Senior and FET Phases)	TPR100C (Five weeks)	TPR200F (Five weeks)	TPS2601 (Five weeks)	TPS2602 (Five weeks)
PGCE (Foundation Phase)	PCF410X (Ten weeks)			

PGCE (Intermediate and Senior Phases)	PFC104T (Ten weeks)	
PGCE (Senior and FET Phases)	PTEAC1X (Five weeks)	PTEAC2Y (Five weeks)

(Source: Own depiction)

According to UNISA (2015:1), student teachers are not permitted to complete two practical modules concurrently; each practical module has its own period. If a B.Ed. student teacher decides to register for two practical modules, he or she must spend ten weeks at the placement school, which translates to five weeks for each module. However, Mubita et al. (2022:7) report that student teachers experience a number of challenges during teaching practice. These challenges include a lack of teaching and learning materials, inadequate supervisory support, overcrowding classrooms, classroom management, lack of transport and learners' behavioural problems, which are causes of frustration.

2.9 AMELIORATING FRUSTRATION DURING TEACHING PRACTICE

This section discusses strategies student teachers employ to mitigate their frustration during teaching practice. Five strategies have been discussed in the following subsections: teaching practice reflections, guidance from mentor teachers and fellow student teachers, UNISA directorate for career counselling and development (DCCD), self-motivation and adaptation.

2.9.1 Teaching Practice Reflections

Reflection allows student teachers to critique their own teaching practice. Tutorial letters for practical modules at UNISA have a section where student teachers are required to reflect on their teaching practice experiences. The section is called TP reflections. It helps student teachers raise positive and negative points about their teaching practice. Student teachers can identify and acknowledge their strengths and weakness through reflection and their opportunities or needs. Carl and Strydom (2017:2) explain that reflection is the process of learning through and from experience towards greater insights into self or practice. Likewise, Mathew, Mathew and

Peechattu (2017:127) affirm that reflection is a procedure where student teachers think over their teaching practice, analyse how something was taught and how the practice might be improved or changed for better learning outcomes. Reflections fulfil the role of creating further opportunities for student teachers to learn from their own experiences. They further pave the way for teachers to express their own beliefs concerning teaching and learning. In support of the above view, Mathew et al. (2017:130) posit that learners' needs and different issues will be dealt with differently when there is a daily reflection by student teachers on their teaching and learning activities.

In addition, student reflections, recorded in the tutorial letter reflection section, alert the university to challenges they might be facing and thus assist the university in improving the teaching practice programme.

2.9.2 Relatedness with Mentor Teachers and Fellow Student Teachers

Ryan and Deci (2017) state that relatedness refers to the necessity for close and secure emotional bonds with others and to feeling part of a collective. Relatedness can be developed when mentor teachers express respect and care for the student teachers and encourage cooperation among themselves. Frommelt et al. (2021:4) state that students who feel supported by their mentor teachers regarding their basic needs show stronger intrinsic or self-determined motivation to learn. Specifically, teachers' interest in students' well-being and provision of emotional support fulfil the students' psychological need for relatedness, which in turn promotes intrinsic motivation. A study conducted by Guay (2022) found that student teachers reported stronger behavioural engagement when they experienced support for social relatedness with their mentor teachers and fellow students. Furthermore, Guay (2022) states that perceived mentor-teacher support has demonstrated strong positive associations with feelings of relatedness and motivation in an academic setting.

2.9.3 UNISA Directorate for Career and Counselling Development

The UNISA Directorate for Career and counselling development (DCCD) can be used by student teachers as another strategy to mitigate their frustrations. The DCCD offers

career support to prospective and registered UNISA students. The DCCD play a major role in ensuring that UNISA students are supported in their studies, careers and their personal well-being (Clarke, 2017). Student teachers in the teaching profession are required to navigate multiple roles as they become competent in their areas of study. As students develop these skills, they are often confronted with new stressors that offer unique challenges. According to Clarke (2017:8), these stressors are seen as the primary barrier affecting competence and maintenance in their academic programmes.

2.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, the review of the literature was based on international and national literature on teaching practice, followed by the South African policies that govern the teaching practice. The theory which underpinned this study was discussed. Furthermore, the chapter also discussed UNISA as an ODL institution. Drawing from national research, the experiences of UNISA student teachers during teaching practice was broadly discussed. This was followed by a discussion on how student teachers plan and prepare for teaching practice. Motivation during teaching practice, supervision and mentoring support, access to resources and class management was also presented. The strategies used by student teachers to mitigate their frustrations was also discussed.

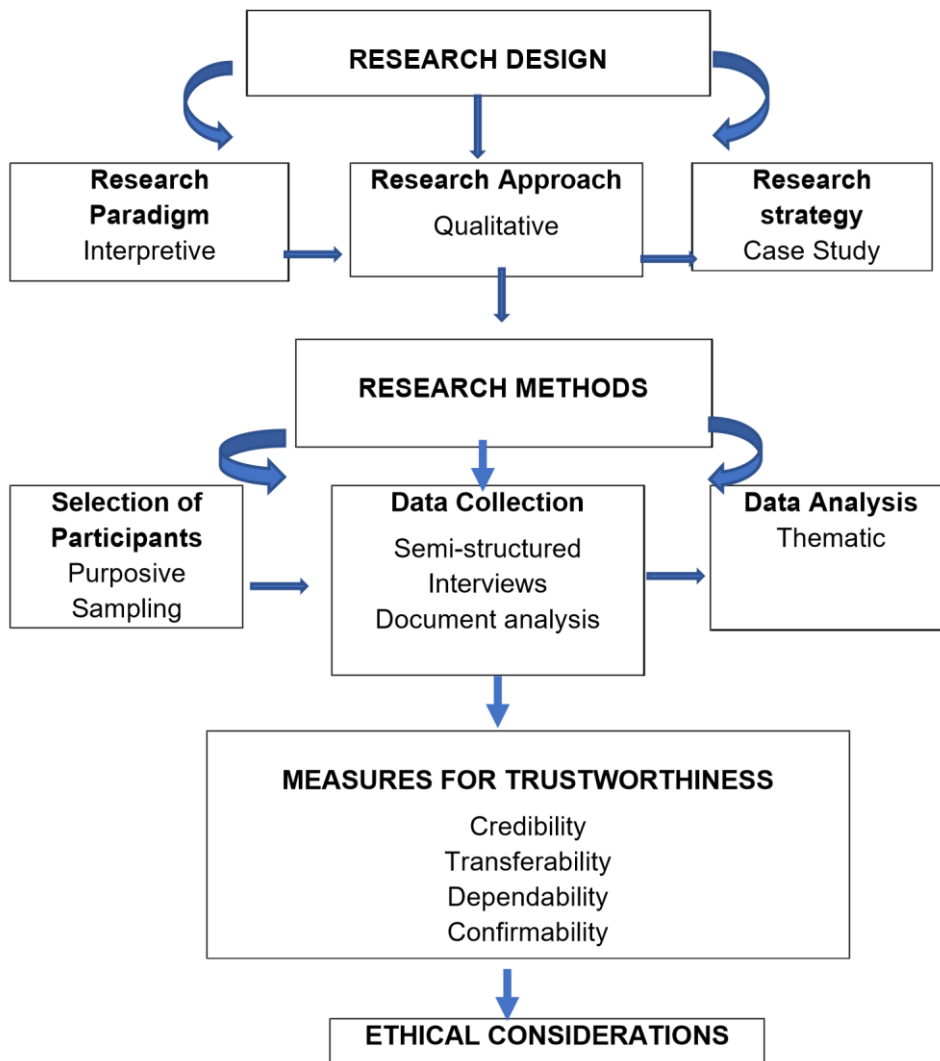
The review revealed that student teachers still experience challenges during teaching practice. Issues relating to difficulties in placement, access of teaching and learning resources, supervisory support and assessment were found to be problems hampering student teachers during teaching practice. Although there is guidance and support from mentor teachers, studies show that mentor teachers need to be capacitated in mentoring student teachers. The self-determination theory showed that student teachers achieved good results when they have close connections with their mentor teachers.

The methodology employed in this study is presented in Chapter 3. The research process describes the design, data collection, and data analysis processes.

CHAPTER THREE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Literature pertaining to the study and the theoretical framework were discussed in the previous chapter. This chapter describes the research methodology and how it relates to the student teachers' teaching practice experiences in selected primary schools in the Tshwane South District. The research design process chart, see Figure 3.1, outlines the paradigm, approach and strategy, data collection and analysis, measures of trustworthiness, and ethical considerations.



(Source: own depiction)

Figure 3.1: Research design process flow chart

3.2 RATIONALE FOR EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

McMillan and Schumacher (2014) define empirical research as a process for collecting and analysing data in reliable and valid ways. McMillan and Schumacher (2014) add that empirical research is driven not by opinions and authorities but by evidence gathered in systematic research methods. Meanwhile, according to Loseke (2017:12), an empirical study is about meeting the criteria of the interpretivist/constructivist research method, which holds that reality can only be recognised and fully comprehended by those who have personally experienced it.

The purpose of this study's empirical research is to ensure that the outcomes for teaching practice experiences are based on student teachers' perspectives. The study aims to understand, explain and report on the lived experiences of student teachers as research participants using an interpretivist inquiry approach. As a result, data were gathered through in-depth interviews with student teachers as well as through an analysis of the documents used by student teachers during their teaching practice period. Babbie and Mouton (2001:309) maintain that empirical research allows for a more in-depth investigation and a better understanding of the student teachers as research participants. The tools used in this study were intended to allow the researcher to learn more about the issues that student teachers encounter throughout their teaching practice.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

Maxwell (2022:4) states that a strategic framework that connects research questions to research execution is known as a research design. According to Loseke (2017:45), research design specifies how to conduct research to answer the research questions. Similarly, Creswell (2014) claims that the research design is a strategy for selecting participants, research sites and data collection processes to address a research topic. As a result, the research design specifies which persons are to be investigated and when, where and how they are to be studied.

There are three approaches that can be used when conducting research: qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods approaches (Creswell & Creswell, 2018:61). Depending

on the research approach, the phenomenology, narrative biography, case study, grounded theory, or ethnography research designs may be used (Creswell & Creswell, 2018:61). In this study, a qualitative approach was employed with a case study design to explore the student teachers' teaching practice experiences in selected primary schools in the Tshwane South District.

In the following subsections, the discussion focuses on the research paradigm, the research approach, the research strategy, and the data collection methods for this study.

3.3.1 Research Paradigm

Denzin and Lincoln (2018:195) define a research paradigm as the fundamental belief or vision structure that guides researchers in ontological and epistemological fundamental principles as well as methodological choices. A paradigm is a collection of beliefs that are a set of fundamental principles reflecting the position in the world and the range of relations that exist with this world and its parts (Denzin & Lincoln 2018).

3.3.1.1 Interpretivist

Every research paradigm, whether deductive or inductive, is based on one of the philosophical and theoretical assumptions of positivism, interpretivism, social constructivism, postmodernism or pragmatism. This study is underpinned by the interpretive paradigm because the interpretivist emphasises the process of interpreting and making sense of the participants' individual lived experiences. The advantage of this paradigm is that methods are qualitative and focused on meaning.

According to Thanh and Thanh (2015:24), an interpretivist paradigm allows researchers to see the world through the eyes and experiences of participants. In other words, the researchers used an interpretivist paradigm to find answers to research questions, using the experiences of student teachers to construct and interpret the data collected. This means that the interpretivist paradigm seeks research answers by constructing and sustaining numerous interpretations of the people's worldview. As a

result, the researcher collected rich data that was not influenced by public opinion. The interpretivist/constructivist paradigm positioned the researcher to explore the student teachers' experiences during their teaching practice through interviews and document analysis. Rubin and Rubin (2018:101) argue that interpretivist research emphasises human ambiguity, attempting to construct and comprehend human environments. However, Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter, (2016:61) emphasise that the interpretivist researcher's goal is to gain an understanding of complex situations. Willis (2014:110) contends that the goal of interpretivism is subjectivity and that interpretivists' human behaviour is possible. The interpretivist paradigm is central to the knowledge of the subject of people's experiences (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018:22). A research paradigm consists of three components that is ontology, epistemology and methodology (Cohen et al., 2018:10).

- **Ontological perspective**

Staller (2010:1159) explains that ontology is concerned with the nature of reality and ontological questions challenge fundamental notions of what is real. In this case, researchers can choose between a realist and a relativist point of view. Furthermore, Staller (2010) argues that a realist perceives reality as 'out there', whereas a relativist perceives reality as a socially constructed concept or shared experience that is open to individual interpretations based on people's personal value systems and unique frames of reference. This study was based on a realist viewpoint.

Creswell (2013:36) shows that the ontological belief of interpretivism is that reality is the result of constructed meanings of interactions and experiences with others. Within this study context, the reality is student teachers' interactions and experiences with the mentor teachers, supervisors and learners in the placement school environment. Therefore, the teaching practice is a reality experienced by student teachers, and this phenomenon can only be understood from their point of view. Thus, the researcher interviewed the student teachers to understand the nature of the reality of the teaching practice they experienced daily.

- **Epistemological perspective**

The epistemological point of view is concerned with how knowledge is acquired. Epistemology is defined by Silva, Bernardino and Gomes (2017:24) as the construction and understanding of knowledge among a group of people. Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) declare that epistemology is important because it enables researchers to demonstrate confidence in their data. Epistemology is important because it helps the researcher to establish the faith, he/she puts in the data. To better understand the knowledge derived from student teachers' experiences, the researcher followed an empirical epistemology. Kivunja and Kuyini (2017:22) state that empirical epistemology relates to when researchers want to best understand experiences and demonstrable, objective facts. Therefore, the researcher acquired knowledge of student teachers' experiences through in-depth interviews where student teachers shared their personal experiences concerning teaching practice and then through document analysis to assist in verifying the analysis.

- **Methodological perspective**

According to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), the methodology articulates the logic and flow of the systematic procedures used in a research project to learn about a problem. It includes the beliefs made, limitations encountered, and methods for mitigating or minimising those limitations (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Therefore, to explore the student teachers' teaching practice experiences in selected primary schools in Tshwane South District, a qualitative perspective was employed in this study (*cf.* Figure 3.1). The limitations of this study are that the methodology is qualitative and has a limited sample of only eight student teachers drawn from four primary schools in the Tshwane South District. Therefore, the study findings cannot be generalised to student teaching experiences in other higher learning institutions.

The shortcomings of qualitative studies are that they are time-consuming as they require much time to obtain meaningful, accurate, and detailed data. Additionally, a low number of participants are studied in qualitative research, which could lead to misleading deductions since it is hard to apply the findings to the whole demographic. With qualitative studies, multiple sessions must be executed to access authentic data,

which culminates in increased costs. Despite its limitations, a qualitative research approach was applicable to this study because the research aimed at understanding the experiences of student teachers' experiences from their point of view, as opposed to explaining the social phenomenon from the outside. The researcher sought to understand the difficulty of the research problem qualitatively since it is not simple to quantify human experiences.

3.3.2 Rationale for Choosing the Interpretivist Approach

Kankam (2019) discusses several paradigms, namely: positivism, post-positivism, pragmatism, critical theory and interpretivist. Denzil and Lincoln (2018:220) indicate that the positivist paradigm relies on the notion that true knowledge is based on the experience of the senses and can be obtained by observation and experiment. Observation alone cannot provide the researcher with enough information concerning student teachers' experiences in teaching practice. This study is qualitative, making experimentation irrelevant to data collection. The post-positivist paradigm lacks the concept of social construct, which limits the avenues of the researcher to obtain sufficient data required to conclude. According to Cohen et al. (2018:8), pragmatism is a paradigm that includes ideas, approaches, methods and principles to explain a solution to a research problem. At the same time, critical theory deals with the meanings of experiences as they relate to race, gender and social class. The interpretivist paradigm assumes that given, or socially constructed reality is obtained through social constructions such as language, consciousness, instruments and shared meanings (Cohen et al., 2018).

The researcher found the interpretivist paradigm relevant to this study since it brings the understanding of the beliefs, perceptions, feelings and actions of student teachers regarding their experiences during teaching practice. Each selected student teacher offered his/her understanding and perspectives regarding teaching practice which allowed the researcher to gain different insights into how student teachers experienced the teaching practice. According to Olusegun (2015), knowledge and meaning are a product of interpretation, which leads to the understanding that no particular knowledge excludes human beliefs and critical thinking since all human beings are continuously engaged in the process of making sense of their worlds. People

continuously interpret, create, give meaning, define, justify and rationalise daily actions. This study was grounded in the need to understand, analyse and detail the student teacher's knowledge concerning the teaching practice programme.

3.3.3 Research Approach

According to De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delport (2011), a research approach is a plan and a procedure that consists of the steps of broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation. According to Creswell (2013), these plans can either follow a qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods approach. Qualitative research is concerned with inductive reasoning from specific to general. In contrast, quantitative research follows deductive reasoning, therefore from general to particular, while mixed methods combine qualitative and quantitative research methods. Quantitative research often uses what might be called a 'narrow-angle lens' because the focus is on only one or a few causal factors simultaneously. Quantitative research is concerned with the aspect of quantity. Mishra and Aloka (2017:3) affirm that quantitative research is related to things that can be counted. Thus, it involves mathematical, statistical and computational instruments such as percentages, numbers and statistics (Mishra & Aloka, 2017). Mixed method research sees positive value in both the quantitative and the qualitative views of human behaviour. It views the use of only quantitative research or only qualitative research thus as limiting and incomplete for many research problems (Mishra & Aloka, 2017).

For this study, a qualitative approach was employed. Creswell and Creswell (2017:295) attest that qualitative research is an approach to explore and interpret the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. Creswell and Creswell (2017) attest that the qualitative method depends on text and image data which have distinct data analysis steps and utilise various designs. Instead of relying solely on one data source, qualitative researchers personally collect data from a variety of sources, including interviews, observations, documents, and audio-visual materials (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The researchers do not frequently rely on or employ instruments or questionnaires created by other researchers.

The qualitative approach provides exploratory, open and detailed data to make claims on in-depth, extensive and detailed research (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The understanding and interpretation of meanings were created through the interaction of the researcher and the student teachers during the interviews, where notes from the interviews and document analysis were in addition, jotted down in words. MacMillan (2016:305) attests that qualitative research is concerned with the comprehensive narrative of data received from participants. All data collection procedures were employed in the participants' natural contexts allowing the researcher to comprehend their behaviour without accounting for situational factors (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). Qualitative research is based on a philosophical, essentially constructivist, because it concerns how sociocultural complexities are experienced, interpreted and understood in a particular context (Bloomberg, 2012:118). According to Silverman (2011:17), the ability to use natural data to discover the sequences in which the meaning of participants is applied is one of the strengths of qualitative research. This means that researchers can always and as often change their fields of research design as they wish.

Despite the advantages of the qualitative approach, Anderson and Taylor (2015:85) stress that qualitative research data cannot provide reliable estimates of how perceptions or attitudes are formed, which may jeopardise the study's reliability and may pose a problem with dependability. Sarantakos (2017:23) shows that due to the subjective nature of qualitative research, judgement may be influenced by the researcher's orientation and perception. The findings of qualitative studies are not representative because they are based on small samples and do not deal with the relationship between variables with the accuracy required to inform social policies (Sarantakos, 2017). The author argues that there is no way to ensure that the researcher acquires the true meaning and interpretation of participants fully and correctly. Finally, the qualitative approach does not generate comparable data and the nature of data collection produces much unnecessary information. Therefore, Sarantakos (2017) advises that any researcher who cannot process large amounts of information and suppress personal inclinations must not conduct qualitative research.

3.3.4 Case Study Strategy/Design

The researcher employed a case study research strategy for this study. According to Swanborn (2018:13), a case study is defined as a research method that can be carried out within the boundaries of one social system (the case) or within the boundaries of a few social systems (the cases), such as people, organisations, in which the phenomena is to be studied. In addition, Swanborn (2018) claims that case studies are normally comprised of not more than four or five cases in a study. Zainal (2007) adds that a case study process selects a small geographic area or a very small number of subjects. A small number of student teachers from four public schools in the Tshwane South District were selected for this study. Thus, data were collected in four primary schools, each of which is a case that qualifies as a case study. Likewise, Tight (2017:4) affirms that a case study is a study in which one case, or a small number of cases, are selected in their real context, and the scores derived from these cases are qualitatively analysed. According to Yin (1984:23), a case study is empirical research that examines a current phenomenon in its actual world setting where there are no clear limits between the phenomenon and contexts and where much evidence is employed. Baxter and Jack (2008:544) indicate that case study design is a research method that enables a phenomenon to be explored by using several data sources in its context. This means that the problem is not viewed through a single lens but rather through several lenses that reveal and understand the phenomenon's different aspects (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

Cohen et al. (2018:379) indicate that a wide audience including non-academics more easily understands case study findings as they are frequently written in everyday language, speak for themselves, and provide insights and there are similar situations and cases. Moreover, a single researcher can undertake the case study without needing a full research team and can embrace and build in unanticipated events and uncontrolled variables. Baxter and Jack (2008:545) state that a case study is bounded by time, place and context. This ensures that the study remains reasonable in scope. This study was conducted during the second term of the school calendar, meaning that learners had had time to settle into their new grades but were not disturbed when preparing for their examinations.

Despite the case study's strengths, Cohen et al. (2017) warn that the case study's results may not be generalisable except where other readers/researchers see their application and are not easily open to cross-checking. Hence they may be selective, biased, personal and subjective. In addition, case studies are prone to problems of observer bias, despite attempts made to address reflexivity. To minimise the biasness, the researcher used two data collecting methods to ensure that the interpretations represent the voices of the student teachers rather than her own. These data collection methods helped the researcher capture theoretical insights into the research problem. Additionally, there was a comparison and contrast of the data from sources during data analysis to ensure the verification was credible.

The case study provided important findings concerning student teachers' teaching experiences in selected primary schools in the Tshwane South District. The investigation of the cases took place through detailed, in-depth data collection methods that involved semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Therefore, the case study design was considered the best research strategy for this study.

3.4 RESEARCH METHODS

According to Cohen et al. (2017:16), research methods are modes that researchers apply when conducting a study. This means that research methods are techniques that a researcher applies to carry out investigations on the research topic (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018:64). Selection of the participants, data collection and data analysis are discussed in the section below.

3.4.1 Selection of Participants

According to Cohen et al. (2017:202), accessibility, cost and time constraints typically restrict researchers from collecting data from the entire population. Researchers frequently need to collect data from a smaller group or subset of the entire population to ensure that the knowledge collected is typical of the overall population under investigation. Cohen et al. (2017) indicate that the smaller group or subset is a sample.

3.4.1.1 Sampling techniques

According to Lopez and Whitehead (2013:123), sampling is a method for selecting a representative sample from a particular population. This study makes a distinction between probability and non-probability sampling techniques. Probability sampling is utilised when the researcher gathers participants who accurately reflect the features of a larger group. In contrast, in non-probability sampling, the researchers recruit only particular populations to look at a particular topic. In this investigation, non-probability sampling was employed. In this regard, purposive sampling, convenience sampling, snowball sampling and theoretical sampling are examples of non-probability techniques (Cohen et al., 2017:220). However, this study employed purposive non-probability sampling methods. The logic and power of purposeful sampling depend on selecting information-rich individuals who can offer detailed information on a particular subject or topic that is important for in-depth study. The logic and effectiveness of purposive sampling are choosing information-rich individuals relevant to the phenomenon under study (Shaheen & Pradhan, 2019). The B.Ed. and PGCE student teachers were purposively selected from four public primary schools in the Tshwane South District.

3.4.1.2 Selection procedure

According to Creswell (2012:206), researchers deliberately choose people and locations in purposeful sampling to discover or comprehend the main phenomenon. Three PGCE students in their first year and five B.Ed. student teachers in their third- and fourth-year level of studies were purposely selected from four primary schools in the Tshwane South District. McMillan and Schumacher (2010: 351) state that researchers select a site that is appropriate for their research problem, resources of time, mobility, and skills. The researcher is a teacher in one of the primary schools in the Tshwane South District. However, none of the student teachers at the researcher's school were selected to prevent a conflict of interest for the researcher and adhere to the research ethics.

The lists of Tshwane South District PGCE and B.Ed. student teachers were requested from the teaching practice office. The researcher focused on the PGCE and 3rd and

4th year B.Ed. student teachers who were undertaking the teaching practice in all the phases, that is Foundation Phase, Intermediate Phase, and the Senior Phase during the second term. Of the ten PGCE and fifteen B.Ed. student teachers on the lists, three PGCE and five B.Ed. student teachers were selected as they were in teaching practice in the Tshwane South District primary schools. Of the three PGCE student teachers, two were male, and one was female, while of the five B.Ed. student teachers, one was male and four were female. Three of the PGCE participants were in their first year of teaching practice as the programme is for one year and designed for ten weeks of real-world practice. Three of the B.Ed. participants were in their fourth year while the other two were in the third-year level of their studies. Table 3.1 represents the biographical information of the student-teacher participants who participated in the in-depth interviews.

Table 3.1: Biographical information of participants

School	Participant code	Gender	Age group	Qualification	Level of study	Duration in teaching practice
A	ST1	Female	20-30	Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) Degree	Third year	Two weeks
	ST2	Female	20-30	Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) Degree	Third year	Three weeks
B	ST3	Male	30-40	Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degree	Fourth year	Three weeks
	ST4	Female	20-30	Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)	First year	Five weeks

C	ST5	Female	40-50	Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degree	Fourth year	Two weeks
	ST6	Male	20-30	Bachelor of Arts (BA) Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)	First year	Three weeks
D	ST7	Male	20-30	Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) Degree	Third year	One week
	ST8	Female	30-40	Bachelor of Arts (BA) Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)	First year	Three weeks

3.4.2 Data Collection

Qualitative research is comprised of various data collection methods. According to Cohen et al. (2018:47), data collection methods are a set of approaches used in educational research to collect and interpret data to explain and predict it. In another study, Gill (2008:291) claims that the most common data collection method in qualitative research is through interviews. Gill (2008) indicates that having a framework that determines and guides the nature of data collection is critical. This means that the needs of the research study determine the techniques used.

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2014:349), each method has advantages and disadvantages, and the approach chosen should be the best one for answering the research question; however, it does not compel the researchers to concentrate solely on the fixed responses as required when employing quantitative methods

(Creswell, 2014). The data collection methods used in this study included semi structured interviews and document analysis.

3.4.2.1 *In-depth, open-ended individual interviews*

In qualitative research, interviews are the most used data collection tool. Interviews are defined as two-person conversations (Marshall & Rossman, 2011:145). According to Savin-Baden and Major (2013:358), interviews allow researchers to obtain complex, in-depth information from participants. Creswell (2014:218) notes that interviews enable the researcher to direct the questioning line. Denscombe (2010:172) states that an interview requires managing conversations as it is not a simple discussion but aims at data collection. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011:267), interviews allow interviewers and interviewees to explore their perceptions of their lives in the world and express their experiences from their personal perspectives. Alamri (2019) asserts that interactions during interviews provide the data and any pertinent supplementary information that can be taped or videotaped. This aids in the transcription, coding, and analysis of the data. Nevertheless, conducting interviews takes time, especially if they are taped and then completely transcribed (Alamri, 2019).

Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtle (2010) indicate that structured interviews consist of a predetermined set of questions with a specific order of questions whereas unstructured interviews are a natural extension of participant observation since they are often used in the continuing observation framework of participants; however, semi structured interviews use predetermined questions but have some flexibility in the interview schedule.

In this view, this study used semi-structured interviews for data collection. One-on-one semi-structured interviews were conducted using open-ended questions to elicit clear participant responses. Adhabi and Anozie (2017:90) state that semi structured interviews give the researcher enough time to investigate the subject under investigation thoroughly. Creswell (2018:320) supported this by indicating that semi-structured interviews enable the researcher to oversee the asking of questions, allows participants to provide rich information and are useful if the participants cannot be directly observed. However, Creswell and Creswell (2018) warn that semi structured

interviews can offer filtered, indirect information and the researcher might be biased with the participants' responses. Eight UNISA student teachers were interviewed using an interview schedule (*cf.* Appendix I). An interview schedule, which offers some uniformity when conducting a series of interviews so that topics relevant to the study question can be covered, was used to ensure that all questions were asked in the same order when interviewing the participants (Hunter, 2012).

The researcher practiced the questions with a colleague before the actual interviews to learn how to conduct one-on-one interviews and avoid making mistakes that could occur. Before the interviews, the purpose of the study was to explain the time to complete the interviews, which meant that the participants were ensured that the study would be available after completion. The participants were asked to complete the consent forms to indicate their voluntary willingness to participate, as suggested by Creswell (2014:221). Probing was used to gain more clarity on the information provided. Creswell (2014:221) indicates that probes are the sub-questions asked under each question to obtain more information. Eight student teachers who were registered for B.Ed. Degree and PGCE were interviewed. English was used during the interviews since it was the language of learning for participants and learning and teaching (LoLT) in all four selected schools. The interview lasted 30 to 45 minutes in quiet classrooms and staffrooms with participants in four schools. The process of teaching and learning was not disrupted, as interviews were held after school hours. A tape recorder was used for recording all the interviews while field notes with non-verbal responses of the participants were jotted down to supplement the recorded data. According to De Vos et al. (2011:359), a tape recorder allows for a much more complete recording than notes taken during interviews. The recorded interview sessions were transcribed in preparation for data analysis. After each interview, the participants were thanked and assured that confidentiality would be used for the responses.

3.4.2.2 Document analysis

According to Creswell (2014), documents are a valuable data source. Thus, this study applied the document analysis method to gather information that could supplement the data obtained through interviews. The document analysis method was used to

authenticate and enhance the triangulation of data gathered during interviews. Rapley and Rees (2018:380) declare that document analysis is a qualitative method of research that requires the researcher to unearth, assess and analyse empirical evidence and draw deductions that represent what took place. It is a planned process that the researcher follows to assess documents, both electronic (internet-based) and printed material (Rapley & Rees, 2018). McMillan and Schumacher (2014:163) affirm that all documents related to research questions, whether in print, handwritten or electronic format, are valuable sources of information, regardless of how old or new they are. Creswell (2012:223) indicates that documents consist of public and private records that can be obtained about a study or from the research site. In this study, public documents obtained from the student teachers were analysed.

The researcher used the document analysis to provide background information to support and strengthen the research rationale and draw conclusions. A checklist (*cf.* Appendix K) was designed to ensure that all the documents needed for the study were observed and documented. Specific documents that were checked included:

- Placement forms
- Indemnity forms
- Attendance registers
- Class timetable

Creswell and Creswell (2017) further indicate that document analysis is easily accessible to the researcher, and it saves the researcher time concerning transcribing. However, the limitation of document analysis is that documents bear bias that a researcher might not be able to recognise. To deal with this, the researcher compared the information from the four primary schools. Again, Creswell and Creswell (2017: 309) claim that sometimes documents may not be accurate or authentic. They further add that some information may be protected and unavailable to the public and some materials may be incomplete.

3.4.3 Data Analysis

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2014:145), data analysis is a process of applying analytical practices to arrange, evaluate, assess, present and interpret data.

Qualitative data analysis focuses on in-depth, context-specific, rich, subjective data and meanings by the participants in the situation, with the researcher herself/himself as a principal research instrument (Cohen et al., 2018:643). Thematic data analysis, as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) was used in this study. The following steps were followed during the analytical procedure.

3.4.3.1 Phase 1: Familiarisation

During this phase, the researcher familiarised herself with data by initially listening attentively to each interview recording prior to transcribing the recording. This process required active listening and as such, notes were not taken at this point. The researcher conducted this process of active listening to develop an idea of areas addressed in each interview before transcription. The researcher transcribed each interview manually after actively listening to playback. After all the transcriptions were complete, the researcher then read each transcript several times. During the interview process, notes were taken, including non-verbatim responses which were then included in the transcripts (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

3.4.3.2 Phase 2: Generating initial codes

Bryne (2021:1399) states that the procedure of coding is undertaken to produce concise, brief and detailed labels for pieces of ideas that may be relevant to the research questions. Furthermore, Bryne (2021) posits that codes are essentially building blocks that become themes at a later stage. In this study, the coding of data began during the process where field notes and participant documents were read by the researcher. Generating initial codes were listed carefully by looking at interesting ideas. Different highlighters were used in this study to identify different probable patterns and assemble them. Topics that were similar were then grouped together.

Thereafter, similar topics were assigned a definable name (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

3.4.3.3 Phase 3: Searching for themes.

Different codes were arranged and sorted into potential themes. The researcher used her notepad to write the potential themes by cutting and pasting the same codes to the corresponding themes. Various pages of the notepad were used to record the codes which shared the same meaning. In the process of coding, themes were developed. In the context where the response of the participants was not clear, the researcher applied member checks to safeguard the credibility of the data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

3.3.4.4 Phase 4: Reviewing themes.

This phase required the researcher to further review themes so that they could be assigned to each category. Triangulation was used to analyse and review the participant's response similarity. Document analysis and field notes were considered to determine the participant's meaning from each response. During the process of refining, some themes were collapsed. Potential themes were frequently compared to the raw data. This brought meaningful comparisons between themes. Finally, themes that were developed because of the same and various data per category were further categorised into sub-themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

3.3.4.5 Phase 5: Define and name of themes.

During this phase, themes were defined and named according to the research questions and participants' responses. This process led to the development of statements which were utilised to report on the findings of this study (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

3.4.3.6 Phase 6: writing the report.

Lastly, there was an interpretation of the meaning of themes. The researcher tried to describe and transcribe what the participants mentioned in documents during data

collection. A narrative report and final conclusions were compiled (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

3.5 MEASURES FOR TRUSTWORTHINESS

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985:290), trustworthiness entails convincing research participants that the findings are important enough to pay attention to. Trustworthiness is defined as a criterion for evaluating the quality of research design (Ali & Yusof, 2011:30). Lincoln and Guba (1985:300) propose four trustworthiness criteria that must be applied when conducting qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. To ensure the credibility of the study, the researcher applied the four criteria as proposed by (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

3.5.1 Credibility

Anney (2014:276) defines credibility as the assumption that the research findings can be translated into facts. Hays and Singh (2012:200) indicate that credibility is a major guideline qualitative researchers use to determine whether conclusions make sense for a qualitative study. The researcher used peer briefing, triangulation and member checking as credible strategies for this study. To ensure credibility in this study, the researcher together with the supervisor, held a consultation meeting through Microsoft Teams to broaden the understanding of the study. In this regard, the supervisor assumed the role of peer debriefing. Additionally, interviews were conducted with participants that met the criteria.

The researcher used triangulation to ensure credibility in this study. According to Newby (2010:122), triangulation is validating a claim, a process or an outcome using at least two independent methods. Information was gathered from eight student teachers in four different placement schools. Two data collection methods namely, interviews and document analysis, were used in this study. These data collection methods helped the researcher capture theoretical and practical insights into the research problem. Additionally, there was a comparison of the data from sources during data analysis in order to ensure that the verification was credible.

Creswell (2013:251) states that member checking is performed to evaluate the integrity of qualitative results by returning the final report or themes to participants and assessing whether they are true. However, Creswell (2013) emphasises that this does not entail returning raw transcripts to check for authenticity; rather, the researcher must return portions of the polished or semi-polished outcome, such as the study's main findings. Data that was analysed, was returned to student teachers for verification to certify their spoken information before the publication of this study.

3.5.2 Transferability

As defined by Anney (2014), transferability is the extent to which findings may be repeated with other participants in different contexts. The study's findings do not apply to different settings due to the unique experiences of each student teacher and their social context. However, the approaches employed in this study might be used in comparable instances with different outcomes. This study provided in-depth and thorough explanations of the research methodology as well as the research findings to enable transferability to other research projects.

Anney (2014) describes thick description as a comprehensive and extensive set of details regarding the methodology and setting. All versions of the data were presented in their original form (raw data from interviews); nonetheless, the same data may be interpreted differently by another researcher using different lenses. Bezuidenhout, Davis and Du Plooy-Cilliers (2014:259) highlight that the study findings and analysis may be transferred outside a single research effort to a comparable circumstance and generate similar findings.

3.5.3 Dependability

Stahl and King (2020:27) define dependability as the accuracy of findings over time. Dependability in this study was shown using an audit trail. Anney (2014:278) indicates that an audit trail involves a process and assessment for validating the data. A reflective journal was also used in this study. A reflective journal is a document that is used by the researcher to reflect, interpret and plan data (Anney, 2014:279). The researcher kept a reflective journal throughout the study to confirm how the study was

conducted. The purpose of the reflective journal is to serve as a methodological technique to encourage reflection, self-analysis and criticism. (Bashan & Holsblat, 2017:2). The researcher guaranteed that the raw interview data and field notes would be kept for a maximum of five years from the date of data collection and stored electronically and in a hard copy. The data would be saved in google drive in the form of audio and text files to help avoid data manipulation. In this way, McMillan and Schumacher (2010:326) state that anyone could conduct an inquiry audit to confirm the established analysis.

3.5.4 Confirmability

Confirmability, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2006:310), entails verification. Baxter and Eyles (1997) argue that confirmability is the degree to which other researchers can confirm or refute the study findings. This study's confirmability evidence was an audit trail, reflective journal and triangulation. The researcher kept some investigation records for auditing purposes to ensure an audit trail. Additionally, the researcher kept a reflective journal in which the reflections of the study were documented. According to Bashan and Holsblat (2017:2), the reflexive journal may be utilised as a teaching instrument to promote reflection, criticism and self-analysis.

Triangulation was also utilised in this context to decrease the impact of researcher prejudice or to make the researcher aware of his or her biases. The study used various data-collecting methods, which ensured that the researcher's interpretations represented the voices of the student teachers rather than her own.

3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The fundamental objective of research ethics, according to Denzin and Lincoln (2018:358), is to protect the well-being of study participants. McMillan and Schumacher (2014:203) define ethics as views about what is right or wrong, appropriate, or improper. Furthermore, McMillan and Schumacher (2014) argue that the primary researcher is ultimately accountable for the study's ethical standards. According to Creswell (2013:57), ethical considerations should always be shown throughout the study process.

3.6.1 Permission

Prior to conducting the research, the researcher applied for UNISA ethical certificate approval from the College of Education Research Ethics Review Committee with reference number: 21/09/08/45692750/17 AM (*cf.* Appendix B). Following acceptance of the University's ethical clearance, the researcher requested permission to conduct the study from the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) and the Tshwane South District (*cf.* Appendix D). Following approval from the Department and the district (*cf.* Appendix E), letters requesting permission were sent to the principals of the four selected schools (*cf.* Appendix F). Consent forms were also given to selected B.Ed. and PGCE student teachers (*cf.* Appendix H).

3.6.2 Informed Consent

According to Bless and Higson-Smith (2006:152), Informed consent refers to the participants' rights during the research process. According to Silverman (2011:418), research participants who provide informed consent have the right to know when the study is taking place and the right to cancel at any time. This implies that student teachers have the right to know about the research, how it will affect them, and the risks and benefits of participating. Consent forms were distributed to student teachers and fully explained to them.

3.6.3 Confidentiality

According to Cohen et al. (2018:130), confidentiality is one of how participants' right to privacy must be protected. Meanwhile, Bruce and Pine (2010:40) argue that confidentiality is an ethical principle that must be addressed in a research plan. The researcher conducted the interviews in a private and quiet location, such as the classrooms and the staffrooms to ensure the confidentiality of the information being provided by the participants. In this manner, the researcher maintained the person's interest in the setting where the interviews took place with the individuals. Thompson (2008:63) mentions that the researcher should not reveal information about a research participant's attitudes, motivations or behaviour that the participant would prefer not to

reveal. As a result, the researcher used pseudonyms to conceal the participants' identities.

3.6.4 Anonymity

When a researcher cannot match a given response to the participants, anonymity is guaranteed (Allan, 2008). McMillan and Schumacher (2006:334) agree that describing the settings and participants in print is inappropriate. However, Babbie (2005) and Allan (2008) warn researchers not to confuse confidentiality and anonymity. To refer to locations and people in this study, code names were used. A student teacher or a school was never named; instead, they were allocated codes as pseudonyms.

3.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The research methodology was introduced in this chapter, followed by the rationale of empirical research. The research design of this study and its paradigm has been described by focusing on the ontological, epistemological and methodological perspectives; the research approach and the case study strategy were also discussed. Under the research methods, the selection of participants, data collection methods were broadly presented. Data analysis that employed thematic analysis was also discussed. Measures of trustworthiness such as credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability were also described fully. Lastly, the study discussed the ethical consideration of this research by focusing on permission, informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity.

Chapter four presents' data analysis and interpretation of the findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the researcher outlined the research methodology of this study. This chapter presents the data analysis and interpretation of the study to answer the main research question: *What are student teachers' experiences of the teaching practice in the Tshwane South District?* The study begins with biographical information of the participants, analysis and interpretation of empirical findings. To achieve the aim of the study, the findings are presented in line with the sub-questions:

- How do student teachers plan for placement at schools?
- How do student teachers prepare for class teaching?
- What documents are used to facilitate the student teachers' teaching practice process?
- What strategies do student teachers use to mitigate any frustrations?

4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

As mentioned in Chapter 3, this study consisted of eight student teachers who were purposively sampled from the four primary schools in the Tshwane South District. The data revealed that all the participating schools were public primary schools consisting of Grades 1 to 7 learners. The participants were UNISA student teachers. They were given pseudonyms as Student-Teacher (ST1 up to ST8) to protect their identities. Three were male and five were females. This implies that most of the student teachers were female. The participants' age ranged from 20-50 years old. The implication is that the participants were mature enough to venture into tertiary education. Five of the student teachers studied Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) and three were enrolled in the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) programme. The indication is that the B.Ed. participants were in their junior teaching degree and the PGCE participants hold first degrees and wanted to qualify for the teachers' certificate to become qualified teachers. Three participants were in their third level (year), two in the fourth level and the other three in the first level of their studies. This means that the B.Ed. participants

who were in the fourth level were in their final year of study, whereas the PGCE participants were in their first year since the programme is for one year.

Two of the participants were in their second week of teaching practice, four in the third week, and two in the first and fifth weeks of the teaching practice, respectively. It emerged that only one participant was on the last week of teaching practice as the official teaching practice duration is five weeks for both programmes.

4.3 PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

This section presents and analyses data collected from the student-teacher interviews and documents relevant to their teaching practice. Student teachers were probed to provide their viewpoints about their experiences, planning and preparing of teaching practice. Additionally, other questions required participants to share the strategies used to ameliorate the challenges that occurred. Raw data from the interviews were recorded, transcribed and analysed while documents were also collected and analysed.

4.3.1 In-Depth Individual Interview Data

The section that follows discusses data gathered from interviews with eight student teachers from four primary schools. The researcher followed the questions in the interview schedule (*cf.* Appendix: I) when presenting this data.

4.3.1.1 Tell me about your teaching practice experiences

When the participants were asked about their teaching practice experiences, they indicated the positives and negatives as experienced in their respective schools. Their responses were based on the support from UNISA, placement schools, mentor teachers, supervisors and time constraints.

a. Support from UNISA

When responding about the support from the university, participants raised concerns about the delivery of study material, module lecturer and teaching practice office.

Participants commented as follows:

- ***Delivery of study material***

Participants indicated that the delivery of study material was a major concern as it delayed them beginning their teaching practice early. Participants indicated the following:

I registered towards the end of the registration closing dates, and my registration was processed late, hence my study material was delivered late. (ST2, School A) [spreading hands]

I normally use my phone to access the teaching practice study material whilst waiting for the delivery. (ST4, School B)

UNISA delivered my study material late after I have long registered and this delayed me, as I can't begin with my schoolwork. (ST6, School C)

My study material was delivered on time. I didn't have to wait long. (ST7, School D)

The delivery of study material was of great concern as student teachers could not begin with their schoolwork as planned. While waiting for the delivery of study material, some participants utilised the myUnisa portal to access study material.

- ***Module lecturer***

Some of the participants claimed that they do not receive sufficient support from the module lecturer. Participants stated the following:

I don't get enough support from the module lecturers. Whenever I call, they don't pick up. This is frustrating as I'm unsure whether I'm doing the right thing or not. (ST1, School A)

I wish the university could answer our enquiries as speedily as possible. For example.... with me, I wanted assistance from the module lecture regarding lesson planning, but the lecturer never responded to my query. (ST6, School C)

In contrast with what ST1 and ST6 mentioned, ST4 had this to say about her module lecturer.

I had great support from my module lecturer, my module lecturer constantly sends out announcements on myUnisa to clarify our concerns. [showing excitement]

Based on the responses, participants indicated that they were uncertain whether they were on the right track during teaching practice since some module lecturers did not responding to their queries. However, ST4 did not experience difficulties and was supported by the module lecturer. The module lecturer communicated with student teachers regularly on the myUnisa portal system.

- **Teaching practice office**

The UNISA Teaching Practice Office (TPO) is responsible for placing students in approved schools prior to their teaching practice period. Student teachers need to complete and submit the Directorate Student Affairs and Registration (DSAR) placement form to the TPO for approval. When responding to this question about support from the TPO, participants responded as follows:

I had a serious challenge with the teaching practice office prior to my teaching practice as I was unsure whether they had approved my school for my teaching practice. (ST 2, School A)

The office doesn't answer our queries... for example [helplessness]...with me, they have never responded to my DSAR form that I need to complete before starting with my teaching practice. I'm in the second week and there's still no response from the office. (ST3, School B)

I struggled with being placed in a school, the TPO's email kept bouncing back when I tried to send my placement form. (ST4, School B)

There is no support at all from the teaching practice office...to tell you the truth..... I have never received a confirmation email from the office. I just started my teaching practice. (ST6, School C)

Nonetheless, two participants from Schools A and D were supported by the TPO and shared the same sentiment and commented as follows:

I had amazing support from TPO, the response was quick. (ST1, School A)

During interviews, participants indicated that in many cases, the office did not respond to their queries. They further mentioned that emails kept bouncing back whenever they send their placement form to the TPO. However, two participants indicated that they received amazing support and that their enquiries were quickly attended to.

b. Support from placement schools and mentor teachers

Concerning the support from schools in which the participants were placed for teaching practice, the following were the responses:

- ***Placement schools***

The school is providing me with a great deal of support. The teachers have been of assistance with my work. They have also given me the Wi-Fi password so that I can have access to the teaching and learning material. (ST1, School A) [showing by hands]

The principal of this school goes the extra mile to ensure that I get the necessary support where needed. Even though I would be here for a short period of time, my principal encourages me to also attend the workshops with my mentor teacher so that I could be more knowledgeable about what the department requires from the teacher. (ST2, School A)

The school supports me with many things.....like for example, I do copies of assignments, I am also able to scan my assignments and send them to the university and lastly, I have access to Wi-Fi. This kind of technological support from the school made my teaching practice to become a lot easier. (ST5, School

[expressing feelings of happiness]

There is a lot of school support. Like, mmmh.... for example.....they assist me with transport. I use learners' buses to come to school.... access teaching and learning material.... engage myself in other extra-curricular activities. (ST8, School D)

Participants indicated that at each of their schools, they were given access to technological facilities and teaching and learning materials, encouraged to attend teacher development workshops and were included in extra-curricular activities. It seemed that the support from the schools facilitated the teaching practice for some participants. ST8 indicated that the school gave her permission to use learners' buses to come to school which helped with transport.

- ***Mentor teachers***

When responding to the question about support from mentor teachers, participants responded as follows:

Yeah....my mentor teachers support me. (ST2, School A)

I get support from my mentor teacher, with regard to class teaching, because initially, I was shy [covering her eyes]. (ST4, School B)

The implication is that mentor teachers support student teachers. Concerning the relationship with their mentor teachers, participants shared the following remarks:

Mmhhhh..... with my mentor teacher it seems like we knew each other. We work well as a team, and he encourages and gives necessary support in my teaching practice, though he sometimes overloads me with too much work. My mentor also included me in the school sports committee. I'm learning a lot from him. (ST2, School A)

I have a good working relationship with my mentor teacher. The support that I have been receiving from her is amazing. (ST4, School B)

My mentor teacher is a nice person... we get on well.... mmmhh, like.... She helps me with many things, [clapping hands] she always tells me that I must put more effort into my studies. Recently I attended an online workshop with her. (ST6, School C)

When asked about what they learn from their mentor teachers, the participants' responses were:

Well, I'm learning a lot of things from my mentor teacher. Each time I have a challenge, I simply go to her to seek assistance.–She has been so helpful. (ST3, School B)

Personally..... I am learning a lot of things from my mentor teacher. She helped me how to develop a lesson plan. She helped me integrate different methods of teaching in the classroom and how to manage the classroom. (ST4, School B)

I spend most of my time with my mentor teacher [showing excitement]. This other day he was showing me how to complete an Individual Support Plan

(ISP) for learners who have learning difficulties. He explained to me that the form assists them in coming up with strategies to assist those learners that experience difficulties in learning. (ST7, School D)

Participants indicated that they had developed a good working relationship with their mentor teachers. Based on their responses, it seems that student teachers learned many things from their mentor teachers, which supported them during their teaching practice and prepared them for teaching.

c. Support from supervisors

Supervision during teaching practice is important as it affords student teachers the opportunity to identify areas in which they can improve their teaching skills. With this question, four participants complained that they were not supported by their supervisors during teaching practice. Participants shared the following frustrations:

I am a final year student and to tell you the truth, the supervisor only visited me once in these four years. How will I know whether I am presenting my lessons correctly if there is no supervisor coming over during our teaching practice? (ST5, School C)

This is my third week of teaching practice, and the university supervisor hasn't communicated anything to me regarding supervision. (ST6, School C)

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted so many things, I heard that supervisors would not be coming to assess us and now I'm anxious as to whether I would be able to pass this practical module. (ST2, School B)

Well, I'm so disappointed ... [showing frustrations] because so far there is no communication from the university regarding the supervisor coming to assess my teaching practice. I have been preparing a lesson that I wanted to present when the supervisor comes, however, my supervisor's visit has been cancelled, I'm confused whether I will pass this module. [with disappointed face] (ST7, School D)

In contrast to the above responses, two participants responded positively about their supervisors. Participants' responses were as follows:

My supervisor communicated with me before coming to my school to assess me.

She was punctual on the day of the assessment...even during my lesson presentation, I could notice that she showed interest in what I was presenting.

(ST1, School A)

When I was doing my third year, my supervisor came to assess me. He was so supportive, after my lesson presentation, he provided me with oral feedback, telling me about the areas that need improvement. (ST3, School B)

The study depicts that some student teachers did not receive adequate support from their supervisors. Participants complained about the university's lack of formal communication regarding supervisors coming to assess them at their schools. In contrast, ST1 indicated that the supervisor communicated prior to visiting the school and was on time during the practical assessment. ST3 also attested that the supervisor was supportive and gave oral feedback after the lesson presentation.

The relationship between supervisor and student teachers was raised during interviews. Given the fact that this study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, the question regarding the relationship between student teachers and supervisors was generally negative. Most student teachers mentioned that they would have liked to present a lesson in the supervisor's presence. Participants remarked as follows:

I was really looking forward to presenting a lesson in the presence of my supervisor, however, that didn't happen as we were told that due to COVID-19 supervisors will not come to assess us in schools. (ST1, School A)

Participants were not able to share much about their relationship with their supervisors as some indicated that they had never been allocated a supervisor or met them or in the case of being allocated a supervisor, a visit was cancelled.

[shaking head] ...there isn't much I can say about my supervisor, as I have never met him/her. (ST3, School B)

I have not been allocated any supervisor yet. (ST5, School C)

This is my fifth week in this school, I have been on my own since the beginning of my teaching practice. I have been allocated a supervisor, [coughing] but when the time arrived for the supervisor to come to my school to assess me, he postponed his visits.... UNISA should introduce another method of supervision in schools, like, mmmh hhhh.....for example, they can tell their student teachers to make a video recording of them presenting a lesson and send that video to the university for assessment. (ST8, School D)

ST8 suggested that if the supervisor is unable to visit the school, a video recording could be made when the student teacher was presenting a lesson. The video can therefore be used to assess teaching practical modules.

d. Time constraints

Participants claimed that teaching practice was constrained by time-related issues. Participants mentioned that they were required to engage in different teaching and learning activities, such as class teaching as well as completing a portfolio. They felt that sufficient time was not allocated to teaching practice. They responded as follows:

There is no sufficient time to teach....my class teaching is being rushed. (ST3, School B)

The time that we spent in school is too little. [clapping hands] I am struggling to complete my assignments. (ST4, School B)

The student-teachers indicated these concerning times for the lessons:

I started my teaching practice when the school was busy administering formal tasks. I also feel like I didn't get enough exposure to class teaching. (ST5, School C)

The duration of a period is 30 minutes, how is one supposed to teach, give feedback on the previous activity, and give learners classwork and homework in 30 minutes? (ST6, School C)

Participants felt that the time allocated to each lesson was too little and did not allow for the full lesson plan to evolve. As a result, the lessons were rushed due to the limited time.

4.3.1.2 How do you plan for the teaching practice?

When participants were asked this question, they indicated that they usually plan their teaching practice based on three factors, namely: the school calendar, choosing schools and the university timetable.

- **South African school calendar**

Student teachers stated that before they could commence with teaching practice, they needed to look at the school calendar so that they would know when schools open and close. Participants mentioned the following.

I plan my teaching practice based on the school calendar so that I don't start my teaching practice when schools are about to open and close. (ST1, School A)

Working with the school calendar, made my planning easier [rubbing fingers] as I could be able to know when the school usually starts with administering their formal assessment tasks. I do not want to interrupt learners during their examination period. (ST7, School D)

Participants indicated that the school calendar helps them in selecting the dates to begin teaching practice. It also assists them in knowing when schools open and close. Consulting the timetable ensures that their teaching practice is not scheduled during the examination period at their placed schools.

- **Choosing schools**

Participants shared the following comments with regard to choosing schools:

I choose schools around where I stay.... particularly those that I can walk to.
(ST1, School A)

I select schools on what subjects they offer. This helps me in knowing whether the practical module that I need to conduct for my teaching practice, is available. (ST3, School B)

Well...[laughing] I choose the school based on the teaching and learning resources it has. (ST5, School C)

Mmhh I chose this school because of the language of learning and teaching. (ST7, School D)

During interviews, it was noted that student teachers chose schools based on various factors, including the distance from home to the school, the subjects offered, access to teaching and learning resources and the language of learning and teaching (LoLT).

However, finding placement schools was often challenging for student teachers, while others found it a straightforward process. Five student teachers shared the same sentiments and indicated that:

It seems like there are many students who are enrolled for teaching practical modules and finding a space in the approved schools is a challenge (ST4, School B).

Choosing a school to do my teaching practice was difficult, I wish the university could do it on our behalf like other universities. (ST5, School C)

[shaking head] Communication breakdown is another issue in the TPO. After finding the school to do my teaching practice, I send the DSAR form to the teaching practice office, and I never got any confirmation from the TPO that my school has been approved. (ST6, School C)

In contrast, participant ST7 commented by saying:

I did not encounter any issues with my placement at school, I went to my nearby school to request permission to do my teaching practice. The principal signed my forms and I send them to the UNISA TPO. Before I could begin my teaching practice, the university has already sent me an email to confirm that my school has been approved. I had an exciting experience with my placement. (ST7, School D)

Student teachers indicated that they wish that the university would choose and allocate schools on their behalf like other universities, particularly as, in some cases, there was a communication breakdown between the placed students and the TPO concerning the DSAR forms.

- ***Reception by the placement school***

Regarding the reception of student teachers by the schools, six of the eight student teachers expressed positive remarks about their experiences in teaching practice. Student teachers' positive responses were as follows:

Learners at this school are well-mannered, and they have got so much respect for the student teachers.... I noticed this when I was introduced to them during the assembly period by the principal. (ST1, School A)

I am doing my teaching practice at this school for the second time, so yeah, well...teachers and learners have been good and supportive to me.... some of the learners still remember me. (ST3, School B)

At my school, I am being addressed as a teacher and not a student-teacher and that has boosted my self-confidence and this also to a certain extent influenced how I was perceived by learners. (ST4, School B)

I received a warm welcome. Well.... mmhhh.... [laughing] I feel like I have been to this school before. Before I could begin my class teaching at school, I did an orientation of the school with my mentor teacher. I was introduced to the learners in the class that I will be teaching. (ST5, School C, showing excitement).

On the first day of my teaching practice, I was formally introduced to staff members by the school principal. The principal assigned me a mentor teacher.

The mentor teacher introduced me to the learners' class by class. Learners were told by the mentor to respect me. (ST6, School C)

The teachers, learners and administrative staff treat me so well as permanent staff. I am having a great time; indeed, their warm welcome has made my stay at this school the most exciting experience that I could have ever imagined. (ST8, School D)

The implication is that the six participants were well-welcomed at their placed schools. Participants indicated that teachers at schools were very supportive. ST5 was orientated by the mentor teacher prior to the beginning of teaching practice, the participant was also introduced to the learners and shown the classes. It seems that being addressed as teachers during teaching practice influenced how learners perceived participants. ST6 was introduced to the mentor teacher and to the learners as a teacher. ST8 was introduced to the learners and staff and was treated well at school. This reception contributed to the student teachers' positive attitude toward teaching practice.

In contrast to the above positive responses, two participants shared negative responses regarding reception by the school. Participant's responses were as follows:

I feel like I was not welcomed by the school because I was not introduced formally to the staff. With learners, [sighing] I was only introduced to those that I will be teaching together with my mentor teacher. I don't have a sense of belonging in this school and I feel like I am a stranger. (ST2, School A)

I had a bad experience at the beginning of my teaching practice [crying]. For example... [sighing] not knowing some of the teachers because I wasn't introduced to them, classes that I will be teaching, not being given the class timetable on time, and being assigned a mentor teacher late. (ST7, School D)

The implication is that the two participants were not nicely welcomed at schools. ST2 was only introduced to learners that she was teaching. The participant indicated that she did not feel a sense of belonging and felt like a stranger in the school. ST7 was assigned a mentor teacher late in teaching practice. The participant indicated that he had a bad experience during teaching practice.

- ***University exam timetable***

Participants have indicated that they use the university exam timetable to plan for their teaching practice. Their responses were as follows:

I planned my teaching practice based on the university provisional examination timetable as I am also registered for other modules. (ST2, School A)

The university examination timetable helped me a lot in planning and structuring my schoolwork because I knew when the examination would begin. (ST5, School C)

I drafted my work plan based on the university timetable as I needed more time to prepare for my examination. Using the university exam timetable assisted me in knowing when to begin my teaching practice. (ST8, School D)

The university provisional timetable assisted participants in structuring their workload as well as scheduling their teaching practice. As they were also registered for other modules, student teachers needed to take this into account.

4.3.1.3 How do you prepare for class teaching?

- **Lesson plans**

Lesson plans should be prepared in advance prior to the actual lesson so that the student teacher is well prepared to teach new concepts and lead meaningful discussions. Lesson planning details the goal or what the students need to learn, how the goal will be achieved or the method of delivery, and a way to measure how well the goal was achieved. This means that the lesson plan describes the subject content, the instructional strategies and the learning activities that need to be completed during the teaching and learning process. A well-thought-out lesson plan helps student teachers guide their teaching (*cf.* Chapter 2, subsection 2.9.1).

When participants were asked about how they prepare for classroom teaching and which lesson plan template they use to prepare their lesson plans, participants responded as follows:

I prepare my lesson plan in the presence of my mentor teacher...so [stretching hands] she provided me with the school template for lesson planning. When I asked her why she use this template, she explained that the template was provided, by the subject facilitator. (ST3, School B)

I use the school lesson template for my lesson plans. In preparation, I use the CAPS document and the Annual Teaching Plan (ATP) that my mentor teacher gave me. (ST4, School C)

For my class teaching, I use the school template lesson plan. However, I've noticed that there is a difference between the school and the UNISA lesson plan. (ST5, School C)

I work with my mentor teacher most of the time, so she prefers the school lesson plan template over the UNISA template. (ST7, School D)

I have prepared all my lesson plans for the duration of my teaching practice, but I am using the school lesson plan template. (ST2, School A)

Participants indicated that for class teaching, their mentor teachers preferred the school template. ST4 used the CAPS document and ATP to prepare lesson plans while most student teachers used the school template lesson to plan their lessons and when completed, they were filed in participants' portfolios.

I was given copies of lesson plans by my mentor teacher. (ST8, School D)

Most participants prepared their lesson plans using the school lesson plan template, although in one case, copies of lesson plans were issued by mentor teachers to participants.

However, two students were not able to give a comprehensive answer to the question:

My lesson plans do not have approval signatures from my mentor teacher; hence I did not file them.....this is stressing me. (ST4, School B)

This week I am doing class observations, I did not prepare [scratching head] any lesson plans for this week. (ST7, School D)

Eish..... these lesson plans are not for this week.....mentor teacher said will have a lesson planning meeting during the week. (ST1, School A)

ST4 in school B indicated that a lesson plan was not approved by the mentor teacher. It has been noted that ST7 was observing lessons and as such he did not prepare

lesson plans. On the other hand, some participants filed their lesson plans even though the lesson plans were not for that week.

- **Access to resources**

Based on student teachers' responses, accessing teaching practice material was a challenge. Participants shared the following frustrations:

Accessing teaching practice material is a challenge that I am encountering. I do not have access to online facilities. (ST7, School D)

[scratching her head] ... I don't know any centre around my area that can grant me free access to online services... I cannot afford data and do not have a smartphone and a laptop. (ST8, School D)

On the other hand, two student teachers commented as follows:

The principal in this school granted me access to the school laptops and printers so that I can be able to access my study material on the myUnisa portal. (ST2, School A)

I am using my smartphone to access teaching and learning resources. However, I wish the university could provide data to student teachers when doing their teaching practice. (ST5, School C)

Participants showed that they did not have access to online facilities. They indicated that data was expensive and that it required one to have a smartphone which they cannot afford. However, ST2 from School A indicated that the school granted her access to the technological facilities and that is how she managed to access the teaching practice materials. ST5 affirms that she uses her smartphone to access the teaching practice material and wished that student teachers were provided with data during their teaching practice period.

- **Classroom management**

Regarding classroom management, participants shared their viewpoints as follows:

There is overcrowding in the classroom. Classes have learners ranging from 50-60. I find it difficult to manage the class especially when I'm not with my mentor teacher. Some learners become unruly, and they are disruptive. I was really struggling, sometimes I would go to another teacher to ask for assistance regarding strategies I could use to manage the class and she was helpful. [expressing frustrations] (ST2, School A)

[shakes her head] ... I feel like some learners don't respect me. There's no discipline at all. Some learners are rude. It is difficult to control the class. Even in the presence of the mentor teacher, learners would still be playful and eat during the class (ST8, School D).

In contrast to the above negative response, participants from School C indicated that learners were well mannered and that they also participated actively in the classroom:

Learners regard me as a teacher and as such, they give me respect, although there are some of those learners who think that since I am a student teacher, I can't punish them when they are misbehaving in the classroom. They think I don't have the power or authority to punish them (ST5, School C).

My classroom has got rules that learners need to adhere to. I do not encounter any problems regarding classroom management. Learners were told that should they break the classroom rules, they will be punished, so because of that, they fear punishment (ST6, School C).

Overcrowding in the classrooms led to student teachers encountering difficulties in managing classes. It was noted that some learners were disruptive and uncontrollable in the classrooms. Participants indicated that learners do not respect them. ST8 from School D complained that some learners were rude and playful.

4.3.1.4 How do you mitigate the frustrations you encounter during the teaching practice?

This question was asked to know how they mitigate the challenges they encounter during teaching practice. During interviews, it was understood that student teachers react differently. When responding to this question, student teachers stated that:

Well.... [sighing] I don't allow these frustrations to hinder my plans of completing my teaching practice. I am glad in my portfolio there is a section where I need to reflect on my experiences.... I will state these frustrations, and hopefully, the university will intervene where possible. (ST1, School A)

I usually talk about my frustrations with my fellow student teachers from this school... I am fortunate that I am not alone in these experiences. Whenever I need clarity on something, I talk with her. We also help each other with assignments. (ST3, School B)

Yeah... my mentor teacher has been guiding me on some of the challenges that I came across during my teaching practice. She has been there for me from the very beginning.....even when it came to those learners that were unruly, she gave me the best advice on how to deal with them. (ST5, School C)

The first week of teaching practice was so overwhelming, I wasn't coping at all... [showing sad face] my assignments were due on the second week of my teaching practice. I booked an appointment with the UNISA Directorate for Student Counselling, as I felt that I was not coping with my studies. (ST7, School D)

It seems that participants spoke about their frustrations with fellow student teachers. The study found that mentor teachers offered student teachers guidance. However, it seems that ST7, from School D, was overwhelmed with the process of teaching practice as well as her studies. The implication is that student teachers can seek help

from used the student counselling directorate of the university for support when not coping with the demands of teaching practice.

4.4 INTERVIEWS DATA INTERPRETATION

Creswell and Creswell (2017:320) state that data interpretation refers to a process whereby the researcher summarises the data findings and compares the results with the literature. This study followed the six phases of thematic analysis as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) when analysing data (*cf.* Chapter 3, Section 3.4.3). The findings from the interviews have been analysed accordingly and themes and subthemes emerged which are presented as findings justified by the existing literature based on the phenomenon under the study. Table 4.1 represents the emerging themes and sub-themes.

Table 4.1: Emerging themes and sub-themes

Question	Themes	Sub-themes
What are UNISA student teachers' experiences of the teaching practice in Tshwane South District?	Theme 1: The effect of support and time constraints on student teachers	1.1 Support from UNISA 1.2 Support from the placement schools and mentor teachers 1.3 Support from the supervisors 1.4 Time constraints
How do UNISA student teachers plan for placement at schools?	Theme 2: Planning for placement at schools	2.1 South African school calendar 2.2 Choosing placement schools. 2.3 Reception by placement schools 2.4 University exam timetable
How do UNISA student teachers prepare for class teaching?	Theme 3: Preparing for class teaching	3.1 Lesson plans 3.2 Access to teaching and learning resources. 3.3 Classroom management

What strategies do UNISA student teachers use to mitigate any frustrations?	Theme 4: Strategies to mitigate frustrations	4.1 Teaching practice reflections 4.2 UNISA Directorate for Career Counselling and Development (DCCD) 4.3 Guidance from mentor teachers and fellow students
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(Source: Own depiction)

The subsequent sections provide a detailed presentation of the key findings as summarised in Table 4.2 above.

4.4.1 Theme 1: The Effect of Support and Time Constraints on Student Teachers

Teaching practice aims to guide and provide student teachers with an opportunity to conduct class teaching. This process offers student teachers intimate contact with the real world of teaching. Several studies have been conducted to understand the effect of support and time constraints on student teachers. Dube, Uleanya, and Mncube (2022:89) argue that the quality of student-teacher support greatly affects student achievement. In agreement, Sibley et al. (2017:147) found that when student teachers have a positive support system, their stress level during teaching practice is reduced. Sibley et al. (2017) add that the reduction of stress levels on student teachers may lead to subsequent benefits for students. It emerged from the findings that the effect of support and time constraints on student teachers aroused both positive and negative feelings in student teachers. The support from UNISA, placement schools and mentor teachers, supervisors and time constraints emerged as sub-themes and are discussed below.

4.4.1.1 Support from UNISA

Student teachers shared their experiences regarding support from the university during teaching practice. The study found that student teachers' support from the university differed as some received adequate and some inadequate support. During the interviews, student teachers raised concerns regarding the delivery of study

material, support from module lecturers and the teaching practice office (TPO). Concerning the delivery of study material, it was found that the study material was delivered early to those students who registered on time and late for those registered late. The study found that some of the student teachers began their teaching practice late due to the late arrival of study material. The implication is that the late arrival of study material delayed the learning performance of student teachers. This finding corroborates with the study conducted by Mahdy (2020:2), which found that late delivery of study material may contribute to students failing their examinations. The study discovered that the University's delayed delivery of study material negatively impacted student teachers (*cf.* Chapter 4, Subsection 4.4.1.1).

It emerged that some student teachers downloaded study materials electronically whilst waiting for the delivery of hard copy study materials. However, access to online material was a challenge, and some students did not have adequate technological devices such as laptops and smartphones. The implication is that a lack of technological devices had a significant impact on the academic performance of student teachers because they could not submit their work on time due to limited resources. In addition, some of the placement schools assisted student teachers in accessing their study materials and LTSMs using school technological resources. This support from their placement schools allowed them the opportunity to find relevant materials to support their teaching. Froiland, Worrell and Oh (2018:866) emphasise that when autonomy is fostered, student teachers can choose relevant teaching material that ignites motivation in teaching.

With regards to support from module lecturers, the study revealed that two of the eight student teachers were not supported by the module lecturers even though contact was repeatedly attempted. The finding concurs with Mokoena's (2017) study, which revealed a communication breakdown between module lecturers and student teachers during teaching practice. The current study found that six of the student teachers were supported by the module lecturers, who constantly communicated with their allocated student teachers on my Unisa platform. This finding supports Du Plessis's (2020:9) assertion that support from module lecturers is vital for student teachers to gain self-confidence and self-assurance for their professional growth. Fedesco, Bonem, Wang, and Henares (2019:760) posit that psychological needs for competence can be

fostered when student teachers receive constructive feedback during teaching practice. In other words, student teachers need to receive feedback from their module lecturers, supervisors and teacher mentors to track their own progress to become competent teachers.

The findings of this study have established that support from the TPO differed from one student teacher to another. Of the eight student teachers, three did not receive any confirmation that they could start with their teaching practice at their placement schools. This led to an uneasy feeling as they started panicking, not knowing whether they should start with their teaching practice or not. This shows that the TPO support for student teachers was minimal. Kelesoglu and Yetkiner's (2021:841) confirm that teaching practice reaches its objectives if healthy communication is established between the student teachers and the university. The current study found that five student teachers had great support from the TPO and were able to be allocated placement schools and supervisors on time by the TPO.

4.4.1.2 Support from the placement school and mentor teachers

Schools play a major role in supporting student teachers during teaching practice. They afford student teachers the opportunity to interact with learners and a chance for self-reflection. The majority of interviewed student teachers indicated that the placement schools profoundly supported them. McLennan, McIlveen and Perera (2021:187) state that teachers' interest in students' well-being and provision of emotional support fulfil the students' psychological need for relatedness, which in turn promotes intrinsic motivation. In some schools, student teachers were given access to the technological facilities of the schools to assist them in preparing for their lessons and accessing LTSMs and their study materials.

It seems that planning became easier for student teachers as they were allowed to access the teaching and learning resources of the schools. Lindström, Löfström and Londén (2022:14) indicate that allowing student teachers to use school resources may contribute to the student's experience of being perceived as trustworthy, independent and appreciated members of the school. The study found that some student teachers were allowed to use learners' school buses to travel to and from school. The

implication is that this helped the student teachers to be punctual and cut transport costs. Again, in some placement schools, it was discovered that student teachers were afforded the opportunity to develop new skills. They were encouraged to attend professional development workshops and participate in extra-curricular activities. Abudulai (2021:103), who supports this finding, reports that placement schools serve as opportunities for student teachers to develop a range of professional skills.

Concerning support from mentor teachers, eight student teachers shared positive experiences. The study found that placement schools allocated student teachers with mentor teachers. The implication is that this assisted student teachers in being effectively guided during the teaching practice period. In support of this, Kuswando's (2017:213) study indicates that mentor teachers should provide student teachers with advice and encouragement during the teaching practice. It has been discovered that a good working relationship between mentor teachers and student teachers has a positive impact on teaching practice. The implication is that student teachers learned how to manage the classes, integrate various teaching strategies, and plan for lessons. Additionally, Kuswando (2017) asserts that mentor-teacher support does not only help student teachers but is concerned with building students' beliefs to develop their teaching capabilities and become motivated.

Another important finding was raised by one student teacher indicating that although her mentor teacher was supportive, she was overloaded with work. This resulted in the student-teacher not coping with the demands of teaching practice due to being overburdened. This finding aligns with Assafuah-Drokov et al. (2018:151) that some of the mentor teachers delegated their teaching duties, adding to the teaching workload of student teachers. Du Plessis (2020:9) posits that student teachers should be given considerable support by their mentor teachers and guiding principles on teaching practice. When supported, student teachers show higher learning results, improved wellness and a more important value for what schools offer (McLennan et al., 2021).

4.4.1.3 Support from the supervisors

Of the eight participants, six participants were not satisfied with the support they received from supervisors. The relationship between the student teacher and the supervisor is vital for emotional support during teaching practice (Lindström et al., 2022:4). The study found a lack of support from supervisors during the teaching practice. This finding is in consonance with the study of Assafuah-Drokov et al. (2018:151) that found that there is a lack of cordial relationship between supervisors and student teachers during teaching practice. From the collected data, the study discovered six student teachers were unsure whether supervisors would come to assess them. The supervisors postponed their school visits to student teachers which caused confusion and anxiety amongst the student teachers. The implication is that student teachers felt disappointed because of the absence of supervision during the teaching practice. Student teachers expect professional feedback from their supervisors so they use this to inform further teaching of the lesson and ensure that they are well equipped with the relevant knowledge and skill in order to obtain their teaching professional degree. Vansteenkiste et al. (2018) affirm that competent and motivated student teachers study harder and pay more attention when supervisors are adequately addressing their needs.

All partners should enforce the support relationship to ensure that student teachers acquire self-assurance and self-confidence that is vital to growing professionally. In support of the above view, Carl and Strydom (2017:7) state that it is very important that supervisors become active members during teaching practice and contribute to the student teachers' professional development. Kaldi and Xafakos (2017:248) indicate that self-competence beliefs, teaching practice stress and teaching practice satisfaction are associated with student teachers' motivation. Furthermore, Kaldi and Xafakos (2017) found that the intrinsic motivation of student teachers during teaching practice can raise learners' academic performance and interest in learning. On a positive note, two student teachers expressed satisfaction regarding support from their supervisors. The student teachers reported that the TPO allocated supervisors to them on time. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the process of supervision was disrupted.

4.4.1.4 Time constraints

Student teachers complained about the time given for teaching practice. Student teachers reported that they did not have sufficient time for class teaching. Regarding class teaching, the study found that student teachers' lessons were always rushed. According to the timetable in four schools, each period was scheduled for 30 minutes, which made it difficult for the student teachers to cover all the work planned. It is argued that student teachers were not able to get sufficient teaching practice exposure because of the limited time allocated for class practice teaching. The above statement is supported by Fatonia et al. (2020:573), who found that student teachers were dissatisfied with the limited time of teaching during their class interaction. Kelesoglu and Yetkiner (2021:848) also reported that the teaching practice period is insufficient and suggested that it should be extended.

Additionally, it was found that all interviewed student teachers were also registered for other modules besides the practical modules. Therefore, having registered for other modules put immense pressure on student teachers as they needed to study and prepare for examinations.

4.4.2 Theme 2: Planning for Placement at Schools

The most significant process for teaching practice success is planning. This theme consists of the findings from the South African school calendar, choosing placement schools, reception by placement schools, and the University exam timetable subthemes.

4.4.2.1 South African school calendar

The study discovered that student teachers use the South African school calendar to plan their teaching practice. The calendar assisted student teachers in knowing when the schools opened and close. The implication is that the South African school calendar was used to ascertain the most appropriate time for teaching practice and avoid being placed during the school assessment period to prevent disruption. Turner, Finch, and Uribe-Zarain (2018:57) found that student teachers used the school

calendar to plan and prepare for teaching practice to ensure ample time for teaching practice and learning from the mentor teachers.

4.4.2.2 Choosing placement schools

The study's findings revealed that choosing placement schools was difficult for some participants. Five participants reported that they struggled to find placement schools. It was discovered that when choosing placement schools, some student teachers did not follow the guidelines and procedures of TPO. The university has outlined guidelines that need to be followed when choosing a placement school (*cf.* Chapter 2, Section 2.8.1). It emerged that most placement schools had students from other universities conducting their teaching practice, making it difficult for UNISA student teachers to find schools near them. Mokoena (2017) suggests that the university should introduce an online placement system where students can place themselves with a click of a computer or a cell phone button (*cf.* Chapter 2, Section 2.8.1). The findings indicate that some student teachers spend more time looking for schools, which often results in them beginning the teaching practice later than expected. Some student teachers lived far from schools, making their teaching practice quite costly as they needed to pay transport fares to travel to the schools. However, it has been discovered that student teachers chose schools based on their being well-resourced. This is confirmed by Okekweo (2021:16), who found that student teachers selected well-resourced schools that created better prospects of learning. In agreement, Abogdia et al. (2015:129) state that the lack of teaching and learning resources frustrates students as it makes teaching a difficult task.

4.4.2.3 Reception by the placement schools

Concerning reception by placement schools, the findings of the study show that six student teachers received a warm welcome from placement schools. School principals formally introduced student teachers to staff members, while mentor teachers introduced student teachers to learners in the classroom. Prior to class teaching, they were provided with an orientation by their mentor teachers. The implication is that this made the students feel welcome and accepted, have a sense of relatedness and belonging and being welcomed in the school. This finding concurs with the study of

Lindström et al. (2022:14) which revealed that student teachers felt included and motivated when introduced and welcomed by the staff members and learners. Another finding was that participants felt more respected when addressed as teachers than as student teachers by learners and this boosted their self-confidence in teaching.

In contrast, there were unpleasant feelings that were experienced by some of the student teachers. The study found that two student teachers of the eight did not receive a good reception from the schools. It has been reported that upon arrival they were not introduced to staff and learners. This has resulted in student teachers feeling unwanted at schools. The finding concurred with Okekweo's (2021:12) study which found that student teachers were not welcomed and introduced to placement schools because they were not properly introduced, and their self-image and confidence were negatively affected. The study also revealed that student teachers did not have a sense of connection and belonging to the broad community in the school because of not being well received. The findings concur with Abongdia et al. (2015:52) who found that some student teachers experienced a sense of alienation in schools during teaching practice.

According to Abongdia et al. (2015), student teachers felt estranged, with no sense of belonging and isolation resulting in anxiety and a lack of self-confidence. The self-determination theory emphasises the process of internalisation on student teachers. According to Vansteenkiste et al. (2018:33), student teachers should adapt or adjust for greater things. Greater functioning will allow them to endorse their beliefs, values and behaviours. The study also found that in School D, a mentor teacher was assigned late to the student teacher which resulted in the participant being deprived of learning opportunities. Fedesco et al. (2019:759) assert that student teachers' motivation is cultivated when a feeling of relatedness is satisfied. In other words, for relatedness to be fostered, student teachers should feel connected, both intellectually and emotionally, to the mentor teachers and learners during teaching practice.

4.4.2.4 University exam timetable

The study found that student teachers relied on the university exam timetable to schedule their teaching practice. It assisted them with scheduling their teaching

practice so that it did not clash with preparations for the examination. In support of this finding, Bania and Duarah (2018:84) advise that the exam timetable should be accurate and effective for the performance of any educational institute. It was noticed that the student teachers were also registered for other modules besides the teaching practical modules, which meant that appropriate scheduling was important.

4.4.3 Theme 3: Preparing for Class Teaching

Three sub-themes emerged from this theme, namely, lesson plans, access to teaching and learning resources and classroom management.

4.4.3.1 Lesson plans

During document analysis it was discovered that two participants did not file their lesson plans, however, six had their lesson plans filed. The study also revealed that some lesson plans were not signed by mentor teachers. In other words, feedback was not given to student teachers after the completion of lesson plans. Nikoçeviq-Kurfi and Saqipi's (2020:191) study found that feedback is rarely provided during teaching practice, and this results in lack of self-confidence of student teachers. A study conducted by Hugo (2018:14) found that student teachers who were given professional feedback on their lesson plans by their mentor teachers were afforded valuable understanding of how to plan their lessons better.

This study found that when preparing lesson plans, student teachers used the schools' lesson templates as opposed to the UNISA template for their daily lesson plans. It was found that the ATP in the CAPS documents were utilised to prepare the lesson plans. It has been found that one student teacher did not prepare lesson plans as he was engaged in class observation. In their study, Nikoçeviq-Kurfi and Saqipi (2022) also discovered that there were low number of students who completed their lesson plans, and this prevented student teachers strengthening their self-confidence and teaching capabilities. It was observed in three schools that lesson plans were completed in the presence of mentor teachers. The implication is that mentor teachers were able to offer guidance when student teachers completed lesson plans in their presence. In

their study, Guay et al. (2019:217) found that students who reported the most support for learning from their mentor teachers had the highest intrinsic motivation.

4.4.3.2 Access to teaching and learning resources

The study found that two of the eight student teachers struggled to access teaching and learning materials. The two schools where the student teachers were placed, did not have sufficient resources to facilitate the process of teaching and learning. The implication is that when schools do not have technological resources, student teachers will struggle to find relevant resources that will assist them in planning their work.

Another significant finding was that learners in some schools did not have textbooks. This finding is supported by Okekweo (2021) study which indicates that there are still some schools that do not have libraries and textbooks (*cf.* Chapter, subsection 2.9.2). The implication is that sharing of textbooks by learners was time-consuming as learners ended up not completing the activities given by student teachers. The study of Onyebuenyi et al. (2022:11) revealed that student teachers' capacity for effective teaching practice and autonomy, could be enhanced when there is a provision of adequate learning materials like textbooks. The study assumes that not having access to teaching and learning material might jeopardise the student teachers' success to complete their teaching practice. Meanwhile, Felix, Dacanay, Otida and Panganduyon, (2019:193) in their study, discovered that teaching aids add value to the teaching and learning of the learners to broaden their knowledge ensuring that the student teacher motivates the learners to become interested in the subject content.

In contrast, six student teachers indicated that they had access to the school's information and communication technology (ICT) resources. The study discovered that student teachers were given Wi-Fi passwords by their placement schools to access LTSMs as well as complete their schoolwork. Tanak (2020:54) recommends that student teachers should be provided with technological opportunities to integrate more inquiry experiences during teaching practice. In support of this statement, Maseko (2022:170) states that student teachers should use various teaching and learning aids when preparing. Thus, the support should be an ongoing process to have

access to technological resources which could be integrated into the teaching and learning process.

4.4.3.3 Class management

It emerged from the study that some student teachers experienced difficulties in managing class. This was due to overcrowding in two schools (Schools B and C). The findings reveal that learners in these schools became unruly. This finding concurs with Ulla's (2016:244) study where learners were also uncontrollable due to overcrowded classes (*cf.* Chapter 2, subsection 2.7.5.1). Ulla's (2016) study shows that student teachers were not respected by learners and were not regarded as teachers. According to Felix (2019), managing a large class is difficult because learners tend to be noisy and are often reluctant to participate in class. It was also found that in one school (School A), classroom rules were not obeyed by learners due to overcrowding. This aligns with Enoc's (2019:84) study which reveals that classroom rule regulations were not obeyed and procedures that suggested good behaviour of learners were not followed, and thus disruption became the norm in large classrooms. Enoc (2019) emphasises that effective teaching and learning cannot take place in a poorly managed class. The current study found that due to large class sizes and limited time, some learners were left unattended with their learning difficulties. The implication is that overcrowding had a negative impact on learners as well as student teachers' teaching.

Although there were student teachers who had challenges in class management, there were those who did not encounter any challenges. Six student teachers managed their classrooms well. It was found that student teachers were supported by their mentor teachers to prepare and manage their classes effectively. In their study Indrawati and Musyarofah (2019:24) recommend that mentor teachers should suggest ideas for class management to student teachers to help them develop skill and confidence. It is assumed that student teachers had a sense of relatedness and competence as they were able to manage their classes with the help of their mentor teachers.

4.4.4 Theme 4: Strategies to Mitigate Frustrations

Student teachers mentioned various strategies they used to mitigate their frustrations during teaching practice. They mentioned the following: the teaching practice reflections, UNISA directorate of career counselling and development and guidance from mentor teachers and fellow students.

4.4.4.1 Sub-theme 4.1: Teaching practice reflections

The findings show that student teachers used teaching practice reflections as a strategy to mitigate their frustrations. The tutorial letters included a reflection section in which students were required to reflect on their teaching practice experiences. The section motivated the student teachers to voice their positive and negative experiences of the teaching practices. Riyanti's (2020) study indicates that during reflections, student teachers wrote down things that they hoped to happen and things they missed, as well as things they need to improve in their next teaching practice. It is assumed that the reflections column could assist student teachers in identifying areas of weakness and strength during their teaching practice. In support of the above viewpoint, Ngussa (2015:22) concurs and states that reflection helped student teachers to discover their level of competence and areas where improvement is needed in their daily routine of teaching practice. Molotja and Maruma (2018:464) affirm student teachers can become more empowered decision-makers when they reflect on how they perceive things around them. In support of this, a study conducted by Riyanti (2020:277) found that student teachers were able to identify their weaknesses and their teaching capabilities through reflections.

4.4.4.2 Sub-theme 4.2: UNISA directorate for career counselling and development

The second strategy that was used by student teachers was to consult with UNISA directorate for Career Counselling and Development (DCCD). The study discovered that some student teachers were overwhelmed with the programme of teaching practice and the unprecedented times of the COVID-19 pandemic. In line with this agreement, Ulla (2016:245) found that during teaching practice some student teachers

were frustrated, overwhelmed and anxious due to a lack of confidence in classroom teaching. In the current study, it was assumed that the student teachers were not coping with the teaching practice and their studies. To ease their frustrations, the study found that student teachers reached out to the DCCD office for assistance. The implication is that student teachers were seeking guidance on their career development and personal well-being. Msuya's (2022:24) study on professional guidance and counselling confirmed that student teachers were assisted with improving various aspects of their teaching practice which included participating in cocurricular activities which form part of teaching experiences. Although student teachers could not attend counselling sessions physically because of the COVID-19 pandemic, student teachers reported that they used emails to communicate with DCCD counsellors.

4.4.4.3 Sub-theme 4.3: Guidance from mentor and fellow students

The findings of the study show that student teachers communicated their frustrations with their mentor teachers and fellow student teachers. The mentor teachers offered guidance to assist student teachers' address their frustrations while fellow student teachers supported each other during teaching practice. Deci and Ryan (2000:56) postulate that mentor teachers promote the autonomy of motivation of student teachers to learn. Froiland et al. (2018:857) agree that autonomous learning motivation has a significant positive impact on academic success. Student teachers indicated that they spoke with fellow student teachers as they can relate to similar experiences. During their study, Kaldi and Xafakos (2017:248) found that when student teachers talk openly with their peers about their experiences, they can lower their fears and concerns regarding teaching practice. Relatedness according to SDT perspectives, assumes that people feel part of collective when they are close and have secure emotional bonds with significant others (Guay, 2022:80). Guay (2022) posits that without relatedness it would be difficult to elaborate why people internalise ways of interacting effectively with other groups. Meaning that student teachers are likely to develop professionally in an environment where they feel connected. It seems that guidance from mentor teachers and relatedness from fellow students helped the student teachers not to feel isolated during the teaching practice.

4.5 DOCUMENT DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Student teachers had a range of documents in their portfolios. Documents such as placement forms, class timetables, attendance registers, indemnity forms and lesson plans were filed and were analysed (*cf.* Chapter 2, subsection 2.8.2) using a developed checklist tool (*cf.* Appendix K). The following question was used as a guide for document analysis: *What documents are used to facilitate the student teachers' teaching practice process?*

During document analysis, the researcher explored whether student teachers used teaching practice documents accordingly to achieve the requirements of the current teaching practice implementation. The document analysis contained information that corroborated some of the data gathered from the interviews. The researcher provides interpretation and findings of the following documents: placement forms, declaration forms, attendance registers, class timetables and lesson plans. Table 4.2 represents the themes and sub-themes from the document analysis.

Table 4.2: Emerging themes and sub-themes

Questions	Themes	Sub-themes
What documents are used to facilitate the student teachers' teaching practice process?	Theme 1: Documents used to facilitate the teaching practice process	1.1.1 Placement forms 1.1.2 Indemnity forms 1.1.3 Attendance registers 1.1.4 Class timetables

4.5.1 Placement Forms

The placement forms were the first documents to be checked and collected during the document collection from the participants. UNISA requires student teachers to complete and send the placement forms to the TPO before they can be admitted at schools for teaching practice. Failure to do so will result in unsuccessful placement.

The study found that student teachers completed their placement forms. It has been discovered that placement schools provided student teachers with great support when

completing placement forms. The implication is that student teachers were given access to school technological resources and the principals ensured that the placement forms were signed before they were sent by the student teachers to the TPO. It was noted that mentor teachers also had copies of placement forms. Guay et al. (2019:217) reports that intrinsic motivation is positively related to students' levels of academic achievement and teachers' relatedness. However, one student teacher did not file her placement form and another student teacher's placement form was not sent to the TPO. The implication is that when placement forms are not sent on time, the TPO will take time to approve the student teachers' placement (*cf.* Chapter 2, Subsection 2.8.2).

4.5.2 Indemnity Forms

Indemnity forms were verified in the participants' portfolios. The purpose of the form was to be completed and signed by the student teachers to declare that they agree to conduct teaching practice at a school determined by the university. All eight participants from the four schools had their indemnity forms signed and filed in their portfolios.

The study found that eight student teachers in the four sampled schools completed, signed and filed their indemnity forms during the teaching practice period. The principals' signatures were also attached to the forms to serve as evidence that the participants were placed at their schools. The implication is that copies of indemnity forms were kept as proof that student teachers would adhere to the rules and regulations of teaching practice as set by the university.

4.5.3 Attendance Registers

The attendance registers were also checked in the participants' portfolios. The purpose of the attendance register was to monitor whether student teachers was present each day at the school during the scheduled teaching practice, as required by the university (*cf.* Chapter 2, subsection 2.8.2.).

The study discovered that all participants' attendance registers were filed. The study found that there was inconsistency when it comes to signing of the attendance register.

Four student teachers' attendance registers were not signed by their mentor teachers. It has been found that student teachers attendance registers were signed either on Fridays or Mondays, sometimes on the last day of teaching practice. This resulted in student teachers being uncertain about the outcomes of teaching practice as they were concerned when their attendance registers were not checked regularly. The implication is that when the attendance register is not monitored daily by mentor teachers, placement schools and the university will fail to track whether student teachers are in attendance each day during their scheduled teaching practice.

In one school (School C) the principals monitored the attendance registers and the mentor teacher was required to sign in the principal's office. The principals' review of student teachers' attendance registers significantly influenced pedagogical practices of the student teachers. In line with these findings, Garba, Waweru and Kaugi (2019:559) found that checking student teachers' professional records, for example, the attendance register, had a positive impact on the academic performance of students in addition to teacher improvement. In the same vein, Ryan and Deci (2020:139) state that when the focus is on nurturing and supporting the teachers and student's autonomy, relatedness and competence, the desired outcomes are produced. Student teachers were told not to be concerned when their attendance registers were not signed by their mentor teachers in the other school, but the implication is that this has left student teachers anxious about whether they would meet the requirements of TPO. It was discovered that four student teachers did not come across challenges with their attendance registers as were they monitored daily by mentor teachers.

4.5.4 Class Timetables

Class timetables document times in the week in which a particular subject is taught. It is expected that when student teachers arrive at placement schools, they are provided with a class timetable so that they are able to ascertain when to attend their classes.

When checking the class timetables, it was revealed that two student teachers did not have class timetables in their portfolios. One claimed that there was a delay in issuing of the timetable by the mentor teacher. The delay had a negative effect on the progress of student teacher since she was not able to begin the class teaching as envisioned. It has been reported that in all schools, mentor teachers were the ones who were responsible for issuing the class timetables to student teachers. Froinland (2018:866) posits that student teacher and mentor teacher relationships promote intrinsic motivation to long-term engagement and enhanced achievement among diverse learners. The implication is that this helped the student teachers to begin with the preparation of their lessons and knowing the time and classes for their subject.

4.6 REVISITING SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY

Based on Deci and Ryan's (2020) self-determination theory, teaching practices that are beneficial for students' intrinsic or self-determined motivation contribute to satisfying students' basic needs for autonomy, competence and social relatedness. This means that intrinsically motivating activities functioned as magnets that encouraged students to become involved. The researchers realised that through SDT, teaching practice as an activity could be useful for student teachers and have a personal meaning. In other words, student teachers need to perceive teaching practice as a process that is truly relevant and meaningful for their own personal value (Vansteenkiste et al., 2018:44). Autonomy took place when mentor teachers provided student teachers with choices and opportunities to work on their own. Student teachers felt related when the mentor teachers expressed respect and care towards them and encouraged cooperation in the classrooms among them and the learners. Studies confirm that students who feel supported by their mentor teachers regarding their basic needs including competency, need to show stronger intrinsic or self-determined motivation to learn (*cf.* Chapter 2 Subsection 2.5.1). Table 4.3 shows a summary of findings through SDT.

Table 4.3: Summary of findings through SDT

Autonomy	Competence	Relatedness
<p>Two student teachers' study materials were delayed and as a result, they started their teaching practice late. In contrast, five students received their study material on time, while one student teacher used her smartphone to access the study material. Six student teachers from the four sampled placement schools were granted permission to use their technological resources to access their study materials, while two student teachers had trouble accessing teaching and learning materials. In two schools (C and D) there was insufficient ICT resources.</p> <p>Six student teachers were supported by the module lecturers and were constantly communicating with the student teachers</p>	<p>Student teachers were supported by their mentor teachers to prepare and manage their classes effectively though one was overloaded with work.</p> <p>The student teachers used the schools lesson plans and completed them in the presence of mentor teachers. Six had their lesson plans filed though some were not signed by mentor teachers.</p> <p>The study found that student teachers' work has always being rushed due to the limited time for class teaching. Time for class teaching was insufficient and as a result, student teachers failed to cover all the content of their lessons.</p> <p>Two student teachers, one in School B and one in School C encountered</p>	<p>Five student teachers had difficulties finding placement schools. Student teachers from other higher learning institutions were already placed in schools making it more challenging for UNISA student teachers to get placed in schools. Meanwhile, finding placement schools for the other three student teachers was easy. These three student teachers did not encounter any challenges.</p> <p>Six of the eight student teachers received a warm welcome at the placement schools where they were introduced to learners and the staff. Participants felt more respected when addressed as teachers than as student teachers. However, two student teachers</p>

<p>on myUnisa platform while two did not get any support from the module lecturers.</p> <p>Seven student teachers used teaching practice reflections as a strategy to mitigate their frustrations (<i>cf</i> Chapter 2 subsection 2.10.1). They discussed their frustrations with their mentor teachers and fellow students. However, they were overwhelmed with COVID-19 complications and one student teacher followed the counselling route.</p>	<p>challenges with classroom management. Learners were misbehaving during lessons. There was overcrowding in the classroom (School A) and as a result classroom rules were not followed. This has resulted in learners not being given individual attention. In contrast, six student teachers did not experience any classroom management difficulties as they were guided by their mentor teachers to prepare and manage their classes effectively.</p>	<p>from Schools A and D were not introduced to the staff and learners, making them feel unwanted at school.</p> <p>Two student teachers complained that they were not supported by supervisors. There was uncertainty about whether supervisors would come to assess them. This resulted in student teachers feeling confused and worried. Meanwhile, six student teachers were provided with sufficient support from</p>
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MAPHUTI CYNTHIA TSEBE	MAPHUTI CYNTHIA TSEBE	MAPHUTI CYNTHIA TSEBE
<p>The study found that student teachers relied on the university exam timetable to plan for teaching practice and prepare for their examinations.</p> <p>Attendance registers of all student teachers were filed, however, in two schools, registers were not signed daily. They were signed either on Friday or Monday. In one school (School B), student teacher was told that attendance register will be signed at the end of the teaching programme. This made student teachers anxious. Meanwhile, four student teachers' attendance register was monitored regularly by their mentor teachers.</p>	<p>All student teachers had their placement forms filed. Principals in the four schools helped student teachers to complete the forms and send them to the teaching practice office, however, one student teacher's form was not sent to the teaching practice office. The indemnity forms of all participants were completed, signed and filed in student teachers' portfolios.</p>	<p>their supervisors. Thus, supervisors were allocated to student teachers on time.</p> <p>All student teachers were assigned mentor teachers. This brought a sense of connection and belonging amongst student teachers to the school. This good working relationships between mentor teachers and student teachers had a positive impact on teaching practice.</p> <p>Six student teachers filed their timetable, while one student teacher forgot to file hers, and one student teacher had not been given the timetable. This resulted in a delay regarding class attendance by the student teacher.</p>

4.7 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This chapter highlighted student teachers' views on their experiences during teaching practice. Challenges affecting student teachers during teaching practice have been recognised throughout this study. Providing student teachers with the necessary support remains significant in strengthening teaching practice. Regarding timing in teaching practice, the researcher maintains that the focus should be on making sure that student teachers understand the main purpose of teaching practice. The study analysed the experiences of student teachers during teaching practice and determined how to prepare prospective student teachers to cope effectively with the challenges they encounter during teaching practice. In conclusion, the study affirms that student teachers' experiences are attributable to issues relating to the planning and preparation of teaching practice, choosing schools and placements, relationship with mentor teachers and supervisors, support from the school and the university, access to teaching and learning resources and classroom management. Chapter 5 concludes the research by presenting the summary and findings of this study.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this research was to investigate student teachers' teaching practice experiences in selected primary schools in the Tshwane South District.

The study's research objectives were as follows:

- investigate how student teachers plan for placement at schools.
- explore how student teachers prepare for class teaching.
- discover the documents used to facilitate the student teachers' teaching practice process.
- identify strategies student teachers use to mitigate any frustrations.

This chapter presents the summary of the research findings, the research conclusions, the study's contributions, limitations, recommendations, suggestions for future research and concluding remarks on the study.

Chapter 1 presented an overview of the study consisting of the introduction, background, theoretical framework, problem statement and research questions, aims and objectives. The research methodology, measures of trustworthiness and ethical consideration were briefly discussed. The study's limitations were also indicated.

In Chapter 2, a review of the literature of the study was presented. The focus of this chapter was to analyse and report on the findings of studies that were previously conducted on the same topic. The self-determination theory (SDT) was used as a theoretical framework to guide this study. This chapter discussed teaching practice in international, national, and local contexts. Policies set out by the Department of Education to ensure quality assurance of teaching practice were outlined.

The research methodology that received attention in Chapter 3 was the research design, research methods, measures of trustworthiness and ethical considerations.

Chapter 4 presented the findings of the study. Data collected via semi-structured interviews and document analysis were presented, analysed and interpreted. The discussions were structured around themes and sub-themes obtained from participants' verbatim responses.

A summary of the main findings is presented in the next section.

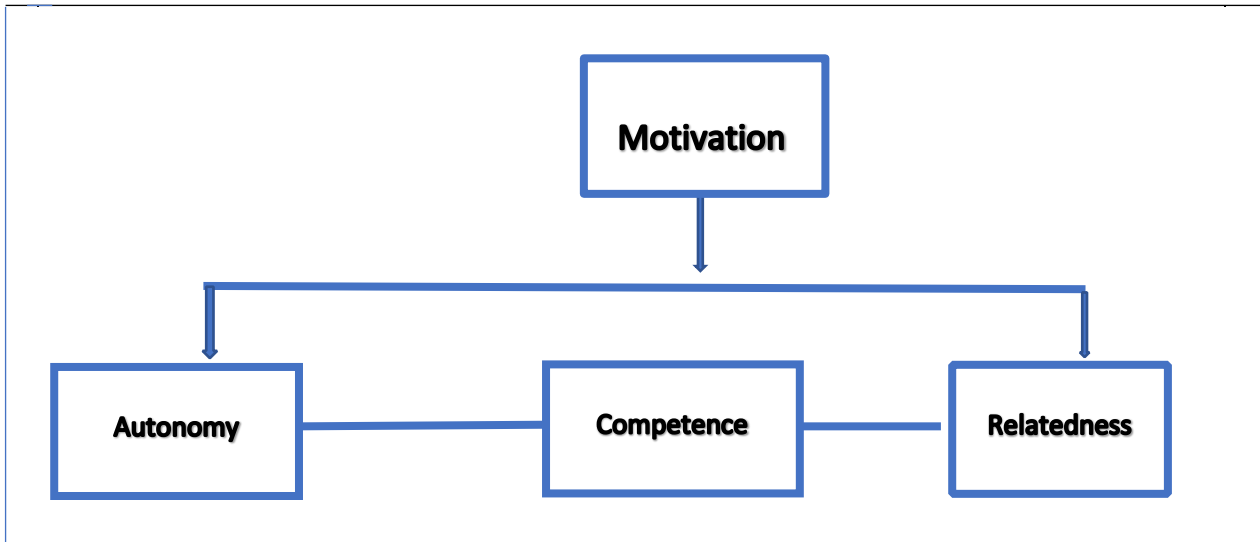
5.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Cohen et al. (2018:157) emphasise that the purpose of research is to understand the phenomenal truth. The research objectives indicated in the introduction of this chapter were achieved. Analysis of participants' responses attained from data answered all the research questions.

This section discusses the key scholarly findings based on the self-determination theory.

5.2.1 Key Scholarly Review Findings

The theoretical framework which underpinned this study was explained in Chapter 2, subsection 2.5.1 which is the self-determination theory. In Chapter 2, subsection 2.5.1.1, the theory suggests that individual motivation is influenced by the social environment. The key findings are reviewed according to the psychological needs of the SDT which are autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Figure 5.1 shows the psychological needs of student teachers.



(Source: own depiction)

Figure 5.1: Psychological needs of student teachers

The findings show motivation as a contributory factor to the autonomy, competence and relatedness which comprise the psychological needs of the student teachers.

5.2.2 Motivation as a Contributory Factor

The student teachers' capacity to operate with determination and initiative when doing their practical teaching to pursue objectives and complete tasks serves as motivation in this study. Likewise, Gusman, Fitria and Rohana (2021:704) affirm that student motivation has a significant effect on student achievement. Even though motivation is significant for academic achievement, Singh, James, Paul and Bolar (2022:2) argue that the quality and quantity of motivation may differ according to time and students.

Singh et al. (2022) mention that student teachers' behavioural and cognitive difficulties may result in low motivation and thus lead to poor academic performance. However, higher learning institutions should opt for extrinsic motivation techniques such as rewards and recognition to encourage and stimulate learning. In other words, a student teacher can be rewarded for achieving good results during teaching practice. Meanwhile, findings from Singh et al. (2022) established that students who are

intrinsically motivated have low anxiety outcomes. These students will welcome competition, focus on achievement and engage more in learning.

5.2.2.1 *Autonomy as a psychological need*

In the context of this study, autonomy refers to a supportive learning environment whereby student teachers have a choice and freedom of expression. Fedesco et al. (2019:758) state that student teachers feel autonomous when they are given options, within a structure, about how to perform a task or present their work. Meanwhile, in another study, Froiland et al. (2019:857) discovered that autonomous motivation greatly impacts student teachers' academic achievement. Furthermore, Froiland et al. (2019) mention that when student teachers are autonomously motivated, they have a deeper purpose for learning.

In this study, two student teachers, one in School B and one in School C encountered challenges with classroom management (*cf.* Chapter 4, sub-section 4.4.3.2). Learners misbehaved during lessons, there was overcrowding in the classroom (School A) and as a result, classroom rules were not followed which resulted in learners not being given individual attention. For student teachers to be able to deal with learners' poor behaviour, strict corrective measures need to be imposed by teachers in and out of the class. According to Kengatharan (2020:5), a greater level of autonomy is required by teachers to empower student teachers by providing them with freedom and discretion over the school environment. In his study, Kengatharan (2020) highlights that autonomous student teachers are responsible for good practice. Therefore, when highly autonomous student teachers take control of or address learners' misbehaviour, they consequently feel in greater control.

In contrast, six student teachers did not experience any classroom management difficulties as they were guided by their mentor teachers to prepare and manage their classes effectively (*cf.* Chapter 4, sub-sub-section 4.6.1), although one student teacher was overloaded with work (*cf.* Chapter 4, sub-section 4.4.3.2). Therefore, it is possible to postulate that student teacher autonomy regulates the relationship between learner behaviour and student teacher motivation, such that with a high level of student teacher autonomy, the positive relationship between learner behaviour and student teacher

motivation becomes stronger. With regards to support from module lecturers, the findings revealed that six student teachers were supported by the module lecturers and were constantly communicating with the student teachers on the myUnisa platform while two did not get any support from the module lecturers. Guay (2022:78) states that the support creates an environment where student teachers feel autonomous, and the outcomes are always positive. However, without support, student teachers feel despondent and perceive teaching practice as a punishment.

It has been noted in this study that two student teachers' study materials were delayed in being delivered to them and as a result, they started their teaching practice late. In contrast, five students received their study material on time, while one student teacher used her smartphone to access the study material (*cf.* Chapter 4, sub-section 4.4.1.1). To enhance autonomy support, Chiu (2022:18) suggests that student teachers should be provided with different LTSM resources to be able to complete their work effectively. Six student teachers from the four sampled placement schools were granted permission to use the schools' technological resources to access teaching and learning materials, while two student teachers had challenges in accessing teaching and learning materials in two schools (Schools C and D). In order to achieve the desired outcomes, there should be a distribution of effective ICT learning resources to student teachers. Autonomy-supportive teaching fosters student teacher motivation. The study found that student teachers' work has always been rushed due to the limited time for class teaching. Time for class teaching was insufficient and as a result, student teachers failed to cover all the content of their lessons.

5.2.2.2 Competence as a psychological need

Competence in the context of this study refers to students' perceptions of their capacity to achieve success. Competence in self-determination is fostered when student teachers feel inspired and have the capacity to achieve a better result (Froiland et al., 2018:859). Competence also enables student teachers to construct new knowledge by building upon prior knowledge and it is accomplished when there is an appropriately structured and connected environment which offers optimal feedback on performance. Guay's (2022:80) findings show that student teachers who perceived themselves as competent during teaching practice have higher chances of achieving better results. In

addition, Guay (2022) indicates that satisfaction with the need for competence is therefore an essential prerequisite for full functioning during teaching practice.

Finding placement schools for three student teachers was easily accomplished and there were no challenges encountered. Five student teachers had difficulties in finding placement schools as student teachers from other higher learning institutions were already placed in schools making it more challenging for UNISA student teachers to get placed (cf. Chapter 4, sub-section 4.4.1.2). Six of the eight student teachers received a warm welcome at the placement schools, where they were introduced to learners and the staff. Participants felt more respected when addressed as teachers than as student teachers. According to Chiu (2022:17), the learning structure should be suitable so that student teachers can be competent and effective in the teaching practice programme. When competence is met, there will be development in mastering the teaching practice programmes. In other words, student teachers will have positive feelings about the course and feel encouraged to participate even further and fully participate. However, two student teachers from Schools A and D were not introduced to the staff and learners, making them feel unwanted at school and despondent.

Seven student teachers used teaching practice reflections as a strategy to mitigate their frustrations (cf. Chapter 2 subsection 2.10.1). They discussed their frustrations with their mentor teachers and fellow students. However, they were overwhelmed with COVID-19 complications and restrictions. One student teacher followed the counselling route. According to Kaldi and Xafakos (2017:255), support during teaching practice enhances student teachers' possibility to satisfy their sense of teaching competence leading to intrinsic motivation and/or producing external motivation. Thus, student teachers' insights into teaching self-competence can be affected by the type of support they receive from significant individuals and the type of motivation they express. The study found that student teachers relied heavily on the university exam timetable to plan for teaching practice and prepare for their examinations. It was found that attendance registers of all student teachers were filed; however, in two schools, registers were not signed daily (cf. Chapter 4, sub-section 4.6.3). They were signed either on Friday or Monday. In one school (School B), a student teacher was told that the attendance register would be signed at the end teaching programme. This made

student teachers anxious; however, four student teachers' attendance registers were monitored regularly by their mentor teachers.

5.2.2.3 Relatedness as a psychological need

The concept of relatedness refers to the need of the student teachers to feel connected to and cared for by stakeholders like the university's teaching practice office (TPO), the placement schools, mentor teachers, and their peers who play a significant role during their teaching practice period. Likewise, McLennan et al. (2021:187) confirm that relatedness is fostered through building interpersonal relationships. On the other hand, Fedesco et al. (2019:759) state that relatedness can be endorsed through cooperation with student teachers on a personal level in a calm environment.

Therefore, the placement school's environment should offer the necessary support for the satisfaction of relatedness.

All student teachers were assigned mentor teachers. Regarding teachers' relatedness support, Chiu (2021:2) states that when student teachers have a good relationship with their mentor teachers and learners, they will feel connected to the teaching practice programme. The good working relationships between mentor teachers and student teachers has a positive impact on teaching practice and brings a sense of connection and belonging amongst student teachers. In other words, student teachers will be confident in completing difficult tasks, comfortable speaking about their teaching and learning needs and also find the teaching practice programme satisfying (Chiu, 2021). The support that student teachers received during teaching practice is perceived as a strong aspect in their self-competence (Kaldi, & Xafakos, 2017:255).

The student teachers used the schools lesson plans and completed them in the presence of mentor teachers. Six had their lesson plans filed though some were not signed by mentor teachers (*cf.* Chapter 4, sub-section 4.6. 5). Six student teachers filed their timetables, while one student teacher forgot to file hers, and one student teacher had not been given a timetable (*cf.* Chapter 4, sub-section 4.6.4). Concerning TPO, the study found that there was a delay with issuing out the placement confirmation letters to students. This brought frustrations among student teachers. Two student teachers complained that they were not supported by supervisors. There was

uncertainty about whether supervisors would come to the schools and assess them. This resulted in student teachers feeling confused and worried. Meanwhile, six student teachers were provided with sufficient support from their supervisors (*cf.* Chapter 4, sub-section 4.4.1.3) who were allocated to student teachers on time. Chiu (2022:17) states that there should be connectedness between student teachers during support and assessment relevant feedback should be provided. By doing this, confidence in student teachers' abilities will increase.

5.2.3 Key Empirical Findings

This section examines key empirical findings in relation to the themes and sub-themes as outlined in Table 4.2.

5.2.3.1 The effects of support and time constraints on student teachers

Some of the student teachers felt that the university did provide them with the necessary support during the teaching practice. Some student teachers received their study material late (*cf.* Chapter 4, subsection 4.4.1.1), which had a negative effect since they could not begin with their studies and teaching practice as envisioned. Pourdavood and Song (2021:101) state that for student teachers to achieve better results, there should be the provision of early access to teaching and learning materials.

Study findings revealed that there was a communication breakdown with some module lecturers. Some student teachers were struggling to reach the module lecturers responsible for teaching practical modules while the TPO delayed with issuing out placement confirmation letters to students. The study also established that some student teachers were not well welcomed at some schools, and this made student teachers uncomfortable (*cf.* Chapter 4, subsection 4.4.1.2). Furthermore, Pourdavood and Song (2021) indicate that student teachers should be more autonomous in their own learning and development. They should ask questions when they do not understand certain things while the extension communication channels are open (Pourdavood & Song, 2021).

Large classes were also an issue experienced by student teachers. Learners misbehaved and were difficult to control. The investigation also revealed student frustrations were due to inadequate resources and student teachers were forced to make use of their smartphones to access teaching and learning resources. Data revealed that mentor teachers provided student teachers with adequate support. Contrary to this, there were problems relating to inadequate supervisory support. The study discovered that some student teachers were not assessed during the entire duration of practice (*cf.* Chapter 4, subsection 4.4.1.3). Students fail to reach their full potential when they encounter lack of support; however, teaching practice confidence can be fostered when constructive feedback and quality support is provided by supervisors (Hugo, 2018:2).

5.2.3.2 Planning for placement at schools

From this study, it became very clear that student teachers used various methods to plan for placement in schools (*cf.* Chapter 4, sub-section 4.4.2). The UNISA teaching practice policy (2015) indicates explicitly that the teaching practice should be conducted between the first term and third term of the school calendar (usually from February to September). The policy also advises student teachers who are enrolled for the teaching practice modules to also complete the placement form upon registration so that the office can process their confirmation as speedily as possible.

It was found that student teachers used the school calendar to plan for the practice period. The South African school calendar provided student teachers with an idea of when to begin and end their teaching practice. It was also revealed that the school calendar was also utilised to check the school opening and closing dates (*cf.* Chapter 4, sub-section 4.4.2.1). Hugo (2018:3) posits that the time spent at placement schools during teaching practice remain significant for upcoming teachers, as they are being offered with the chance to plan and prepare their lessons based on their knowledge and interests.

When it comes to choosing a school for placement, some student teachers encountered difficulties. The study revealed that some schools had placed or accepted student teachers from other higher learning institutions. It has also been discovered that some participants could not get a placement at their nearest school and as a result,

they had to use transport to get to the other schools (*cf.* Chapter 4, sub-section 4.4.2.2). Difficulties in finding placement schools left the student teachers anxious and, in some cases, they started their teaching practice later than expected.

When student teachers arrived at their placement schools, six out of eight students were warmly welcomed by the school, while two did not receive a positive reception (*cf.* Chapter 4, sub-section 4.4.2.3); these student teachers felt that they were not wanted since the principals did not introduce them to other staff members, which affected their motivation. This also affected them negatively when doing their practical teaching. Another significant finding was that in one school, a student teacher was allocated a mentor teacher late. The issue is that when mentor teachers are assigned late to student teachers, the teaching practice process is delayed.

Since all participants interviewed were registered for other modules besides teaching practice modules, the study found that they all relied on the university exam timetable for planning (*cf.* Chapter 4, Sub-section 4.4.2.4), which assisted them in preparing for their studies and their teaching practice.

5.2.3.3 *Preparing for class teaching*

The study noted that when it comes to preparation of class teaching, student teachers were faced with numerous challenges. It was established in the study, that accessing teaching and learning resources became a predicament for student teachers. Two of the eight student teachers did not have access to resources. Learners shared textbooks during lessons, and this made it more difficult for student teachers to provide learners with homework activities (*cf.* Chapter 4, Sub-section 4.4.3.1). In their study, Mubita et al. (2022) discovered that some student teachers had to improvise. However, improvisation has restriction over some teaching aids since they are too technical and complicated (Mubita et al., 2022:5).

The finding illustrated contravention of the LTSM policy (2011) which states that all learners should be provided with a textbook for every subject. Furthermore, the LTSM policy (2011:4) emphasises that resources should be provided to all learners to ensure the provision of equal opportunity for their right to basic education. However, in contrast

to what the two students experienced, six student teachers did not experience challenges with regard to accessing teaching and learning resources. It was noted that some placement schools ensured that student teachers have full access to their ICT resources which made preparing for class teaching easier for student teachers (*cf.* Chapter 4, sub-section 4.4.3.1).

The findings established that there was overcrowding in two schools (*cf.* Chapter 4, sub-section 4.4.3.2). Student teachers had to battle with strategies to manage the classes. Issues of time constraints were also raised by student teachers. Due to the limited time for class teaching, student teachers failed to cover all the content of the prepared lessons. However, six student teachers did not encounter problems with class management. It has been noted that mentor teachers provided student teachers with guidance on how to prepare and manage the classes (*cf.* Chapter 4, sub-section 4.4.3.2). The close connection led to student teachers' achievement of better results in teaching practice.

5.2.3.4 Strategies to mitigate frustrations

The empirical research found that student teachers used various strategies to mitigate their frustration (*cf.* Chapter 4, sub-section 4.4.4). Student teachers mostly applied teaching practice reflections with guided open questions found in their portfolios prepared by module lecturers to voice their concerns and achievements. Student teachers also found the guidance of fellow student teachers and mentor teachers and counselling of value to mitigate frustrations. The teaching practice reflection strategy assisted student teachers in viewing teaching practice positively despite the negative issues experienced. Therefore, they recommended ways in which the university could improve the programme. Being able to express their challenges to their fellow students and mentor teachers, helped student teachers address their fears and concerns about the programme. The study also revealed that counselling offered student teachers immense support.

5.4 RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS

The findings emphasise inconsistencies in the teaching practice process which had a negative image on the quality of the teaching practice programme offered by the

university. From the study, it is concluded that the experiences of student teachers were hindered by several factors, such as inadequate support from the university, placement in schools, access to teaching and learning resources, class management and supervisory support. It was also concluded that the teaching practice period was insufficient.

The main research question was: *What are the student teachers' teaching practice experiences in selected primary schools in Tshwane South District?* Three questions were formulated to answer the main question. Research conclusions emerged from the participant's responses to the research questions.

5.4.1 How do UNISA Student Teachers plan and prepare for Placement at Schools?

The study affirms that planning and preparing for placement at schools was a formality among student teachers. Some of the student teachers did not follow the placement guidelines when choosing schools which led to a delay by TPO to approve their placement forms. Struggling to find appropriate placement schools delayed the programme for some of the student teachers. This means that some student teachers' teaching practice programme did not start on time.

5.4.2 How do UNISA Student Teachers prepare for Class Teaching?

It was confirmed during investigations that student teachers prepared their lessons using a lesson plan template; however, there were issues that prevented some student teachers from preparing efficiently. Lack of access to resources negatively affected some student teachers' preparation. Overcrowding also hindered the capabilities of student teachers. Late delivery of study materials by the university to some student teachers also had a negative impact as they were not able, to begin their practice teaching on time.

5.4.3 What Strategies do Student Teachers use to Mitigate any Frustrations?

Regarding this question, the empirical investigation affirmed that student teachers' strategies were relevant. The practical teaching reflections, guidance from fellow students and mentor teachers and counselling were all employed to help student teachers to overcome the frustrations when doing their practical teaching.

5.4.4 What are Student Teachers' Teaching Practice Experiences in Selected Primary Schools in Tshwane South District?

Regarding the main question, it was discovered that student teachers were affected either positively or negatively by support from the university, the placement schools, mentor teachers, the supervisors and time constraints. Placement schools play a vital role in teaching practice. Study findings revealed that there was good reception of student teachers in most of the placement schools. Student teachers were given access to school technological facilities and mentor teachers offered student teachers guidance and support. The findings of the study showed that most of the student teachers had little supervision from university supervisors during practical teaching. This might have been due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which limited visitations to schools.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

The suggestions are provided for student teachers' teaching practice experiences in selected primary schools in the Tshwane South District in the paragraphs that follow.

It is important to note that improving student teachers' practical teaching takes time and does not happen overnight. To address problems that student teachers face, transformation is required. Evidence of strategies that can be applied to the practical teaching of student teachers was provided by a review of literature in Chapter 2 and the empirical data in Chapter 4.

The recommendations are presented via the University and placement schools' levels.

5.5.1 Recommendations for the University

- It is recommended that the dispatch section should ensure that student teachers' study material is delivered on time so that they are able to begin with their teaching practice at the required time. Student teachers should be advised to download their study materials from MyUnisa under the official study materials while still waiting for the delivery of hard copies.
- Module lecturers who were unable to support their student teachers during the teaching practice, should seek advice from those who were able to support their students. This can be done during the seminars where lecturers share their good practices with student support during teaching practice.
- Module lecturers should train student teachers on how to manage their lesson presentations so that they are able to complete the lesson according to the school timetables.
- Student teachers need to be supported during the entire teaching programme. The College of Education at the university should ensure that student teachers are provided with strategies they can use to deal with their frustrations.
- The university management, particularly those in the College of Education, need to consider having consultation workshops with student teachers prior to teaching practice. This will assist student teachers in easing their frustrations and ensuring that they prepare themselves adequately before they begin with the programme.
- Student teachers together with the module lecturers should have a critical review of the teaching experience after the programme. This can be done through Microsoft Teams, Zoom and Blackboard so that student teachers who live in remote areas are also accommodated in these discussions.

5.5.2 Recommendation for Teaching Practice Office

- The TPO should ensure that the confirmation letters are issued to the student teachers prior to teaching practice and attend to queries at least within twenty-four hours.

- It has been reported that student teachers struggled to find schools, therefore the TPO should consider placing student teachers on their behalf to the placement schools near their homes.
- The TPO should allocate more supervisors for student teacher supervision during teaching practice.
- The TPO should consider allowing student teachers to video record their lessons in cases where supervisors are not available for assessment. This video could be recorded by other student teachers for assessment. A link to send the video must be created so that student teachers can be assessed online by supervisors.

5.5.3 Recommendations for Placement Schools

- Placement schools should consider establishing a teaching practice committee that would work with higher learning institutions. This committee will assist the schools and higher learning institutions with the number of student teachers from different institutions to be placed in an individual school. The subjects to be taught by the student teachers should be indicated so that mentor teachers can be selected and be readily available to guide the students.
- The study also recommends that placement schools should allow student teachers to use their ICT tools during teaching practice.

5.5.4 Recommendations for Mentor Teachers

- Mentor teachers should ensure that they sign student teachers' attendance registers on daily basis until the last day of teaching practice so that they are able to manage their daily school attendance.
- It is also recommended that mentor teachers should guard against overloading the student teachers since they are at schools to learn from them but not to take over their responsibilities in the classroom.
- Mentor teachers should guide student teachers on how to manage overcrowded classrooms as they deal with this kind of situation in their daily teaching. Therefore, the strategies they implement to control classes with a high number of learners can assist the student teachers.

5.6 AVENUES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Teaching practice is a critical aspect of teacher preparatory programmes. Findings of the research provide an opportunity for further research on challenges that student teachers experience during teaching practice to ensure successful completion of the programme. Emphasis should be on assessment, mentorship and supervision. Additional research should also focus on how higher learning institutions are involved in planning and preparation of student teachers for teaching practice. A similar study should also be conducted in other higher learning institutions to check whether student teachers experience the same challenges.

Suggested areas of future studies include the following:

- Further professional development of mentor teachers
- The investigation of the criteria used to assess student teachers during teaching.
- The use of ICT by student teachers while doing their practical teaching
- Thorough preparation of student teachers for teaching practice

5.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study had its own limitations. Firstly, the study was limited to a small sample of five B.Ed. and three PGCE student teachers from the University of South Africa. Therefore, the findings of this study cannot be generalised to other student teachers from other higher learning institutions. Secondly, a limitation pertains to the geographical area in which the study was conducted as the conditions of the Tshwane South District may not be representative of other areas in South Africa. The study was limited by the number of cases that were selected. Four primary schools were purposively sampled from the Tshwane South District in Gauteng province to participate in this study. Thirdly, the study followed a qualitative approach, which limited its scope. A quantitative or mixed methods approach is likely to offer an intensive understanding of the research problem. Furthermore, the study used two methods of data collection, namely, interviews and document analysis, which has limitations to the quantity and quality of the data that could have been discovered.

5.8 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This study was undertaken to understand the experiences of student teachers concerning teaching practice. Having been a student teacher, the researcher made thorough observations of challenges and inconsistencies characterising the teaching practice programme. The desired contribution of this research was to have a positive effect on the teaching practice programme. The researcher fully understands that teaching practice is the final journey in developing student teachers to become teachers. The findings of this study are of importance to the policymakers and implementors to close the gaps in the teaching practice programme which need attention. The findings and recommendations will further guide the institutions in addressing issues relating to teaching practice and consider other ways to improve the programme. This study will contribute to the existing literature concerning issues that restrict the effective and efficient application of teaching practice programmes in higher institutions and placement schools.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Proof of Registration

UNISA 
university of south africa

0113

TSEBE M C MISS
29 PABADU STREET
KALAFONG HEIGHTS
0008

STUDENT NUMBER : 45692750

ENQUIRIES TEL : 0861670411
FAX : (012)429-4150
eMAIL : mand@unisa.ac.za

2021-07-17

Dear Student

I hereby confirm that you have been registered for the current academic year as follows:

Proposed Qualification: MED (CURRICULUM STUDIES) (98434)

CODE	PAPER	S NAME OF STUDY UNIT	NQF crdts	LANG.	PROVISIONAL EXAMINATION EXAM.DATE	CENTRE(PLACE)
DFDID95		MED - Didactics	**	E		

Study units registered without formal exams:

You are referred to the "MyRegistration" brochure regarding fees that are forfeited on cancellation of any study units.

Your attention is drawn to University rules and regulations (www.unisa.ac.za/register). Please note the new requirements for reregistration and the number of credits per year which state that students registered for the first time from 2013, must complete 36 NQF credits in the first year of study, and thereafter must complete 48 NQF credits per year. Students registered for the MBA, MBL and DBL degrees must visit the SBL's ESOOnline for study material and other important information.

Readmission rules for Honours: Note that in terms of the Unisa Admission Policy academic activity must be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the University during each year of study. If you fail to meet this requirement in the first year of study, you will be admitted to another year of study. After a second year of not demonstrating academic activity to the satisfaction of the University, you will not be re-admitted, except with the express approval of the Executive Dean of the College in which you are registered. Note too, that this study programme must be completed within three years. Non-compliance will result in your academic exclusion, and you will therefore not be allowed to re-register for a qualification at the same level on the National Qualifications Framework in the same College for a period of five years after such exclusion, after which you will have to re-apply for admission to any such qualification.


Readmission rules for M&D: Note that in terms of the Unisa Admission Policy, a candidate must complete a Master's qualification within three years. Under exceptional circumstances and on recommendation of the Executive Dean, a candidate may be allowed an extra (fourth) year to complete the qualification. For a Doctoral degree, a candidate must complete the study programme within six years. Under exceptional circumstances, and on recommendation by the Executive Dean, a candidate may be allowed an extra (seventh) year to complete the qualification.


CREDIT BALANCE ON STUDY ACCOUNT: 4480.00-

Yours faithfully,

Prof M S Mothata
Registrar

0108 0 00 0





University of South Africa
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
www.unisa.ac.za

Appendix B: Ethical Clearance Certificate



UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2021/09/08

Ref: **2021/09/08/45692750/17/AM**

Dear Ms MC Tsebe

Name: Ms MC Tsebe

Student No.:45692750

**Decision: Ethics Approval from
2021/09/08 to 2024/09/08**

Researcher(s): Name: Ms MC Tsebe
E-mail address: 45692750@mylife.unisa.ac.za
Telephone: 072 678 9784

Supervisor(s): Name: Dr M.M Maja
E-mail address: majam@unisa.ac.za
Telephone: 012 429 6201

Title of research:

STUDENT TEACHERS' TEACHING PRACTICE EXPERIENCES IN SELECTED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN TSHWANE SOUTH DISTRICT.

Qualification: MEd Curriculum studies

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2021/09/08 to 2024/09/08.

The low risk application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2021/09/08 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to the relevant guidelines set out in the Unisa Covid-19 position statement on research ethics attached.
2. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.



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Appendix C: Permission to use UNISA Data



RESEARCH PERMISSION SUB-COMMITTEE (RPSC) OF THE SENATE
RESEARCH, INNOVATION, POSTGRADUATE DEGREES AND
COMMERCIALISATION COMMITTEE (SRIPCC)

24 November 2021

Decision: Permission approval 24
November 2021 to 23 November
2022

Ref #: 2021_RPSC_097
Ms Maphuti Cynthia Tsebe
Student #: 45692750
Employee #:

Principal Investigator:

Ms Maphuti Cynthia Tsebe
Department of Curriculum and Instructional Studies
School of Teacher Education
College of Education
45692750@mylife.unisa.ac.za; 0726789784

Supervisor: Dr Margaret Malewaneng Maja; majam@unisa.ac.za; 0844797293

**Student teachers' teaching practice experiences in selected primary schools in
Tshwane South district**

Your application regarding permission to involve Unisa staff, students and data in respect of the above study has been received and was considered by the Research Permission Subcommittee (RPSC) of the UNISA Senate, Research, Innovation, Postgraduate Degrees and Commercialisation Committee (SRIPCC) on 12 November 2021.

It is my pleasure to inform you that permission has been granted for the study. You may invite two groups of Unisa students in the study for online interviews through the gatekeeping assistance of your supervisor.

- a) Student teachers doing PGCE (registered 2021) (3 persons)
- b) Third- and fourth-year student teachers doing B.Ed. (registered in 2021 and 2022) (5 persons)



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Appendix D: Request Permission from the GDE

29 Pabadu Street
Kalafong Heights
0008

08 August
2021

Dear sir/madam

**REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT M.Ed. RESEARCH IN GAUTENG
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

**TITLE: STUDENT TEACHERS' TEACHING EXPERIENCES IN SELECTED
PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN TSHWANE SOUTH DISTRICT.**

My name is Maphuti Cynthia Tsebe, and I am doing research under the supervision of Dr M.M Maja, a senior lecture in the Department of Curriculum Studies towards an M.Ed. degree at University of South Africa. I hereby request your permission to conduct a study entitled, "student teachers' teaching experiences in selected primary schools in Tshwane South District" at your school

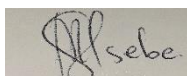
The study will entail interviewing the student teachers conducting their teaching practice in the selected primary schools within Tshwane South District. Interviews will be in a form of individual face to face interview. The expected duration of interview is approximately 30-45 minutes in length. Analysis of student teachers' documents will also be done during this session. Data will be collected over a period of two weeks.

The aim of this study is to explore the student teachers' teaching practice experiences in selected primary schools in Tshwane South District. Your school has been selected because it is one of the schools within the Tshwane South District and therefore the presence of student teachers in this school will be of great value. I also undertake to ensure that confidentiality and anonymity during the study will be maintained, and that data obtained will be kept in a safe place upon completion of the study. Participants' participation will always remain voluntary, and they can withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Should you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me at 072 6789 784 or by email at 45692750@mylife.unisa.ac.za or you can alternatively contact my supervisor on 012 729 6201 or by email at majam@unisa.ac.za.

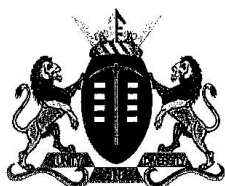
~~Hoping for your positive response.~~

Yours Sincerely



Ms M.C Tsebe

Appendix E: Response Letter from the GDE



GAUTENG PROVINCE

Department: Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

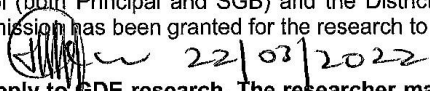
8/4/4/1/2

GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	22 March 2022
Validity of Research Approval:	08 February 2022– 30 September 2022 2022/99
Name of Researcher:	Tsebe M.C
Address of Researcher:	29 Pabadu street Attteridgeville Kalafong Heights
Telephone Number:	0726789784 / 0683617103
Email address:	45692750@mylife.unisa.ac.za
Research Topic:	Student teachers' teaching experiences in selected primary schools in Tshwane South District.
Type of qualification	Master's in Education
Number and type of schools:	4 primary Schools
District/s/HO	Tshwane South

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.


The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

1

Making education a societal priority

Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management

7th Floor, 17 Simmonds Street, Johannesburg, 2001

Tel: (011) 355 0488

Email: Faith.Tshabalala@gauteng.gov.za

Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

Appendix F: Request Permission Letter to Schools

29 Pabadu Street
Atteridgeville
0008

08 August 2021

Dear Principal

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT M.Ed. RESEARCH AT YOUR SCHOOL

TITLE: STUDENT TEACHERS' TEACHING EXPERIENCES IN SELECTED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN TSHWANE SOUTH DISTRICT.

My name is Maphuti Cynthia Tsebe, and I am doing research under the supervision of Dr M.M Maja, a senior lecture in the Department of Curriculum Studies towards an M.Ed. degree at University of South Africa. I hereby request your permission to conduct a study entitled, "student teachers' teaching experiences in selected primary schools in Tshwane South District" at your school.

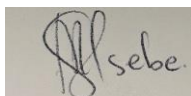
The study will entail interviewing the student teachers conducting their teaching practice in the selected primary schools within Tshwane South District. Interviews will be in a form of individual face to face interview. The expected duration of interview is approximately 30-45 minutes in length. Analysis of student teachers' documents will also be done during this session. Data will be collected over a period of two weeks.

The aim of this study is to explore the student teachers' teaching practice experiences in selected primary schools in Tshwane South District. Your school has been selected because it is one of the schools within the Tshwane South District and therefore the presence of student teachers in this school will be of great value. I also undertake to ensure that confidentiality and anonymity during the study will be maintained, and that data obtained will be kept in a safe place upon completion of the study. Participants' participation will always remain voluntary, and they can withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Should you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me at 072 6789 784 or by email at 45692750@mylife.unisa.ac.za or you can alternatively contact my supervisor on 012 729 6201 or by email at majam@unisa.ac.za.

Hoping for your positive response.

Yours sincerely



Ms M.C Tsebe

Appendix G: Request Permission Letter to Student Teachers

29 Pabadu street
Atteridgeville
0008
8 August 2021

Dear Student teachers'

REQUEST TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY

My name is Maphuti Cynthia Tsebe, and I am doing research under the supervision of Dr M.M Maja, a senior lecture in the Department of Curriculum Studies towards an MEd degree at University of South Africa. I hereby request your consent to participate in the research. My research title is "student teachers' teaching experiences in selected primary schools in Tshwane South District." Your input and feedback are therefore crucial to the study.

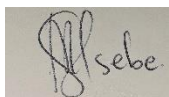
Your participation in this research will be through interviews and document analysis. Data collection and interviews will take a period of two weeks. Your participation is voluntary. You will not be asked to reveal any information that will allow your identity to be established, unless you are willing to be contacted for individual follow up interviews. Should you declare yourself willing to participate in an individual interview, confidentiality will be guaranteed, and you may withdraw at any stage should you wish not to continue with the interviews.

If you are willing to participate in the research, please sign the consent letter as declaration of your consent, that is, you participate in this study willingly, and that you understand that you may withdraw at any time. Any information obtained from the conversations will solely be used for the purpose of this research. If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me at 0726789784 or by email at 45692750@mylife.unisa.ac.za or you can alternatively you can contact my supervisor on 012 6201 or by email at majam@unisa.ac.za

I hope that you will favourably consider my request and grant me permission to harness your participation for various aspects of the study.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Yours Sincerely

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in black ink. The signature appears to be 'M Tsebe' written in a cursive style.

Maphuti Tsebe

Appendix H: Consent for Student Teachers

I....., have read and fully understand the request letter to participate in the research on student teachers' teaching experiences in selected primary schools in Tshwane South District.

I also understand that confidentiality and anonymity during the study will be maintained, and that participation is voluntary.

I accept and give my consent to participate.

.....
Signature

.....
Date

Researcher : Ms M.C Tsebe

Supervisor : Prof M.M Maja

Appendix I: Interview Schedule

TITLE: STUDENT TEACHERS' TEACHING PRACTICE EXPERIENCES IN SELECTED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN TSHWANE SOUTH DISTRICT

AIM: The aim of the study is to explore the student teachers' teaching practice experiences in selected primary schools in Tshwane South District.

SECTION A: INTERVIEWS QUESTIONS FOR STUDENT TEACHERS

1. How do student teachers plan for placement at schools?

- Tell me about your teaching practice experiences.
- How do you plan for the teaching practice?
- What support do you get from the school during the teaching practice?
- What support do you get from the university during the teaching practice?
- How is the relationship between you and your supervisor and mentor teacher?

2. How do student teachers prepare for class teaching?

- How do you choose the schools you intend to do your teaching practice?
- How do you prepare your lesson plan? Do you use the UNISA lesson plan template or the school one?
- Are there any technological facilities or centres you can access to get TP materials?

3. What documents are used to facilitate the student teachers' teaching practice process?

- Placement forms
- Class timetables
- Attendance registers
- Indemnity forms

4. What strategies do student teachers use to mitigate any frustrations?

- What challenges do you face during the TP?
- How do you mitigate these frustrations?

Appendix J: Responses to Interview Questions

INTERVIEWS QUESTIONS FOR STUDENT TEACHERS

1. Tell me about your teaching practice experiences

a. Support from UNISA •

Delivery of study material

UNISA delivered my study material late after I have long registered and this delayed me, as I can't begin with my schoolwork. (ST6, School C)

My study material was delivered on time. I didn't have to wait long. (ST7, School D)

• Module lecturer

I had great support from my module lecturer, my module lecturer constantly sends out announcements on myUnisa to clarify our concerns. [showing excitement] (ST4, School B)

I don't get enough support from the module lecturers. Whenever I call, they don't pick up. This is frustrating as I'm unsure whether I'm doing the right thing or not. (ST1, School A)

I don't get enough support from the module lecturers. Whenever I call, they don't pick up. This is frustrating as I'm unsure whether I'm doing the right thing or not. (ST1, School A)

I wish the university could answer our enquiries as speedily as possible. For example.... with me, I wanted assistance from the module lecture regarding lesson planning, but the lecturer never responded to my query. (ST6, School C)

b. Teaching practice office

I had a serious challenge with the teaching practice office prior to my teaching practice as I was unsure whether they have approved my school for my teaching practice. (ST 2, School A)

The office doesn't answer our queries... for example [helplessness]...with me, they have never responded to my DSAR form that I need to complete before starting with my teaching practice. I'm in the second week and there's still no response from the office. (ST3, School B)

I struggled with being placed in a school, the TPO's email kept bouncing back when I tried to send my placement form. (ST4, School B)

I had amazing support from TPO, the response was quick. (ST1, School

c. Support from placement schools and mentor teachers

• Placement schools

The school is providing me with a great deal of support. The teachers have been of assistance with my work. They have also given me the Wi-Fi password so that I can have access to the teaching and learning material. (ST1, School A) [showing by hands]

The principal of this school goes the extra mile to ensure that I get the necessary support where needed. Even though I would be here for a short period of time, my principal encourages me to also attend the workshops with my mentor teacher so that I could be more knowledgeable about what the department requires from the teacher. (ST2, School A).

• Mentor teachers

Yeah....my mentor teachers support me. (ST2, School A)

I get support from my mentor teacher, with regard to class teaching, because initially, I was shy [covering her eyes]. (ST4, School B)

Well, I'm learning a lot of things from my mentor teacher. Each time I have a challenge, I simply go to her to seek assistance. She has been so helpful. (ST3, School B)

d. Support from supervisors

I am a final year student and to tell you the truth the supervisor only visited me once in these four years. How will I know whether I am presenting my lessons correctly if there is no supervisor coming over during our teaching practice? (ST5, School C)

This is my third week of teaching practice, and the university supervisor hasn't communicated anything to me regarding supervision. (ST6, School C)

My supervisor communicated with me before coming to my school to assess me. She was punctual on the day of the assessment...even during my lesson presentation I could notice that she showed interest in what I was presenting. (ST1, School A)

When I was doing my third year my supervisor came to assess me. He was so supportive, after my lesson presentation, he provided me with oral feedback, telling me about the areas that need improvement. (ST3, School B)

I was really looking forward to presenting a lesson in the presence of my supervisor, however, that didn't happen as we were told that due to COVID-19 supervisors will not come to assess us in schools. (ST1, School A)

[shaking head] ...there isn't much I can say about my supervisor, as I have never met him/her. (ST3, School B)

I have not been allocated any supervisor yet. (ST5, School C)

e. Time constraints

There is no sufficient time to teach....my class teaching is being rushed. (ST3, School B)

The time that we spent in school is too little. [clapping hands] I am struggling to complete my assignments. (ST4, School B)

The duration of a period is 30 minutes, how is one supposed to teach, give feedback on the previous activity, and give learners classwork and homework in 30 minutes? (ST6, School C)

2. How do you plan for the teaching practice?

- **South African school calendar**

I plan my teaching practice based on the school calendar so that I don't start my teaching practice when schools are about to open and close. (ST1, School A)

Working with the school calendar, made my planning easier [rubbing fingers] as I could be able to know when the school usually starts with administering their formal assessment tasks. I do not want to interrupt learners during their examination period. (ST7, School D)

- **Choosing schools**

I select schools on what subjects they offer. This helps me in knowing whether the practical module that I need to conduct for my teaching practice, is available. (ST3, School B)

Well...[laughing] I choose the school based on the teaching and learning resources it has (ST5, School C).

It seems like there are many students who are enrolled for teaching practical modules and finding a space in the approved schools is a challenge (ST4, School B).

Choosing a school to do my teaching practice was difficult, I wish the university could do it on our behalf like other universities. (ST5, School C)

I did not encounter any issues with my placement at school, I went to my nearby school to request permission to do my teaching practice. (ST7, School D)

- **Reception by the placement school**

Learners at this school are well-mannered, and they have got so much respect for the student teachers.... I noticed this when I was introduced to them during the assembly period by the principal. (ST1, School A)

I am doing my teaching practice at this school for the second time, so yeah, well...teachers and learners have been good and supportive to me.... some of the learners still remember me. (ST3, School B)

At my school, I am being addressed as a teacher and not a student-teacher and that has boosted my self-confidence and this also to a certain extent influenced how I was perceived by learners. (ST4, School B)

I received a warm welcome. Well.... mmhhh.... [laughing] I feel like I have been to this school before. Before I could begin my class teaching at school, I did an orientation of the school with my mentor teacher. I was introduced to the learners in the class that I will be teaching. (ST5, School C, showing excitement).

- **University exam timetable**

I planned my teaching practice based on the university provisional examination timetable as I am also registered for other modules. (ST2, School A)

The university examination timetable helped me a lot in planning and structuring my schoolwork because I knew when the examination would begin. (ST5, School C)

I drafted my work plan based on the university timetable as I needed more time to prepare for my examination. Using the university exam timetable assisted me in knowing when to begin my teaching practice. (ST8, School D)

3. How do you prepare for class teaching?

Accessing teaching practice material is a challenge that I am encountering. I do not have access to online facilities. (ST7, School D)

[scratching her head] ... I don't know any centre around my area that can grant me free access to online services... I cannot afford data and do not have a smartphone and a laptop. (ST8, School D)

I am using my smartphone to access teaching and learning resources. However, I wish the university could provide data to student teachers when doing their teaching practice. (ST5, School C)

- **Classroom management**

[shakes her head] ... I feel like some learners don't respect me. There's no discipline at all. Some learners are rude. It is difficult to control the class. Even in the presence of the mentor teacher, learners would still be playful and eat during the class (ST8, School D).

My classroom has got rules that learners need to adhere to. I do not encounter any problems regarding classroom management. Learners were told that should they bridge the classroom rules, they will be punished, so because of that, they fear punishment (ST6, School C).

4. How do you mitigate the frustrations you encounter during the teaching practice?

I usually talk about my frustrations with my fellow student teachers from this school... I am fortunate that I am not alone in these experiences. Whenever I need clarity on something, I talk with her. We also help each other with assignments. (ST3, School B)
Yeah... my mentor teacher has been guiding me on some of the challenges that I came across during my teaching practice. She has been there for me from the very beginning.....even when it came to those learners that were unruly, she gave me the best advice on how to deal with them. (ST5, School C)

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Appendix K Document Analysis Checklist

Student teachers' portfolios	Yes	No
	Describe.	Describe.
Practical placement form (DSAR25)	Yes	No
	Describe.	Describe.
Indemnity forms	Yes	No
	Describe.	Describe.
Attendance register	Yes	No
	Describe.	Describe.
Class timetables	Yes	No
	Describe.	Describe.

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Appendix L Proof of Editing

EDITING SERVICES

To whom it may concern

This letter serves to confirm that editing and proofreading was done for:

MAPHUTI CYNTHIA TSEBE

MASTER OF EDUCATION

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTIONAL STUDIES

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

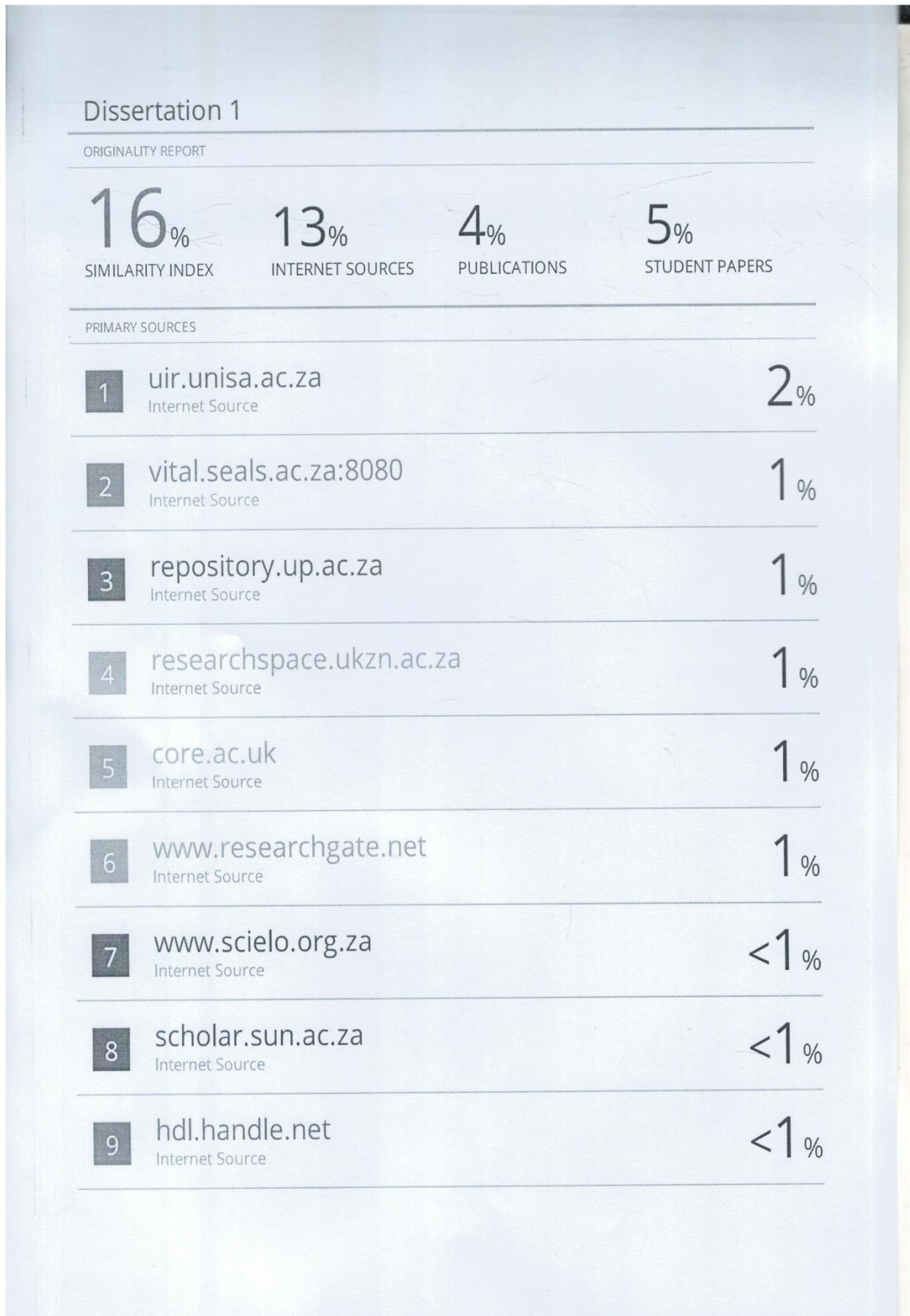
**STUDENT TEACHERS' TEACHING PRACTICE EXPERIENCES IN
SELECTED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE TSHWANE SOUTH DISTRICT**



Cilla Dowse
03 March 2023

Cilla Dowse PhD in Assessment and Quality Assurance in Education and Training: University of Pretoria 2014 Basic Editing and Proofreading: McGillivray Linnegar Associates 2008 Programme on Editing Principles and Practices: University of Pretoria 2009 Editing and Proofreading for Academic Purposes: McGillivray Linnegar Associates 2021 Professional Editors' Guild Associate Member, DOW003	Rosedale Farm P.O. Box 48 Van Reenen Free State cilla.dowse@gmail.com Cell: 084 900 7837
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Appendix M Turnitin Report



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