Understanding the Out-of-Field Teaching Experience

Anna Elizabeth Du Plessis
DEd; MEd (Cumm); BEd (Hons.); GCHEd;
FED (Remedial Teaching); HED

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at
The University of Queensland in 2013

School of Education
Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to unveil the complexities surrounding out-of-field teaching. Out-of-field teaching entails teachers teaching outside their field of qualification, this field might be a specific subject or year level. Quality education is influenced by the availability of various resources to support effective pedagogies. Hattie (2009) claims that teachers remain the main and most influential resource in education. Previous research in this field focused on the occurrence and implications of out-of-field teaching as a “whole” on school management and professional development but overlooked the lived experiences of those involved in out-of-field teaching practices. The purpose of the thesis is to address the need to understand the out-of-field experience.

The research question, *how fundamental, for out-of-field teachers in their everyday concerns and practices, are their lived experiences and the meaning of out-of-field teaching*, focuses on what really happens when teachers are assigned to out-of-field positions. The thesis explores the interrelationships between lived experiences and out-of-field teaching and what it means for teacher dispositions, leadership strategies, classroom and behaviour management, pedagogical content knowledge and the wider school community. The thesis highlights misconceptions and misunderstandings while new information emerged to underline gaps within policy and decision-making in relation to out-of-field teaching practices. Existing literature hovers around the occurrence of out-of-field teaching and thoroughly discusses claims that out-of-field teaching is a global concern (Ee-gyeong, 2011), and widespread with implications for teacher turnover, attrition, retention (Ingersoll, 2001a, 2003a, 2004). McConney and Price (2009a, 2009b) claim that between 20% to 24% of teachers in Western Australia teach in positions outside their field of qualification. Ingvarson, Beavis, and Kleinhenz (2004) claim that 25% to 30% of teachers in Victoria, Australia, feel unqualified for the position in which they teach. Norway appoints student teachers in positions outside their field of training in certain schools with ethnic minorities because of a shortage of qualified teachers (Bonesrønning, Falch, & Strøm, 2003). In my endeavour to know more about the out-of-field teaching practice I completed research about its implications for school management (Du Plessis, 2005) and professional development (Du Plessis, 2010) but the need to understand was not sufficiently explained by these research projects. The fundamental meanings of the lived experiences were still overlooked. This is the first thesis in this field focusing on the lived experiences in relation to out-of-field teaching practices through the lenses of educational directors, school leaders, teachers (specialist and out-of-field) and parents across two cultures. The thesis develops an in-depth understanding of the meaning out-of-field teaching has for teachers and their
effectiveness in teaching and learning environments. Supporting the development of in-depth understanding, the thesis integrates Gadamer’s theory (1975) of “fusion of horizons” (p. 273) together with Vygotsky’s theory (1978) of the more knowledgeable other, and a deeper understanding of the meaning out-of-field teaching has for the learning environment develops. Using hermeneutic phenomenology as way of inquiry, primary and secondary schools across two continents, Australia (Queensland and Western Australia) and South Africa, were approach for close conversations and observations. Gadamer’s theory about “shared meaning” (Gadamer, 1976) supported the exploration of lived experiences through the different lenses of the participant sample (i.e., principals, teachers [specialist and out-of-field], parents, and educational leaders). The transnational exploration of 48 participants’ lived experiences was not to compare but to validate the data and offer an in-depth understanding (Goodnow, 2006) of what really happens within out-of-field situations in various environments. Data were triangulated through eleven classroom observations which included classes with specialist and out-of-field teachers as well as document analysis (agendas, minutes of subject and staff meetings, reflective notes in the field diary). I interpreted six key themes, firstly teacher dispositions, emotions perceptions and expectations, secondly leadership concerns, thirdly classroom management difficulties, fourthly behaviour issues, fifthly the meaning for the wider school community and finally concerns about the lack of pedagogical content knowledge. Through the support of colour coding the magnitude of data were interpreted while sets of meanings within these themes were identified with the focus on keywords and phrases which developed into categories.

The thesis supports Darling-Hammond’s (2006) proposition that effective teachers need to understand and respond to the multifaceted nature of the environment in which they function and realise how they relate to this environment. The new information offered through this thesis will assist principals, teachers, and educational leaders to develop an in-depth understanding of the meaning of the out-of-field experiences in order to effectively manage the out-of-field teaching situation. An awareness of the impact out-of-field teaching has on the teaching and learning environment has the potential to influence policy transformation and education leaders’ decision-making about recruitment and support strategies while focusing on the needs of out-of-field teachers within the classrooms. This thesis offers new understanding about teachers’ experiences in out-of-field positions with implications for the improvement of retention of teachers.
Declaration by author

This thesis is composed of my original work, and contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference has been made in the text. I have clearly stated the contribution by others to jointly-authored works that I have included in my thesis.

I have clearly stated the contribution of others to my thesis as a whole, including statistical assistance, survey design, data analysis, significant technical procedures, professional editorial advice, and any other original research work used or reported in my thesis. The content of my thesis is the result of work I have carried out since the commencement of my research higher degree candidature and does not include a substantial part of work that has been submitted to qualify for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution. I have clearly stated which parts of my thesis, if any, have been submitted to qualify for another award.

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Publications during candidature


Publications included in this thesis

No publications included.

Contributions by others to the thesis

No contributions by others.

Statement of parts of the thesis submitted to qualify for the award of another degree

None.
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following people without whose support this thesis would not have been possible:

The University of Queensland for granting me the opportunity to do further research, their financial support and the tremendous professional development opportunities they provide through support, effective structures, resources and systems available during my research.

Professor Robyn Gillies who acted as my principal supervisor. She challenged me, since our first meeting, with subtle questions to dig deeper and make the optimal use of the richness the data offered. I still look back at our first meeting as one of the great blessings I received in my academic career. I respect her not only as an academic but for the person she is.

Associate Professor Annemaree Carroll, my second supervisor. She challenged me to write explicitly, constantly challenging me to reflect on how I said what I said. Her admirable attention to detail ensured that I gave the data the space to convey its valuable message. I am forever thankful that she challenged me to move outside my comfort zone into the next layer of understanding.

The research panel, Dr Ian Hardy and Associate Professor Shelley Doyle, who ask the most needed questions that encouraged me to constantly reflect on how I offer the new information.

Associate Professor Gloria Dall’Alba, who shared her specialist knowledge about phenomenology with me. I felt privileged to have had in-depth conversations with her.

The staff, academic and administration, at the School of Education, I am thankful and in debt for their unconditional support, encouragement and for the professional approach with which they motivated me to do more than what I thought was possible.

Pam Tupe for the final thesis proofreading, Carina Barnard for sharing her specialist knowledge on linguistic matters and Maria Kirstein for the technical care of the thesis.

All participants for sharing their experiences and their willingness and openness to share their most honest inner feelings with me while trusting that their openness through this research might make a difference.

The different transnational Departments of Education and their specific contact persons for the permission to do research in their schools.

My friend and mentor, Aspa Baroutsis for her unconditional advice since my first day at The University of Queensland. Because of her support I explored different learning opportunities during my PhD term. Cate Montes for her friendship and for constantly reminding me about the significant
meaning of the thesis. My close friend Karen Malherbe for her continuous support while reminding me that the thesis does not define my life, it is just enriching it.

My family, Ettienne, Prieur and Menanté for their ongoing support for my passion for research and education. I am blessed with your patience to act as my sounding boards while you continuously read what I found interesting, thank you for sharing my passion.

I received more grace and blessings during my studies than I can mention and for that I will look upon my research experience with a thankful heart.
Keywords
out-of-field teaching, transnational common practice, nature of out-of-field teaching, lived meaning, teacher dispositions, leadership influence, effective classrooms, teacher and student behaviour, school community, pedagogical content knowledge.

Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classifications (ANZSRC)
ANZSRC code: 132034, Education Administration, Management and Leadership, 40%
ANZSRC code: 130313, Teacher Education and Professional Development of Educators, 40%
ANZSRC code: 130302, Comparative and Cross-Cultural Education, 20%

Fields of Research (FoR) Classification
FoR code: 1608, Sociology, 20%
FoR code: 1605, Policy and Administration, 40%
FoR code: 1302, Curriculum and Pedagogy, 40%
“Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.”
Martin Luther King.
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<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AEU</td>
<td>Australian Education Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADHD</td>
<td>Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATAR</td>
<td>Australian Tertiary Admission Rank</td>
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<tr>
<td>FET</td>
<td>Further Education and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and Communication Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MKO</td>
<td>More Knowledgeable Other</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCTAF</td>
<td>The National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future</td>
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<tr>
<td>NAPLAN</td>
<td>National Assessment Programme – Literacy and Numeracy</td>
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<tr>
<td>PCK</td>
<td>Pedagogical Content Knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>PD</td>
<td>Professional Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOSE</td>
<td>Study of Society and Environment</td>
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<td>TAFE</td>
<td>Training and Further Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<td>US</td>
<td>United States</td>
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<tr>
<td>VET</td>
<td>Vocational Education and Training</td>
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<td>WA</td>
<td>Western Australia</td>
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<td>ZPD</td>
<td>Zone of Proximal Development</td>
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Chapter 1

Background to the Study

“The real being of language is that into which we are taken up when we hear it – what is said.”

(Gadamer, 1976)

1.1 Introduction

The lived meaning of teaching defines teachers. Teachers’ lived experiences in classrooms are the starting points of “being a teacher”. The understanding of out-of-field teachers’ real-life social interactions is the subject matter of this thesis (Wagner & Okeke, 2009). Gadamer (1975) described lived experience as a “significant whole” (p. 60) made up by several parts or clusters of meaning. Lived experiences of difficulties in classrooms influence the quality of education. Quality education draws from a variety of resources to support effective pedagogies, however, teachers remain the main and most influential resource in education (Hattie, 2009). The purpose of the thesis is to “listen” to what is said through the verbal and non-verbal language of participants whilst attempting to understand the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching (Gadamer, 1976). Ingersoll (2001a) writes that the concept of out-of-field refers to qualified teachers who become unqualified when they are assigned to teach subjects or year groups for which they do not have suitable qualifications.

The thesis embraces three main concerns while it focuses on the inter-relation between teachers, classrooms and schools and the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching. It firstly acknowledges that effective pedagogies in the classroom involve constant transformation in the learning and teaching environment. Transformation, the intended change to better education, is usually resisted by teachers because it requires an exceptional effort to create and maintain effective classrooms (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2012). Teachers often find themselves in out-of-field situations during processes of transformation and change within education systems or curricula. An example would be year seven being moved from upper primary to junior secondary school. The pressure to implement change and curricula transformation rapidly means that there is often not sufficient time for teachers to learn about and understand the new learning areas (Hall & Hord, 2001) or to acquire the necessary background knowledge or skills with an influence on teachers’ confidence (Marais & Meier, 2004). I share Bernstein’s (2000) concern about the pedagogic dialogue that structures
curricula and the effect it has on different social groups (Scott, 2008) under supervision of an out-of-field teacher. The better equipped teachers are for their specific tasks, the better the chances schools and students have of achieving success in terms of reaching objectives and future goals (Bondesio & De Witt, 2004a). The reality, according to an Australian School Workforce Report (Australian Government Productivity Commission, 2012), is that 39% of metropolitan school principals and 42 to 66% of remote school principals admitted that they have difficulties when assigning suitably qualified teachers.

Secondly, the thesis is concerned with understanding the meaning of out-of-field teaching for teacher dispositions, leadership styles, effective classrooms, behaviour, the wider school community and the quality and depth of the content offered. It seeks to understand through sharing the real-life experiences as they were found in the field (Van Manen, 1990). The thesis looks through the lens of each individual practitioner involved in the study and argues with Gadamer (1975) that our intentions to understand the truth open and prepare us for what their “language” exposes. The thesis explores the out-of-field teaching experience through the viewpoints of school leaders, specialist and out-of-field teachers, parents and educational directors to construct new knowledge. Gadamer (1979) explains further that the process of understanding is built on an awareness of specific consciousness that clarifies our own truths, the root of understanding.

Thirdly the thesis acknowledges the unrealistic expectations for teachers in their classrooms in spite of their out-of-field positions. The truth is that teachers build the reputations of their schools as successful institutions, with the quality of teaching determining the quality and effectiveness of schools (Du Plessis, 2005). In order to manage their classrooms effectively, teachers need to feel confident and believe that they are in control of their situation (Frenzel, Goetz, Stephens, & Jacob, 2009). Classrooms should be environments where social and behavioural structures are formed and practised effectively in different situations (Gillies & Boyle, 2006) and where teachers direct successful learning and knowledge construction during constructive classroom interaction (Gillies & Boyle, 2010; Lingard, Hayes, Mills, & Christie, 2003). However, it is a global common practice to assign teachers to positions for which they do not have suitable training or qualification (Ingersoll, 2001a). Available statistics about out-field-teaching, which are discussed in Chapter 3, indicate that the practice is transnationally a reality in schools (see section 3.2). This thesis is, however, the first transnational thesis to investigate the lived experiences of out-of-field teachers in both secondary and primary schools in two very different transnational settings with the aim to fill the gaps in our understanding.

In order to enhance effective learning, motivate students and stimulate participation, teachers need to confidently include students in classroom planning, implementation and execution of plans
Van der Westhuizen (2004) without feeling threatened. The investigation highlights how the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching influences teachers’ effectiveness in various ways and the thesis offers new information to support this argument. The study targets schools in Australia and South Africa to develop a transnational awareness and understanding of what the out-of-field experience means for effective classrooms and schools. The transnational exploration opens up a view of the relation between factors with additional meaning for out-of-field teachers’ lived experiences, for example, class size, language of instruction, leadership styles, tradition, culture and the availability of resources to support these teachers.

Hobbs (2012) noted the pressing need to understand the complexities surrounding out-of-field teaching. Complexities in these classrooms intensify because of the lack of knowledge and skills of these teachers (Conners, 2008). The gap in knowledge and skills include concerns about expertise in relation to interaction, integration, cooperation, functionality and sensitivity (Wenger, 2009). Meaningful teaching and learning are at risk when students are stimulated by anxiety rather than positive stimuli and responses (McInerney & McInerney, 2006). Complex and difficult classrooms and behavioural situations can contribute to anxious and dissatisfied teachers which lead to anxious students (Frenzel et al., 2009). Research indicates that transformation impacts on teachers’ identity and effectiveness in executing different roles in the classroom, such as mediator, facilitator, counsellor and manager when they are assigned to unfamiliar areas of learning (Du Plessis, 2005; Hobbs, 2013a; Ingersoll, 2001a). The thesis answers to a need to understand the out-of-field experience better in order to develop suitable support and management for teachers in these positions whilst keeping in mind that teachers are the resources which direct the outcome of learning. My passion to support teachers and aid them to reach their full potential within their classrooms motivated me to argue this case.

1.2 The Research and I: Looking Through My Lens ...

As a researcher, my 26 years experience as a teacher in secondary and primary schools, of which eight years were in school leadership, I developed an awareness of the important role that lived experiences play in teachers’ classrooms and in comprehensive schools. My teaching journey included various out-of-field positions in three different countries. These countries included one developed and two developing nations which brought me to realise that out-of-field teaching has no boundaries, it is a global issue which means that transnational collaboration can greatly benefit the development of support and management strategies. The experience of “being in the out-of-world” and how it is perceived by leaders and colleagues created more questions than answers. I was intrigued by the work of Ingersoll and others in this field and I wanted to know more and understand what is really happening behind what seems to be obvious but not noticed. I wanted to
understand the real-life stories and the meaning behind the statistics discussed in chapter three through the reviewed literature (see section 1.3). I realised that the lived experiences of out-of-field teachers have been overlooked, most of all in my own previous research projects. Through my previous research in this field, I investigated out-of-field teaching and the impact it has on school management and professional development, always looking on the “outside” missing the real-life experiences and what they mean.

Against the background of my personal experiences of out-of-field teaching in various countries, the thesis aims to seek better understanding and awareness of the out-of-field teaching experience as a global trend (see section 3.2). I realised that I had just touched the first layer of meaning and although it already affected the way I looked at the life-world of these teachers, I realised I needed to look deeper in order to understand better. I turned to Gadamer and his hermeneutic philosophy (1975) noting that only through language and close conversations does full understanding develop. Gadamer’s (1976) “fusion of horizons” (p. xix) theory was a perfect fit for this thesis. I admire him for the accent he placed on “language” in order to hear what is really said, I applaud the “practical understanding” (Vessey, 2007, p. 6) and practical wisdom he investigated and the way he acknowledged “prejudice” or “fore-understanding” (Gadamer, 1976, p. xv) as an inseparable tool in the depth of our understanding. I respect his view of the “hermeneutic circle” in order to lay bare the whole truth through the specific “parts” of the lived experience. The extended time I spent in the field put me “inside” the “life-world” of participants while adopting Gadamer’s hermeneutic philosophy allowed me to get close to their “truth” (Gadamer, p. xxx, p. xliv).

1.3 Out-of-Field Teaching: The Truth

Out-of-field teaching is a transnational concern, and researchers in Australia (Hobbs, 2013a; McConney & Price, 2009a, 2009b), Korea (Ee-gyeong, 2011), Norway (Boneværing, Falch, & Strøm, 2003), US (Ingersoll, 2001a, 2003a, 2006) and South Africa (Du Plessis, 2005, 2010) have focussed on its occurrence and implications. It is notable that recent research has placed extensive attention on unsuitably qualified teachers in specific learning areas such as science and mathematics. It is however important to keep in mind that these teachers do not function in a vacuum or isolated learning and teaching “space” but also influence the others in this space. Vygotsky’s (1978) socio-interdependence theory highlights the meaning of positive interpersonal relationships in the teaching and learning environment as support for effective learning. The common transitional practice to assign teachers in out-of-field positions raises questions about the influence it has on socio-interdependent relationships. The situation occurs either through managerial decisions or through recruitment procedures (Zepeda, 2006). However, the purpose of this thesis is to underline that the common practice of out-of-field teaching in schools has no
boundaries in relation to subject and year levels but happens from pre-primary classes up to year 12 level. Although out-of-field teaching is a reality in classrooms, it seems to be an under-researched area (Hobbs, 2012; McConney & Price, 2009a). This thesis acknowledges valuable previous research that focused on the occurrence, its effects on academic results (Darby, 2012; Dee & Cohodes, 2008; Ingersoll 2001a, 2001b, 2002; McConney & Price, 2009a) and its effects on school management and professional development (Du Plessis, 2005, 2010). It, however, aims to address the pressing need to develop a fuller understanding of the “real-life experiences” of teachers, parents and educational leadership in relation to out-of-field teaching, which has remained under-researched up to now.

The knowledge constructed through this thesis will benefit leadership towards knowing how to provide effective support and development for these teachers. Kan, Çinkir, Olgun, Eryılmaz, and Cemaloğlu (2013) noted that 52% of teachers in Turkey teach in subjects or positions for which they are not suitably qualified. Recent unsatisfactory year 12 results in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa were connected to the fact that more than 9,000 government science teachers out of a possible 34,968 science teachers in the KwaZulu-Natal region were unqualified to teach science subjects (Unkown, 2010). McConney and Price (2009a, 2009b) provide valuable information about the occurrence of out-of-field teaching in Western Australia. The research unveils that 123 teachers were functioning in out-of-field situations from within a sample of 529 teachers. This report further highlights parental concerns about the extent and impact of out-of-field teaching on learner outcomes, especially in rural and remote schools in Western Australia. Educational leaders and stakeholders share the responsibility for investigating and understanding the impact of educational change on the teacher, the teaching environment and on the quality of education.

Research (see section 3.2) confirms that out-of-field teaching is a widespread problem with implications for effective teaching, effective classrooms and comprehensive schools. My concern, however, is the absence of research projects which offer an in-depth investigation about what effect the lived meaning out-of-field teaching has on the learning and teaching environment as a “whole”. Numbers available about the occurrence of out-of-field teaching may vary but they reveal the truth about the out-of-field teaching concerns and are discussed in detail in Chapter 3. However, justification of the urgent need to understand the complex lived meaning of out-of-field teaching is supported by The state of our schools survey 2009 (Australian Education Union, 2009) which reveals that 31.8% of all Australian schools have programmes taught by teachers who are not suitably qualified in the teaching area concerned as shown in Figure 1.1.
Figure 1.1. Suitably and unsuitably qualified teachers per state in Australia
Secondary schools in Australia: Programmes taught by teachers not fully qualified in the curriculum and teaching area concerned (AEU, 2009).

The same research (AEU, 2009) reveals that 58.9% of secondary schools in Australia indicated they had programmes taught by teachers not suitably qualified for their specific learning area as shown in Figure 1.2. Mathematics, at 28.2%, was the largest curriculum area taught by teachers not suitably qualified in the learning area, followed by Technology at 25.5% and ICT/Computer Science at 23.6%. The report (AEU) also explains that 58.9% of schools experienced teacher supply problems in 2008/2009, while 56.5% of schools indicated the teacher supply problems were becoming worse. Out-of-field assignments are often the last resort school leaders have in order to fill their classes with teachers (AEU, 2010).

Figure 1.2. Unsuitably qualified teachers per subject in Australia
All schools in Australia: Curriculum accommodation areas affected by out-of-field teaching (AEU, 2009).
The information in Figure 1.2 explains the pressing concern about subjects such as mathematics and science but also supports my argument that out-of-field teaching is spread across all subjects and year levels. The unfamiliarity of staff members and other stakeholders with “out-of-field” terminology makes it clear that the situation is not part of educational conversations, particularly in discussions regarding the quality of teaching and learning. The absence of conversation and the minimum amount of attention the out-of-field teaching “thing” receives motivated me to investigate what really happens in the classrooms of out-of-field teachers through an ontological approach of close observations. The statistics available on out-of-field teaching will only find real justification once the meaning of out-of-field teaching for the lived experiences of teachers, their classrooms and school are clearly defined and understood.

1.4 Justification and Motivation for the Study

The Schools Workforce Report 2012 (Australian Government Productivity Commission, 2012) acknowledges the ground breaking research in Australia on the imbalances that develop in the workforce because of out-of-field teaching practices. The report draws from researchers such as Hobbs (2012) in the field of math and science, McConney and Price (2009a, 2009b) in Western Australia, and Mckenzie, Rowley, Weldon, and Murphy (2011) on supply, demand and assignment of out-of-field teachers. Hobbs (2013a) as well as McConney and Price (2009b) highlighted the insufficient level of research in this field. None of the previous research projects provide an in-depth investigation of the lived experience of these teachers through different lenses and against the background of a transnational setting. This transnational thesis opens up a “wider” context or a “larger whole” to support a fuller understanding of the “life-world” of these teachers in very different environments. The transnational investigation included Australia and South Africa. My justification for a transnational investigation is rooted in personal teaching experiences in both countries and how such a study would confront certain assumptions that might exist about out-of-field teaching. Goodnow (2006) noted that transnational investigations reveal misconceptions, assumptions and gaps in understanding that might exist. Transnational research offers a vast range of balanced, applicable and reliable information while it supports construction of new concepts that could benefit policy makers in transnational settings, for example, professional development policies, teacher recruitment policies, policies concerned with teacher supply issues and attention to student teachers’ training and recruitment in specific fields. With the aim of furthering the understanding of the far-reaching meaning of the real-life experience, the transnational thesis examined the universal impacts of the situation that could affect all teachers and students in the modern era of globalization.
This transnational research reaches across borders and demonstrates that out-of-field teaching happens across secondary, primary, public and independent schools whilst proving it is not a localized occurrence. The thesis proposes that specific learning theories and pedagogies are closely connected to certain subjects and year levels, and out-of-field teachers’ unawareness or lack of pedagogical content knowledge develops into pedagogical, concept and theoretical issues. The supportiveness of effective pedagogical interaction within effective classrooms and comprehensive schools depends on the specific behaviour of teachers and students in the classroom. It is fundamental to consider that teachers’ responses are always connected to their own set of values, beliefs, work and personal experiences, and their understanding of the environment in which they function (Kegan, 2009). This thesis, which conceptualises teaching and learning as constructed and embedded in the classroom experience of teachers, provides an opportunity to explore the complexities and concerns with this lived experience. I insinuate through a bold hermeneutic phenomenological perspective that the thesis is particularly pertinent to various social environments where out-of-field teaching is common but unnoticed by educational leaders and not openly discussed.

1.5 Describing the Study: The Problem Statement

The thesis focuses on a wide range of interpretations and perspectives to improve understanding of the meaning of out-of-field teaching. Teachers, parents, principals and directors shared their lived experiences in the search for answers to the research questions. The wide range of perspectives revealed the viewpoints of participants currently connected to real-life educational situations in relation to out-of-field teaching. The focus of the thesis is directed through the main research question:

- How fundamental, for out-of-field teachers in their everyday concerns and practices, are their lived experiences and the meaning of out-of-field teaching?

Three sub-research questions can be identified:

- What is the pedagogical meaning of out-of-field teaching for primary and secondary schools? (See Chapters 7, 8, 9 and 10)
- What is the meaning of out-of-field teaching for real-life experiences in relation to school leaders, classroom management, teacher and student behaviour? (See Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8)
- What do out-of-field teachers do to manage their out-of-field lived experiences in the wider school community? (See Chapters 5 and 9)
The search for answers to the above-mentioned questions was supported through the theoretical framework which involves a combination of research traditions such as phenomenology, ontology and case studies. Assisted by triangulation in the data gathering procedure with close observations, semi-structured interviews and document analysis, the research offers sound, reliable information while the validity of the thesis is underlined through offering information as it was found in the field (Van Manen, 1990).

1.6 Aims and Objectives of the Study

Previous research has taken a statistical approach focussing on results and outcomes and reports the incidence of out-of-field teachers in various schools. However, there is no focus on the impact of out-of-field teaching on the lived experiences of out-of-field teachers, their colleagues, parents and leadership. Understanding quality learning and teaching “spaces” with effective articulation between theory and practice in relation to out-of-field teaching is the primary goal of this thesis. As Freebody (2003) highlights, research is intended to provide evidence-informed information in order to close the gap between policy and practice in education. The emphasis of this thesis is on out-of-field teaching with particular regard to what it means for classroom pedagogies and the gap it creates between theory and practice, searching to understand the influence on the effectiveness of teachers, classrooms and schools. In seeking a deeper understanding, the thesis will describe and investigate in depth the influence out-of-field teaching has on meaningful teaching and learning. In an endeavour to understand the lived experience and make sense of the meaning it has for quality teaching and learning, the research strives to:

- investigate the meaning of out-of-field teaching for meaningful classroom pedagogies;
- investigate classroom and behaviour management complexities surrounding out-of-field teaching;
- discover school leaders’ understanding and awareness of out-of-field teachers’ lived experiences in the teaching “space” and their specific needs;
- investigate interpretations and understandings of educational leadership and school leaders in managing the out-of-field lived experience effectively; and,
- investigate various perceptions in the wider school community about out-of-field teachers and what it means for learning and students.

The hermeneutic phenomenological perspective is used to explain these concepts and interpret data as it emerges during all the phases of the research (Linge, 2008; Van Manen, 1990). The aim is to understand the real-life experiences in the out-of-field classroom in order to provide better, more focused support and development. The phenomenological research approach supports a deeper
understanding of out-of-field teaching and its meaning for effective learning and teaching environments.

1.7 An Overview of the Way of Inquiry

Holstein and Gubruim (1998) noted that phenomenology opens the field to interpretive processes. It provides tools to take a deeper look at the construction of meaning in specific social incidents. For example, in this thesis it provides a way of inquiring into the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching for teachers, school leaders, colleagues and parents. The research question: *How fundamental, for out-of-field teachers in their everyday concerns and practices, are their lived experiences and the meaning of out-of-field teaching?* seeks to focus on the influence of the out-of-field experience for effective construction of knowledge. Gadamer believes that understanding lies in the deliberate self-conscious reflection which is in nature “*episodic*” and “*trans-subjective*” (Scott, 2008, p. xxviii). The knowledge that this research has unveiled is seen as socially constructed and the interpretive research adopts a postmodern epistemological stance in which knowing is conceptualised through participants’ life-world as initially suggested by Merleau-Ponty (1968). Supporting this approach is social constructivist ontological theories of “be”, drawing on the phenomenology of Schutz (1899-1959) (Wagner, 1970). The interdisciplinary nature of the thesis as well as its social and behavioural interdependent nature makes it necessary to describe these theoretical statements (Wilson, 2002). Together with Heidegger, Gadamer’s perspectives are based on ontological statements with a focus on what happens beyond our intentions and actions (Gadamer, 1976), interpretations that are based on how knowledge and truth are understood beyond the obvious. The ontological approach made it possible to move into the teaching and learning “space” while I remained aware of Heidegger’s (1962) theories of “being in the world” (p. 174). The thesis is anchored in ontological assumptions since it is concerned with the nature of reality, which for this thesis entails a great deal about what happens inside out-of-field teachers’ classrooms. The understanding of reality is through multiple interpretations and closely tied with subjective experiences of participants in their world. It involves multiple interpretations, socially constructed realities, and real-life experiences as expressed by Heidegger (1962).

I am aware of the significance of ethics in qualitative research and because of the boldness of the research I ensured high ethical processes by adopting axiological theories. For example, I constantly assured participants that sharing their honest and sometimes upsetting stories added value and supported a fuller understanding which was not available up to now. The thesis intends to tell the participants’ stories from the safety of a detailed theoretical framework which incorporates the views of Gadamer and Vygotsky as explained in Chapter 2, and assisted by phenomenological
methodology (see Chapter 4). I apply a reflexive approach to highlight awareness and openness to participants’ understandings as they express their thoughts.

In an attempt to understand the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching for teaching and learning through hermeneutic phenomenology, I draw from an ethnographical strategy to describe the world of out-of-field teachers through their eyes (Rubin & Babbie, 2010) while the ontological strategy supports the explanation of what it means to be in out-of-field situations. Defining the way of inquiry into hermeneutic experiences with an ontological strategy is fundamental to describe the underlying nature of the thesis.

**1.7.1 Hermeneutic phenomenology**

The hermeneutic phenomenological standpoint explores “the thing”, which in this thesis means “being out-of-field”, as the participants experience it, and aims to offer the underlying meaning of the out-of-field experience and how participants structure their own meaning and truth about the specific lived experiences (Gadamer, 1975; Van Manen, 1990).

**1.7.2 Ontological strategy**

The ontological strategy supported me in exploring “what it means to be” (Gadamer, 1976, p. 183) in an out-of-field position while I closely observed teachers in their natural settings to see the world through their eyes and understand the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching for the development of their individual belief systems and behavioural norms. The ontological strategy made it possible to experience the reality of the participants within their “lifeworld” to understand how they cope within their different school communities and how they function in their classrooms (Rubin & Babbie, 2010; Van Manen, 1990).

**1.8 Defining the Study**

In an attempt to determine what is relevant to the field of this thesis, a conceptual analysis (Braddon-Mitchell & Nola, 2009) was completed with regards to the following concepts: **the thing**, meaning making, transnational, out-of-field teaching, transformation, constructivism and comprehensive schools.

**1.8.1 “The thing”**

Gadamer (1975) explained “things” (p. 414) as units of meaning or units of experience of our world which have significant influence on our being. In this thesis “the thing” is the out-of-field teaching experience discussed through the language offered by participants.
1.8.2 Meaning making

Cerbone (2006) explains meaning making with the example of looking at a rock: the view and perception of the rock changes depending on the particular angle and distance from which we look. Phenomenology reveals how the development of meaning is inter-related to lived experiences. Moustakas (1994) adds that phenomenology seeks meaning through reflection and interpretation of demonstrations of lived experience which develops understandings, ideas and concepts. In this thesis meaning making developed through close conversations and observations about the real “life-world” as shared by participants.

1.8.3 Transnational research

Transnational research refers to investigating phenomena in two or more countries to provide “wider wholes” with attention paid to “wider context” (Smith, 2005, p. 9). Goodnow (2006) explained that research projects that reach across borders fill gaps in understanding and change assumptions. This thesis reports on transnational research in Australia and South-Africa with the aim of developing a deeper understanding of the complexities surrounding out-of-field teaching.

1.8.4 Out-of-field teaching

Hobbs (2013a) defines out-of-field teaching as teachers “teaching outside their subject areas” (p. 271). McConney and Price (2009a) discuss the definition of out-of-field teaching used in the 2008 survey they conducted for the Western Australian College of Teaching (WACOT) and reflect on how the out-of-field term is most commonly understood as the teaching of subjects and learning areas in which a teacher has neither a major nor minor tertiary (university) teaching qualification. In this thesis out-of-field also indicates teaching in a specific year level without the necessary qualifications. Although primary school teachers in countries such as Australia and South Africa are usually qualified for pre-primary to year 6 or year 10 it is clear that primary school teachers see themselves as specialists in specific areas. In this study out-of-field primary school teachers are defined as teachers teaching outside their field of expertise or qualification. For example a primary school teacher who majored in music and who taught only music for ten years and then found herself in a year 7 science classroom experiencing this subject or year level as outside her specialisation field or qualification. The same happened with teachers who majored in early year/foundation phase and taught pre-primary classes for an extended time after which they then got assigned to a year 5 teaching position and vice versa. Primary school teachers see themselves as specialists/experts and qualified in a specific area or year level and experience uncertainties when they got assigned outside this area.
1.8.5 Transformation

Caldwell and Harris (2008) define transformation in education as the significant and sustained change that should secure success for students in all settings. They further stated that successful transformation includes intellectual capital, social capital, spiritual capital and financial capital combined with excellent management and governance. In this thesis, transformation is defined as the process of change to better the effectiveness of the teaching and learning environment. The thesis also highlights transformation as a process where teachers move from the familiar to unfamiliar, often into out-of-field positions and what it means for their effectiveness.

1.8.6 Constructivism

Hyslop-Margison and Strobel (2008) explain that the concept of constructivism defines the nature of human knowledge as diverse and supports the idea that the demonstration of knowledge is personal and individualistic even though it is formed through active social encounters. Constructivism is how the individual views the world through personal experiences, personal history and predisposition (Wenger, 2009). In this thesis, the concept of constructivism refers to the meaning making process connected to teaching and learning that takes place in classrooms.

1.8.7 Comprehensive schools

Comprehensive schools are seen as inclusive schools, as they attempt to uphold a whole school approach which includes teachers, students, classrooms and school leaders (Riddell, 2009). This study defines comprehensive schools as effective teaching and learning environments where a ‘whole school’ approach includes educational directors, principals, teachers and parents as partners in reaching quality education. This inclusive approach forms a rationale to include these partners in the investigation sample in order to develop a clear understanding of what out-of-field teaching means for comprehensive schools. Teachers’ quality plays an influential role in effective school environments and successful learning. Comprehensive schools endeavour to address the individual learning needs of all the students. Borman et al. (2005) describe comprehensive schools as schools which engage in fostering the key involvement of parents so as to follow inclusive learning theories while they reflect on and address problems in order to better the service they deliver. The link between quality education and comprehensive schools is highlighted as the positive learning culture within these schools. Characteristics of comprehensive schools include, for example, the emphasis on the inter-personal dimensions of learning (Gillies, 2009). In this thesis, attention is paid to lived experiences that influence the development of comprehensive schools.
1.9 Overview of the Thesis

Whilst this chapter focused on the background of the thesis and placed it within a societal context, the literature review in Chapter 2 focuses on the theoretical perspective of the thesis while Chapter 3 offers literature about the occurrence of out-of-field teaching and existing research in this field. It highlights discussions in the literature about certain aspects that influence effectiveness of teachers, classroom management, teacher and student behaviour and the effectiveness of schools as learning environments. Chapter 4 discusses the methodological approach of the thesis that informs the process of inquiry, settings, samples, ethical considerations and discusses the data gathering strategies involved. Chapters 5 to 10 provide thematic results while discussing data in specific clusters and units of meaning as they were found in the field. The thematic analyses discuss the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching in relation to participants’ dispositions, emotions, perceptions, school leaders, classroom management, teacher and student behaviour, the wider school community and pedagogical content knowledge. The hermeneutic phenomenological exploration focuses on the relationship between the lived experience and the subject, which forms specific units of meaning such as confidence and self-esteem concerns, feelings of belongingness and at homeness in subject areas, trust-relationship issues, and disconnectedness, amongst many others which will be discussed in detail through these chapters. Chapter 11 concludes with an overview of the findings and summary of the discussions as concluding comments.

1.10 Summary

It is a common practice for school leaders to take the risk of assigning teachers to positions without them being suitably qualified for the specific field. The following chapter offers an in-depth discussion of the theoretical position of the thesis. The lived meaning of out-of-field teaching for effective teaching and learning is filled with complexities and the multilayered lived experiences need to be carefully unpacked to fully understand what it means. The phenomenological exploration opens the field for a clearer picture of the essence of out-of-field teaching and the influence it has on quality teaching and learning. In agreement with Dall’Alba’s (2009) view I will explore and inquire through constructive dialogue while providing participants with an opportunity to reflect upon and explain their lived experiences. Reflecting on their lived experiences brought participants to a deeper understanding through the act of sharing these experiences in their own ‘language’.
Chapter 2

Theoretical Perspectives of the Thesis

“The effort of understanding is found wherever there is no immediate understanding, i.e. whenever the possibility of misunderstanding has to be reckoned with”

(Gadamer, 1975, p.157)

2.1 Introduction

The thesis takes a bold and innovative stance to draw from Vygotsky’s (1978) social constructivist theory and Gadamer’s (1975, 1976) hermeneutic philosophy in order to develop a wider context from which an in-depth understanding of the “real-life” experiences surrounding out-of-field teaching can be developed. I acknowledge that Vygotsky and Gadamer have different theoretical assumptions but I suggest that the long tradition, culture and common practice of assigning teachers in out-of-field positions while their lived experiences are often taken for granted and misunderstood call for bold innovative research. I have developed an innovative theoretical framework for this thesis which is unusual but which strongly supports the urgent need to investigate out-of-field teaching from a new angle. The thesis focuses on the human experience. Teachers in these out-of-field positions deal with specific lived experiences which develop because of their incapacity to fully fulfil their role as the knowledgeable other in the learning environment. I propose that the human experiences of these teachers have been, up to now, mostly overlooked by educational and school leaders and a hermeneutic phenomenological approach is an appropriate way to unveil the “life-world” of teachers assigned to out-of-field positions.

The theoretical framework I developed for this thesis reveals the misunderstandings and misconceptions that exist about the complexities surrounding out-of-field teaching while it underlines why it needs to be addressed and confronted. I combined the two powerful theories (see Figure 2.1), the social-constructivist theory of Vygotsky (1978) to argue the complex learning and teaching environment that develops because of out-of-field teaching and Gadamer’s (1975, 1976) hermeneutic philosophy to support a deeper search about the complex lived experiences and the meaning of out-of-field teaching. These complexities cannot be investigated in isolation because they are intertwined. The two theories, displayed in Figure 2.1, provide a sound foundation from which my search for the “truth” surrounding the out-of-field practice and the lived meaning that the
out-of-field teaching has for the teaching and learning environment could be conducted. Combining Vygotsky and Gadamer reveals the thesis’ intention to take great care to approach the investigation with sensitivity to the human experience while keeping the focus on the nature and essence of the problem, the influence it has on the teaching and learning environment.

My search to understand is guided by Gadamer’s (1975) hermeneutic rule to “understand the whole in terms of the detail and the detail in terms of the whole” (p. 258) to enlighten the conditions and traditions that underlie the out-of-field “thing” (p. 414) as part of these teachers’ world. The hermeneutic circle as suggested by Gadamer (1975) involves and supports observing the culture, tradition and history of the out-of-field situation in totality but also effectively pays attention to specific “parts” of the whole experience. Inquiring into the “life-world” of people requires tact, sensitivity and empathy. I found comfort and guidance in the social constructivist theories of Vygotsky (1978) and the hermeneutic philosophy of Gadamer (1976) in preparing the theoretical placing of this thesis. The thesis aims to develop an in-depth understanding of the out-of-field experiences and arguments to stimulate a deeper investigation and a sensitive reflection on the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching for the people involved. A hermeneutic mind is sensitive to the “newness” that is offered through text (Gadamer, 1975, p. 238). Gadamer’s theory (1975) directs my reflection on “what” needs to be understood about the out-of-field experience.

Finding my way to understanding what the real-life experiences of participants are in relation to out-of-field teaching practices brought me to asking “why” understanding is necessary and “how” are these lived experiences connected to the teaching and learning environment of students and teachers. Vygotsky’s (1978) social constructivist theory highlights the influence of “more knowledgeable others” (MKO) in the classroom and how a knowledgeable adult guides and directs knowledge construction. The knowledgeable other effectively create link between prior and new concepts, described as the “zone of proximal development” (ZPD). Reflecting on this theory urged me to get answers for questions about the impact out-of-field teachers have on learning. I further acknowledged the necessity to understand the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching for these teachers in their role as the expected more knowledgeable other in the classroom.

The following sections explain how the theoretical perspective of the thesis is a partnership between the social constructivist theory of Vygotsky (1978) and the phenomenological philosophy of Gadamer (1976). It is a decision I made with careful consideration of the support such theoretical framework offers the thesis in making a case for why it is important to understand the deeper, lived meaning of out-of-field teaching. An in-depth discussion of the phenomenological philosophy of Gadamer (1976) explains how different lenses and the use of specific verbal and non-verbal language supports the thesis to look deeper into the hermeneutic experiences in relation to out-of-
field teaching. Hermeneutics is a practical philosophy that upholds the view that truth is not dependent on scientific methods for it to be revealed and that knowledge is situated in history.

Figure 2.1. Theoretical framework of the thesis

Understanding depends on linguistics – and as a result it reveals what there is to understand. The focus of the thesis to interpret the language of participants about their lived experience makes it hermeneutical, while the aim to explain how the nature of “the thing” under investigation is rooted in the essence of life-world and understanding (Regan, 2012). In this thesis “the thing” is out-of-field teaching. Gadamer’s (1975) hermeneutic philosophy of “understanding the whole in terms of the detail” (p. 291) supports the thesis to look deep into specific details of the lived experiences of those involved in out-of-field teaching in order to have a fuller understanding.

2.2 Phenomenology as a Theoretical Framework

Phenomenology is interested in the essence and nature of lived experiences (Van Manen, 1990). My own lived experiences in relation to out-of-field teaching practices made it possible to dig deeper into the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching through the help of Gadamer’s hermeneutic philosophy stating “Someone who understands is always already drawn into an event
through which meaning asserts itself” (Gadamer, 1975, p. 446). Gadamer’s (Regan, 2012) theory that language supports understanding the complex human “life-world” is fundamental in this thesis.

2.2.1 **Outlining the phenomenological design of the study**

Regan (2012) noted that Gadamer’s hermeneutic philosophy is an interpretive method which investigates the meaning of personal experiences in relation to understanding these human interpretations. The thesis’s use of Gadamer’s (1975, 1976) view of interpretation which involves listening, observing, testing, reflecting and looking from different angles to formulate the meaning of the language offered. A Gadamerian philosophical approach turns focus to reflection, understanding and interpretation of lived meanings (Regan, 2012). Gadamer’s hermeneutic philosophy as part of the phenomenological tradition frames this investigation as it relies on his theoretical account of understanding through language encounters, “fusion of horizons” (Gadamer, 1976, p. xix), ontological focus and pre-understanding of lived experiences (Vessey, 2007). Phenomenology searches for the nature of the “life-world” while it attempts to “uncover and describe structures” towards a better understanding of lived experiences (Van Manen, 1990, p. 10-11). The thesis employs Gadamer’s (1976) view that interpretation of the “whole being” as reflected and revealed through language is an ongoing process. Gadamer (1975) claimed that being-in-the world involves the situatedness of Dasein, how human beings who are immersed within this world, share it with others in caring, thinking, doing and using language to understand. The thesis relies on Gadamer’s view of “being-in-the-world” with others to stimulate an in-depth understanding of the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching for the teaching and learning environment. I aimed to provide new knowledge about the experience, stimulate sharing of emotions, perceptions and viewpoints within different environments in order to promote awareness and understanding. The phenomenological exploration looks at out-of-field teachers’ lived experiences through an international lens, looking at the same “thing” in Australia and South Africa, while the research builds bridges for further research to develop an in-depth understanding of specific needs and possible collaboration (Brewer, 2005).

Ontological understanding, which focuses on the life experiences of a human’s world, is important for Gadamer because it turns focus to the “capacity to not only interpret human understanding but misunderstanding as a mechanism for effective communication” (Regan, 2012, p. 288). This total focus on “being” has significant meaning for the thesis because of the tremendous misunderstanding surrounding out-of-field teaching. My philosophical belief in ontological understanding leads to a methodology that emphasises discovery of meaning. The methodology is a resourceful move toward in-depth conversations during the substantial periods spent at the schools (Holstein & Gubruim, 1998). The hermeneutic phenomenological approach provides a methodology
that supports the prospect to progress towards a better understanding of the lived meaning and descriptions of participants (Annells, 2006; Laverty, 2003).

This methodological approach defines the participants’ roles, and my role as the researcher, to reveal the real-life experience as it happened. For example, it ensured that I was closely involved with these participants and schools for a period of one-and-a-half years. I spent almost two years as a volunteer at one of the schools which sustained trust relationships with participants and consequently stimulated shared, honest and in-depth reflection by the participants and me (Laverty), while it made it possible to question what “every person takes for granted” (Holstein & Gubruim, 1998, p 138). The rationale behind volunteering was to build trust relationships with teachers, principals and parents. As a researcher I needed to spend extended time in the field and the option to volunteer provided a natural and spontaneous manner to show my respect and appreciation for the field. I sought to understand the lived meaning of “being part of the out-of-field situation” in such depth that it reveals what even the participants might not be aware of (Van Manen, 1990; Laverty) about the essence of out-of-field teaching. As the thesis endeavours to understand participants’ “being-in-the-world” (Laverty; Standing, 2009), reflection on their out-of-field experiences helps to identify prejudice and increase their understanding of the out-of-field experience.

The hermeneutic phenomenology is a human science that studies the uniqueness of a person’s lived experiences (Van Manen, 1990). The hermeneutic phenomenological concepts and principles support me in accessing, interpreting and communicating the human experiences of the participants. During the development of the research questions, I drew from Gadamer’s view that a person is influenced by the community in which he/she functions (Gadamer, 1976). An awareness of the interdependence between my own personal experiences in relation with out-of-field teaching and the research question enriches the search for deeper understanding of participants’ “life-world” descriptions (Van Manen; Maggs-Rapport, 2001). Phenomenology as a methodology within a qualitative approach allows for the exploration of a wide range of perspectives and interpretations in the field (Boudah, 2011). Gadamer’s theory (1976) of “fusion of horizons” (p. xix) makes it possible to interpret the real-life experiences of participants and to look at one experience through different lenses. The example has been used of looking at a stone from different angles where each angle reveals a new dimension of the stone. Hermeneutic phenomenology endeavours to provide answers to questions about “things” (see section 1.8.1), and in this thesis “the thing” is out-of-field teaching, as it is perceived in real life (Mason, 2009). Looking at the whole experience means acknowledging the social interdependence in the classroom while at the same time realising the impact teachers’ outcomes have on the actions of their students (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). The
thesis partnered with Vygotsky and Gadamer in an effort to provide a well-developed theoretical framework.

2.2.2 Vygotsky and Gadamer frame the thesis

I agree with Gadamer's (1976) suggestion that prejudices constitute “being”. We claim that this view develops an opportunity to rely on Gadamer’s hermeneutic theories when investigating the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching for the teaching and learning environment. Together with Vygotsky’s social constructivist theory, it forms a sound basis to dig deeper into the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching. The theoretical framework of this thesis underlines the interplay between teaching and learning and turns focus to the unseen consequences of taken-for-granted attitudes towards out-of-field teaching. The diagram in Figure 2.1 illustrates how the theories of Vygotsky and Gadamer support the investigation. The social-constructivist theory of Vygotsky (1978) and Gadamer’s (1975, 1976) hermeneutic philosophy support the thesis to address the need to understand the complexities surrounding out-of-field teaching. The hermeneutic experience in relation to out-of-field teaching has been overlooked until now, the theories of Vygotsky and Gadamer provide a sound framework from which the thesis explores the essence and meaning of out-of-field teaching; while Gadamer’s theories (1975, 1976) of fusion of horizons and understanding through language support and direct an in-depth investigation.

2.3 “Why” is Understanding Important? Vygotsky

Conceptualising the theoretical framework in “why” it is necessary to understand and “how” understanding makes a difference, I turn my focus to Vygotsky’s (1978) theories about the more knowledgeable other (MKO) and the zone of proximal development (ZPD). Through his social-cultural constructivist theory, Vygotsky provided tools to encounter an in-depth understanding of the meaning of the out-of-field experience for the teaching and learning environment.

2.3.1 Awareness of social-cultural interdependence

The thesis acknowledges the significance of social interaction in the teaching and learning space. The culture within the learning space influences cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1978). Students’ interaction with a skilful teacher models effective learning through cooperative and collaborative encounters (Vygotsky).

2.3.2 Constructing new meaning

The themes that emerged through the investigation form “insightful invention, discovery and disclosure” while they help to construct new meaning (Van Manen, 1990, p. 88). The themes open
the “needfulness and desire” (p. 88) of the teaching and learning community to make sense of the out-of-field lived experience. The role the community plays in the development of students and how effectively they construct meaning (Vygotsky, 1978) supports the thesis in positioning the argument that the out-of-field teaching experience affects meaning-making in several ways. Vygotsky’s theory (Vygotsky) underlines the role an expert teacher plays in guiding students through constructing new knowledge, scaffolding prior and new knowledge, and ensuring students internalise new, unfamiliar knowledge. Vygotsky’s theory underlines the importance and need to understand what happens in classrooms when the teacher is not the knowledgeable one or an expert adult is not skilled to provide sensitive and skilful guidance. The social-constructivist theory of Vygotsky provides the thesis with tools to fulfil the urgent need to develop an in-depth understanding of the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching for the learning process.

2.3.3 Moving towards an in-depth understanding

Language, verbal or non-verbal, has a prominent role in the learning environment (Vygotsky, 1978). The language that “happens” in the classroom endorses internalisation of new knowledge. Language practiced in classrooms facilitates the smooth transitions between prior acquired knowledge and newly constructed knowledge to internalise new concepts. The teacher, as the “more knowledgeable other” (Vygotsky, 1978) plays an important role in this guiding process.

2.4 “What” is there to Understand? Gadamer

Hermeneutic phenomenology as a philosophy evolved from the theories of Husserl (Zahavi, 2003) on the essence of consciousness and Heidegger (1962) theories which involve the ontological principle. My philosophical beliefs for this thesis are to personally connect with the participants in their “real life-world”, in the “space” where their lived experiences take place, based on Gadamer’s hermeneutics (1976). Viewing the way of inquiry as ontological, close conversations and continuous interaction with participants develop my fuller understanding because “in linguistic communication, the world is disclosed” (Gadamer, 1975, p. 404). A better understanding develops when focus turns to the relationship between the totality and the segments (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2010) and in this instance it will include an overview of the out-of-field situation happening in schools (using existing literature) in relation to the people involved (the purpose of the current thesis). Husserl’s concept of the “life-world” describes object and subject as interrelated through the subject’s lived experience, while Heidegger (1962) explained “the being-there” (p.182) of Dasein (the truth) is “being in the world” (p. 174). I argue that being assigned to teaching positions without having suitable qualifications for the specific subjects or year levels influences teachers’ sense of belongingness in these fields.
2.4.1 Belongingness

This thesis takes Heidegger’s theories of “being” into account when it analyses an out-of-field teacher’s feeling of “at homeness” or not, in their out-of-field position and the impact this “at homeness” has on other stakeholders. People (in this case out-of-field teachers) influence their life-world but, in turn, are influenced by the “world” in which they live (Schutz & Luckmann, 1973). Bourdieu (1979) notes that habitus involves embodied dispositions which stimulate how a person views the world, performs and adjusts to it. This thesis underlines the influence of embodied experiences on the teaching and learning environment. Bourdieu (1990) explains how meaning making and “habitus” influence social viewpoints. Gadamer (1975) claims that truth as understanding is an ongoing process and is never completed. He also argues against a specific method, technique or rule to develop understanding or claiming “truth. This Gadamerian philosophy is significant for the thesis as the out-of-field teaching practice has a different “truth” and understanding depending on changing environments. Out-of-field teachers act in a specific manner because of their understanding of their situation and the meaning of it. Participants share their understanding of the relationship between being and the truth in terms of their out-of-field situation. They reflect on emotions of “belongingness” (Gadamer, 1975, p. 416) and life experiences through different lenses.

The embodied knowing that binds the experience and the person in union (Dall’Alba & Barnacle, 2005) has relevant meaning for this thesis as out-of-field teaching directs teachers’ perceived experiences and affects how they function in their world. The “body” is the vehicle of perceptions, experiences, internalised knowing and actions, but is often overlooked while intense focus is placed on symptoms or outcomes (Moran & Mooney, 2002). This is underlined by the specific focus of previous research on the occurrence of out-of-field teaching while the experiences, perceptions and embodied knowing of the people involved were overlooked. The out-of-field teaching practice is seen as the whole, while understanding of the whole develops through segments of sharing through verbal and non-verbal language (interview, observation and document analysis). The experience is not secluded from the world but highlights that specific situations, such as out-of-field teaching, can only be understood through references to different meanings attached to the experience of participants.

2.4.2 Hermeneutics: Understand what is being said

Hermeneutic phenomenology aims “to let things speak for themselves” through a descriptive approach and accepts that “lived experiences are always already meaningfully experienced” when they are interpreted (Van Manen, 1990, p. 180–181). In the present thesis, I focus on the different
people involved and through close conversations, interactions and discussions. In so doing, I search to understand what is really being said about their real-life experiences. With the support of Gadamer’s hermeneutic theory (1975) that only through “true conversation – each opens himself to the other person, truly accepts his point of view – understand not a particular individual, but what he says” (p. 347), the thesis searches for the essence of the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching. Gadamer’s hermeneutic philosophy (1976) places focus on lived experiences that are made possible to understand through language. Being involved and engaged in conversation makes understanding possible (Gadamer, 1975). Acknowledging Gadamer’s (1975) view that “language is the middle ground in which understanding and agreement concerning the object takes place” (p. 345), this thesis pays attention to what is said and how it is said to interpret lived experiences and what it means for the people involved. I value interaction with participants and I am intrigued by the nuances in their language when explaining their experiences. They offer their understanding through a unique and personal language.

Gadamer (1976) claims that understanding and interpreting are ongoing and always meaningful. Dialogue supports the mediation of understanding through stimulation of curiosity to know more about the “taken for granted” experiences of everyday life (Barnacle, 2001). The “engaged research” provided me with an opportunity to closely study out-of-field teachers and their lived experiences (Laverty, 2003). A hermeneutic phenomenological approach reflects deeply on information offered during interviews and observations to develop a deep, overarching understanding of the lived meaning (Sharkey, 2001) of out-of-field teaching, acknowledging and connecting all the clusters or layers of meaning (the parts) to fully understand the whole out-of-field experience. The hermeneutic phenomenology supported the decision to spend extended time in the field while focusing on several close discussions with participants, in addition to semi-structured interviews, in order to collect in-depth insights into lived experiences (Crist & Tanner, 2003). I constantly reflected on the main research question: how fundamental, for out-of-field teachers in their everyday concerns and practices, are their lived experiences and the meaning of out-of-field teaching, to direct interaction with participants. I regard teachers, in agreement with Gadamer (1975), as part of a larger community, culture and history – they are not isolated. As a result I made a huge effort to have close conversations with a broad range of participants. Gadamer based his concept of the person, drawn from Heidegger’s view, as always being a person-in-community with a history or tradition; he suggested that analysis of the human experience should take this into account: “There are no eternal truths. Truth is the revealedness of being that is given with the historical nature of there-being” (p. 479).
2.4.3 Fusion of horizons

Working towards understanding the out-of-field experience in totality, the present thesis made use of Gadamer’s analysis of shared meaning. Grondin (2002) explained that the Gadamerian notion of practical wisdom involves self-understanding within the situation of practice while distance from the practice “can induce a distortion” (p. 5). He further noted that Gadamer upholds attentiveness as a mode of knowledge which has potential as an application of understanding and reflective knowledge of the human experience. Vessey (2007) underlined that Gadamer pays attention to the nature of hermeneutic experiences, of forming an interpretive understanding of what is shared and who is sharing. Firsthand experiences prove to convey the real-life story. Gadamer defines practical wisdom as understanding that develops through the fusion of different horizons (Gadamer, 1975). I found comfort in Gadamer’s theory (1976) of “fusion of horizons” (p. xix) as it respected the horizons of all the people involved in interpreting the meaning of what has been shared. Gadamer’s “fusion of horizons” theory (1975) claimed “to interpret means precisely to use one’s own preconceptions so that the meaning of the text can really be made to speak for us” (p. 358).

I interpreted the text while taking the hermeneutic situation from which it stems into account and offering understanding through the language of participants. Vested in Husserl’s theories (Zahavi, 2003) of the “horizon” of experiences that hovers between what is real or concrete and what is seen as the ideal or abstract ideas of people, this thesis finds home in Gadamer’s theory of “the fusion of horizons” (Gadamer, 1975, 1976, p.xix). In union with Gadamer’s view, I believe that real understanding is only possible when the thesis looks through different lenses at the out-of-field “thing” (p. 414). Through the “fusion of horizons” of educational directors, principals, specialist and out-of-field teachers, parents and the interpreter, the text offers understanding of “being” (Gadamer, 1975, p. 432). The large sample of participants provides a deeper understanding through their “horizons” (p. 217) but also calls me to ensure every voice is equally heard. Although Giorgi’s (2009) work isn’t based on hermeneutic phenomenology, the magnitude of data offered by participants compelled the researcher to innovate a methodology where Giorgi’s work would support the aim of the thesis to confront and address long time misunderstandings and assumptions. I acknowledge that hermeneutic phenomenological philosophy does not usually incorporate bracketing and coding as part of the data analysis process (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003), but I found comfort in applying bracketing based on the empirical phenomenological philosophy of Giorgi (2009) which is rooted in the work of Husserl.

The exploration of the lived experiences surrounding out-of-field teaching finds reassurance in Gadamer’s view of the hermeneutic circle where the “whole” can be understood by focusing on
specific segments against the background of a cultural, historical and literary context. The negotiation of understanding is intertwined with specific circumstances and “the self” (Gadamer, 1976) which in this thesis implies the relation between the out-of-field situation and those affected by the experience.

2.4.4 Prejudice precedes understanding

Based on the concept of the hermeneutic circle, the thesis aims to investigate out-of-field teaching through the lenses of different participants, their pre-understanding of the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching and how they construct meaning and understanding of the out-of-field situation. In Truth and Method, Gadamer (1975) explained that deeper understanding is not possible without the presence of “prejudice” (p. 238), by this Gadamer explained “a person trying to understand a text is prepared for it to tell him something” (p. 238). Gadamer explained further that an awareness of prejudice implies openness to the meaning of others in relation to our own meaning to produce a variety of interpretations and a deeper understanding. Gadamer (1976), in agreement with Merleau-Ponty (1968), viewed prejudice as essential in the process of understanding lived experiences and through language prejudice gives way to the sharing of personal truths that is vested in the unity of experiences and perceptions. Gadamer (1975) claimed that “The hermeneutical task becomes automatically a questioning of things and is always in part determined by this” (p. 238). My sensitivity involves “the conscious assimilation of one’s own fore-meanings” (p. 238). Hermeneutics is a questioning of things and in the search to understand the research question: how fundamental, for teachers in their everyday concerns and practices, are their lived experiences and the meaning of out-of-field teaching, direct my preparedness for the text to tell me something. The theoretical positioning of the thesis about the out-of-field teaching experience (see section 1.7) is supported by a theoretical framework based on Gadamer’s theory of practical wisdom through shared meaning.

The phenomenological analysis of the data draws from Gadamer’s (1975) hermeneutic approach as a fusion of the perspectives of the interpreter and the data being interpreted. Gadamer highlights different ways of interpretation such as: firstly, finding out what the content means; secondly, finding out what the content suggests by way of its grammar; and thirdly, the confident extension of interpretation with the “fusion of horizons” to formulate new interpretations and allowing me to go beyond what is said (Crist & Tanner, 2003). These three modes of interpretation merged as I interpreted the content. Hermeneutics acknowledges and accepts the presuppositions of a researcher in approaching text and accepts the connection between presupposition and interpretations as the reality and the truth (Annells, 2006). According to Gadamer, “prejudice” is necessary before interpretation and understanding of what is said can take place. The
“consciousness of the effects of history” neutralises the gap between familiar and unfamiliar information, as a gap can destroy the link between the object of thesis, the pre-understanding, past prejudgement and previous research experiences. It is, however, necessary to be aware that a consciousness of history and its effects can put me in an interpretational lineage (Laverty, 2003) with the reality in the field. Gadamer explains that awareness of historical effects such as history, background and culture presents a different understanding of the world, that it has the ability to bring subject and object closer and develops understanding of interconnectedness as a whole (Laverty). The quality of data depends on the effective relationship between the interpreter and the interpreted and an awareness of prejudices within a specific historical time in order to expose beliefs and construct new knowledge about the meanings of actions (Maggs-Rapport, 2001). Awareness of tradition and historical time stimulates an in-depth understanding of the experience which is enhanced through the thesis’ transnational stance with a diversity of participants while also validating the data.

The hermeneutic circle involves phenomenological insights of the whole and the parts as a developmental part of understanding (Grondin, 2002). Gadamer (1975) in *Truth and Method* argues that the process of understanding involves a fusion of horizons and the interpreter’s awareness of the hermeneutic circle is vital. He explains that life experience (history), the use of language and tradition form a rhythm to open up and stimulate awareness of anticipation, preconceptions, pre-understandings and judgements. In this thesis, Gadamer’s hermeneutic circle supports looking at out-of-field teaching in a new way which goes beyond common practices and taken-for-granted attitudes. It focuses on the priority of understanding the lived experiences in relation to out-of-field teaching as a dialogic, practical and situated action. Interpretive analysis acknowledges that personal context conditions have implications for the research approach. Gadamer (1975) described it, together with Heidegger (1999), through the hermeneutic circle. “A hermeneutical trained mind must be, from the start, sensitive to the text’s quality of newness – sensitivity involves neither neutrality – nor the extinction of one’s self but the conscious assimilation of one’s own fore-meanings and prejudices” (Gadamer, 1975, p. 238). The circle is the interrelationship between part and whole (Charalambous, Papadopoulos, & Beadsmoore, 2008) which in this scenario describes “the thing” (the out-of-field experience) and those who experience “the thing” (participants). The analysis process includes examining and re-examining the participants’ responses to find emerging insights through interpretation of the participants’ accounts, while the context of the participants’ story is the focus of the hermeneutic circle (Annells, 2006; Crist & Tanner, 2003). Discovering the meaning of the whole through investigating various elements of out-of-field teaching evolves as it emerges from transcripts and contributes to the participants’ perspectives of the experience. The decisions taken in the analyses are reasoned and reflect the theoretical framework of the
methodology which holds ideas about the nature of truth and reality based on an ontological approach (Annells) which investigates in this thesis what it means to be out-of-field. The value of the hermeneutic phenomenology approach for the current thesis is the options it provides to investigate the true “horizons” embedded in the subjective (personal) and emotional nature of the out-of-field experience.

The theoretical framework of the thesis offers description, understanding and various acts of interpretation (“fusion of horizons”) as described by Gadamer (1975). The hermeneutic phenomenological approach assists the development of a union between the perspective of the interpreter and the perspective projected through language in order to grasp new and unfamiliar concepts and to avoid misunderstanding (Maggs-Rapport, 2001). I addressed the possibility of misunderstanding through the inclusion of a combination of horizons and lenses of principals, teachers, parents and educational directors. Interpretive phenomenological analysis drawn from each sentence of the description or narrative, the search for detail, essence and meaning develops the language of phenomenological understanding (Maggs-Rapport). The interpretation of the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching according to themes leads to revealing rich clusters of meaning identified from data to expose the essential nature of the lived experience (Van Manen, 1990) which in this thesis is the lived experiences in relation to out-of-field teaching.

2.5 Summary

This thesis adopts a specific theoretical framework to support in-depth conversations through which information emerges about the “life-world” of out-of-field teachers “as we immediately experience it pre-reflectively” (Van Manen, 1990, p. 9). This means that data might sometimes be upsetting and confrontational while stimulating questions about our “taken for granted” views about lived experiences. Focusing on the whole and respecting the parts (Gadamer, 1975) made me aware of the value the social constructivist theory of Vygotsky (1978) has for the thesis. It supports the aim of this thesis, to take an in-depth investigation into the units of experiences and meaning that emerged in relation to out-of-field teaching as a whole. The two theorists, Gadamer and Vygotsky, provide me with a safe base from where I could explore the out-of-field experience. Gadamer’s theories directed my interpretation of the whole out-of-field experience while Vygotsky’s theories provided me with tools to dig deeper into the meaning of the experience for leadership, effective classroom management, behaviour management, school community and the lack of content knowledge. The phenomenological study allowed me to take a holistic view of the out-of-field experience while the qualitative design supported me to “get close” to valuable data in the field (Berg, 2004; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011; Ladson-Billings & Donnor, 2005) and to look at “the thing” through the lenses of different participants. The significance of the thesis is to offer,
through a phenomenological conceptual framework, new understanding about the interrelation between the out-of-field experience and effectiveness in classrooms and schools.
Chapter 3

Literature Review

“...everything points to another thing.”

(Gadamer, 1976, p. 103)

3.1 Introduction

Teachers bring knowledge into perspective for students, teachers guide students to make sense of the world around them and understand their place in history. Teachers play a central role in the concept development of students (Hattie, 2009). Paying attention to Hobbs’ (2013a) statement that out-of-field teaching impacts professional identity and self-efficacy, I strongly argue that the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching influences healthy learning environments while its multi-layered meaning reaches beyond classrooms. My concern for teachers in positions outside their field of qualification is grounded in the review of the literature on out-of-field teaching. For example, research in the US revealed the reality of teachers’ attrition and the fact that 25% of novice teachers are ready to leave the teaching profession within their first year of teaching (Ingersoll, 2003a, 2003b, 2006; The National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (NCTAF), 2007) raises questions about the common practice to assign these young teachers to out-of-field positions. Hobbs (2012) as well as McConney and Price (2009b) noted that the complicated lived experiences of out-of-field teaching are insufficiently researched. Insufficient research means insufficient understanding.

The literature reviewed in this chapter elucidates the need for this thesis and supports the arguments I offer throughout this phenomenological exploration in order to address misunderstandings. One such misunderstanding is that the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching only has a severe influence on secondary schools and does not really happen at primary level. In Australian primary schools only half of the classrooms of specialist areas such as Languages Other than English and Special Needs have suitably qualified teachers with the remainder being “out-of-field” (McConney & Price, 2009b). Similar situations exist in South Africa where 54% of professionally unqualified teachers are teaching the reception year (grade R or Pre-Primary), in the foundation phase (grade/year 1–3) while only 49% of teachers have foundation phase qualification.
Thirty-eight percent of teachers in the intermediate phase have an intermediate phase (grade/year 4–6) qualification and 18% a primary phase qualification while 23% of teachers in the senior phase (grade/year 7–12) have a senior phase qualification (Republic of South Africa, Department of Education, 2005; Republic of South Africa, Technical Report, 2011). In the United States, secondary schools had between 17% and 22% of their core classes taught by a teacher without a subject-related degree or certification (U.S. Education Department, 2010) while the United Kingdom has increasing numbers (Shepherd, 2013) where teachers are required to teach subjects that they have not been trained to teach.

The investigation described in the following chapters is the first transnational phenomenological exploration of what “being out-of-field” means for education stakeholders and how these lived experiences manifest in effective teaching and learning environments. In agreement with Jones (2010) who proposed that the rewards of transnational research are worth the effort, I propose that the attempt to support positive and resourceful classrooms and schools can extensively draw from working across disciplines, across schools, for example, secondary and primary schools and transnationally as it provides an extension of information and increases the influence of the investigation. The literature review offers a view of statistics from the US, UK, Australia, Korea and South Africa which shows that out-of-field teaching is a transnational concern. Exploring existing research and literature on teacher dispositions and competence, leadership, behaviour management, effective classrooms, and school community and subject knowledge turns focus to transnational findings and the benefits for a deeper understanding while it shares perceptions about the same experience through different lenses.

3.2 Out-of-Field Teaching: Statistics Tell the Story

I put forward that the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching greatly influences what happens inside classrooms because of the lived experiences of teachers in these positions. The transnational occurrence of out-of-field teaching in different school settings, for example, independent and public, high and low socio-economic schools, make it necessary to develop a deeper understanding of what the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching entails for education. This section focuses on statistics available to highlight the necessity to understand the meaning of out-of-field teaching for quality teaching and learning.

It is noted that 39% of all science teachers in South Africa are unsuitably qualified (Silva, 2010) while 26.6% of maths teachers, 28.7% of geography, and 31.4% of physics teachers in the UK are not suitably qualified for the subjects they teach (Loveys, 2011). In addition, a major concern is that 24% of core courses such as maths, science, social studies and English in US middle
and secondary schools are taught by teachers not suitably qualified (Barlow, 2002). Darby (2012) compiled a valuable summary of recent Australian statistics from researchers such as Ingvarson, Beavis, Kleinhenz, Harris, and Jenz (2004) about out-of-field teaching in Australia. Table 3.1 offers information adopted from Darby’s (2012) *Response on schools workforce issue report*.

**Table 3.1. Occurrence of out-of-field teaching in Australia (Darby-Hobbs, 2012)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia National Survey (Darby, 2012)</td>
<td>5–13% math, physics and chemistry teachers teaching year 11 and 12 secondary students have less than one year tertiary qualification in subject they teach. 25% Junior math teachers had less than one year tertiary qualifications in the subject, 50% Junior math teachers did not have 3 years tertiary qualifications in the subject. Math, ICT and Science teachers are twice as likely to teach out of their field in provincial towns and three times more likely in remote towns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria – Australia (Ingvarson, Beavis, &amp; Kleinhenz, 2004)</td>
<td>13–20% graduate teachers feel unqualified for the year level they teach, 15% science teachers did not feel qualified while 25–30% teachers in general did not feel suitably qualified for their position.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia (McConney &amp; Price, 2009a)</td>
<td>24% teachers overall were unsuitably qualified for the subject they teach, 16% math teachers unsuitably qualified, 18% science teachers unsuitably qualified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia (Panizzon, Westell, &amp; Elliott, 2011)</td>
<td>16% general science teachers unsuitably qualified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania (Tasmania Audit Office, 2010)</td>
<td>Only 49% of science teachers are suitably qualified.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Darby (2012) noted further, from Australian research done by Harris, Jensz, and Baldwin (2005), that 16% to 28% of science teachers did not have science-based degrees, 22% of year 7 teachers were unsuitably qualified to teach science while 20% of math teachers did not study math beyond first year level. Although alarm bells are sounding about out-of-field teaching, Zepeda (2006) explains that between 40 to 50% of out-of-field teachers in the US do not receive extra help or support. I suggest that out-of-field teachers function without support because of misconceptions and misunderstandings about the essence or nature of the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching. Misunderstandings about out-of-field teaching develop into complex concerns. Statistics show high rates of out-of-field teaching in middle school because educational leaders assume academic preparation for middle school is not as important as for secondary school (Eppley, 2009) with considerable implications for students’ future subject preferences. Gordon (2007) drew a comparison between out-of-field teaching in middle schools and secondary schools in the US, stating the seriousness of misunderstandings with evidence that 69% of middle school students and 31% of secondary school students in the US were taught maths by teachers not suitably qualified.
while 93% of middle school students and 67% of secondary school students were taught physical science or physics by out-of-field teachers. I believe that students will find it hard to be proficient in subjects like computer science, mathematics, science and information technology in secondary school if they were not sufficiently prepared for these subject during the middle year period or were taught by teachers who had a lack of pedagogical content knowledge for these subjects. Gordon (2007) further noted that teachers play a significant part in the future academic success of students.

### 3.3 Quality Teaching: The Expectation

The quality of teaching comes under the microscope through a research project about the preparation of mathematics teachers in Australia (Harris & Jensz, 2006). In this research, Harris and Jensz state that 39% of schools nationally indicated that they experience difficulties recruiting suitably qualified teachers. The research further claims that the problem of getting qualified maths teachers results in a tendency to move the most experienced teachers into these senior classes while junior mathematics classes are filled with less qualified teachers. I argue that assigning out-of-field teachers to these positions without taking care to improve their effectiveness results in students avoiding these subjects as part of their subject choices during their final secondary school years. My argument that the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching influences teaching and learning turns focus to school leaders and their perceptions about out-of-field teaching. Collard (2009) noted that transformation and change such as adjustments to new and unfamiliar curricula, unfamiliar pedagogies and changes in school leaders’ theories and strategies creates very personal experiences for teachers. Glanz (2003) noted that successful management of transformation identifies problem areas, and develops strategies to address concerns in order to develop comprehensive schools. My argument is that misunderstanding of the lived experiences surrounding out-of-field teaching hampers effective transformation strategies. I argue further that out-of-field teachers find it harder to comply with transformation and change directions in education while I agree with Hobbs (2013a) that out-of-field teaching has significant meaning for effective implementation of curricula.

An Australian Government Productivity Commission Report (2012) claimed that principals admitted they experience difficulties in assigning suitably qualified teachers in some subjects. I argue that these principals often have no other option but to assign unsuitably qualified teachers. There is however the expectation that these teachers will be as effective as their suitably qualified colleagues. Statistics claim that 73% of beginner teachers in South Africa are placed in remote schools and often in out-of-field positions where they have limited access to professional development opportunities (Republic of South Africa, 2005). Although these teachers are expected to manage their teaching situation, Ingersoll (2003a, 2003b) indicates that teacher attrition in the US after five years of teaching experience is between 40–50%. Over the last decade, Ingersoll (2001c)
was involved in extended research about the occurrence of out-of-field teaching and reasons why it forms part of the education environment in the US. These efforts stimulated more and more questions about the out-of-field experience.

### 3.3.1 The Model: Meaningful teaching and learning

Effective and competent teachers constantly re-commit to the fundamental principles of teaching while they embrace pedagogies that support them in realising the specific needs of the students in their classrooms (Sayeski, 2009). The thesis explores teachers’ lived experiences and closely observed classrooms and staffroom interactions in a journey to understand how out-of-field teaching influences meaningful learning environments, trusting relationships among teachers and students, and how it impacts on schools in delivering outstanding education and well-prepared students (as end products) to society. A concerning statement through an Australian research project, *Who is teaching science, meeting the demand for qualified teachers in Australian secondary schools* (Harris et al., 2005) underlines a key finding as “No matter how good their pedagogical skills, teachers who lack knowledge in their discipline are manifestly unprepared.” (p. viii). I kept on questioning why lived experiences of out-of-field teachers are still overlooked, while some education communities seem to be aware of the widespread out-of-field practice (see section 1.3 and Table 3.1). My critique therefore is that responses about school leaders’ understanding and perceptions in relation to the real-life experiences of teachers in out-of-field positions are noticeably absent. I insinuate that misunderstandings and misconceptions among school leaders about the meaning of out-of-field teaching greatly influence what happens inside classrooms, with an impact on comprehensive schools.

Classrooms are micro cosmoses of the wider community and effective classroom management and behaviour management are dependent on critical pedagogical strategies (Usher, 2009) which raises further questions about what out-of-field teaching means for developing “model” classrooms. Developing “model” classrooms involves critical pedagogy and engaged teachers who effectively facilitate in-depth subject conversation, encourage critique, and stimulate questioning (Braa & Callero, 2006). I argue that out-of-field teaching influences the level at which teachers fully connect and engage in the teaching and learning practice while it further influences how comfortable out-of-field teachers are in encouraging in-depth subject conversations and reasoning. Teachers and school leaders with positive dispositions develop meaningful learning and teaching environments to the advantage of all students (Bondesio & De Witt, 2004b). The opposite happens when already vulnerable teachers are constantly exposed to changes in subjects and year levels they teach while lacking the necessary support (Du Plessis, 2010).
3.3.2 Teachers build the future: Impact sphere of teachers

The influence of effective teachers on the quality of knowledge and social interaction in classrooms has major implications for students’ performance (Gillies & Boyle, 2010). The impact sphere of teachers goes beyond the classroom. Teachers’ expertise, practices and dispositions toward transforming classrooms into cooperative learning environments where individuals develop to complement, support and stand together in reaching a common goal, are at the centre of their impact sphere (Gillies & Boyle; Lingard et al., 2003). The impact sphere of suitably qualified, competent and effective teachers not only involves creating a most needed fit between practice and policy but also supports a change and development of new teaching strategies. In addition, it provides an opportunity for effective teachers to put newly researched strategies into practice. Teachers’ ineffectiveness is based on the extent of the gap between policies and their practices (Dee & Cohodes, 2008) which raises questions about out-of-field teaching. Effective teachers improve the scaffolding of students’ construction of knowledge by linking previous understanding to new information in a process where they analyse, integrate and move to critical thinking and problem-solving (Gillies, 2009). These teachers promote higher-level thinking by the challenge they present to students (Gillies). I maintain that the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching has an influence on the effective linking of previous understanding to new concepts because of insufficient pedagogical content knowledge. The impact sphere of unsuitably qualified teachers goes beyond the classroom walls.

3.3.3 The classroom matters

The teachers influence what happens in the classroom, they play the “leading role” in the teaching and learning environment. Teachers who reflect a self-doubt about managing particular matters, displaying a lack of or a total absence of engagement, influence what happens in the classroom (Lingard, 2010). An effective classroom displays healthy classroom characteristics through positive teacher/student relationships, healthy peer relationships, effective home/school relationships, self-determination, academic efficacy, and self-control of all the stakeholders in the classroom (Doll, Zucker, & Brehm, 2004). Theories of situated everyday practice of learning by Vygotsky claim that the activity of learning should not be isolated from the social world in which the learning activity takes place (Lave, 2009). Furthermore, Lave argues, students acting within the social world of a classroom are actually forming and engaging in an agreement with positioned practice of what and how they learn. Learning is best attained in an atmosphere which promotes but does not force learning, develops respect for independence, and provides the security and safety in which to make mistakes (Arnold, 2005).
Marzano (2007) states that teaching and consequently learning is inhibited without well thought through effective rules and procedures inside the classroom environment. The classroom setting expresses a strong message regarding a teacher’s approach to managing instruction and learning and provides an influential atmosphere with implications for the success of the learning process (Marzano). Gadamer (1975), through his work on the elevation of previous experiences in understanding, describes his theory of “being” part of a specific world involves a feeling of being at home or a “belonging to that world” (Gadamer, 1975, p. 258). I suggest in this thesis that out-of-field teachers do not feel “at home” or that they belong in specific teaching positions resulting in complex classrooms situations.

3.3.3.1 *Inside the classroom: Action, cooperation and communication*

I view the interaction in the classroom as a setting for “fusion of horizons” (Gadamer, 1976, p. xxviii) in agreement with Gadamer’s hermeneutic philosophy. Through social interactions and language (verbal and non-verbal) inside the classroom, understanding develops of the learning environment. This understanding develops because of attitudes, interactions and the specific language among individuals within this space. Bruner (1996) states that the most frequent teaching instrument used in settings such as a classroom is a mysterious learner-teacher “interchange” (p. 44). Classroom management is a matter of developing co-operative relationships in the classroom (Joyce, Weil, & Calhoun, 2000). Suitably qualified teachers are skilled at identifying “horizons” or needs of individuals in the classroom and communicating appropriate progression while pacing the subject content according to the need to create a specific atmosphere inside classrooms. Suitably qualified teachers are aware of viewpoints (horizons) and needs of students, they offer suitable support and mobilise the students’ coping strategies and have skills to develop cooperation strategies in the classroom (Arnold, 2005).

Students feel safe in learning and teaching environments where the focus is on meaningful interaction and integration and also on effective and positive student motivation and performance (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). Kounin and Sherman (1979) noted that effective classroom management does not depend on teachers’ reaction to behaviour problems but on the strategies they apply to prevent behaviour problems.

3.3.3.2 *Classroom management: Mediating and facilitating*

Effective mediation and facilitation within the learning environment are fundamental for meaningful teaching to take place as it guides and enables the construction of new knowledge and learning strategies (Ashman & Gillies, 2003). The level to which students might understand their own behaviour depends on how teachers characteristically exercise and adjust classroom
management strategies and skills (Rogers & McPherson, 2008) according to the specific needs in the classroom situation. Vygotsky’s theory (1978) that the mind can only be understood through awareness of the surrounding society, which includes the more knowledgeable other and the zone of proximal development in the learning process, places the teacher as a mediating artefact in the centre of meaningful learning (Engestrom, 2009). Facilitating learning in the classroom includes careful planning of strategies and pedagogies of correction, for example, sensitive classroom interaction, sound rules and objectives (Ashman & Gillies).

Continuous, honest and effective reflection on classroom management skills are necessary for success and depend on teacher dispositions and personality: a positive, confident, expectant and relaxed strategy, which enhances teachers’ authoritative leadership in the classroom (Rogers & McPherson, 2008). The teacher as facilitator of the construction of knowledge is the mediator of understanding within the learning space. In agreement with Gadamer’s (1976) focus on language as an instrument towards understanding, this thesis is concerned with specific “language” of correction, verbal and non-verbal, as it plays a major role in “meaning making”. The teacher’s ability to communicate calmness and control over the classroom environment prepares the classroom for positive and effective structured learning possibilities while it supports students in their “meaning making”.

3.3.3.3 Pedagogies and psychology: Classroom politics

Classrooms are learning spaces loaded with emotions and dispositions, often mentioned as the atmosphere inside the classroom. Teachers’ dispositions and emotional competence often set the classroom climate, with an influence on student outcomes (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). I argue that out-of-field teachers cope with complex dispositions and emotions. These dispositions and emotions impact the atmosphere of the learning space and develop specific classroom politics, for example, students are not allowed to ask too many questions or no time allowance is made for in-depth discussions. The classroom is the environment where each learner’s needs, emotions and feelings should be dealt with effectively (Lingard et al., 2003). A clear understanding of pedagogy in the classroom is fundamental to the sociology of education (Lingard, 2010). Classroom politics impact on learner confidence and willingness to share personal experiences (Lingard et al.). Personality development takes place when students incorporate values held by others of importance, teachers and parents are powerful models in the process of identification with specific values (McInerney & McInerney, 2006).

Pedagogies and psychology meet classroom politics when students display anxiety because of what happens inside the classroom. Teachers determine what happens inside the classroom, they
have the “leading role” in this play. Students not supported by teachers and parents to understand behaviour, unpleasant experiences and feelings of unworthiness or inadequacy within the classroom environment find it hard to experience meaningful teaching and learning (McInerney & McInerney). Psychology meets classroom politics through verbal and non-verbal communication within the classroom, especially in disruptive classrooms. Disruptive classrooms have a significant impact on how students experience learning (Ashman & Gillies, 2003). The impact of out-of-field teaching on classrooms, learning, and construction of knowledge, “meaning making” and social attributes needs attention as far as it influences the mediating and facilitating of quality teaching and learning.

3.3.4 Schools define the quality of education

Joyce et al. (2000) stated that the development of positive school cultures is a process of developing integrative and productive ways of interacting while displaying norms that support vigorous leaning activities. Schools are sites where the most effective change can take place (Aladjem & Borman, 2006). Comprehensive schools and systematic reform strategies involving national, state and local policies are needed for long-term and “whole-school” reform (Lingard, Hayes, & Mills, 2002). In school environments where teachers fail to intervene effectively with at-risk students with learning disorders such as hyperactivity, developmental language disorder, reading difficulties or dyslexia, there might be an early onset of antisocial behaviour and disruptive classroom and school environments (Rutter, 2008). I suggest that out-of-field teachers might not have the skills, training or content knowledge needed to manage these students appropriately. Although school leaders have perceptions that what happens inside schools is guarded, most parents are aware of dysfunctional learning and teaching environments, with implications for the school and parent trust-relationships.

3.3.4.1 Inside the school

Rutter (2008) recognises the beneficial effects of school-based analysis and prevention of learning and behaviour problems by timely school recognition followed by appropriate intervention. He highlights that those students who have effectively engaged teachers in the classrooms demonstrate positive changes in their behavioural and learning development. The positive potential of effective school and classroom initiatives designed for timely prevention and analysis have beneficial effects on learner behaviour. Comprehensive schools are seen as environments which provide cultural psychological tools needed for cognition in the school and classroom environment (Gillies, 2007; Lingard, 2007). Suitably qualified teachers know how and when specific strategies
are the most suitable pathway to take in order to build effective classrooms and comprehensive schools (Gillies).

Comprehensive schools as a whole and effective classrooms in particular are structured to enable students to feel a sense of belonging, a sense of power, a sense of freedom and a sense of fun (Gillies, 2007). In accordance with the research question, the thesis also explores how the out-of-field experience impacts comprehensive schools. Within healthy learning environments, students effectively maintain their own history, needs, desires and interests. Under the guidance of skilled teachers they are skilfully introduced to collaborate and have opportunities to be involved in a diversity of learning approaches in harmony with the culture of the wider educational community.

### 3.3.4.2 Comprehensive schools: Effective within change

In effective learning environments, the focus is placed on students’ abilities and their sense of self-worth in relation to teachers’ motivational framework. Bernstein (2000) highlights the importance of healthy interactions and relationships between students and teachers “power constructs relations” and “controls relationships within given forms of interactions” (p. 5). Teacher/student relationships impact pedagogic communication that connects students’ everyday knowledge and knowledge offered at school. Within effective school environments knowledgeable teachers successfully assist students to focus on learning new problem solving strategies, understanding and mastering specific tasks, and exploring the use of deep learning and reasoning strategies (McInerney & McInerney, 2006).

### 3.3.4.3 The school as part of the wider educational community

A sound link between the school and the wider educational community provides positive stimuli, develops healthy concepts, enriches teacher and student experiences, extends learning experiences and stimulates interests (Freiberg & Driscoll, 1996). The opposite is true when a gap is experienced. School and classroom management are meaningfully influenced by individuals within the wider school context, for example, parents, specialist teachers and principals (Freiberg & Driscoll). Meaningful student interactions are essential for forming a link between the classroom, the school and the wider school community (Lonsdale & Anderson, 2012). The development of a link between the school and the community is crucial to develop effective learning and teaching environments.
3.4 Issues with Teaching Out-of-Field

3.4.1 Out-of-field teaching: Lived experiences as “truths”

It is suggested that misunderstandings and misconceptions about the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching for the teaching and learning environment exist because of insufficient research about these lived experiences. There exists a dearth of information and literature about the implications of out-of-field teaching (McConney & Price, 2009b). The constant transformation and rapidly changing nature of education poses a challenge for staff recruitment and placements resulting in the increased assignment of out-of-field teachers (Wirt et al., 2004). The need for information about the truths surrounding out-of-field lived experiences makes this phenomenological exploration significant. McConney and Price (2009b) highlighted the absence of research and literature on out-of-field teachers’ efficacy, their well-being and the link between out-of-field teaching and teachers’ stress, burn-out and attrition. This thesis aims to listen to and observe the “real world” behind information offered by The Queensland Government Workplace Bullying Taskforce (2002), which counts public school teaching among the high-risk occupations for mistreatment. Again I re-focus on teachers in out-of-field positions and the need to develop a fuller understanding of their lived experiences while they are in out-of-field positions and struggling with behavioural issues.

Heidegger describes how easy it is to overlook what is really happening in the social context (Gadamer, 1976). Compliancy causes the exploitation of teachers which includes unreasonable assignments and unfair re-assignments which include out-of-field assignments (Queensland Government Workplace Bullying Taskforce, 2002). The thesis investigates the meaning of the out-of-field situation for the well-being and efficiency of teachers in their classrooms against literature offered by Blase, Blase, and Du (2008) about the mistreatment of teachers which leads to health and self-esteem issues with implications for family, friends and economic livelihood.

The literature overview is the starting point of this research in accord with Van Manen’s (1990) view that “breathing in” the experiences surrounding “the thing-in-itself” (Gadamer, 1975, p. 307) is preparation for understanding the data shared by participants. The general concept is that students deserve a highly qualified teacher in their classroom, but the concept of what comprises a highly qualified teacher is complex and context-dependent (Eppley, 2009). My critique of the Eppley research is that although it has highlighted the concerns for quality teaching in rural schools, it does not focus on the lived experiences of out-of-field teachers teaching in these remote schools to highlight their specific needs. Since research demonstrates that high quality teachers influence the quality of an education system (Ling, 2008) and are instruments towards economic rationalisation, I argue strongly that educational leaders need to develop a deeper understanding of the out-of-field lived experience and what it means for the development of comprehensive schools.
Specific needs in schools call for specific teachers; for example, the unique needs of specific schools, such as multiculturalism, rural, disadvantaged and lower socio-economic schools, are important factors to keep in mind during teacher recruitment and placement procedures. Out-of-field teaching has a negative and inequitable effect on students’ academic achievements with specific focus on poor communities, as well as small and remote schools (Darling-Hammond, 2002; Ingersoll, 2003b). Research claims that teachers in disadvantaged schools are more likely to be assigned to out-of-field positions (Barlow, 2002). This prompted me to investigate the meaning of out-of-field teaching for teacher and student behaviour and students’ view of these teachers.

The collective attitude that teachers can teach any subject is an indicator of the low status teaching receives in society, which Ingersoll (2001a) connected with the practice of assigning teachers to teach subjects without the necessary qualifications. Ingersoll and Smith (2004) drew attention to teachers’ learning and training issues once they are assigned to out-of-field positions. Barlow (2002) states that it is imperative to understand that teachers are not the cause of out-of-field teaching, but pinpoints lack of political will and poor administrative practices as being responsible for out-of-field problems. Even highly qualified and highly experienced teachers often find themselves assigned to year levels or subjects outside their field of expertise (Barlow). I found Barlow’s research encouraging as he reflects on the way out-of-field teachers are perceived. His research however, did not take an in-depth look at real-life experiences of teachers in out-of-field positions. Gordon’s (2007) statement that a nation’s future rests on the foundation of a well-educated workforce equipped with a sound science and mathematics education underline the urgency to develop a deeper understanding of the meaning of out-of-field teaching for certain subjects.

Research by Chamberlin, Plucker, and Kearns (2003) highlighted the delicate relationship between teacher characteristics, qualifications, experience, subject and content knowledge and effective learning. I believe that teachers assigned to out-of-field positions further complicate this relationship. The thesis highlights the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching for this delicate relationship. Ling (2008) explained teachers make a difference in students’ lives, and teaching is a profession with significant responsibility. Competence is compromised when teachers teach subjects outside their field of expertise or qualification (Pillay, Goddard, & Wilss, 2005) because of the deficiencies in their subject knowledge (Zepeda, 2006). A combination of content knowledge and pedagogical skills are needed to achieve effective teaching and learning (Gordon, 2007); the concern is how teachers affected by out-of-field teaching pedagogically cope and what they do to manage their classrooms. Concerns are further raised about assessing the progress of students’ intellectual development because teachers who do not know their subject area have a major impact
on the accuracy of learner performance assessment (Stanley & Baines, 2001). The experience of out-of-field teaching often makes bad teaching and learning situations even worse (Stanley & Baines).

The out-of-field situation is a complicated (Hobbs, 2012), multi-faceted experience, which involves teachers often being transferred from subject to subject or year level to year level regardless of their field of qualification or expertise. In order to understand staffing problems such as out-of-field placements, open discussions about the situation in schools and districts shed light on where the actual problems lie and how to rectify wrong diagnoses and wrong prescriptions (Ingersoll, 2006). I propose however, that there is currently a lack of open discussion because of misconceptions and misunderstandings about the influence of out-of-field teaching on lived experiences. The continuing changes in placement and assignment influence the schools’ ability to offer consistency and to provide and develop in-depth curriculum scaffolding towards deep learning.

In its search for truth about the out-of-field experience the thesis explores the positive and negative aspects of out-of-field teaching to provide a fuller understanding. Becker (2000) noted a positive aspect about how teachers who have mixed workloads and are functioning out-of-field in Information Technology often start to display a constructivist approach in their teaching, applying their newly acquired knowledge across subject borders with positive effects on teaching and learning. Another positive aspect highlighted by Wilson and Cole (1991) differentiates a constructivist approach as opening up an authentic versus academic context for learning. Students take more control over their own learning. This approach takes pressure off out-of-field teachers because mistakes are seen as a way of understanding. The view that mistakes are demonstrating development through a constructivist approach give an out-of-field teacher the space to develop alongside students. Out-of-field teachers often adjust their teaching strategies and improve their competency in out-of-field subjects when support that allows personal and professional growth (Zepeda, 2006) is available. Ingersoll (2001a, 2001b, 2001c) noted misunderstandings in relation to out-of-field teaching practices – for example, the viewpoints of researchers such as Friedman that a good or competent teacher can teach any subject. Ingersoll is skeptical about Friedman’s viewpoint that the necessity for teachers’ specialised training in subjects is over and unnecessarily accentuated. Ingersoll (2001a, 2001b) admits that some exceptional individual teachers might be able to teach anything, but on average teachers are greatly dependent on intensive preparation about specialised pedagogies to teach specific subjects. Specialised pedagogical content knowledge supports the teacher to integrate concepts while they relate new content knowledge with already internalised knowledge (Hattie, 2003). Van Driel and Berry (2012) note the importance of a sound
pedagogical content knowledge to support teachers’ appreciation for the way in which students learn in specific subject areas. It suggests that the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching not only influences teachers’ dispositions towards specific subjects but impacts students’ motivation to choose certain subjects as fields of study.

I further argue that teachers who do not feel “at home” in their teaching positions and have to cope without support or an in-depth understanding from their school leader about their specific lived experiences are more likely to leave the teaching profession. Brown (2008) noted that teacher migration among schools and attrition equally effect the stability of schools because of the influence it has on staffing problems. Vacant positions are often filled under pressure with school leaders depending on unsuitably qualified teachers. Teacher turnover rates are higher in comparison to other occupations (Ingersoll, 2003b) and high turnover rates not only influence the stability needed by comprehensive schools but also have the influence on these nomad teachers’ professional development.

3.4.2 Out-of-field teaching: Concerns and social practices

The main research question and the three sub-questions (see section 1.5) address concerns about the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching for learning, keeping in mind the importance of social interdependence learning theories in classrooms (Johnson & Johnson, 2003) and classroom and behaviour practices. Within a classroom setting, the behaviours of teachers and fellow students have important outcomes for future learning and behaviour modification (Bandura, 1977). When a teacher is appointed to an out-of-field position, there is a time of adjustment and this period has an effect on the teaching and learning environment (Du Plessis, 2010). It would be a misconception to perceive disruption in the learning environment because of an unsuitably qualified teacher as only influencing the lived experiences of students or only those of teachers. Different environments stimulate different actions, and teacher behaviour and learner behaviour have a reciprocal effect on each other (Rogers, 2003). Teaching is a profession in which teachers can easily become accustomed to a set way of doing things (Bondesio & De Witt, 2004a), especially when they are perceived as competent, effective and efficient. Effective teachers are not self-centred but the success and development of students is their focus, realising the importance of trustworthy relationships in order to stimulate positive behaviour while they work hard on constructive relationships with their students (Frenzel et al., 2009).

Effective relationships have the potential to impact on what happens inside the classroom and influence future choices and decisions of students and teachers. Behaviour within classrooms doesn’t occur by itself (Taubler, 2007). Teachers adopt and rely on specific pedagogical strategies
within their classrooms. Different strategies are influenced by the degree a teacher feels “at home” in a specific subject area or year group. The classroom serves as a micro-cosmos where social skills are practiced; the teacher’s actions and reactions have implications for the part that students play in the societal context of effective classroom management and their understanding of the learning experience (Unknown, 2012).

Disturbances in confident interaction and communication, guidance, well-articulated objectives, suitable decisions, and classroom control often result in social pressure within the classroom and school environment (Van Niekerk, 2003). These may cause feelings of anxiety in teachers and students (Huberty, 2013). On the other hand, classroom models where confident teachers partner with students in constructive learning ventures and practise positive interdependence, will enhance social learning and integration (Joyce et al., 2000). The research questions (see section 1.5) address concerns about the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching for the classroom and learning environment. These concerns are discussed in detail through the data analysis in Chapters 5 to 10.

3.4.2.1 Emotional factors influence teaching and learning pedagogies

Bruner (1996) explains that the process of learning, constructing reality and meaning generation always include emotions and feeling and these emotions and feelings are evident in how the school community responds to schools. Disappointment and the unpopularity of schools are often the result of their failure to deliver quality education (often caused by the lack of suitably qualified teachers) and to understand the expectations, perceptions and educational needs of the wider school community (Bush, 2003). Levin (2001) explains the role teachers play in the classroom and how attitudes in the classrooms are shaped by the teachers’ emotional stability and the views they express. Unrealistic expectations to maintain high levels of effectiveness, place pressure on teachers and create a sense of sadness and loss (Hall & Hord, 2001). What is seen as less positive dispositions towards change and transformation often are stress and distress over the loss of confidence and familiar pedagogical content knowledge. As a result, teachers’ self-esteem suffers; they become over-critical of their own teaching which in turn influences their relationships with other stakeholders (Steyn & Du Plessis, 2007). Out-of-field teachers experience emotional stress when they feel they are not in control of their teaching situation (Du Plessis, 2005) and it develops into behavioural concerns. Even specialist teachers are more likely to leave schools where there are behavioural concerns or the school environment is perceived as dysfunctional (Olson, 2000).
3.4.2.2 An overview: Unsuitable and suitably qualified teachers

Being a professional means having a level of control over the work one does. This concept, however, generates questions about the acceptability of the transnational common practices to assign unsuitably qualified teachers. To be seen as a specialist in a specific learning field allows teachers to claim professional status. Nielsen (2007) claims that functioning outside their field of qualification not only influences teachers’ skills and de-professionalises them but also influences their vocational rights as employees. I further argue that assessment and evaluation of teachers while they are in out-of-field positions have implications for their vocational rights. On the other hand, suitably qualified teachers confidently create effective and positive learning cultures without uncertainties about deficient pedagogical content knowledge. Teachers’ professional welfare, which includes developing confidence as competent teachers, a positive self-concept and effective self-management, should be a priority for school leaders (Armstrong, 2006). Suitably qualified and competent teachers are successful in applying pedagogies in concord with specific course designs informed by research (Dorman & McDonald, 2005) to form an integrated whole between existing and new knowledge.

Hobbs (2013a) noted that teachers in out-of-field positions are entangled in critical self-concept, constantly doubting their professional identity. This constant doubt has an impact on self-management and it influences goal setting and goal obtaining in schools (Brouwers & Tomic, 1999). Unsuitably qualified teachers influence the development of a subject on various levels, for example, in-depth development of curricula (Hobbs). Teachers with a lack of pedagogical content knowledge are hesitant to explore new pedagogical strategies for fear of a negative outcome on students’ performance and results and the possibility of damaging their own career (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). In support of this argument, Hall and Hord (2001) explain how dissatisfied teachers develop into self-absorbed teachers, who place focus on personal decisions and needs as a result of uncertainties while their vision is usually set on short-term (day to day) goals with teaching for survival dispositions.

3.4.3 Interdependent elements of an out-of-field learning environment

The thesis endeavours to understand what out-of-field teaching means as a whole by acknowledging the interdependent elements such as lived experiences of principals, teachers, parents and educational directors. Bruner (1996) states that learning is a communal activity; it is part of the culture in which students function. Teachers are the most influential resources of any effective change or transformation process in education (Hall & Hord, 2001; Hattie, 2009). Appreciating the influence out-of-field teaching has upon transformation, school leaders are faced
with teachers who are uncertain about their own actions, motives, management and teaching skills (Du Plessis, 2005). Teachers assigned to positions without necessary training or qualifications can require complex management strategies (Darling-Hammond, 2010a). Bruner (1996) explains that knowledge, power, teaching and learning strategies as well as the structures within a learning environment are interdependent elements of the social-cultural learning context.

Confident teachers do not avoid inherent classroom emotions, but develop effective classroom management skills where emotions, tensions, personal encounters and experiences are maintained while embracing subject-focused pedagogies (Redmond, 2010). Teachers develop the classroom atmosphere as the environment or space where teachers and students meet and for meaningful learning to take place, effective learning spaces are necessary (Bourdieu, 2010). I argue that out-of-field teachers find it hard to develop meaningful learning environments where students are engaged in active knowledge construction. The reason for this is explained through Vygotsky’s (1978) social constructivist theory about the role the knowledgeable other has to guide and successfully facilitate learning as part of creating a stable and “safe learning space” for students to explore new concepts.

3.4.3.1 What happens between task, instructor and learner?

The process of constructing new knowledge can be confronting for students and teachers, especially when it requires reflection on their own beliefs about learning and teaching and interpersonal and professional life (Gillies, 2007). I propose that this is even more the case when a teacher is in an out-of-field position. Teachers make a substantial difference in the academic and social lives of students when teachers themselves have continuing opportunities for quality learning and development (Glanz, 2003). Suitably qualified teachers demonstrate a high level of self-understanding and an ability to express care through the specific anticipation of consequences, responsibilities, self-reliance and mutuality in their subject areas (Arnold, 2005). Rutter (2008) emphasises the importance of the quality and type of interactions between students and their environments, which include the classroom.

Research completed by Arnold (2005) on empathic intelligence in teaching, learning and relating concepts underlined the impact teachers without the appropriate pedagogical content knowledge have on learning. Connecting new and existing concepts through the guidance of expert teachers improves the smooth construction of knowledge and liberates students and teachers when it stimulates new ideas and concepts (Arnold). Absence of appropriate pedagogical content knowledge makes it hard to connect new and existing concepts. Teaching is a complex act which connects and binds different areas of life but also effectively creates distinctions between situations, opportunities and circumstances (Maguire, 2010). Teachers in out-of-field teaching positions find it
hard to manage the situation which influences how aware they are of their students’ needs in the “meaning making” space (Hobbs, 2013a). Recent developments in pedagogy recognise that effective teaching and learning do not occur in an emotional or intellectual vacuum (Arnold, 2005). These developments are supported by the social learning theories of Vygotsky (1978) and Lave (2009) claiming that learning is socially constructed. It is suggested that the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching influences social practices in the teaching and learning environment and unsuitably qualified teachers can affect already at-risk students.

3.4.3.2 Conceptualising the lived experience of at-risk stakeholders

In classroom situations where out-of-field teachers unsuccessfully attempt to uphold consistency and continuity, uncertainty transforms these teachers into vulnerable and uncertain classroom managers (Tauber, 2007). Students sense teachers’ uncertainties and this has the potential to stimulate behavioural difficulties in classrooms. The different backgrounds of students and their societal markers influence classroom interaction and call on teachers’ skills and competencies to protect and facilitate vulnerable students (Redmond, 2010). Teachers’ confidence and ability to recognise specific needs and effectively deal with concerns that influence meaningful functioning of individuals within the school organisation (Van Niekerk, 2003) enhance meaningful teaching and learning.

3.4.4 Meaning of out-of-field teaching for comprehensive schools

An awareness of what stimulates dysfunctional learning environments and prevention is a prerequisite for comprehensive school environments (Rutter & Maughan, 2002). I maintain that an in-depth understanding of out-of-field lived experiences would reveal more about dysfunctional teaching environments and might assist the development of appropriate professional development programmes. In addition, I argue that the specific school environment in which the out-of-field teacher teaches greatly affects their lived experience. The thesis includes a wide range of school environments (see Chapter 4) as part of the setting, for example, high and low socio-economic schools, multicultural schools, and independent and public schools, in an effort to provide a deeper understanding of these teachers’ lived experiences.

It is, however, necessary to be aware of the conclusions McConney and Price (2009a, 2009b) reach, stating that suitably qualified teachers have a greater impact on students’ learning than class sizes or students’ background. Eppley (2009) adds that although teachers are the biggest predictor of a student’s success, educational leaders do not accommodate the challenges faced by teachers in specific schools environments or areas. McConney and Price further explain how these schools, for example, small urban schools, rely on the practice to assign “top-up” subjects to teachers regardless
of qualifications to fill up their timetables, without realising the influence on these teachers’ lived experiences. Abovementioned research completed by Eppley as well as McConney and Price add valuable new information which highlights results, quality teaching and organisational concerns but unfortunately has overlooked the lived experiences and perceptions of those in the centre of the out-of-field “thing” such as the teachers, colleagues, principals and parents.

McConney and Price (2009a) highlight that school management is often reluctant to make the extent of out-of-field teaching at their schools public because of the impact it might have on the reputation and image of their schools; this influences the accuracy of reports on the situation, underlining the secrecy Ingersoll (2003b) discusses. Although out-of-field teachers cause a major distraction for subject coordinators because of their specific needs such as extra support, mentoring and specific resources (McConney & Price, 2009a, 2009b), school leaders still find it difficult to openly acknowledge the occurrence of the out-of-field situation in their schools. Pro-active approaches whereby the expertise of colleagues supports the out-of-field teacher assist these teachers to cope with their teaching position (Zepeda, 2006). Zepeda further noted that it is short sighted not to focus on individual teachers’ needs and differentiate professional development according to these needs. I argue the need to take notice of previous research in this field and address current research gaps about out-of-field teaching in order to move towards an in-depth understanding of lived experiences.

3.5 Critiquing Literature

Appreciating the valuable foundation provided by existing research on the occurrence of out-of-field teaching, critiquing these research projects has only one aim: to highlight the need to understand the lived experience. Ingersoll (2002, 2006) provides us with valuable information about the common practice of out-of-field teaching and the impact it has on the schools as organisational processes. My aim is to underline the gap that exists in research through critiquing previous studies and literature available in this field. I propose that policy adjustments to accommodate the needs that develop because of out-of-field teaching practices cannot be “tailor made” without an in-depth understanding of the out-of-field experience. I add to my argument a question, how can effective and suitable support programmes be developed without an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of out-of-field teaching and what it means for quality education? I summarised the need for more information about the lived experiences through critiquing how we looked at the “whole” without taking note of the “parts” (Gadamer, 1975) (see Chapter 2).

The various research projects discussed in Chapter 1 and 3 (see sections 1.3 and 3.2) cover the occurrence and statistics in detail. Research further tended to focus on the negative influence of the
out-of-field situation on results, outcomes and quality teaching, impact on school management and professional development while overlooking the real-life experiences of the people involved. The gap in existing research is mentioned by Hobbs (2012) and McConney and Price (2009a, 2009b) while they highlight the complexities surrounding out-of-field teaching. This thesis addresses the acknowledged research gap while it also highlights some positive lived experiences of teachers in out-of-field positions, from which a lot can be learned. I argue that more research is needed to develop an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences in connection with out-of-field teaching.

Ingvarson et al. (2004) provided statistics to claim that graduate primary school teachers feel unprepared and unqualified. My critique of this study is that although it provided valuable statistics it overlooked what these lived experiences of “feeling” unqualified means for these teachers. Harris et al. (2005) share valuable information about year 7 and 8 science teachers in Australia who did not study science at university level. Although it proved to be a valuable study it overlooked the need to develop an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences surrounding these unsuitably qualified science teachers, their principals and the experiences of the wider school community.

Most of the prominent research in the out-of-field teaching field currently focuses on secondary schools with specific emphasis on mathematics and science subjects (Harris & Jensz, 2006) (see section 3.2). My critique, however, is that current research in this field overlooks the essence of the meaning out-of-field teaching has for the lived experiences of the teachers in these positions. I insinuate that misunderstanding and misconceptions about these lived experiences influence quality teaching and learning environments. Most of all I critique my own research on the implications of the out-of-field phenomenon on school management (Du Plessis, 2005) for focusing only on the impact out-of-field teaching has on school leaders and overlooking what it means for the teacher in the classroom. I further overlooked how the misconceptions and misunderstandings of leaders influence out-of-field lived experiences. In another research project (Du Plessis, 2010) about the implications of the out-of-field phenomenon for continuing professional development, my main focus was on the influence out-of-field teachers have for effective professional development programmes, missing the importance that developers of professional development programmes should firstly understand the lived experiences of out-of-field teachers before suitable and effective professional development programmes can be developed. My critique of these research projects has only one aim and that is in agreement with Hattie (2003) to focus on teachers as the most valuable resources and provide focused development and support for out-of-field teachers based on an in-depth understanding of their lived experiences. Lingard (2011) mentioned in “Policy as Numbers” it is important to remember that there is always a lot more going on behind the numbers. Statistics
are valuable information but this thesis focuses on what was previously overlooked, the lived experiences of the people behind the numbers.

3.6 Transnational Research Towards Deeper Understanding

Research completed by Tayeb (2001) about the shortcomings and obstacles when conducting transnational research focuses on concerns and issues, for example, the cost and time involved. However, my objectives for undertaking transnational research, focuses on and are in agreement with Tayeb’s statement that countries are increasingly dependent on each other in sharing new knowledge and development which highlights the value of transnational research. Although transnational research is time consuming, my viewpoint is that thorough initial planning, familiarity with the different cultures and awareness of concerns can address obstacles. The importance to “leave the field undamaged” (Kirby, Greaves, & Reid, 2006, p. 185) is even more important with a transnational research project that entails sensitive data. Taking the time I spent in the countries I involved in my research (see section 1.2) I felt confident that transnational research has major benefits for developing a fuller understanding as well as the revelation of new information.

This is the first research of its kind that has looked at the lived experiences in relation to out-of-field teaching in two countries simultaneously. Conducting transnational research offers an in-depth understanding of the experience while it sheds light on factors that, for example, intensify, worsen or improve the positive aspects of the out-of-field experience. Reaching out transnationally is stimulated by claims that out-of-field teaching practices are widespread (Ingersoll, 2001a, 2001b), but research in this field up to now did not involve participants across borders to develop a deeper understanding. Research projects mentioned and critiqued in previous sections focused only on one country, which is understandable taking into account the sensitivity surrounding teachers in out-of-field positions. Ingersoll (2003a, p. 5) called it education’s “dirty little secret” focusing on the denial of its existence in schools across the board. Existing research has underlined the need to know more and to develop an in-depth understanding of the experience without limitations or borders. I agree with Jones (2010) that multi-national research involves a considerable amount of time and effort but I argue that the focus, however, should be on the impact a bold and well-designed thesis has as far as it offers support and enhances education transnationally and broadens existing knowledge. Transnational research empowers and presents opportunities to build bridges for future research projects. It also offers opportunities for the acquisition of new knowledge, information and support and, in accordance with Gadamer’s (1976) view, that understanding happens when we share views across “horizons”. Methodological issues, which are discussed in Chapter 4, and cultural preparations that are usually associated with international studies are not
seen as problematic in this research project because of the knowledge I have about the countries and as I practiced in both countries as a teacher.

Transnational research enables helpful debate and opens the field for different viewpoints while it offers a voice for those who usually do not have such a privilege (Ager & Young, 1997). I do not aim to focus on cultural differences but in agreement with Goodnow (2006) aim instead to use the research to develop a “wider context” to develop a in-depth understanding and to build educational bridges in a multi-faceted world (Tayeb, 2001). A transnational exploration provides an in-depth understanding of the institutional characteristics of host states and countries (Tayeb).

3.7 Summary

Schools display a great need for teachers who are well trained and confident in their ability to effectively cherish the academic well-being of their students (Obidah & Howard, 2005). Research claims that out-of-field teaching influences comprehensive schools and noting that schools in low socio-economic environments have a higher level of out-of-field teaching. I, however, argue that misunderstandings about the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching for teaching and learning environments allow assumptions that out-of-field teaching is more acceptable in certain school environments. To confront these assumptions the thesis explores the influence of out-of-field teaching on teacher dispositions, leaders, classrooms, behaviour, school communities and pedagogical content knowledge. The literature reviewed supports the thesis in seeking urgently needed understanding of the complexities surrounding out-of-field teaching. The thesis challenges stakeholders to break away from set concepts about out-of-field teachers using a phenomenological approach that includes various “horizons”. The phenomenological approach opens the field for responses about real-life experiences from participants. Out-of-field teachers’ lived experiences provide valuable information to inform decision-making and policy transformation. The methodological design, discussed in Chapter 4, ensures that the bold transnational research project adheres to the ethical requirements of a qualitative research project.
Chapter 4

Research Methodology

“The real being of language is that into which we are taken up when we hear it – what is said”
(Gadamer, 1976, p.xxx)

4.1 Introduction

The phenomenological position of the thesis assisted me to look with new appreciation at what is really experienced in the field and the world of out-of-field teachers, while misunderstandings were exposed. The fundamental nature of this phenomenological research is to share the essence and nature of the lived experiences, for example, the meaning of teachers’ emotional and personal lived experiences, leaders’ lived experiences, classroom management and behaviour management experiences, the community experiences, and experiences about the subject content. The diverse sample of participants provides a “fusion of horizons” (Gadamer, 1976, p. xix) as participants share their own truth of the experience. The main question (see section 1.5) inherits the possibility of multiple experiences to be investigated, but through sub-questions the research is directed to focus on the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching for the education environment. The investigation searches for the truth about real-life experience and how teachers, school leaders and parents make meaning of all these experiences. In an endeavour to discover the truth about teachers’ real life situations, the thesis adopts a hermeneutic phenomenological methodology.

The empirical sense of this inquiry is vested in its attempt to capture the “taking for granted” lived experiences (Gadamer, 1976) surrounding out-of-field teaching and, in agreement with Freebody (2003), searches for the meaning these taken for granted lived experiences have for teaching and learning. Along with Ozga, Seddon, and Popkewitz (2006), I acknowledge that research plays a part in wider global developments while transnational research enhances deeper understanding and the empirical sense of the inquiry. My transnational exploration of the out-of-field teaching experiences includes countries with very different human development index rankings, Australia 2\textsuperscript{nd} and South Africa 123\textsuperscript{rd} (United Nations Development Programme, 2011) in an attempt to provide useful insights into the common practice of out-of-field teaching in very different settings and under very different conditions. The value of this transnational study lies in the bold new information it offers while it underlines the applicability and reliability of the data.
The justification of the extended amount of data offered lies in the necessity to underline the multi-layered lived experiences in relation to out-of-field teaching. In the search for deeper understanding and reliable information the research project involved more participants than is usual for a phenomenological inquiry. For this reason, diverse phenomenological research methodologies (Dall’Alba, 2009) were adopted. For example, through the hermeneutic philosophy of Gadamer (1976), I incorporate his “fusion of horizons”, “understanding through language” and “pre-understanding” theories, while I managed the large amount of data with the support of Giorgi and Giorgi’s (2003) bracketing and coding recommendations. These procedures were carefully selected to inform and explore (Cresswell, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2002; Smith et al., 2010) the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching experience. The empirical phenomenological approach is best suited to explore and understand the out-of-field “thing” through the lived experiences of the participants because a well-designed methodology and focused research questions add consistency and clarity to the investigation. This chapter outlines the data management process that upholds the ethical procedures necessary for a bold qualitative study like the current study with such a large amount of data.

4.2 The Research Design

An empirical phenomenological approach entails more than just constructing reality; it seeks to develop an understanding of meaning while it links beliefs, traditions, history and social structures such as attitudes, behaviour, interpersonal relationships, and truth (Cohen et al., 2011; Denscombe, 2005; Hardcastle et al., 2006) which direct understanding of the experiences surrounding the out-of-field teaching practice. I followed a qualitative research design as proposed by Creswell (2007) and Silverman (2005) while I adjusted Carspecken’s (Hardcastle et al.) five-stage approach (see Table 4.1) to provide options for different stages during the inquiry process. The first three stages explored different “horizons” about the out-of-field experience. Stages four and five focused on interpretation with the guidance of Gadamer’s theory about the hermeneutic circle and the positive role “prejudice” plays in deeper understanding (Gadamer, 1976, p. xviii). A critical self-consciousness about my previous research “brings before me something that otherwise happened behind my back” (Gadamer, 1976, p. xviii) while it stimulated an in-depth awareness of the need to explore the truth through different perceptions that are “fused into a common view of the subject matter” (Gadamer, 1976, p. xix).
Table 4.1. Adjusted Carspecken’s five-stage approach for this phenomenological inquiry (Hardcastle et al., 2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aim of the stage</th>
<th>What the stage does</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Building a primary record</td>
<td>Review literature, observe, reflecting. Gadamer’s theory on “prejudice” (Gadamer, 1975, p. 238) (see section 2.4.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Researcher interpretation and perspective</td>
<td>Previous research – “What is missing?” Background research, culture, tradition and history of “the thing”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Data generation, collaborative stage</td>
<td>Fieldwork: participants – interviews, observations, informal interactions and reflections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Interpretation of relations to broader context</td>
<td>“Fusion of horizons” – analysis between participants and schools, classrooms, sites, states and countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Explains relational systems</td>
<td>Links findings to theories, themes and categories – explanation of results</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first stage plays an important role in building a primary record by developing a sound perspective about the social, cultural and historical context of the experiences through reflections on previous research and current literature reviews. The second stage involves a focus on the hermeneutic circle, taking into account tradition, history and cultures surrounding out-of-field teaching which leads to the development of questions about the need that was overlooked in previous research. Focus turns to underlying traditions and assumptions that structure the actions of participants in connection to the out-of-field situation. The third stage involves the data generation, perception and interpretation of lived experiences. The third stage is also the collaborative and dialogical stage of the investigation as it aims to focus on participants’ perceptions, interpretations and experiences through “language” supported by one on one interviews, classroom observations and document analysis. The aim of the third stage is a cultural interpretation, with specific focus on the attainment of an insider perspective, the exact lens through which the participant perceives the out-of-field experience.

Although interpretation of the out-of-field practice runs like a thread through all the stages I used the fourth stage to discover connections to the broader context while analysing “units of meanings” within specific themes while the data inquiry ties different participants and institutions together in the “fusion” of their “horizons”. Stage five aims to link the findings and “units of meaning” to existing theories discussed in the theoretical placing of the thesis (see Chapter 2). During this stage I address the theoretical level of the investigation and offer the interpretations in
broader social theoretical terms. Stage five offers the “fusion of horizons” (Gadamer, 1976, p. xix) by interpretation of reliable information (Hardcastle et al., 2006) as it was found in the field (Van Manen, 1990) and offered in the data analysis chapters.

An inquiry of the nature and essence of lived experiences involves social science and human nature, which means that the research unveils sensitive information and portrays lived emotion (Creswell, 2007; Heaton, 2004; Henning, Van Rensburg, & Smit, 2004). These emotions and perceptions about experiences in the constructivist theory (where individuals create meanings through interactions with each other and with the environment they live in) makes the qualitative design based on a phenomenological, empirically rich interpretive paradigm as a research approach the most suitable option for this investigation (Cohen et al., 2011; Freebody & Freiberg, 2006; Reisetter et al., 2004). The research questions (see section 1.5) support the methodological position and guided me in forming interpretations beyond the interview data with the support of close conversations and close observations in order to understand certain aspects of the lived experience.

4.3 Methodological Position

In this section I justify hermeneutic phenomenology as methodology for this thesis while I elaborate on my reasoning behind the data collection instruments implemented. The hermeneutic phenomenological methodology answers to the need to capture the meaning of the out-of-field situation as it manifests lived experience (Creswell, 2007). The transnational exploration of the meaning of out-of-field teaching for teachers, classrooms and schools opens a wider context towards better understanding while it takes beliefs, traditions and customs into account to offer a sound interpretation of meaning (Tayeb, 2001). Explanations from teachers and school leaders about what they usually do and what they in reality do are often quite different (Hardcastle et al., 2006) and for that reason I also interviewed parents and educational directors. I kept Gadamer’s (1999) ideology “All human action and decision are conditioned by experience” (p. 25) in mind while preparing the interview questions. The aim was to stimulate in-depth conversations and prompt further discussions, descriptions, interpretations and penetrations about information shared by participants in an effort to improve the valuation of the thesis. Additionally it provides the interviewee with an opportunity to recount perceptions and experiences and share them as honestly and openly as possible.

Instruments were chosen with great care, as open-ended interviews have dual value, developing a conversational relationship while allowing me to collect narrative material (Creswell, 2007; Smith et al., 2010). I employed Van Manen’s (1990) theory on constructive ways to handle complex research around specific meanings to support an in-depth understanding. In this thesis, it
entails meaning in relation to out-of-field teaching practices. Constructive ways include acknowledging participants’ and my personal history, spiritual and mimed expression, and interpretation of behaviour and culture as well as non-verbal records to open the flow of rich data (Gadamer, 1979) by asking stimulating questions. Gadamer (1975) saw conversation and interaction in hermeneutics “as an art and not a mechanical process” (p. 168) although used as tools with which to develop real understanding. This view is supported by Merleau-Ponty’s (1968) explanation about the consciousness of understanding through language stating “it speaks of being and of the world” (p. 96), giving meaning to the visible and invisible world and provides me with an opportunity to also inquire about what is not said. The hermeneutic circle involves language and movement from self to experience and experience to self (Laverty, 2003). Gadamer (1975), perceives hermeneutics as the opportunity to become aware of the unfamiliar and unknown, while internalising new information from new and different perspectives and views of the world. The hermeneutic phenomenology avoids the subject/object divide but rather underlines the inter-relationship between the experience and the person and sees language as the vehicle to carry the lived experiences of participants (Laverty).

The hermeneutic phenomenology provided me with an opportunity to test, unmask, affirm or question prior understandings of the out-of-field practice through dynamic language engagement, interaction and openness. Gadamer describes this development of understanding as a journey of constant change and interpretation that takes place in the middle space where questioning, sharing of text through language, understanding and interpretation are connected (Annells, 2006; Maggs-Rapport, 2001). This methodological position made it possible for me to move beyond what was shared through verbal language. I also relied on observation protocols, note taking, sketches of classroom settings, field notes and interview transcripts to keep the encounters with text in the field real as the research project spread out and developed. The field notes and observation note taking provided an opportunity to return to the text several times to assist with interpretation, details of places, participants, attitudes, behaviour and encounters during the field work.

The interpretation of the data relied heavily on Gadamer’s (1975) views of interpretation that focus on “deriving our understanding of the text from the linguistic usage of the time of the author” (p. 237). This means I paid attention to grammatical interpretations and the “space” wherein participants function, which forms a unity in the interpretation of the content found in the field. Participants are seen as constantly interacting with their environment, interpreting impressions and ascribing personal meaning to experiences (McManus Holroyd, 2007).

To conclude, in agreement with Gadamer’s theory (1975) that understanding happens through language, I believe that in “— conversation with another person who presents us with the object –
lies the coming-into-language of the thing itself” (p. 341). I sought for the many truths that the language of participants may conceal. This was achieved with the support of the interview questions, enabling me to dig deeper for the real-life experiences and to allow the flow of information. Reading this hermeneutic phenomenological thesis means sharing the lived experiences of the participants, their real-life emotions, perceptions and expectations in relation to the out-of-field situation. Maggs-Rapport (2001) describes understanding according to four levels, namely:

- ontology as the first level (What is reality?)
- epistemology as the second level (What counts as knowledge and what is the relationship between the knower and what can be known?)
- methodology as the third level (How can we understand reality, how can I go about finding out whatever they believe can be known?)
- and methods as the fourth level (How can evidence be collected about reality?).

In order to develop an in-depth understanding, the lived experiences of the participants involved made it necessary to spend an extended time in the field. The data were gathered over an investigation period of 18 months with more than two years spent as a volunteer at one school. As a result of the extended time I spent in the field I put emphasis on consistency and reliability by applying interview guidelines and observation protocols while detailed reflections were kept in a field logbook and diary. The same procedures were consistently followed throughout the investigation in each setting. The logbook and diary kept a detailed account of time planning, while the details of specific interviews, close conversations and close observation experiences were recorded to support reliability and validity of the information. In agreement with Fokkema and Ibsch (2000), I conceptualised the reliability of the research through a question: *Will the exact methods, if used by different researchers at different times give the same results?* Additionally, I used multiple data gathering sources, for example, close informal conversations, semi-structured interviews, close classroom observations as well as staffroom observations to unveil participants’ “real world” (Holstein & Gubruim, 2011). I ascertained positive confirmation on the questions while the triangulation in data gathering sources underlines the applicability of the information.

4.3.1 Applicability of the study

The success of the hermeneutic phenomenological approach lies in its usefulness in providing answers to specific concerns (Crist & Tanner, 2003) and the possibilities to broaden education interventions, policymaking, philosophy and further research. The consistent reflection on the data as it was found in the field (Van Manen, 1990) provides an exact report of participants’ real-life experience, from which it was interpreted. The transnational reference of the thesis to global issues,
highlights transnational trends and concerns while it reveals specific factors that impact the lived experiences in the two countries. This lens adds to the significant value the thesis has for improvement in relation to the management of the out-of-field teaching situation. The information offered in this thesis can play an informative role (Crossley & Watson, 2003) for policy makers, the development of comprehensive school environments and the improvement of support and development programmes for teachers as well as contexts outside the framework of the thesis (Torrance, 2011).

The literature control stretched globally and addresses the need for this phenomenological exploration while the verbatim quotes in the following chapters represent the truths from the field. Leaders in different environments could use the findings of this thesis as it is supported by a sample reflecting transnational teaching communities in very different settings for example, secondary and primary schools, remote, metropolitan, multicultural, small town, public and independent institutions (Cohen et al., 2011). The usefulness and transferability of the thesis are rooted in the display of themes in the data from the different environments as it was found in the field (Van Manen, 1990) and interpreted against the hermeneutic phenomenological theories of Gadamer (1976).

4.3.2 Verification and standards of quality data gathering strategies

Extensive attention to the audit trail served as the verification, and standards of the quality of data collection strategies ensured the large volume of researcher-generated data was managed without violating ethical considerations (Christians, 2011). In qualitative research validity is addressed by the scope, depth, honesty and richness of the data (Cohen et al., 2011), while the choice and number of participants in this phenomenological inquiry asserts the validity and reliability of data offered. In order to ensure the validity, consistency and reliability of the data, I performed a bold research project which included seven schools, two countries and two different states in Australia with various participants, for example, a principal, specialist teachers, out-of-field teachers and parents at the same institution to ensure that views and concepts are well grounded and well supported throughout the thesis (Polkinghorne, 2005). Data reliability and neutrality is found in offering information through the lenses of more than one participant from the same institution, and verifying perceptions offered by individuals through member checking (Hardcastle et al., 2006). Although a hermeneutic phenomenological exploration puts me in the centre of the investigation, the aim was to uphold neutrality during close conversations and interactions to provide the participants with the main voice and the right of free expression of thoughts, preserving the originality of the data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Wengraf, 2001).
Reliability and dependability of the data were confirmed through collection carried out in different settings and time frames spread over one and a half years offering the same results (Cohen et al., 2011). Additionally, the validity, reliability and consistency of the exploration were supported by the triangulation in the data gathering sources while participants had the option to examine their own descriptions of the out-of-field lived experience (Arthur & Nazroo, 2003; Lewis, 2003; Snape & Spencer, 2003; Wengraf, 2001). The participants were informed that the data and information they shared are anonymous and protected through the code of confidentiality as stated in the consent letters (Christians, 2011; Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2006). I frequently assured participants not to be afraid to share information exactly as it is experienced, highlighting their opportunity to produce valuable new data. I ensured that participants saw me as a colleague who understood their truths, and this supported data collaboration, negotiation and fulfilment about being heard without being exposed to criticism. Trust, openness, confidentiality, and anonymity stimulate honesty about real inner-feelings through their own language, as Gadamer (1976) explains. I encouraged, in agreement with Gadamer (1976) that any expression, perceptions or feelings are valuable as long as they are true. Close conversations and informal interactions with various staff members support the verification of information (Jones et al.; Wengraf). Mp3 recordings of interviews, reflective field notes, verbatim transcripts, observation protocol and other documentation are available for investigation (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001) as stated in the information letter and letter of consent.

4.3.3 Data gathering strategies

Triangulation involves two or more data collection methods (Cohen et al., 2011). In this thesis interpretations of interviews and classroom observations were triangulated with document analysis. Triangulation provides the thesis with validity and reliability but additionally allows me to move beyond a narrow view of the lived experience (Chambliss & Schutt, 2003). Triangulation of the data gathering sources provided an opportunity to dig deeper while interpreting the interviews, observations, and documents to form a more holistic and valid view of what really happens in the field (Hammersley, 2006; Oliver-Hoyo & Allen, 2006).

The data gathering strategies were planned according to different phases. The different phases are summarized in Table 4.2. Phase one reflected on literature reviews and previous research that support the development of research and interview questions. The first was used to execute a pilot study in order to test data gathering tools, after which some questions were shortened and more prompting questions were added. This phase also underlined the value and importance of the first informal meetings with the principals from the research settings identified in Table 4.3. These initial meetings were set up to collaborate on the most suitable participants. Phase two accommodated the
adjustments to semi-structured interview guidelines and organising settings and visits. During phase three, I conducted close conversations, semi-structured interviews with immediate field notes and transcriptions while phase four included the close classroom observations and staff room observations with detailed reflections. Phase five concluded with document analysis. Table 4.4 identifies the participants interviewed and Table 4.5 shows the participants involved in the close classroom observations.

Table 4.2. The five stages of data gathering

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phases</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Purpose/Aim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phase one</strong></td>
<td>Out-of-field teachers, specialist teachers, parents, principals</td>
<td>Acknowledgement of Gadamer’s “prejudice” (Gadamer, 1976). Test the interview guideline with 7 participants and the observation protocol with 1 out-of-field teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflect on literature</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>review and adopt a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>pilot study to test</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>data gathering tools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phase two</strong></td>
<td>Initial informal interviews with principals/deputies/school management</td>
<td>Introduce research project, discuss expectations and procedures. Prepare field for research.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adjustments to semi-</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>structured interview</td>
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<tr>
<td>guidelines. Set up</td>
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<tr>
<td>research process in</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>various states, countries and schools</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Phase three</strong></td>
<td>Interviews with out-of-field teachers, specialist teachers, parents, principals, deputy principals, heads of departments and education directors</td>
<td>Data collection Close conversations 48 – Semi-structured, one-on-one interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-structured, one on</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>one interviews</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Phase four</strong></td>
<td>Voluntary teachers as approached by principals</td>
<td>12 – Close classroom observations focusing on teacher confidence, disposition and attributes, classroom pedagogies, interaction and classroom strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom observations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff room observations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phase five</strong></td>
<td>Ask principals, deputy principals, heads of department and subject leaders for minutes of meetings where out-of-field teaching was the core of the discussion. Write reflective notes in field diary after each interview.</td>
<td>Data collection, investigation, planning, awareness and support for out-of-field teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document analysis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3.3.1 Pilot study

The pilot study provided an opportunity to test the depth of engagement stimulated through the data gathering instruments and to affirm that the planned data gathering strategies, planned stages and the sample open up the information in the field (Nuttall, Murray, Seddon, & Mitchell, 2006). I performed the pilot study with a sample of one principal, one specialist teacher, two out-of-field teachers and three parents. Additionally the pilot study ensured that I was aware of the importance of the first informal contact with the school leader. It ensured that I paid attention to the
information and direction of this conversation. The first conversation with the principal provides the option to initiate small-scale “captive samples” to be identified in collaboration with the school leader. It also allows for the possibility of being directed to colleagues, specialist teachers, out-of-field teachers and parents with lived experiences about out-of-field teaching (Nuttall et al., 2006). The test interviewing process exposed potential problematic interview questions, for example, some questions that were too long or not clear enough to keep the flow of conversations. This trial study assisted me to develop an awareness of possible additional questions to prompt more disclosure while it highlighted the sensitivity surrounding these lived experiences. It underlined the importance of accommodating participants’ emotional experiences and different concerns and how to prompt deeper conversations (Hardcastle et al., 2006).

4.3.3.2 Description of the setting

The search for data to explain the truth was aimed at schools in Australia and South Africa. Research in Australia was aimed at two different states, Queensland and Western Australia, while research in South Africa was conducted in the Gauteng province, Johannesburg and districts south and west of Johannesburg. Justification for the transnational research (see section 3.6) lies in the aim to offer a “wider whole” or a “wider context” (see section 1.8.3) in support of a deeper truth about the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching for teaching and learning.

Table 4.3. Research setting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic institution</th>
<th>Description of institutions</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Public school/Small town community: Combined Secondary/Primary School</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Public/Multi-cultural Secondary School: Instruction Language - Dual Medium</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Public/ Suburban Primary School: “Leafy green school”</td>
<td>Australia/State 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Independent Combined Secondary/Primary School: Metropolitan</td>
<td>Australia/State 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Independent Secondary School: Remote</td>
<td>Australia/State 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Independent Primary School: Remote</td>
<td>Australia/State 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Public Secondary School: Suburban – low socio economic environment</td>
<td>Australia/State 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Central Office: Education Director 1</td>
<td>Australia: Independent Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Regional Office: Education Director 2</td>
<td>South Africa: Public Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>Central Office: Education Director 3</td>
<td>Australia: Public Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>Central Office: Education Assistant Director 4</td>
<td>Australia: Public Schools</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Transnational settings increase understanding of the lived experience (Goodnow, 2006) while exposing specific factors which influence the intensity of the experience. Various schools and educational offices in Australia and South Africa (see Table 4.3) were targeted with focus on accessibility and re-visits; these institutions included secondary schools, primary schools, and central/regional/district offices. Education administration offices were included with the focus on discussions with directors of education at central, regional and district level to inform my argument that viewpoints and knowledge about lived experiences, perceptions and expectations surrounding out-of-field teaching from central educational leaders will clarify misconceptions and misunderstandings while looking through a variety of lenses. The research sites chosen were from diverse environments – the social background, language, community and cultural setting within the various research sites differed.

An additional motivation for including schools and central/regional/district offices from different settings was to provide a true interpretation of perceptions in the search for differences or similarities in the opinions and perceptions about out-of-field teaching practices and experiences. Looking through different lenses, as Gadamer (1976) suggests, not only improves understanding, but is useful in confirming the applicability, truthfulness and reliability of the data (Nuttall et al., 2006). I chose ten academic institutions (seven schools and three central offices) which are recognised in their communities as schools and learning centres with positive academic cultures and are perceived as being typical, comprehensive and effective learning environments. I targeted schools within the paradigm of convenient sampling to ensure that I would be able to spend extended times at the schools and visit these schools and participants as needed. After the specific Departments of Education and Training in Australia and South Africa granted permission, the various principals, administrators, and directors were officially contacted to introduce the research project, ask for permission and discuss organisational matters and concerns connecting to schools and regional/district offices visits and to compile the research sample.

4.3.3.3 The research sampling process and description

A combination of convenient and purposive sampling was incorporated. I purposively chose educational institutions from diverse environments in Australia and South Africa as part of the setting, specifically because of community circumstances, tradition, culture, history and accessibility as suitable settings. The “selection” of participants started during my first informal conversation with the principal. I outlined the research and in collaboration with the principal purposively identified possible participants (Cohen et al., 2011; Polkinghorne, 2005) most suitable for this research project. In addition I chose settings convenient to visit as often as I needed. The chosen sample enabled me to apply findings to the education population as a whole because the
selection of participants involved in these transnational settings is a representative sample of educational directors, school leaders, parents, specialist teachers, as well as out-of-field practitioners.

Justification for including three educational directors and one assistant director from different education departments (central or district offices) in the sample lies in the valuable information they offer in relation to their understanding of the experience, their expectations, concerns and viewpoints from which they make decisions. It provided a deeper understanding of their perceptions about supporting, recruiting and assigning teachers in out-of-field positions. The inclusion of participants from education departments gave access to an additional lens through which information could be interpreted and explained, while investigating the level of intensity of the lived experience and connectedness to the lived experiences by principals and teachers and directors. The justification of the sample process lies in the inclusion of participants from various professional backgrounds, teaching degrees, four year teaching diplomas, one year Dip. Ed. qualifications – some were experienced specialist teachers, some experienced teachers but in out-of-field positions and then novice teachers in out-of-field positions. The justification of parents and directors in the sample lies in the triangulation and cross-checking (Hardcastle et al., 2006) possibilities it offers while looking through different lenses in agreement with Gadamer’s (1976) “fusion of horizons” (p. xix) theory.

4.3.3.4 Identifying potential participants

Identifying potential participants was directed by Gadamer’s (1976) view that looking at the same “thing” through different lenses will enrich understanding. “Every interpretation has to adapt itself to the hermeneutical situation to which it belongs. There cannot therefore, be any one interpretation that is correct ‘in itself’” (Gadamer, 1975, p. 358). The pilot study made it possible to identify certain strong relationships between various experiences and perceptions of teachers, parents, and principals and affirm the necessity to include these participants in order to provide the reader with an accurate interpretation of what is experienced in the “world of out-of-field teaching” (see Table 4.4). Letters of consent were delivered to the identified participants. However, during the pilot study I became aware of the valuable role the snowball effect played in identifying additional participants with extraordinary experiences (Cohen et al., 2011) connected to out-of-field teaching. The thesis offers an extensive amount of data, the responses shared by participants is offered as it was found in the field and would be presented throughout the thesis in cursive font and between quotation marks to make reading easier. The participants are identified throughout the thesis by their school code and participant number for example, a participant in school B (B) who was the fifth participant (5) to be interviewed at this school are identified by a consistent code (B5).
### Table 4.4. Participant profiles included in close discussions and interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Gender and Age (Years)</th>
<th>Current institution and organisational responsibilities</th>
<th>Teaching experience (Years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thirteen Out-of-field teachers</td>
<td>Nine Australian</td>
<td>7 – Females, 2 – Males (22–50y)</td>
<td>2 – Pre-Primary/Early years, 4 – Middle/Upper Primary School, 3 – Secondary School</td>
<td>1–30y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Four South African</td>
<td>4 – Females (22–50y)</td>
<td>2 – Middle/Upper Primary School, 2 – Secondary School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven Specialist Teachers (Deputy Principals/Heads of Department)</td>
<td>Four Australian</td>
<td>2 – Female, 2 – Male (35–60y)</td>
<td>1 – Pre-Primary/Early years, 1 – Middle/Upper Primary School, 2 – Secondary School</td>
<td>10–30y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Three South African</td>
<td>2 – Females, 2 – Males (40–60y)</td>
<td>1 – Middle/Upper Primary School, 2 – Secondary School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven principals</td>
<td>Five Australian</td>
<td>2 – Females, 3 – Males (45–60y)</td>
<td>3 – Primary School, 2 – Secondary School</td>
<td>15–35y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two South African</td>
<td>2 – Males (22–50y)</td>
<td>1 – Secondary School, 1 – Combined Primary/Secondary school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifteen parents</td>
<td>Eleven Australian</td>
<td>11 – Females (30–55y)</td>
<td>3 – Pre-Primary/Early years, 4 – Middle/Upper Primary School, 4 – Secondary School</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Four South African</td>
<td>2 – Female, 2 – Males (40–50y)</td>
<td>2 – Middle/Upper Primary School, 2 – Secondary School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Directors of Education (Central/Regional)</td>
<td>Three Australian</td>
<td>2 – Females (45-55y), 1 – Male (55–60y)</td>
<td>1 – Independent Education, 2 – Public Education</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One South African</td>
<td>1 – Female (55+y)</td>
<td>Public Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition to the specific sampling process and identification of participants, the different data collection instruments impacted the quality and depth of the data and provided an opportunity to use verbal and non-verbal language to mirror the participants’ stories.

4.3.4 Instruments for data collection

Hermeneutic phenomenology focuses on the human lived experience while the interpretive paradigm has a “concern for the individual” (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 17). Interpretative phenomenology focuses on understanding the human lived experiences as an “effort is made to get inside the person and to understand from within” (p. 17). Different instruments support the theoretical position of the thesis to hear what is really said (Gadamer, 1976) as lived experiences are honest understandings of what it means to be out-of-field. Interpretation of participants’ actions, body language and expressions of power or emotions while interacting during the interview (Oliver-Hoyo & Allen, 2006; Shields & Twycross, 2003) between leaders, colleagues and out-of-field teachers enhanced understanding of their experiences. The data instruments included an interview guideline (see appendix A), and close classroom and an observation protocol (see appendix B). These instruments were supported by close conversations and informal interactions, discussions, document analyses and reflections in the field diary (Mertens & McLaughlin, 2004; Polkinghorne, 2005).

4.3.4.1 Close conversations and semi-structured interviews

Interviews produce first-person accounts of the participants’ lived experiences in relation to the out-of-field teaching practices and influences on their everyday working environments (Freebody, 2003). I invested extended time and attention to develop a rapport and trusting relationships with participants in order to work together as co-interpreters of meaning through the language that was shared during interviews, reflections and broad explanations of participants’ lived experiences (Laverty, 2003). I engaged in informal and close conversations in addition to the one-on-one, semi-structured interviews with the selected participants as the primary source of data collection. Semi-structured interviews with different participants at the same school, principals, specialist teachers, out-of-field teachers, and parents facilitated the crosschecking of findings. The close conversation offered openness and encouraged participants to describe their real-life experiences about out-of-field teaching and classroom practices (Nykiel, 2007). I observed and listened to the specific language used (Gadamer, 1976), I adopted Gadamer’s position to hear what was really said behind the words and I prompted more sharing through further individually focused and personal questions when these were deemed appropriate or necessary (Gadamer; Wengraf, 2001). The interview guidelines supported me to prompt participants to reconstruct significant
segments of an experience or perception which focussed more on the subjective experience (Fontana & Frey, 2000; Wengraf). The interview guidelines involved questions such as

- Tell me more about your perceptions of teachers teaching outside their field of qualifications?;
- What are your personal feelings/perceptions and concerns as far as the out-of-field situation is concerned?;
- What do you think are the major concerns in an out-of-field teacher’s classroom?

In addition, the interview guidelines enabled me to break the research question and sub-questions down into interview questions (Cohen et al., 2011). The interview questions were compiled in agreement with Patton’s checklist of possible questions (Patton, 2002), which included questions on behaviour, experiences, feelings, knowledge, sensory events, demographic questions, opinions and values. To verify the information offered during interviews, the thesis takes an ontological stance to inquire about what it is to “be” in the real-life situation through close classroom observations.

### 4.3.4.2 Close Observations

I used close observations to record my encounters in the presence of participants actively involved in the teaching and learning environment - specialist and out-of-field teachers. Observation records opened an ontological perspective and supported an in-depth understanding of the real-life experiences in classrooms with specific focus on teacher dispositions, classroom management strategies, skills, pedagogies and behavioural attitudes. I included classroom observations in an attempt to explore and investigate the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching for teaching and learning while it was happening. Close classroom observations in specialist teachers’ and out-of-field teachers’ classrooms were conducted and in some cases I had the opportunity to observe the same group of students in the two different environments. A deeper understanding of the information shared during interviews developed while the social reality of teachers in the classroom was observed. I relied on hermeneutic phenomenology, described in Chapter 2, to understand actions, statements, dispositions and attitudes of teachers and how they relate to their social context (Cohen et al., 2011) through observations. The close observation of twelve practitioners, five specialist teachers and seven out-of-field teachers, took place according to an observation protocol (see appendix B) which observed

- teacher confidence;
- teacher and student dispositions;
- teacher/student relationship; non-verbal communication;
- classroom pedagogies and strategies, collaboration;
• classroom management, behaviour management.

Seeing that immediacy was important, I used an observation guideline (see appendix B) that made provision for naturalistic and participant observation with whole interval recording where a behaviour is only recorded if it lasts for the whole interval (Cohen et al., 2011).

Table 4.5. Participants included in classroom observations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher and Institutions</th>
<th>Year level</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Teacher situation</th>
<th>Class size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School A: Mrs. O (Interview: A7)</td>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>SOSE</td>
<td>Out-of-field (Qualified Foundation Phase)</td>
<td>35+ students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School B: Mrs. W</td>
<td>Year 10/B</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Specialist</td>
<td>35+ students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School B: Ms J</td>
<td>Year 8/A</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Out-of-field (Qualified Maths/Science)</td>
<td>35+ students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School B: Mr. C</td>
<td>Year 11/B</td>
<td>Earth Science</td>
<td>Specialist</td>
<td>20+ students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School B: Ms P (Interview: B6)</td>
<td>Year 8/A</td>
<td>Technology (Economics and Afrikaans)</td>
<td>Out-of-field (Qualified Science)</td>
<td>35+ students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School B: Mr. P (Interview: B6)</td>
<td>Year 10/B</td>
<td>First Language: English</td>
<td>Out-of-field (Qualified Biology)</td>
<td>35+ students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School B: Mrs. R</td>
<td>Year 10/B</td>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>Specialist – Economics and Maths</td>
<td>35+ students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School B: Mrs. W</td>
<td>Year 11/A</td>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>Specialist</td>
<td>15+ students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School B: Mr. P (Interview: B6)</td>
<td>Year 8/A</td>
<td>Second Language: Afrikaans (Phys.Ed.)</td>
<td>Out-of-field (Qualified Biology)</td>
<td>35+ students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School B: Mrs. Co</td>
<td>Year 11/A</td>
<td>Home Economics</td>
<td>Specialist</td>
<td>15+ students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School C: Mrs. A (Interview: C1)</td>
<td>Year 7</td>
<td>Art</td>
<td>Out-of-field (Qualified Intermediate Phase)</td>
<td>25+ students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School D: Ms C (Interview: C7)</td>
<td>Pre-Primary</td>
<td>Literacy</td>
<td>Out-of-field (Qualified Upper/Senior Primary)</td>
<td>20+ students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the guideline, I recorded personal observation reviews in the field diary directly after specific observations took place, with sketches and additional reflective notes of teachers’ movements in the classrooms. The classroom observations assisted the researcher to “get a feel” (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 465) for what happens in these classrooms. Detailed descriptions were compiled (Cohen et al.) recording “themes and patterns, clusters of events, activities and people behaviour” (p. 469). Informal observations of staffroom interactions and observed inter-personal
relations were recalled in the field diary while attending specific school environments and situations. These observations were used to supplement and provide a deeper understanding of the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching as well as classroom and school practices derived from interviews (Cohen et al.).

4.3.4.3 Document analysis

Documents provided more information about discussions, meetings and strategies in these academic environments as far as openness about out-of-field teaching and support, professional development and re-training opportunities were concerned (Cohen et al., 2011; Polkinghorne, 2005). Documents also include the field logbook and field diary, interpretive notes, and detailed field notes that form an essential part of the final interpretations displaying detailed information about participants and the settings (Crist & Tanner, 2003). The request to have insight into documents, for example, the minutes and agendas of official staff and subject meetings, revealed differences between what is said and what actually happens during discussions. The analysis of documents provided evidence to clarify and confirm what participants highlight during various interviews (Polkinghorne, 2005). Analysis of documents sought to understand if an awareness about the out-of-field experience found a place on agendas and minutes of staff and subject meetings, or in reports of mentor teacher feedback and professional development documentation. In addition to official documents I used the field diary as a log book and recording of reflective notes to capture the information to support the analysis I had undertaken. The analysis of documents offers unique data that sometimes might be overlooked or left unnoticed (Lincoln & Denzin, 2003). I linked findings from documents with participants’ responses to create a solid information foundation, together with semi-structured interviews and observations on which the final data analysis and findings were built.

4.4 Data Processing and Analysis

Data analysis in hermeneutic phenomenological research does not prescribe one exclusive way to process data (Smith et al., 2010). This thesis follows a structure that illustrates the interrelationship between themes. It is however a process which involves identifying patterns within each theme as clusters of meaning (Smith et al.), for example, confidence, respect and self-esteem issues, and trust relationships. In order to translate observations, interviews and document analysis into concepts and clusters of meaning, colour coding focused on common structures revealed in the data. I agree with De Vaus (2001) and Speziale-Streubert and Carpenter (2007) that social research attempts to uncover the truth by searching for relationships or connections in the data. I aimed to conceptualise context through identifying clusters of meaning with the help of the different lenses.
through which participants viewed the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching. I found comfort in Gadamer’s (1975) view that “wherever an attempt is made to understand, there is reference to the truth that lies hidden in the text and must be brought to light – not thought as part of another’s life, but as a truth” (p. 163). Understanding that immediacy is important in phenomenological analysis, the analysis procedures were started simultaneously with the data collection process in the form of immediate reflections in a field diary, interpretations, and narrative report writing. Transcripts were completed soon after interviews. The different layers of understanding within the six identified themes were connected by “subsumption” of a series of clusters of meaning (Smith et al., 2010, p. 97).

I made a concerted decision to incorporate strategies that supported intensive attention to each individual response. The sample size of seven schools, 48 interviewed participants and 12 close classroom observations in a transnational setting is unusual for a phenomenological exploration but was most necessary for in-depth understanding of the out-of-field experience. However, the sample size was extremely beneficial for this thesis to support a deeper understanding of the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching that has been “taken for granted” up until now and to underline the reliability of the data. The large corpus of data motivated me to follow Giorgi’s (2009) design of data analysis which included bracketing from the stage where interview questions were compiled while Gadamer’s (1976) view on prejudice (see section 2.4.4) kept me aware of my role in the data analysis process. Bracketing was actively incorporated throughout the data analysis process, especially during interpretation of themes while working on verbatim transcripts and seeking interrelationships and commonalities (Marotzki, 2004; Winter, 2004) between themes to find clusters of meaning. I paid extensive attention to each transcript and applied colour coding according to specific responses connected to the six themes (Cohen et al., 2011).

The colour coded responses of each participant were organised under the theme headings, which included general emotions, perceptions and expectations, school leadership, classroom and behaviour management, school community and pedagogical content knowledge. These responses were further interpreted “to bring together clearly related” (Smith et al., 2010, p. 97) categories according to typical and frequent elements such as keywords and key phrases, giving me an overall view to uncover patterns in the data (Cohen et al., 2011; Smith et al.). Most prominent keywords and phrases were offered in graph form to provide a full narrative with “visual guide” (Smith et al., 2010, p. 80) (see Chapter 5). I spent extensive time reflecting on single subjects to interpret what was really said (document reviews, interviews and observation memos), comparing the data, extracting and coding significant statements, and creating themes and textual descriptions of the
essential components of participant experiences to develop a deeper understanding of what the experience meant for them.

I used an inductive form of reasoning to interpret concepts (Speziale-Streubert & Carpenter, 2007) and insights to develop a clearer understanding of the patterns in the data (Matt, 2004). I interpreted clusters of ideas and meanings as concepts and used these concepts for chapter headings and sub-headings (Kelle, 2004; Strauss & Hildebrand, 2004) which supported retrospective conclusions made from evidence gathered in the field (Swidler, 2000).

The results were offered under specific headings and sub-headings with the aim of offering the whole picture (Smith et al., 2010) through all the different parts. Themes emerged from the interview, observation and document data. I relied on interpretation, intuition and personal judgment to analyse the data while I planned the data management of the thesis in accord with Gadamer’s focus on language (Gadamer, 1976). I realised that information and nuance might be lost when oral data are transcribed into written text. However, despite the problems and complexities involved in transforming human life experience into language I agree with Gadamer (1976) that language is our primary source and access to people’s experience. Consequently, I paid close attention to offering an insight of what really happens in the field, exactly as it was shared by participants (Van Manen, 1990). I listened to interviews repeatedly while also keeping hard copies of the interview transcriptions to examine when needed. Interpretation and analysis were stored in a database protected by a password and code, as well as a physical system containing the raw data, field notes/field diary and documents, transcripts, and audio recordings (Speziale-Streubert & Carpenter, 2007) in a locked cabinet. The large corpus of data offered in the results sections of the thesis compelled me to offer the direct responses of participants in an italic font in order to make it easier to read. Confidentiality and privacy of participants is protected through the use of pseudonyms and codes in their responses.

4.5 Summary

I argue with Hobbs (2012) that research into the complexities of out-of-field teaching is an urgent need. This thesis is a step towards revealing some of the complexities. The thesis brings the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching for quality education to the discussion table with the lived experiences of those involved. Previous research, as discussed in the literature review (see Chapter 3), focused on the occurrence of out-of-field teaching overlooking the lived experience of education’s most valuable resources, the teachers. I argue the need for this research from the perspective of the importance of meaningful teaching and learning in classrooms and the meaning out-of-field teaching has for effective classrooms. The hermeneutic phenomenological framework
of the thesis provides an opportunity to take a deep look into the human lived experience while it informs our understanding of the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching for the teaching and learning environment and social constructivism in classrooms. The outcome of the research is a meaningful description which enlightens and informs.

Additionally the thesis provides a voice for teachers (Lobo & Vizcaino, 2006; Van Manen, 1990). The following chapters offer information in the “language” of those who experienced the out-of-field “thing” while they comprise an in-depth exploration of units of meaning. First the data revealed the general emotions, dispositions, perceptions and expectations surrounding the out-of-field experience in Chapter 5, developing an understanding and awareness as foundation for the data that followed. Second, based on the awareness of emotions, perceptions and expectations revealed, the next data chapters take an in-depth look at specific units of meanings. For example, the interrelationship between the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching for school leaders, leadership styles, effective classrooms, teacher and student behaviour, school community and pedagogical content knowledge are examined in depth. These real-life experiences combined the inquiry with ontology (case studies in Chapter 8) and Gadamer’s hermeneutic phenomenology. A parent (E4) summarised the significance and need for this investigation in order to understand these emotions, perceptions and expectations: “... you wanted to make the future better ... that is why you are doing your research ... isn’t it?”
Chapter 5

The Meaning of Out-of-Field Teaching for Teacher Dispositions, Emotions, Perceptions and Expectations

“They always feel like a hamster on a wheel ...”  
Specialist teacher

5.1 Introduction

The Gadamerian approach requires “avoiding misunderstanding” while it focuses on the “expression of meaning” through interpretation that supports understanding (Gadamer, 1976, p. 96). This chapter discusses emotions, perceptions and expectations through the character of language. The Gadamerian approach discloses lived meaning of something that was previously not visible, and in this chapter emotions, perceptions and expectations support a deeper understanding of the out-of-lived experience. Ginot once said that birds fly, fish swim, and people feel. This chapter aims to explore dispositions, emotions and perceptions in relation to the out-of-field experience. The image of teachers caught up in out-of-field situations where they feel they are going nowhere “like a hamster on a wheel”, left me disturbed and with a multitude of questions. The purpose of this chapter is to offer results about the emotional experiences (i.e., the personal perceptions and expectations) that participants have in relation to the out-of-field teaching practice in schools. The reason for the investigation of the emotional experiences perceptions and expectations of participants lies in the endeavour to develop an in-depth understanding of the real life experience and what it means for effectiveness in classrooms and schools. Hargreaves (1998) states that emotion, passion and feelings form the heart of teaching.

Understanding how emotional experiences, perceptions and expectations are closely related to the out-of-field teaching practice are clarified by Hare (2002) underlining “We teach who we are” (p. 143). The “why” is entangled in the meaning of the out-of-field experience for teachers. Smith (2002) highlighted that teachers’ teaching characteristics, emotions and decisions are influenced by their own beliefs, culture, knowledge and environment. Teachers “make” the classroom (Hattie, 2003) and their emotions and behaviour are intertwined, neither being more important than the other (Kristjánsson, 2007). Out-of-field teachers’ emotions and dispositions influence their decisions to stay in the teaching profession or to leave. Understanding emotions, perceptions and
the expectations surrounding the out-of-field experience is important when informing decision-making and policy transformation.

Interpreting the real-life experiences in relation to the out-of-field situation urges me to constantly revisit Gadamer’s (1975) theory that understanding depends on the language we hear, asking myself and the participants the question “This is what I hear, is this what you are saying?” I took great care to capture the language participants used to express their emotional experiences, perceptions and expectations of their lived experience of the out-of-field situation. I offer the results as they were found in the field, while the discussion offers interpreted sets of meaning. The phenomenological inquiry looks at an experience from all the different angles. Gadamer claims that self-understanding is influenced by thinking and participating in the event of “being” (Gadamer, 1976; Linge, 2008) and Chapter 5 serves as an introduction and framework to explain what it means “being in the out-of-field world”. The chapters hereafter aim to closely look at a specific set of meanings such as leadership, behaviour and classroom management, school communities and pedagogical content knowledge. This interpretive phenomenology is supported by Vygotsky’s social constructivist theory (Vygotsky, 1978; Daniels, 2008) to attempt an in-depth exploration of the out-of-field experience and what it means for quality education. Unsuitably qualified teachers deal with complicated emotions and dispositions which are vested in their own inabilities but often “end up blaming the students for their own lack of skills” (Darling-Hammond, 2010b, p. 39).

5.2 Results

The results look through the lenses of educational directors, school leaders, teachers (specialist and out-of-field) and parents as they shared the emotions, perceptions and expectations in relation to out-of-field teaching practices. The interrelation of the out-of-field experiences and the participants in their everyday practices will be discussed under three main headings, first emotions and dispositions, second perceptions and third expectations. The thematically interpreted data offer the lived experiences and what this means for effective teaching and learning environments.

5.2.1 Interrelation between out-of-field experiences, emotions and dispositions

5.2.1.1 Educational directors

Acknowledging the implications of out-of-field teaching on teachers’ emotions and attitudes, Director 1 (Australia) admitted: “Teachers take it [out-of-field positions] and don’t like it, and go under. When they’ve got three classes out-of-field, they’re in strife, the psychology, in the end they don’t want to do the course, it’s just too hard.” Passion proved to be instrumental to experience positive dispositions and effective classrooms. Assistant Director 4 (Australia) underlined: “It’s a passion. They’ve got a deep-seated belief in what they do as an educator.” Director 1 (Australia)
stated that pressure on out-of-field teachers comes from all sides, especially through the intense focus on results: “Causing a lot of stress, it’s unhealthy – we’re all to blame for it, every system is to blame – we do our own internal analysis of school results. Your performance is openly measured, that’s out there.” Constant pressure and anxiety becomes part of out-of-field teachers’ experience as understood by Director 1 (Australia): “Anxiety goes up when they move up the years. If you put me in charge of year 11s I’d be absolutely hopeless.” School leader’s decisions play a significant role in the anxiety that accompanies out-of-field situations: they perceive the emotions involved through a different lens.

5.2.1.2 School Leaders: Principals, deputies, deans of staff, heads of departments

Principal (G2) shared that school leaders are often in a situation where they are compelled, as a last resort, to assign out-of-field teachers, a view mirrored in the State of our schools report (AEU, 2009). The principal explained how these circumstances and decisions cause concerns and emotions, conveying his perception that: “The frustration was, they were very, very picky.” School leaders recognise that teachers’ passion for a subject area or field is influential on their dispositions. The Dean of Staff (E3) explained how strong emotions make a difference: “If a teacher is in their area, they’re naturally more passionate.” The absence of passion for a subject is demonstrated in different ways. Principal (G2) not only highlighted how detrimental the absence of passion is, but focused on how being in an out-of-field position impacts different emotions: “The level of accountability, it’s the big stick. It’s out of kilter. There’s no vision. There’s no speech that makes you think.” A principal (D4) highlighted: “This is just not a job to go to work and back again. You actually have to love this to do it.”

My argument that the out-of-field situation brings along emotional experiences that affect effective teaching is grounded in interview statements of participants indicating that out-of-field teachers deal with emotional challenges. The Dean of Staff (E3) explained: “The ones that are outside their area, they’ve got the guards up”. The principal in school G clarified, “my experience across schools is that these teachers don’t feel safe within their own peer group.” In school environments where responsibilities are seen as unfairly assigned, the working environment is experienced as emotionally “unsafe”; the Dean of Staff (E3) explained: “We’ve got one learning area; the English department has imploded this year, in-fighting, it’s just been terrible and that has really impacted on staff. There’s been a lot of hostility and a lot of anger.” The Dean of Staff explained further: “This department has always been difficult to staff, the burden falls on one or two.”
School leaders find it hard to manage emotions that develop as a result of out-of-field experiences. The principal in school C tried to understand these emotions: “Teachers don’t like to be seen that they haven’t got an area of expertise, they don’t wear that with any pride; they see that as a weakness.” School leaders’ understanding of these emotions impacts on their decision making. In school G, the principal explained the result of specific dispositions and emotions: “Teachers teaching out-of-field don’t last if they’re not coping. They’re not retained. They don’t want to stay and they don’t get pleasure out of the position.” In school C the principal admitted that he experienced feelings of fear just thinking about the implications out-of-field teaching might have on the school:

*My fears are that there will be gaps in learning, disengagement of learning and probably from an operational sense I have fear that there will be community unrest that will reflect poorly on the school which has implications further around enrolments and in the end the perceptions of the school – perceptions are everything in education..."

He added that emotions of angst were also recognised in out-of-field teachers; these emotions influence what happens in their classrooms: “There was some angst that is for sure.” The principal in school C shared his understanding of these emotions in teaching: “Outside your area of expertise is a burden and anything [accentuated] that is a burden is having a cost.” The newly appointed principal in school C came from a secondary school environment and shared personal emotions of “being out-of-field”: “I feel very much out of my depth within the Early Years, certainly Prep, 1, 2, and 3 – very much out of my area of comfort.” “Being at home” and “being comfortable” in teaching positions are affected by several factors. Personally having the experience of being in an out-of-field position in a secondary school for a couple of years, the principal in school D described his appointment as primary school principal as a “home coming”: “I was out-of-field, I taught SOSE [society and environmental studies] whereas the minute I walked in here I felt like I was coming home, whereas up there I had to learn everything every night before.” The principal in school C experienced how teachers’ dispositions and emotions impact their effectiveness with an out-of-field subject: “Those that are unsuitably qualified with the right attitude will make that leap, those that haven’t got the right attitude won’t make that leap and it will be an absolute disaster for everybody.” The major themes emanating underlined school leaders’ awareness of the role passion plays in teaching, and that out-of-field teachers have their “guard” up because of not feeling “at home” in these positions. School leaders shared that “being” out-of-field creates complicated relationships and issues but with the right attitude teachers can have success in out-of-field situations.
5.2.1.3 Teachers

5.2.1.3.1 Specialist teachers

Specialist teachers further emphasised passion as an important emotional disposition for success. A specialist teacher in (C2) explained: “You need a lot of passion. I had a colleague who has been a music teacher, she hadn’t done her training but she was passionate and she was able to do a very good job.” The VET Coordinator (Vocational Education and Training) (G3) shared his interpretation of the struggle out-of-field teachers have to be successful: “I think it’s just an emotional reaction where the teacher just doesn’t want to come along, doesn’t want to go into that class.” The VET Coordinator further discussed exceptions: “You get the younger teachers who sometimes have to teach out of their learning area to get a job – quite nervous and keen to do well because it’s their future.”

Being out-of-field is an emotional journey; a specialist math teacher (E2) shared her observations when out-of-field teachers simply received timetables without prior discussion or communication: “Teachers get their timetable and see they’ve got four different out-of-field subject areas. They say, ‘How am I going to do this?’ It’s survival, it’s not passion ...”

A specialist teacher (E2) emphasised how quickly out-of-field teachers feel emotionally unsafe: “I’ve seen quite a lot of disillusioned teachers and they become quite stressed.” Another specialist teacher (C2) added that out-of-field teachers try to maintain a positive attitude but sometimes at a high price: “They struggle, they do their best, but they felt stressed and burnt out and would not last the distance.” A specialist teacher, who was teaching in her area of qualification but at a new school and different year level, shared her experience: “I felt a bit bare, it was a culture shock to me. I hadn’t expected to experience children to behave like that and I started to doubt – am I going to be able to keep going with this, will I survive this?” Her emotional experiences as a suitably qualified teacher enhance our understanding of the intensity of emotions experienced by out-of-field teachers. Turning her focus from her own emotional experience towards her out-of-field colleagues, she shared her understanding: “It depends on whether they have to do it or whether they want to do it ...”

5.2.1.3.2 Out-of-field teachers

The understanding of educational directors, principals and specialist teachers previously discussed in connection with the emotional experience puts out-of-field teachers’ own understanding of “being out-of-field” under the magnifying glass. A teacher (C7) was assigned to teach maths and science for a year 7 class without suitable qualifications; she is qualified as a music
teacher. This teacher experienced pressure and burnout, and was constantly challenged while teaching outside her field of expertise:

A massive amount of extra hours – it’s been exhausting, it is a big change, it is a huge responsibility and you have that pressure on you, it’s been really stressful! You are the one that teaches them for their last year in Primary School. It’s pretty hard.

She turns to focus on her own emotional journey: “... more self-critical because you are not sure ... you are not comfortable [grimaces].” She admits that she took the position because of loyalty but afterwards doubted her decision: “I must admit after last week I went home and thought, what have I done, maybe I should have said no.” She tried to reflect on her own emotions: “I am out of my comfort zone and ... [takes deep breaths and exhales] ... I don’t like being out of my comfort zone.” A young out-of-field teacher (G5), shared the emotions she has to work through: “I do reflection and at night time, I just constantly think about it, I can’t get to sleep.” An out-of-field teacher (E5) explains the emotions of one of her teaching colleagues who is also an out-of-field teacher: “She is just like, I hate this class. I don’t want to be there, she is just constantly cranky about it. Your attitude or your behaviour reflects back on the kids... she is a grumpy thing...”

An out-of-field teacher (D7) explained dispositions of out-of-field teachers: “It makes it harder to like, you are stressed, and you feel like you are carrying a bigger burden.” Stress is further emphasised by an out-of-field teacher (E5):

I was really quite stressed out because I had none of the prior training in dealing with Physical Education, I had been trained as a Science teacher. I did not know anything – while the kids know how to play the games; it was really stressful for me and I kind of freaked out.

This teacher had severe emotional experiences, ended up in counselling and had to take extended sick leave because of her struggle to deal with these emotional experiences and misconceptions of her school leaders (which will be explained in Chapter 6 in more detail). The sensitivity experienced by out-of-field teachers about their position develops into complex emotions, as Participant 1 school D clarified: “You get a lot of conflict ... teachers pull the pin on teaching and stop, or show denigrating interest in teaching.” The emotions out-of-field teachers experience impact decisions about their future in teaching. An out-of-field teacher (E5) contributes the following about her emotional journey: “The plan was to take six months leave without pay and work somewhere where I just do not have to deal with [crying again] stress and – just to calm myself down.” An experienced teacher currently in an out-of-field position (F4) clarified: “If they’re out of their field – in a lot of cases they realise ‘This is not for me’. The kids don’t have respect. ‘I can’t control them’. So they left.” In some situations time makes the experience more bearable; an out-of-field teacher (F4) shared his emotions: “I can see the light at the end of the tunnel – but I mean I’ve known people to give up and go on extended sick leave and things like that

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because of not being able to cope.” Admitting to the pressure she experiences, an out-of-field teacher (G4) mentioned that there are teachers who enjoy the challenge to teach new and unfamiliar subjects: “You have to be the type of person that thrives on it and that’s me.” It again underlines the importance of understanding and awareness, although there are the exceptions. Most out-of-field teachers work through emotions of doubt and disappointment about school leaders and the profession; an out-of-field teacher (C7) shared: “Most of the pressure I put on myself to start with because I want to do a good job, I didn’t want to let anyone down and I don’t want these kids to go downhill.” Self-doubt unveils itself in various ways; according to an out-of-field teacher (E5): “I didn’t want to look like – I wanted to join in but, I thought I wasn’t as good as them. I didn’t have the experience so I had to be really careful what I said and when I said it.” She added: “At staff meetings and things I would NEVER [accentuated] have said anything or put my hand up”. Teachers in out-of-field positions tend to spend a lot of energy reflecting on and stressing about their teaching environment.

Self-critique and embarrassment form part of an out-of-field teacher’s emotional experiences. An out-of-field teacher (E5) gave details: “I felt kind of embarrassed because everyone else was teaching for ages in year 7 and I didn’t know ... you know the background talk they all have.” An out-of-field teacher (G5) described the inner conflict and frustration connected to the situation in detail: “There’s frustration, I’m so out of my element, it’s just ... the feeling that they don’t understand what I’m going through.”

The emotions out-of-field teachers (E5) experience that urge them to leave the profession are explained: “I feel guilty a lot of the times, I might go... I am supposed to be teaching this but I don’t know that ... so I do feel guilty a lot of the time ...” The teachers (specialist and out-of-field) agree with educational directors and school leaders that passion for an out-of-field subject can make a difference. The obvious differences in responses among educational leaders, school leaders and teachers are that specialist and out-of-field teachers “take the bullet” of the out-of-field experience with self-doubt, self-critique, stress and feelings of burnout. Specialist teachers feel, in a way, responsible for out-of-field teachers but often do not know how to react to the out-of-field experience, describing the feeling as “awkward”. Specific experiences develop because of the different levels of involvement and understanding of all concerned in relation to what really happens in the out-of-field teacher’s classroom and what it means for teaching and learning. Educational directors look at the out-of-field experience from a distance, school leaders are closer but sometimes unaware of the real life experience while specialist teachers, out-of-field teachers and parents experience the implications of out-of-field teaching practices or “being in the out-of-field situation” and what it means for the teaching and learning environment on a personal level.
Parents acknowledge the difficulties out-of-field teachers face in these positions; a parent (G1) explained her perceptions of the situation: “If I have to go and teach something that I know nothing about I’ll be a nervous wreck.” Parents are clearly aware when teachers are struggling emotionally; a parent (C5) shared her experience of her child’s out-of-field teacher: “I knew that she was really struggling because I saw her a couple of times in tears... I knew in the way she was, a couple of times she wasn’t there in the mornings.” A parent (D3) added: “It can be very disheartening if you’re not equipped. It must be soul destroying just to try and keep up. A teacher with expertise (D6) shared her observations: “It’s really difficult. You can see that they are out of their depth and they lack the confidence that they would normally have if they were in their field.” A parent (E6) highlighted concerns through a comparison: “A specialist teacher has more passion. They can still cleverly teach out-of-field but it’ll be dry and if children don’t see that passion coming through they switch off.” A specialist teacher (D6) focused on the anxieties experienced inside an out-of-field classroom: “That sort of teacher is quite anxious and children in his or her class pick up on that anxiety and stress, and become anxious themselves.” A parent (C3) offered details about the impact an out-of-field teacher’s emotions have on students in the classroom:

My daughter is anxious; she tends to be fairly quiet. Her year 2 was unfortunately quite distractive and it upset her because she just desperately wanted to learn and get on with the activities and the fun side of learning – it was starting to bother her.

A parent (D3) underlined how an out-of-field situation becomes a dominating factor with far-reaching implications for students’ learning experience:

If your child comes unhappy home from school, you’ve got to deal with it, it just impacts on the choices you make as a family to spend time together ‘cause you’re ending up drying up tears and sorting out issues like that. So, it takes away from what should be a normal routine of life, you’re ending up fixing problems ...

Emotional experiences in relation to out-of-field teaching call on parents to play a more prominent supportive role in the learning and teaching environment. Darling-Hammond (2010b) claimed that key educational resources inside and outside school (such as parents) influence outcomes. A parent (C5) described the emotional experiences her family had to cope with while their at-risk child in year 2 was in an out-of-field teacher’s classroom: “It went worse and worse and worse – by week nine there were talks about suspension. In just six weeks it had gone down [soft voice, look tired and sad], and I didn’t know where it would go from there.” She further described the emotional experience: “I felt bad – suspension – I just thought – wow – [long silence], how much worst can it get? I sometimes felt physically sick...” She explained what caused her to feel emotionally drained: “His self-esteem was linked to that. I just struggled [intense voice] with him being so miserable, I struggled with his attitude, his anger because he had problems with his
sister; he took it out on her, me and my husband.” The family suffered greatly because of an unsupportive classroom environment linked to a teacher who just did not have the qualifications to manage the year group. The mother further explained: “He was comparing himself to his peers and self-esteem was a big issue.” Another parent with a child in the same class, participant 3, shared concerns about changing emotional behaviour: “If the child is feeling the stress in the classroom you really have to act on that and give the child coping strategies, help them to get through.” Parents will act upon observation of an uncertain out-of-field teacher portraying specific emotional characteristics that concern them; a parent (C5) clarified:

I could physically see the signs on her – things were out of – reports from other parents that things were unravelling with their children. In some ways it was comforting – it was all the children not only Derrick although he was the extreme, he is sensitive to emotions; he would say ‘mum that look on her face’.

A mother (F2) shared lived experiences in relation to the emotional influence an out-of-field teacher had on her child: “She’ll be ratty all the time, my children will come and tell me, ‘Ah she’s being mean again’. If you go into the class and she’s all frazzled and there’s no homework coming home ever.” A specialist teacher (D6) discussed additional experiences “…not feeling satisfied with what they’re doing – they always feel like a hamster on a wheel, there’s just no sense of success.” A parent (E6) discussed the emotional experiences of students in an out-of-field teachers’ classroom: “Kids were frustrated. The biggest thing was counseling the kids to understand that in life you’ll get these situations happening, I was philosophical about it and said, you’re still to do your best.” She described the situation: “Teachers get discouraged in their skills and their ability in an area they are not competent – the children see the lack of confidence.”

A parent (F5) concurred with this statement when she explained her child’s emotional experience in an out-of-field teacher’s classroom: “He doesn’t want to go to school and that is my frustration because he loves school, he loves to learn but in these circumstances he is going to be left behind.” The parent argued further: “Everything has been fine but this year was a big shock for me.” The emotional experiences students have in a dysfunctional classrooms influence how they see themselves and their learning within this learning community; a parent (E4) shared her reflections: “Do my children feel valued at school – that is my number one concern.” Students with specific needs often suffer emotionally in an out-of-field teacher’s classroom; a parent (F5) of a gifted boy explained: “He is so bored! I am so glad it is the end of the year, he is not going to have this. We have arrangements for another school. I am not going to struggle every day to get him to school.” Parents trust teachers to have the students’ best interests at heart although they are not suitably qualified. A mother (C3) added that parents would want to offer the teacher emotional support to better the situation if they were allowed to do so, claiming that parents are uninformed
about the out-of-field situation, which makes it hard to support their children on an emotional level:

“It happens a whole lot more than what we realise. I was unaware that it is such an issue, it concerned me, I try to stay positive to my daughter about the environment, the teacher and the other children.” A parent (C4) explained how students with different personalities deal differently with the learning environment with an out-of-field situation:

Someone who is a bit emotionally fragile – Isaac, [now in grade 2], went through the first term in the midst of a daze because of what was happening in the class. That really made me worry about him – he is already a wee bit behind, I thought he can’t waste time! [Emotional, intense, long silence] Can you ask the question again?

A primary school parent (C3) shared her concerns: “They spend so much time with the teachers don’t they? – [long pause] teachers absolutely influence the feelings of our children.” Emotions make parents more aware of what happens in the learning and teaching environment and impact their perceptions of the experience. The major points that stood out from the responses of parents relate to their awareness of the dysfunction that develops in the classrooms because of the out-of-field situation. The focus in primary schools is on pastoral care, while secondary school parents focus on content knowledge. Parents describe their emotions as nerve-wracking and experience disheartening feelings such as anxiety, frustration and fear, which impact on the whole family and on students’ future. In cases where the out-of-field situation was out of control, mental health and physical sickness was experienced by parents and the teacher.

5.2.1.5 Summarising emotions and dispositions

Summarising emotions and dispositions of school leaders, teachers and parents, through the most prominent keywords and phrases used, clarified the out-of-field experience. My argument that the out-of-field experience develops complex emotions, dispositions, and expectations which influence decision-making and effectiveness, are further explained in Figures 5.1 and 5.2. The thesis employs Gadamer’s (1975) view that “the single word whose virtuality opens up the infinity of discourse” (p. 498) informs and enhances understanding. The information offered in Figures 5.1 and 5.2 provides a portrait of participants’ emotive understanding of the out-of-field experience. The Gadamerian approach (Gadamer, 1976) underlines aesthetics as important, the keywords and phrases in Figures 5.1 and 5.2 are parts that enlighten and reveal the specific meaning of the whole lived experience of out-of-field teaching. Hermeneutics is an in-depth understanding of real-life experiences through the medium of language (Gadamer, 1975). In an endeavour to interpret what I heard, and to summarise what was really being said, I used Microsoft Word software to find and count these specific words in the verbatim transcript of interviews. I acknowledge that it is not a scientific display of data, but rather that it is supported by Gadamer’s (1975) theory that “the
meaning of the word cannot be detached from the event of proclamation – its eventual character is art of the meaning itself” (p. 387).

Figure 5.1 reflects the dispositions of all participants closely connected to the out-of-field experience or to the practice of out-of-field teaching. The responses of education directors were not included because they are not directly and actively involved in the teaching and learning environment.

![Figure 5.1: Dispositions of participants outlined in words and phrases](image)

Groundwater-Smith, Ewing, and Le Cornu (2011) claim circumstances that have an impact on a secure and constructive learning and teaching atmosphere cause constant anxiety and end in teacher burnout. The information offered in Figure 5.2 displays dispositions and keywords or key phrases which were obvious during the interviews with school leaders, teachers and parents. Keeping Van Manen’s (1990) assertion that “meaning is embedded in a situation” (p. 18) I compiled these descriptive words in a diagram separating four of the seven schools (with very different environments) researched. This enhances understanding of the impact specific environments and leadership styles have on the out-of-field experience. Du Plessis, Carroll, and Gillies (2013) discuss the significant meaning that different leadership models have for the lived experiences of novice out-of-field teachers in different settings. Hattingh and De Kock (2008) explained that the effective transition of graduate teachers into the teaching profession goes together with personal transformation, abandoning profound belief structures which are often traumatic. They further describe the experience as chaotic transformation of existing social structures, personal identity, knowledge and competences. The interview and close observation results showed that these experiences intensify when novice teachers find themselves in out-of-field teaching positions.
Interpretation of the words and the environments in which they were used enriched understanding in agreement with Gadamer’s (1975) view “to reach an understanding – dialogue is not merely a matter of total self-expression – but a transformation into a communion, in which we do not remain what we were” (p. 341).

Figure 5.2. Dispositions of participants by individual school

The graph shows specific words such as “stressed”, “out-of-control”, “hard”, “upset” “emotional” and “don’t know”, as well as the need to feel “valued” are among other prominent words that are used by participants to explain the lived experiences of out-of-field teachers. Goldie and Spicer (2002) suggest that an “adequate description of an emotional experience is a description of the way the world is for the subject of the experience” (p. 12): emotional experiences are epistemological and provide information about the quality of the teacher’s environment. The specific words used by participants and the frequency in which they used the words describe and summarise their emotional experiences while explaining perceptual experiences. Smith (2002) suggests that emotions demonstrate more about the environment and the individuals in this environment.
5.2.2 Interrelations between the out-of-field perceptions and experiences

The interview data revealed the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching in relation to perceptions as constructed through the different lenses of participants.

5.2.2.1 Educational directors

The perceptions of educational leaders about the out-of-field experience influence decisions about strategies and the transformation of policies. This section focuses on the perceptions and understandings of Directors about out-of-field teaching and explores the perceptions of educational directors about what out-of-field teaching means for students, transformation of policies as well as the effective implementation of the curricula. Director 1 (Australia) shared his perceptions about the out-of-field experience and its implications for students: “They smell it, we see kids migrating out of biology at a particular school because the teachers are ‘dumb’, kids will become raucous, and they know you’re an imposter.” Director 3 (Australia) saw the out-of-field situation as follows: “It’s very hard; research does tell us that it’s the quality of the teacher that makes the biggest difference in a child’s education.” The reality in the field is that teachers who are in distress to find a job will teach any subject area, and this is a view shared by Director 2 (South Africa). The director further explained that the constant transformation in curricula often caused teachers to be placed in out-of-field teaching positions: “A history teacher now having to teach geography, or a science teacher having to teach biology. That brought about this perception that teachers are not qualified ...” Director 2 added: “The curriculum was introduced without a proper audit to see whether the human resources were there to deliver this curriculum.” The director used a metaphor to explain the perception: “It’s like launching a new car but we haven’t set up our production line to be able to provide all the parts for this car.” Director 3 (Australia) perceived schools as having a responsibility to “fix” the out-of-field situation: “We’re moving to an autonomous system and if the outcomes are unfortunate then it is the responsibility of the school. Schools will soon realise to put people in out-of-qualification teaching positions is not wise.” What stood out is the perception that schools are responsible for assigning suitably qualified teachers to specific positions.

5.2.2.2 School leaders: Principals, deputies, deans of staff, heads of departments

School leaders’ perceptions of the out-of-field situation determine their attitudes towards teachers in these positions. School leaders perceive struggling out-of-field teachers in a less positive light while questioning their reason for choosing the teaching profession, how prepared they are to walk the extra mile, and the control they have over classroom pedagogies, often overlooking the part the school leaders themselves played in assigning the teacher in the specific position. In school D the principal shared his perceptions: “Too many taking up a teaching post because they’re at the
end of the line. They have a degree, they couldn’t do anything else with this degree so they quickly did a teaching diploma and they got into schools.”

The strategies and skills school leaders employed to manage the out-of-field situations in their schools are closely connected to their perceptions and understanding of the out-of-field experience. The principal in school D perceived teachers struggling in out-of-field positions as: “Teachers not coping – they’re not planning properly, they’re not putting enough time in, or they don’t care.” In school F the principal perceived balancing necessary pedagogies as a concern in out-of-field teachers’ classrooms: “They are too strict and formal or too lax within their classrooms.” The principal shared how he perceived out-of-field teachers: “Someone who is very much a chalk-and-talk person who teaches to the middle and who doesn’t have the control over it [teaching environment].” The principal had concerns: “There are no extending children who need that extension, they’re not identified, there’s no helping and supporting children that are struggling or have special needs. It’s just down the middle because it’s the easy way.”

School leaders perceive the impact of out-of-field teaching on the stability within schools as negative. The principal in school G shared perceptions about recruiting suitably qualified teachers: “There are people who are looking for jobs but they’re not appropriate as teachers of a subject that many students are already very alienated and disengaged from.” The principal found public claims by an educational director that there are not really major concerns about teacher quality, especially in specific subjects such as maths and science strange: “I thought ‘How can our top public servant say that?’”. In school C the principal shared perceptions on how attitudes of out-of-field teachers influence a stable school environment: “You can have an attitude of whatever doesn’t kill me makes me stronger – I can learn from this experience but it has a negative impact on the curriculum, particularly for enrichment of the high flyers in the classroom.”

A Dean of Staff (E3) shared his perceptions about the relationship between work ethics and a stable classroom and work environment: “I find that the Y-generation, or under 30s, their work ethic is not very good – when it gets tough they fall over and I’ve had constant staffing issues, lots of tears, lots of emotion – teaching is a difficult job.” Hard working, experienced teachers cope better in out-of-field positions and school leaders perceive them as an asset to the teaching environment; the principal in school C described an experienced out-of-field teacher’s effort to maintain a stable environment: “She is working incredibly hard.” These teachers are perceived as effective, causing principals to regard out-of-field teaching as a negligible issue. In school D the principal expressed the following perceptions: “A good teacher can do anything – I reckon.” The principal had some doubts and clarified his perceptions:
When you get a child who wants to learn more ... you need your specialist teachers. It would be a disadvantage for the student to continue with that [an out-of-field teacher] for long. That’s why we are moving our year sevens up into the high school now because they need specialist conditions.

The spoken views of the principal in school D showed that these perceptions have not been thoroughly reflected upon up to now, stating that out-of-field teaching in primary schools is not a concern but proclaiming in the same statement that they have experience of a “very competent” upper primary school qualified teacher struggling and not coping in a pre-primary position:

It depends on the stage of the development of the child. I think we can do that [out-of-field teaching] with pre-primary to year sixes. I think in high school it’s more pertinent – we are now beginning to see that in early years it’s more pertinent ... We just had a year five teacher teach our pre-primary students and we realized she couldn’t do it ...

A different perception is shared by the Dean of Staff (E3):

People make more of it than what it is. He described his perceptions in more detail: If you’re a teacher, you should be able to teach anything up to Year 9 level. If I were given a Year 10 class, yes, this curriculum is a little bit more in-depth ...

The mixture of positive and negative perceptions (although predominantly negative) among school leaders suggest that in some school environments school leaders incorporated strategies to effectively manage teachers in out-of-field positions.

5.2.2.3 Teachers

5.2.2.3.1 Specialist teachers

Specialist teachers shared valuable information about the out-of-field experience because they operate the closest to out-of-field teachers; their perceptions are based on encounters with out-of-field colleagues. A specialist teacher (C2) shared perceptions about the expertise needed to teach specific age levels, stating: “What you know about children of that age level and their development and how they should be learning impact your teaching.” She added: “It is hard when you ... see something that is not being done the right way or not matching the children’s needs and abilities and their trust.” A previously out-of-field teacher who sees himself now, after five years, as a specialist (D1) shared his perceptions: “I think that can be quite dangerous, especially if they don’t have the strategies or the knowledge to pick up on the at-risk [students] as well. It’s quite easy for students who are at risk to just slip through.” He explained his concerns: “... to know how to support them – that can be really tricky.” He perceived out-of-field teachers as “unprofessional in their mannerisms.”

Experienced teachers in out-of-field positions seem to be able to conceal the gap in their content knowledge more effectively than novice teachers. The VET Coordinator (G3) was adamant:
“Up to year 10 a good teacher can teach anything. There are such things as good, basic teaching practices.” Views that “good” teachers can teach anything often do not take into account what these teachers need to do to accomplish or uphold a certain level of effectiveness within out-of-field positions. The specialist teacher explained: “There’s a lot of pressure put on young teachers. In terms of workload and class sizes – it’s difficult, it’s a huge responsibility.” A specialist teacher (C2) shared personal experiences about how easy it is to perceive your abilities as not good enough: “It is just a very hard situation to manage [long silence].”

5.2.2.3.2 Out-of-field teachers

Out-of-field teachers often perceive the out-of-field experience quite differently to leaders or other members of the school community. An out-of-field teacher (C7) shared these perceptions: “It [out-of-field situation] needs to be looked at because these days we seem to have a lot more people around working in areas that aren’t their expertise.” Teachers are aware that more colleagues are having out-of-field experiences (AEU, 2009, 2010): “experienced teachers are being moved from lower year levels to cover senior school mathematics” (Harris & Jensz, 2006, p. 58). The widespread occurrence and increase of out-of-field situations causes these teachers to develop perceptions of unworthiness. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2006) discuss how an extreme focus on content knowledge develops perceptions that highly qualified teachers can fix everything, which leaves unsuitably qualified teachers to question their effectiveness. An out-of-field teacher (G5) shared how she perceived the experience: “It’s bad, I am never in the staffroom because I’m always running around doing things – I’ve got a science club, I’ve got maths tutoring after school and tutoring kids during my dot time [non-contact time].” She perceived herself as isolated: “I walk through the staffroom to my pigeonhole to get some stuff and they’re all sitting and having a good time. I just feel really bad.” An out-of-field teacher (D7) experiences her out-of-field teaching as a concern, especially when working with a large group: “Working one-on-one or tweaking a task or a project just for them specifically that I am okay with – but as a group – it is probably not my ideal situation [voice trembling …long silence].”

Some out-of-field teachers perceive out-of-field teaching as positive. An out-of-field teacher (G4) shared her insights: “I know some teachers don’t agree with people teaching out of their area but from what I see, successful teachers can carry it across all areas.” She admitted, however, that there are always exceptions: “Students can often pick up on it, they know.” Another positive perception is shared by an out-of-field teacher (D1), who perceived himself as a specialist after five years in the position: “It is worth doing in terms of the challenge; it allows the teacher to grow. I would – [hesitates] discourage a teacher from doing it full time if they not competent.” Being perceived as competent in the classroom is important for teachers (Hattie, 2009) and being in an
out-of-field situation where they experience a lack of subject knowledge (which will be explained in more detail in Chapter 9) hampers a positive outlook about the out-of-field experience. Some teachers try to cover their gaps in content knowledge in order to uphold an image of being in control of their subject; an out-of-field teacher (F4) shared his perceptions: “Some try to cover up their inadequacies, they try to hide the fact that they’re not capable, that’s when they get overwhelmed and it can lead to them even getting out of teaching.” He added: “If they realise that they’re going to have to continue to perform in that area – I’ve known people to – ‘I can’t stand that anymore’ and they go off somewhere else.” An out-of-field teacher (E5) perceived different possibilities to overcome inadequacies: “If you are dedicated you would learn it all the night before which is what I do – even in grade 7– there are areas that I don’t know about and you have to teach yourself.” It stood out that most of the out-of-field teachers perceived out-of-field situations as stressful, while there are some exceptions where teachers perceived the out-of-field experience as a positive challenge. Parents shared concerns that their children miss valuable learning opportunities while an out-of-field teacher adjusts to a new subject.

5.2.2.4 Parents

Parents are aware of the central roles teachers are supposed to play in their children’s positive learning experience and have clear perceptions about the impact of their children’s teachers on the learning environment. This section highlights parents’ awareness of and empathy with out-of-field teachers. A major concern that stood out is the impact teaching without the necessary skills has on students’ learning. Another important area of concern they expressed was the need for open communication between parent and teacher. They want their children to be challenged, and to be valued but are adamant that their children’s happiness should never be compromised. A parent (E4) understood the out-of-field experience as follows: “It might be a struggle for them to start but I don’t think it is always going to be a bad story; sometimes it is a new opportunity.” Parents are aware that success in teaching depends on specific pedagogies and learning theories applied to different subjects, and perceive teachers as professionals with specific expertise, as participant 6 in school D explained: “Depending on which area they’ve come from...it depends on personality, it depends on work ethic. If the teacher is a dedicated person but they’re not that qualified, they’ll still go out of their way to make an effort.” A parent (D3) offered perceptions: “It can work, but it’s not ideal,” and then added: “I can’t reconcile [myself with] the fact that it happens.”

Parents are aware when things start to unravel in the out-of-field learning environment and teachers are not comfortable when questioned about an out-of-field subject, or shy away from open honest communication. A parent (F2) shared her perception: “Their communication with parents [fails] – because they want to hide the fact that they’re out of their field and cover up, tell children
are doing fine when in fact they’re not, the teacher probably doesn’t even know that themselves.” A parent (C3) underlined parents’ concerns about honest communication: “I only communicated with her on a social level. I didn’t dare say my son had a problem because she had so many bigger problems in the class [long silence].” She added: “She seemed to act as though there wasn’t a problem, like ‘they are very boisterous’ – that was when they were throwing a brick through the window. She didn’t want to talk about it.” Another parent (C4) noticed a tricky out-of-field situation that escalated beyond what was good for the students because of an out-of-field teacher and a principal outside his field of expertise: “The principal himself – he is outside his field of expertise, he has been a high school teacher.” A dysfunctional learning environment impacts on how much students need to do outside school hours to maintain a certain level of development; a parent (F5) explained: “He doesn’t want to go to school all morning and then come home and do another two hours – he goes to school to learn.” The mother perceived that students feel frustrated when classrooms do not function effectively, and that this had implications beyond the current year: “What is it going to be when he gets to being a teenager – it’s really hard – because these are foundation years – they are just so important.” In school C, participant 5, a parent saw the out-of-field situation as devastating for her at-risk child: “Derrick’s hearing has a 25% deficiency – so if the class is so noisy – he just couldn’t hear the instructions.” She added: “He did say that she screamed a lot …” A parent (C3) sensed the difficulty of the out-of-field teacher’s situation: “If she says ‘I am not coping’ – she is not going to get a job next year. It is hard – she’s just a contract teacher. I think the structure of how teachers are employed – it’s tricky.” The same parent, qualified as a teacher, shared the following perceptions about teacher training: “I may try and get employed in primary school, which I am allowed to – ridiculously – with just a one year Dip Ed!”

Participants used specific words during interviews to describe their perceptions about out-of-field teachers. The perceptions of directors, principals, parents, out-of-field teachers and specialist teachers are summarised in Figure 5.3. The general perceptions that stood out were that out-of-field teachers do not manage behaviour effectively; they in general struggle with classroom pedagogies, their classrooms often develop into disorderly and disruptive environments where respect becomes a concern. Out-of-field teachers are often perceived as negative while having control issues.
Figure 5.3. Perceptions of participants about out-of-field teachers

The perceptions displayed are just a summary, but give a clear indication of the concerns that develop because of the practice of out-of-field teaching and provide a possible indication of expectations that develop because these perceptions.

5.2.3 Interrelations between the out-of-field experience and expectations

The Gadamerian approach views the life-world as structures of indeterminately open horizons (Gadamer, 1976) which are often questioned by expectations that teachers should fulfil specific roles. There is an expectation that teachers in out-of-field situations will learn from their experiences, however, Darling-Hammond (2010b) mentioned that unsuitably qualified teachers might not learn “the right thing” (p. 208) from their experiences. The high expectations stakeholders have for quality education influence experiences within the teaching and learning environment. Hattie (2009) claimed that expectations and conceptions thoroughly debated enhance achievements. It is, however, clear that a lack of communication about expectations adds to uncertainties and self-critique. The clarity and open discussion of “various beliefs and expectations of adults” (Hattie, 2009, p. 71) in the education environment impact success in classrooms. Bourdieu (1979) noted that expectations of “audiences” are powerful and that adjustments and omissions take place to create an expectable space. The following tables (Tables 5.1–5.4) offer data about the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching for expectations in organisational spaces of teaching and learning for example, quality teaching, control in the teaching and learning space, expectations about pedagogical content knowledge, and stimulating a love for learning.
Table 5.1. **Expectations: The out-of-field experience and its organisational impact**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pedagogical expectations – example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Director 3</strong> Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We’ve got major issues with our tertiary institutions and the lack of connection, and collaboration between us and the tertiary institutions, in that universities fill spaces, fill places, they don’t necessarily …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School G, Principal</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are we doing to address the lack of qualified maths teachers in the system? We’re not strategic at university level or at department level to support schools in getting good, qualified, passionate, able teachers in areas such as maths. A member of an engineer’s association made a public comment about the shortage of maths teachers. Our director countered that and said there was no shortage. How can they say there’s not a shortage? There may be positions being filled but there’s not a surplus of passionate, qualified, able teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School D Participant 1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is a shame, he was offered a maths job for next year, he is a science teacher to start with, not a maths teacher, they offered it to a guy of 68 years of age, a full-time job – and you think, ‘What is wrong?’ [Frowns].</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.2. **Expectations: The out-of-field experience and quality teaching**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pedagogical expectations – examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Director 2</strong> South Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once you are a good teacher in a particular subject you should be able to transfer those skills to another subject.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School G Participant 3</strong> VET Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I had to have been near a school where the academic ability of students was reasonably high, I would’ve probably struggled. At the two district high schools I was at, before I came here, the students mostly were real strugglers. So virtually whatever you took into the classroom you could change it to make it interesting. The difficulty wasn’t the same – when they say ‘You’ve got to teach this’ and you’ve got really smart students. I might’ve got a bit put off for that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School E Participant 5</strong> Out-of-field teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imagine if my class results weren’t on the same level as the other two classes? It would really show that I wasn’t being a good teacher. Are they learning enough? – NAPLAN – that was actually a huge worry for me – what happens when my NAPLAN results are lower than ….</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.3. **Expectations: The out-of-field experience and developing a love for learning**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pedagogical expectations – examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>School C Participant 3</strong> Parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It hasn’t been a very inspiring year for him with regards to his teacher – with the learning environment. You can’t expect the children to love it [subject] because the out-of-field teacher does not enhance that love.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School E Participant 4</strong> Parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He wasn’t engaged – I feel if he just could have [had] a different teaching experience, he would have been a lot better. I as an earlier parent I didn’t even know, I didn’t even think about it – it didn’t occur to me they were unsuitably qualified to teach in whatever – older children can manage it but the younger children need so much help to learn those skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School F Participant 2</strong> Parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like a positive person to influence my children. Senior school is different, you get them for an hour or so – I want you to be able to impart good morals, respect, and reinforce what I’m trying to teach them at home.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.4. Expectations: The out-of-field experience and control subject knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pedagogical expectations – examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Director 1 Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know how we’re going to solve this – especially in those critical areas – fewer kids are doing maths and sciences in the shortage of good teachers who would teach them, they are gone – they leave the school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director 2 South Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our teachers don’t seem to understand that when I teach my contract actually says I have to teach everything in this work schedule for a year, so they tend not to focus on that. I honestly think it’s an attitude problem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School C Participant 3 Parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She was teaching outside her field of expertise – she was just not up to grade for year 2 – and the impact of that was that she didn’t have the respect of the students – she didn’t have the niche to work with these kids. The children weren’t learning anything because she was spending her time putting out fires – I guess she didn’t have the expertise she needs to cope with the behaviour issues and the classroom management issues.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.3 Discussion

I found that participants’ responses underlined prominent emotions and dispositions – namely feelings of weakness, fear, anxiety, stress, passion, and being out of their comfort zone. Firstly, I discuss the findings that emerged about emotions experienced in relation to the practice of out-of-field teaching. Secondly, the dispositions and perceptions which emerged will be discussed. Thirdly, findings that emerged surrounding expectations within the school community in relation to the out-of-field situation are reviewed. The interpretive analyses of participants’ responses in relation to their personal emotions, perceptions and expectations offered a deeper understanding of their real life experiences. Vygotsky (1978) highlights the interrelation between the individual and his/her social world, claiming the individual and the environment are inseparable. Carlyle and Woods (2002) state that teachers have an intense emotional rapport with their work; it develops because of their relational orientation and the way in which they pour themselves into their work. The discussion acknowledges that not all students are disadvantaged by being taught by out-of-field teachers, as a result data are discussed to reveal the influence of out-of-field teachers’ emotions and dispositions on the teaching and learning environment.

5.3.1 Emotions: “Have to or want to ...”

Passion for an out-of-field subject overcomes the lack of suitable qualifications but self-doubt and lack of confidence impact teachers in out-of-field positions. Emotions displayed by out-of-field teachers are often perceived as disturbing the stability of an effective learning environment (Smith, 2002). The statement by a principal that unhappy out-of-field teachers “don’t stay” shows that the out-of-field experience has an impact beyond the classroom. Unhappy out-of-field teachers are self-critical and feel embarrassed. Carlyle and Woods (2002) claim that school environments are packed
with emotions and underline the importance of mobilising emotions in ways which benefit organisational effectiveness. Teachers in out-of-field situations are uncertain, they do not have the necessary skills and knowledge to capitalise on incidental learning opportunities and quick responses to keep students engaged and this causes anxiety and constant stress to become part of their practice.

The mental health concerns of teachers in out-of-field positions accentuates my argument that an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences surrounding out-of-field teaching is needed to enable better decision making and transformation of policies. Key phrases used during interviews revealed the constant self-doubt, self-criticism, stress, tension and uncertainties out-of-field teachers are exposed to and which impact on their dispositions towards their teaching responsibilities. Day, Kington, Stobart, and Sammons (2006) noted that teachers’ critical self-reflection of who they are as professionals has meaning for their identity development. Hobbs (2013a) explained how teachers’ identities are influenced by out-of-field teaching, while focussing on their commitment and beliefs about their roles as teachers. Seven close classroom observations of out-of-field teachers uncovered the uncertainty and lack of confidence with which out-of-field teachers approached students. Misunderstandings and misconceptions influence the intensity and focus of emotional experiences, continuous feelings of stress, nervousness, and burnout, consequently resulting in mental health and physical health concerns. Carlyle and Woods (2002) discuss how teachers often find themselves in difficult situations perceiving leadership decisions and management styles as maladministration, undertaken to achieve conformity; these management styles stimulate feelings of fear, lack of trust, blame, low respect and chronic anxiety. Vygotsky (1978) highlights that experience has a biosocial positioning: it takes place between a personality and the environment and directs the relationship that develops; he underlines that emotional experiences are combinations of cognitive and passionate elements that presume emotions (Daniels, 2008). Van Manen (1991) argues that the skills and perceptions of teachers support the recognition of specific pedagogical moments to capture the essence of a lesson. He added that inadequately equipped teachers often flounder during the presentation of lessons.

Out-of-field teachers revealed that they are not confident “putting their hand up”, believing that their opinion is not worthwhile. Freeman (2007a) states that dispositions are more noticeable depending on specific circumstances and times. Focus turns then to the environment and circumstances in which out-of-field teachers function and at what stage of their teaching career they function in these positions. The practical implications of emotional experiences and dispositions in relation to the out-of-field experience showed a concern with support; disposition is grounded in what teachers identify as necessary to become effective at a specific time in a specific educational
setting and their beliefs about what they have to offer (Freeman, 2007b). Additional practical implications occur when teachers feel of out-of-comfort and decide to leave the profession. Van Manen (1991) suggests that transformation of policies and curricula often leave teachers with emotions of frustration as they feel they lose their influence as subject specialists.

5.3.2 Perceptions: “When it gets tough they fall over ...”

Participants perceive teachers as the most influential participants in the teaching environment, but claim that the setting in which they function influences their effectiveness. The results highlighted that out-of-field teachers are perceived as struggling to cope in disruptive environments and are often seen as “imposters” or “chalk and talk” teachers who tend to act unprofessionally when circumstances become challenging. Carlyle and Woods (2002) claim that the unconstructive feelings teachers experience develop because of constant crisis management, insufficient communication, autocratic decision-making and bullying management styles. Out-of-field teachers perceive at-risk students or students with special needs as difficult, and so experience frustration as they do not know how to manage these needs. “Negative emotions” are often described using terms such as _destructive emotions, inconsiderate, aggressive, mean_ and _disloyal_ but these descriptions display an inadequate understanding of the underlying issues in a specific situation (Kristjánsson, 2007). Smith (2002) explains that teachers’ dispositions such as frustrations, enthusiasm, dislikes, likes, doubts and determination are closely connected to their beliefs and highlights that “_everyday psychologising_” (p. 111) often goes unnoticed.

My argument is then that misunderstanding, unawareness and misconceptions about the out-of-field experience cause misplaced perceptions and place significant pressure on these teachers. Perceptions that a “good teacher can do anything” leave teachers feeling that they are not coping and that they should hide their “incompetencies”. If these teachers are perceived as not effective, students “migrate” from subjects or schools. Out-of-field teachers are perceived to be taking the easy way out and just aim for the “middle” group in the class because that is the easy way, and they do not take on any challenges. Smith (2002) stresses that the effect emotions have on teachers’ effectiveness should not be ignored, as it develops an understanding of why people act the way they do. The relation between emotion (feelings of anger, sadness, shame) and the connected belief or perception affects teachers’ mental states (Smith), and this mental state impacts out-of-field teachers’ effectiveness. The practical implications of these perceptions about out-of-field teachers are that this situation hampers collaboration, trust-relationships within the teaching and learning environment, and the support which is provided.
5.3.3 Expectations: “I’d prefer a teacher who knows ...”

Expecting that classrooms are healthy and positive learning environments with a knowledgeable adult to guide students is not an unfair expectation. Groundwater-Smith et al. (2011) claim that students need to be emotionally connected with their teacher. Participants shared expectations of effective strategies to address the concerns which develop because of the out-of-field teaching practice. Although interview data with parents, teachers and school leaders show a slight difference in concerns between secondary and primary schools, the intensity of the concerns are the same. The interview responses clearly showed that the impact of the out-of-field experience is not less important in primary school, and this is often misunderstood. Both environments are greatly influenced by the out-of-field situation but on different levels. Figure 5.4 summarised the responses of secondary and primary school parents, teachers and school leaders about the expectations in secondary and primary schools. My argument that the out-of-field experience influences effective teaching at secondary and primary school level is summarised in Figure 5.4, asserting that primary school students depend on the pastoral guidance of a suitably qualified teacher for their specific year level while secondary school students need specialist teachers with sound pedagogical content knowledge. Figure 5.4 points out that out-of-field teaching has implications for secondary and primary schools; the impact does not have fewer implications in primary schools, but the impact happens on a different level shared by different participants involved in secondary and primary schools as indicated in the sample diagram in Chapter 4.

**Figure 5.4. The expected lived meaning of out-of-field teaching for Primary and Secondary schools**
The findings suggest that out-of-field teachers severely impacted classrooms in primary schools. In the year 2 class disruptive behaviour got out of control developing into emotional trauma; in the pre-primary class the teacher didn’t know what and how skills should be taught causing self-doubt; in a year seven class the teacher hated the science lessons because she didn’t know how to teach science. Groundwater-Smith et al. (2011) mention that teachers’ “beliefs alongside their expectations for learners will interact with knowledge about how to teach in a particular discipline to determine what kind of learning experiences should be planned and implemented” (p. 189). Parents expect their children to have a positive learning experience and want the school to take responsibility to develop and support effective classrooms but they experience out-of-field teaching as hampering these environments. Cooper and McIntyre (1994) state that teachers’ lack of in-depth knowledge causes them to rely on teaching approaches that harm students’ love for learning. Teachers’ perceptions of themselves as teachers in different discipline areas, feelings of inadequacy and a lack of interest in specific fields cause an unhealthy textbook-orientated teaching strategy while complicated themes and sections are often omitted (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2011). I argue that perceptions and misconceptions (for example, that out-of-field teaching doesn’t happen in primary schools or that the impact it has on primary school students is minimal, or that it is more damaging when it happens in secondary schools) affect the effectiveness of decisions made by educational leadership. Stone (2002) suggests that differences in opinion about education are often founded in the different expectations of consumers (students and parents) and the providers (school leaders, educational leaders and teachers) – school leaders are concerned about the operation of schools while parents and students are more concerned about benefits and results.

Van Manen (1991) argues that teachers tie the present and future of students together: what teachers do in the classroom unlocks students’ future, adding that pedagogical thoughtfulness and tact are skills teachers needed in an always-changing educational situation. I want to claim, “I rest my case”, but if teachers are to unlock students’ futures, their foundation phase is as important as their final year in school and the management of the out-of-field situation across secondary and primary schools becomes a responsibility of educational leaders. The practical implications of out-of-field teaching for primary schools are mainly vested in the effect it has on the pastoral guidance provided by teachers, the development of teachers’ identity within the school community and how out-of-field teachers’ neglect of less favourite subjects causes students to struggle with foundational concepts. The implications for secondary school students are significant as far as pedagogical content knowledge, academic results and subject choices of students are concerned.
Chapter 5 investigated dispositions of teachers in out-of-field positions, while focusing on emotions, perceptions and expectations of these teachers, their school leaders, directors, parents and colleagues. Chapter 5 first offers insight into different emotions caused by the lived experiences while it draws from Nias’ (1996) focal point that the classroom is fundamental in teachers’ emotions of self-esteem and fulfilment; this viewpoint shows that the out-of-field teacher is in a vulnerable situation of continuous critical self-reflection. Secondly, the chapter offers new knowledge about perceptions in relation to the out-of-field teaching experience. Thirdly, the chapter offers new information about expectations for teachers although they function in out-of-field teaching positions. An understanding of emotions, perceptions and expectations lays the foundation for discussion of additional units of meaning such as leadership, classroom management, behaviour management, school community and pedagogical content knowledge that will unfold in the following chapters. The detailed exploration of these units of meaning in the following chapters supports the development of an in-depth understanding which has benefits for future policy and decision-making processes which include school leaders and the significant role they fulfil in effectively managing out-of-field positions. The next chapter takes a closer look at school leaders and how their understanding and perceptions of the out-of-field teaching practice influence effective school environments and these teachers’ lived experiences.
Chapter 6

The Lived Meaning of Out-of-Field Teaching for Educational Leadership

“If there is a big picture and a strategic plan I don’t know about it. It’s a well-kept secret...”
Principal

6.1 Introduction

School leaders are accountable for the development of productive, competitive, and effective school environments (Hattie, 2009). Effective leadership is a key to both continuous improvement and transformation in schools (National College for School Leadership, NCSL, 2001). I argue that out-of-field teaching creates complex leadership and management situations in schools. Out-of-field teaching is a global concern (Ingersoll, 2002) influencing the quality of education, while education plays a part in the international economy (Bush, 2008). Adding to an already complicated situation is the tendency of new, less experienced leaders to focus on school image and popularity while building survival alliances to cope with pressure. This new leadership generation is more comfortable managing processes than leading people by example (Getkin, 2009).

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the “real life experiences” of out-of-field teaching in relation to educational leadership strategies. New information is offered about school leaders’ involvement and understanding in relation to the out-of-field experience while the chapter looks through the lenses of directors, principals, specialist and out-of-field teachers and parents. Specific focus is placed on leadership strategies and styles and what they mean for out-of-field teachers as was revealed through the analysis of interviews, classroom observations and documents. The chapter further explores how different leadership experiences and practices intensify the lived experiences of out-of-field teachers.

School leaders are expected to make decisions that would benefit students and teachers. School leaders’ strategies and decisions influence the success of students’ learning (Hattie, 2009). The view that school leaders shape goals, motivations and actions, and initiate change to reach existing and new goals (Dimmock, 1999) is tested against the specific needs created by the out-of-field situation. Out-of-field assignments can be seen as “crisis management” or “snap shot”
strategies implemented by school leaders to solve staffing problems. My argument that leaders have a significant impact on the out-of-field experience and its meaning for effective learning is supported by Darling-Hammond’s (2010b) comment that principals have, second to teachers, a major influence on student achievement. I further argue that leadership strategies influence how engaged and aware leaders are of the needs of out-of-field teachers. Spillane, Camburn, and Stitziel Pareja (2009) mentioned that leadership strategies determine the amount of time leaders spend on critical reflection and incidental interaction with staff members. I further argue that leaders who spend a significant amount of time in their office become disconnected from the real-life experiences within out-of-field classrooms and make decisions without understanding the lived experiences and needs of the involved teachers, students and parents.

6.2 Seeking Answers in Literature: Is “The Office” an obstacle for effective leadership?

The main research question explores how fundamental, for out-of-field teachers in their everyday concerns and practices, are their lived experiences and the meaning of out-of-field teaching. School leaders have bestowed upon them the power to make or allow decisions that impact not only teachers in out-of-field positions, but also their students and parents (Hattie, 2009). How they are connected to, and engage with, the out-of-field experience influences their decisions (Davies & Davies, 2009). This section will discuss the interrelationship between the out-of-field experience and educational leaders and discuss this interrelationship in light of the main research question. Educational and school leaders play a vital role in out-of-field teaching positions and these teachers’ experiences (see section 5.2.1.1 and 5.2.1.2).

This chapter offers information from interviews, classroom observations and document analysis to interpret the interrelation between leadership strategies and the out-of-field experience and what it means for effective teaching. School communities expect principals to set directions, develop staff, and ensure an effective workplace where successful teaching pedagogies are followed (Anderson, Moore, & Sun, 2009). Schools have complicated workplace cultures because they draw staff together to form a cohesive entity towards effective school environments (Latham, 2009). The interview data offered insights into how leadership decisions often take financial considerations or social considerations into account but overlook pedagogical content knowledge when assigning teachers to certain positions. Caldwell (2009) highlighted the importance of school leaders taking intellectual, social and financial capital into account to bring about effective transformation. I argue that misconceptions about out-of-field teaching not only affects effective transformation and change within the education environment but also influences these teachers’ confidence about collaborating with colleagues.
This chapter offers information about school leaders’ understanding and dispositions in relation to out-of-field teaching and what it means for comprehensive school environments. To understand needs and focus on the development of skills, strategies and strengths involves exceptional leadership. Effective leadership actively engages and commits to assign goal-achievable resources (Getkin, 2009). Teachers remain the most valuable and influential resource school leadership has to work with because “the greatest change that most students experience is the level of competence of the teacher” (Hattie, 2009, p. 1). I argue that if teachers are a most influential resource, leaders need to have an in-depth understanding if this “resource” functions outside their field of expertise. Effective transformation takes place when the focus is on people. Staff relate to colleagues through shared beliefs and values and through effective leaders’ focus on shared goals for the future. Successful school leaders view leadership development as a necessity to unlock the social capital of their staff and to enhance interpersonal connections and collaboration (Davies & Davies, 2009). Hattie (2009) claimed through meta-analyses that the type of principal leadership is an influential factor in effective schools. Engaged school leaders are concerned about “real life experiences” in classrooms and aim to develop strategies that foster teacher attitudes, empower students and stimulate a learning culture (Bush, Glover, & Harris, 2008).

6.3 Results: A “Fusion of Horizons”

This phenomenological exploration interprets the relationship between leadership and the out-of-field experience through the views, perceptions and experiences of 48 participants (educational directors, principals, specialist and out-of-field teachers and parents). The seven schools involved in the investigation have very different leadership styles, and represent schools across a whole spectrum including suburban, remote, metropolitan, multicultural, public and independent secondary and primary schools. The choice of different school environments was made to underline the reliability of the information. Due to the phenomenological nature of the study, the schools included were located where more visits could be made when needed.

The leadership misconceptions displayed in chapter 5 were in relation to emotions, dispositions and perceptions (see section 5.2.1.1 and 5.2.1.2) about the lived experiences of out-of-field teachers and their influence on effective management of the experience. I argue that an in-depth understanding of the out-of-field teaching experience will improve school leaders’ strategies to manage out-of-field teaching in their schools. Within the schools researched only two out of seven schools (28.5%), seem to manage the out-of-field situation in such a manner that the teachers in these out-of-field positions experience teaching as an opportunity to grow and develop as teachers. Phenomenology supports the interpretation of the interrelated experiences of leaders and out-of-field teachers and what it means for collaborating and leading effective teaching and learning.
environments. The results report on the impact of educational leaders’ disconnectedness in relation to the out-of-field experience, how school budgets influence decisions about out-of-field teaching practices, misconceptions in relation to openness about out-of-field teaching and misunderstandings in relation to these teachers’ lived experiences. The thesis took an in-depth look at the impact leaders’ misunderstandings have on collaboration among colleagues and out-of-field teachers and what misunderstanding the lived experiences means for the future of these teachers.

6.3.1 The ivory tower syndrome

Leadership can make or break a school and its teachers. Darling-Hammond (2010b) stated that leaders play the major role in “inside-out” (p. 322) school improvement. A discussion about the disconnectedness of educational leaders is directed by the main research question about how fundamental, for out-of-field teachers in their everyday concerns and practices, are their lived experiences and the meaning of out-of-field teaching. Leaders’ understanding and perceptions about the needs of teachers in out-of-field positions can impact their strategies. The strategies school leaders implement influence the views of the school community and can isolate leaders from what really happens in classrooms. A Dean of Staff (E3) explains:

There are concerns at the lack of communication from the leadership – a lot of it comes from staff members ... because people in leadership don’t teach as much, they don’t do any ‘work’. There’s a very much, very much the perception of the ivory tower syndrome.

The roles principals fulfill in schools often isolate them and make it easy to be disconnected, as expressed by the principal in School G: “The principalship; it’s the loneliest job in education. Ultimately you can have the most influence of any position in education, the principalship is the most potent.” The influence principals have impact the out-of-field situations and the principal is seen as accountable for what happens in the school. However, interview data showed principals are firstly concerned about what out-of-field teaching might mean for their and the schools’ image. The principal (C6) declares his concern about the impact out-of-field teaching might have on his personal career: “To be honest ... I would have fears about how that would impact on my ... on me ... professionally.” The interview data showed that principals do not always interact and collaborate with other sources of leadership, which creates major misconceptions and misunderstandings. A Dean of Staff (E3) explained his experiences as follows:

I just picked up on considerable groundswell of negativity, and even in the language use. It was us and them, “them” being leadership. So there’s a real division. My role was help out a little bit because I’m in the middle, I guess, but I’m in the leadership team, but I’m trying to change that ...

The same participant suggested the following about leadership: “We can be – at times you can get stuck in your office and unable to leave, that’s really important that you become hands-on and
get out in the yard a little bit”. School leaders’ business hampers their awareness of out-of-field teachers’ and parents’ concerns and needs. The response of a principal (F3) explains how disengaged leadership only becomes aware of concerns in relation with out-of-field teaching through parent complaints: “Well ... we’re usually made aware of the problem through the parents, the parents will come and see us.” This response explains the impact disengaged leaders have on the amount of time that passed before problems are dealt with. I argue that isolation of leaders develops into misconceptions about how out-of-field teachers cope in their classrooms. Hattie (2009) highlighted school leaders’ responsibility to create safe environments to grow and develop. Participant 7 (School C) shed light on leadership shortcomings in managing the out-of-field situation:

They acknowledge the out-of-field thing when they first put them in that field ... after that they get forgotten about – they forget you are doing something that is not your usual job. That is really hard because then you feel you have to go to them and saying ... Hallo! I need some help or I need some time – you having to ask for support. I would say that they just don’t understand really at all what it is like to be in that classroom ... to be doing that job.

A novice out-of-field teacher (E5), explained how difficult it was to gain the attention of school leaders:

The Deputy said, oh sorry, I am really busy ... I emailed him a couple of times and I had no reply ... and ... and I tried to see him before the kids came in at the start of the year and he was busy ... he didn’t have time for me ...

Leaders get caught up in their own leadership concerns and their interaction with staff is neglected. An out-of-field teacher (C1) shared her experience: “I was told on the last day of term that I was going to be teaching grade 7.” These statements underlined my concern about leaders’ “snap shot” placement decisions without having an in-depth understanding of the major implications for these teachers. A specialist teacher (E2) added: “In this school, somebody gets their timetable with things on there that they have not been consulted about, that’s a huge problem in terms of people management. I don’t think that’s a nice way to manage anybody…”

Parents soon notice teachers are not coping or are not qualified for what they need to do in the classroom, often before school leaders do, an indication that school leaders are not sufficiently engaged or too busy. A parent (E6) asked the following question on specific support that leaders offer the out-of-field teachers: “How do they support them? They probably haven’t got time to support them a lot.” A parent (C4) focused once again on the disengagement of leaders and how much time went past before they became aware and acted: “The leadership in the classroom wasn’t there – the problems arose and really escalated after that. The principal did step in and then the deputy ... perhaps it was too late.” School leaders who get isolated or caught up in the administration of a school and the safety of their office, with their focus more on business aspects
than pedagogies, are often unaware of the lived experiences of the teachers they have assigned to these out-of-field positions. Teachers observe school leaders as disconnected, unengaged and uncaring.

6.3.2 Money, money, money?

School leaders’ decisions are often directed by the school budget rather than pedagogical importance. My arguments are supported by interview data, for example, a Dean of Staff (E3) offered insight into the perceptions leaders factor into their financial planning and how this influences out-of-field teachers:

*We wouldn’t tend to send them on PDs [professional development courses], so we’d invest all this money in them and then they might just leave or staffing would change anyway, or their timetable would change for example, with science teachers, probably three science teachers are quite heavily out of their area this year... if we had invested money on them this year, on S&E, for example, it wouldn’t have been worthwhile...*

It is clear that school leaders find it challenging to differentiate between the roles of a business manager and the role of a leading professional and to keep a healthy balance within financial and human resource decisions they have to make (Bush, 2008). A principal (School C) explained the gap in understanding, expectations, and what really happens at a school level concerning out-of-field teachers:

*Gaps are around the cost and the time.... funding. I think the gap is quite huge ... as an educational leader I can spend all of my day in this office ... doing the official things ... that have to be done – I can get around the idea that I need to get in the classrooms, that is the gap ... education leaders find it hard to get into classrooms to do what really is their core business ... to ensure that there is quality of delivery.*

The pressure school leaders experience in order to make the school budget work take them away from what matters for teaching and learning. An out-of-field teacher (C7) tried to explain:

*Schools are becoming too much like businesses. That is my personal opinion – teachers and kids don’t really matter... It’s the results, the numbers – and people who are working in areas outside their field of expertise ... they are another number and unless you are really-really struggling... it would not come to their attention at all.*

Out-of-field teachers feel let down by leaders because their business orientated decisions do not create an “out-of-field friendly” environment. The budget benefits when a teacher with less years experience is assigned to a position, and this can occur easily, despite them being outside the field of qualification, as an out-of-field teacher (C1) explained:

*The principal was very keen for me to do the job because I was a first year teacher – you don’t have to pay them as much and they are always trying to – it is all about the money and the fact that a first year teacher is cheap ... in fact he actually said it ... he said it [laugh] ... he said it in the staff meeting – something about how  [laugh] it would help balance the budget.*
Out-of-field teachers are often exposed to leadership decisions that do not put their professional needs first, which highlights leaders’ misconceptions created by their lack of awareness of the real life experiences of all the stakeholders involved.

6.3.3 What they don’t know doesn’t hurt them?

The misconceptions school leaders have about parents’ awareness of out-of-field teaching practices develop into mistrust and misunderstandings. Hattie (2009) suggested that parents often find it difficult to “comprehend the language of teaching” (p. 70). I argue that school leaders underestimate the importance of open and honest communication about out-of-field teaching practices. Informed parents are positive parents who are willing to actively support their children’s school. A parent’s (D3) response shows how misunderstanding leads to questions about strategies:

*I just can’t come to the terms with management letting it [the out-of-field placement of teachers] happen in the first place. That’s a hard thing for me as a parent. I don’t understand why management would choose to employ somebody ... I don’t know how management can choose to... they can’t change it overnight so they’re going to have to work with it and they’re going to really support that teacher, more so than they would with a qualified teacher teaching in their field.*

Parents experience how their children struggle because of out-of-field teaching practices and question leaders’ strategies and their decisions to assign unsuitably qualified teachers. Interview data shows that parents doubt leaders’ decisions in relation to out-of-field teaching, while they have empathy for these teachers.

6.3.4 At the wrong end of the stick?

Educational leaders assign teachers to out-of-field positions for various reasons. These decisions put teachers at the wrong end of the stick. The out-of-field teachers often deal with “out-of-depth and out-of-place” experiences while some leadership strategies clearly indicate inequitable practices. These practices are explained by a Dean of Staff (E3):

*There was a bit of inequity in terms of distribution of classes – the heads of the learning area decided who teaches what. They’ve feathered their nest – that led to a lot of inequity, you’ve got inexperienced teachers teaching all lower school classes the size of thirty kids and that’s just very hard yards ...*

I argue that leadership decisions based on misconceptions and unawareness of the impact of out-of-field experience greatly influence teachers in these positions and effective pedagogies in classrooms (which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 7). The Dean of Staff (E3) explained how the decisions of leaders put teachers not only in out-of-field positions but affect their well-being: “*I think if teachers have all lower school they do get burnt out pretty quick – it’s pretty tough.*” He further shared his experiences:
The start of the year I had probably four or five teachers in the first couple of weeks – complain about their timetables. I couldn’t do anything about that – you obviously can’t change timetables at the start of the year. I said to them, you’ve got to make the best of it; that’s your timetable – it is what it is, and to be fair most of it was just people teaching PE or Health, and PE and Health is not that difficult. They were all Y-generation and so they were all young girls under 26 – and I basically in a nice way said, you’ve got to deal with it. I mean, it’s really not that hard. You’re only teaching a couple of PE lessons a week, and so I wasn’t overly empathetic, I guess. I mean I listened to them and told them - You have to deal with it.

Leaders who belittle lived experiences of out-of-field teachers are on dangerous ground, as one of the “Y-generation ... all young girls under 26” mentioned above opted to leave the teaching profession because of the misconceptions and misunderstanding from leadership. A leadership misconception caused the teaching profession to lose a young science qualified teacher. An out-of-field teacher (C7) shared more symptoms of misconceptions:

When you are outside of your field or area of expertise you feel like you need to perform – so people ask you to do things and you then have to say ‘Oh yeah’ ... ‘Oh am I supposed to do that?’ [role play] I have seen it happen – people dumping responsibilities on people.

Document analysis showed that the out-of-field teaching situation in schools never makes it to official agendas of meetings. The principal of school A acknowledged that most of the time it is just mentioned in informal discussions. However, a specialist teacher (C2) explained the dilemma that develops because of this:

How we went about it was sort of left to us ... It probably wasn’t the best situation in that the person who knew the most, it was his second year. He had only did it once [laugh]... so it wasn’t that we had a great area of expertise – he had me doubting myself [laugh].

An out-of-field teacher (D7) experienced the effect of leadership decisions:

They ask me to relief in the Pre-Primary classroom – one day turned into two days and two days turned into a week and after the end of the week ... they ask ‘Can you stay?’ – It was just a little bit chaotic ...

This participant further explained that she was a qualified upper primary teacher finding herself teaching a pre-primary class. She tried to cope with an already dysfunctional pre-primary class while coming to terms with specific rules and regulations for early childhood learning strategies and pedagogies which made her feel disorientated. The reality for these out-of-field teachers is that one of these teachers quit teaching for a job in the private sector. Leadership decisions based on misunderstanding and misconceptions about out-of-field teaching not only create complex situations for these teachers but also put students and parents in situations they find hard to manage. This happens when their decisions are made without knowledge of the real-life experiences inside these classrooms regarding at-risk students and out-of-field teachers. A parent (C5) added: “Top management came into the classroom quite a lot, try to give her some support [emphasis] but I don’t know whether... what kind of support she got – but she did need it.”
same parent offered a different “horizon” of being at the wrong end of the out-of-field stick where her boy received all the blame for what went wrong in the class while the unsuitably qualified teacher mismanaged his needs:

There is something wrong with her group dynamic. The emphasis seems to be all on Derrick that it was Derrick’s issues and that it was Derrick’s problem [behaviour problem]. A lot of emphasis just on him being truanted and his behaviour... Every time that we had a meeting I would say he is not like this why is he behaving like this. I don’t want to send him to school. I was very, very anxious – he is going to hurt somebody or he is going to do it to himself or something. Specially the Deputy Head ... she was very much focused on Derrick ... [as the reason for problems] [voice low, moving away from recorder and crossing her arms over her chest].

School leaders tend to lay the blame of classroom and behaviour management issues on the students rather than on the out-of-field teacher’s classroom management strategies. Interview data showed that leaders’ misunderstanding of specific needs within the out-of-field situation develop perceptions that they do not really care.

6.3.5 Does it matter? Do I matter?

Out-of-field teaching presents teachers and school leaders with challenges. Of the seven schools researched, leadership in only two of the schools managed to support out-of-field teachers in such a way that they portrayed positive dispositions. The out-of-field teachers in these schools are confident that they can succeed and can be effective, with support, and were willing to take on challenges to change. In interviews they portrayed openness to the benefits of change and transformation. In these schools the principals used the phrase “we are growing people” as an aim set by the leadership team. A principal (D4) gave details: “We’re now saying to our support teachers, stop taking children out of the classroom, you go into the classroom and equip the teacher.” Another principal (F3) explained how the extra attention Deputies paid to teachers made a difference: “It shows the teachers that at least the school is caring about what they’re doing in their classrooms ...” The Dean of Staff (E3) added: “I think we’ve got a responsibility to retain staff ... there is a high drop-out rate, so we’ve got to try and keep these people in a job, and to protect them.”

Out-of-field teachers experience feelings of disregard and neglect as an out-of-field teacher (C1) described: “One thing that I would have liked early on, was more positive feedback ... NO ONE [accentuated] from up above said anything positive.” She added: “A nice caring principal would be checking whether they all have been supported.” An out-of-field teacher (E5) emphasised how important leadership is:

The head of department is brilliant, but Admin [principal and deputies] no, there was – Deputies ... no ... [eyes becoming teary]... when I had my freak out ... the Dean of Staff was brilliant, he said look take a week off, you need it. Get yourself sorted out. They took the 3
curriculum enrichment classes off of me [teary eyes] because the Dean of Staff had a word and settled it. When I was speaking to him the principal came in and said he had a hard time too and he gave me some cards for counsellors.

Out-of-field teachers often report that their needs are overlooked. An out-of-field teacher (D7) shared her experience of school leaders’ decisions about her professional development: “Because everybody is knowing that I won’t be doing this again next year … [silence] … that … doing that wouldn’t have been valuable for the school long term … [silence]… does that make sense ...?” A specialist teacher (F1) explained how leaders’ personal intentions influence stability in a school in relation with staffing concerns: “A lot of time in the country, the principals are new principals, they come from the city to get their experience here. They stay five years and then they go back.” A teacher (D1) with experience of being out-of-field, shared: “You can have out-of-field teachers but they need to be nurtured and they need to be taken care of.” He added more about his experiences and perceptions as part of a family of teachers:

   When they are encouraged ... I have seen my mother being encouraged and I have seen my father being discouraged ... I have seen him just awful ... and I just want to go nay ... I am not interested sort of thing because he hasn’t been encouraged and he hasn’t been promoted and he also is out of his comfort zone too ...

He further made the following suggestion about support for out-of-field teachers:

   They need mentoring in delivering their lessons and their teaching. The principal coming in and just being genuinely [accentuates] – it starts from the top down – the principal leading by example. Experiences of some teachers, the principal makes a near death experience. If the principal can make it a positive experience – ’I am here as guidance and if you got a problem you come and talk to me –’:

A parent (C5) told about her experience in the school community involving students and their parents in an out-of-field teacher’s classroom: “They’ve issues with their kids. One of the mums has got separation anxiety, her kid has a high level of separation anxiety. She is not getting any support from the school or the classroom. They only pay attention to kids who are disruptive…” A parent (D3) shared her experience about out-of-field teachers: “These teachers are out of their depths. I think the teachers are not skilled enough and supported by management. Management needs to come alongside and support the teacher and just guide her and help her …”

Support is seen as a team effort not only by the teachers in out-of-field positions but also by the parents who experience the out-of-field teacher’s struggle and the impact of leadership decisions through their children.

6.3.6 “Relational leadership” towards teamwork

Out-of-field teachers mostly feel vulnerable (see section 5.2.1.3) and depend on colleagues for help and support. Interview data showed that out-of-field teachers have an impact on the school
“team” because they are seen as “high maintenance” team members who need extra support and attention from leaders. Effective teamwork however, draws from healthy relationships and a principal (F3) shared his experience of out-of-field teachers as part of the school team: “The biggest, the biggest stress, the biggest issue for me as a principal is relationships, that’s what the biggest thing is.” Principal (D4) shared her views about the implications of different leadership styles for relationships involving out-of-field teachers not coping, and teamwork:

> Your teacher who’s not coping and who has an autocratic leadership structure – not coping is even worse because now they just know they have to perform and they know they can’t perform. They’re not coping, traditional principal will come in and want you to please explain. A relational leadership structure – say, how can I help you?

The Dean of Staff (E3) added: “I realised quite early on that building relationships is a key to staffing in schools. You’ve got to develop more relationships and you get the most respect by, going out and doing little things, listen to their needs.” A specialist teacher (F1) explained how leadership strategies impact effective teamwork: “The principal wants us to have more meetings and more professional talks and things like that. No-one is going to talk – no-one talks... nothing is done about it.” A parent (D3) explained:

> For me, as a teacher teaching alongside somebody who wasn’t skilled, it put extra pressure onto me ... I don’t think management realises how much you need to work to form a team if you’re working together and a lot of your training needs to go towards the teacher and not towards your children.

A parent (F2) offered her perception of the outcome of teamwork: “An effective school has a strong person-focused headmaster who makes an effort to get to know all the parents.” The principals in the two schools where positive dispositions were showed focused on development of teachers in out-of field positions. The leaders went back to their basic professional needs in the classroom and highlighted the importance of informal interaction.

6.3.7 Back to the future

School leaders need to evaluate and reflect on decisions they make about out-of-field teaching practices in their schools. My argument is deeply rooted in the lived experiences of participants shared during interviews which constantly pointed to the impact leaders’ decisions have on these experiences, and on the future of these teachers and their students. School leaders have, as one of their many responsibilities, the task to guide, direct and lead education’s most valuable resource, the teachers. When teachers are assigned to positions outside their qualifications, there is an increased responsibility to ensure they receive all the help necessary. The decisions made by leaders influences students’ and teachers’ experiences and has implications for their future. A principal (G2) described the roles and experiences of leaders:
From a day-to-day perspective the principal is the most potentially potent position in the whole system. But they’re the loneliest, they’re the least supported, they’re the most accountable. If you look at the level of accountability we have compared with the level of support, there’s no induction for principals in our system. It’s appalling.

School leaders do not receive enough support to manage out-of-field situations in such a way that the gaps and restrictions in learning are limited. School leaders’ effectiveness in managing out-of-field situations depends widely on their awareness and understanding of its meaning for teachers and the classroom. The Dean of Staff (E3) explained: "the retention rates were so – losing teachers was so high.” Attrition rates make principals reluctant to spend money and time on out-of-field teachers’ development. A principal (D4) offered the following explanation: “It’s not always easy. We’re starting what we call a cadetship and we look for students at universities and offer them ATPs [assistant teaching positions] at our school with the view of them becoming systemized so they understand our culture and our background.” A Director of Education in South Africa mentioned:

The accountable person in a school is the principal and naturally his first priority is to ensure that the curriculum is managed and delivered in his school because that’s what we sell, so to speak. Unfortunately many principals get sidetracked and start seeing themselves as abdicated from the classroom now and that’s where they make the mistake.

Director A, a Director of Education in Australia, explained why some schools are more successful in preparing out-of-field teachers for the future: "... they’ve got to learn on the job and the big schools can nurture them and develop them, they’ve got enough other good people [qualified teachers].” School leaders with a broad vision and total commitment to staff members will project a willingness to share experiences which then constructs inter-social relations. Healthy relations among staff enhance feelings of “at homeness” and “belongingness” (see section 2.4.1) and honest sharing of experiences while also providing a safe environment for out-of-field teachers to explore the unfamiliar subjects through interaction with colleagues. An out-of-field teacher (G5) in such a positive environment described her situation: “I love teaching maths. I’d definitely want to teach it next year.” She went further: “I feel like I’ve learnt more in my 10 weeks here than my four years at uni.” The positive impact school leaders have on teachers in out-of-field positions influences decisions on their future development in a specific subject area. The caring and nurturing leadership style of two female principals interviewed during the inquiry claim to have had a significant outcome on out-of-field teachers’ experience and outlook on their future in the teaching profession. An out-of-field teacher (D7) expressed her needs:

“... but there needs to be some kind of plan for orientation for new staff ... when my partner started at the beginning of the year there wasn’t actions to IT, there wasn’t actions to ... just little bits and pieces but the big things ... you figure it out as you go ... and you have a great team partner or something that is supposed to help you with that kind of things.”
A parent (E6) in a remote school environment shared her concerns about the future of the school and her child’s learning experience: “The problem is the school is not able to secure good teachers”. School leaders need an in-depth understanding of the out-of-field experience to meet the challenges and needs of out-of-field teachers; first to retain them and second to effectively develop them into specialist teachers.

6.4 Discussion

The culture that was currently evident in more than 70% of schools involved in this research involved misunderstanding and disconnectedness from what out-of-field teaching really means for the classroom. The significant difference in experiences and perceptions about out-of-field teaching between leadership, parents and teachers at the same school indicates an absence of discussion and interaction, which causes misunderstandings. It is these misunderstandings which explain the importance of engaged school leaders. Hattie (2009) underlined the influence engaged principals have on effective school environments. The discussion explores educational leaders’ understanding of the out-of-field experience through the following sets of meaning - transformation, leadership strategies and models, the purpose of schools, decision-making and valuing staff.

6.4.1 Leadership models and transformation

There is a strong link between the out-of-field experience, leadership and effective school transformation. Bush (2008) maintained that understanding the construct of connections involves a focus on the main characteristics of leadership such as authority, values and vision. Change and transformation within a school cannot take place without reflecting on what needs to be changed about the culture and behaviour in a school in relation to out-of-field teaching. In schools where there is a disengaged relationship between leaders and out-of-field teachers, leaders are regarded as functioning from an ivory tower while out-of-field teachers are discerned as not putting enough effort into their out-of-field subjects. Transformation and change stimulate intense responses; new approaches with the potential to improve effectiveness are often met with negativity and uncertainty and resourceful leadership skills and styles become crucial for success (Fullan, 2001). School leaders’ strategies and styles greatly influence how teachers make meaning of an out-of-field position.

6.4.2 Leadership and the CEO-Strategy

In recent times educational leadership and management strategies have drawn from business management theories where schools are not supposed to focus on profit alone, but rather on processes and outcomes (Dimmock & Walker, 2005). More often principals currently act like chief
executives of a business rather than a head teacher (Bottery, 2006). School leaders are caught up in making their school budgets work and decisions to assign younger teachers to vacant positions, although they are not suitably qualified for the specific positions, are seen as a cheaper option to staff the school. Teachers see the principal as driven to achieve results for the students (Latham, 2009) acting in a businesslike manner and so leaving them feeling not valued.

Regarding school leaders’ awareness of staff needs, Hartley, and Hinksman (2003) suggest that leadership training and development need to focus on structures and systems as well as people, interaction and social relations. When principals are disconnected from what is the truth in the classroom, this influences effective leadership (Hattie, 2009) and it impacts on evidence-informed decision-making, and misunderstandings and misconceptions develop. Misunderstandings and misconceptions about the out-of-field experience influence the effectiveness of support offered to these teachers. Latham (2009) and Redding (1998) explained that school leaders’ personal relationships with students (Latham), teachers, parents and other stakeholders influence the academic culture of a school. The principal who believes that different needs call for different leadership styles provides leadership strength (Latham). The leadership team should spend a lot of time dealing with staff concerns, quickly identifying and acting upon them (DiPaola, 2003).

6.4.3 Leadership and the purpose of schools

Hattie (2009) indicated that teachers prefer principals who encourage teacher development with a focus on shared interests and teamwork. The general view that principals are becoming business managers ignores the unique purpose of schools, which is to provide an effective teaching and learning environment (Bush, 2008). Novice and inexperienced teachers are blamed for the troubles that develop inside the organisation while the truth is the opposite; the organisation has failed the new teachers (Caldwell, 2009) who are most of the time assigned to out-of-field positions or placed in “hard yard” positions. Caldwell also points out that school leaders and managers share a responsibility to identify and efficiently provide support. However interview information showed that leadership decisions to send out-of-field teacher on professional development programmes are based on the funds available (see section 6.3.2 and 6.4.2) and how permanent these positions turn out to be. I acknowledge effective financial and human resource management does influence safe and secure learning environments (Getkin, 2009), but argue that leadership should shield their most valuable resource, teachers who they have chosen to assign to a specific position, from unaligned or political diversions.
6.4.4 Leadership and decision-making

School leaders who have misconceptions or a misunderstanding of the real-life out-of-field experiences in classrooms wait cautiously in the background when problems arise and often only take action when parent complaints get serious. School leaders struggle to find the balance between responsibilities to improve staff, student and school performance and administration duties (Dimmock, 1999). It is a leadership strategy that leaves out-of-field teachers feeling exposed and vulnerable. Leaders are expected to base their decisions and strategies on clear personal and professional values (Bush, 2008). Some school leaders have perceptions that what parents do not know will not hurt them, however, a school environment consists of a delicate set of interrelationships connecting all stakeholders to form a unique school culture that unites them (Dimmock & Walker, 2005). Effective leadership teams should employ strategies to enhance learning and teaching opportunities with focused observation and evaluation of performance levels (Getkin, 2009) of teachers in out-of-field positions. In schools where the out-of-field teaching impacted teachers and students greatly, the school leaders waited until parents started to complain before they put strategies in place to deal with the situation. The community needs to see the school leader at the front leading with a purpose, working in a facilitative, consultative way according to a distributive leadership model (Getkin, 2009; Latham, 2009).

Teachers and parents involved in the out-of-field teaching practice feel that they are at the wrong end of the stick. They have to manage an experience that developed because of the school leader’s decision to assign an unsuitably qualified teacher to a certain position. While leadership is seen as the single most important component in determining the effectiveness and success of a school, school leaders seem to become too political and self-serving, and plan school strategies to please people instead of basing their decisions on educational needs (Getkin, 2009).

6.4.5 Leadership and valuing staff

The seven schools researched displayed obvious differences in leadership experiences and difficulties for the school leaders. Interview data showed that the different school leader experiences impacted the lived experiences of out-of-field teachers. In the two schools where the leaders were focused on out-of-field teachers’ needs and the problems they experienced in the classroom, the teachers felt valued. In successful schools the leader focuses on curriculum knowledge and practice as well as the area of curriculum development (Latham, 2009). The out-of-field teachers in schools D and G, although in challenging teaching situations, felt that they and their teaching experience mattered. Dimmock and Walker (2005) highlighted the significant implications of social interactions for educational leadership. The social interactions not only influence leadership but it
became clear through interview and observation data that in five out of the seven schools researched school leaders’ perceptions were not connected to the real life experiences of the out-of-field teachers in their schools. Misconceptions and misunderstandings by the school leaders in the five schools added to lived experiences which included complex and stressful teaching and learning environments (see Figures 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3). These complex lived experiences will be discussed in the following chapters.

A principal showing warmth, empathy, reliability, and portraying alertness to staff and their emotions is seen as a good leader (Latham, 2009). In schools where leaders portray attentiveness to staff needs a healthy support network develops around out-of-field teachers. The interview data showed that school leaders are caught up in an ivory tower syndrome, often isolated from what really happens in classrooms, coping with school budgets, resources and interpersonal relations in an effort to develop a healthy professional environment. In school B, C and G principals shared feelings of isolation, mentioning the gap in communication between education departments and them about the out-of-field concern. Early and Jones (2009) underlined the necessity and urgency to provide school leaders with tools to manage schools and the learning environment effectively.

Being part of a healthy professional environment where support is available helps teachers in out-of-field positions to sustain a certain level of effectiveness. Effective school leadership allows broad participation in school decision-making and lessens teachers’ resistance to change (Latham, 2009). Social capital refers to the strength of formal or informal affiliations that initiate connections involving the school, teachers and students to support or be supported by the school (Caldwell, 2009). A strong leader focuses on the development of a culture of strong relationships, self-review, and openness to improve practices (Latham). Distributed leadership includes interrelating individuals, no limits on who takes part in leadership, and relies on expertise of staff (Woods, Bennett, Harvey, & Wise, 2004). Collaboration supports the development of effective teaching habits (Anderson et al., 2009). Inventive school leadership answers the challenge to stimulate staff members to personally assist in developing a shared and most sought after future for the school (Davies & Davies, 2009).

Two of the seven schools researched, schools D and G, had school leaders who displayed specific dispositions towards “growing” people, providing healthy challenges and acknowledging their responsibility to give their out-of-field teachers “tools to make the correct choices” (Principal, School D). They effectively listened to needs and effectively addressed the concerns that really mattered in order to secure a healthy teaching and learning environment in spite of the out-of-field situation in their schools (see Figure 5.2). Effective school leaders display wisdom and lead by developing new skills, capabilities and understandings (Davies & Davies, 2009). A school culture
built on effectiveness and greatness involves an aspiring vision based on reachable criteria, values, and beliefs (Getkin, 2009). In addition to “growing people” the leaders in schools D and G focused extensively on honest, open communication and healthy interpersonal relationships, and these two schools show major differences in how their out-of-field teachers and colleagues experienced the out-of-field situation (see Figure 5.3). Latham (2009) underlined how principals and management teams in successful schools realise that, although students are the core focus, working closely with engaged parents will influence the effectiveness of the learning and teaching process. Innovative school leaders create ways to transform practices in their school but during this process stay connected with practices of colleagues in the wider educational community, while they build personal and professional connections to support the development of new perspectives within the educational environment (Davies & Davies, 2009).

The success of schools depends on their ability to join networks or partnerships to share knowledge, address problems and pool resources (Caldwell, 2009). A successful leadership style is mutually respectful and supportive, positive and empowers teachers through their participation in decision-making (Latham, 2009). In successful schools the management team realises the importance of engaged parents with children at the centre of the school environment (Caldwell; Latham). Transformation and change should have significant and sustained outcomes that ensure success for all students in all settings (Caldwell).

6.5 Summary

Awareness of the meaning of the out-of-field experience for everyday practices, as the research question underlined, assists educational leaders to pay attention to in-depth need analysis of what out-of-field teaching means for effective teaching and learning environments. I came to the conclusion that a previous leadership model I developed (Du Plessis, 2010) is insufficient and needs to be adjusted. The new information offered through this thesis, and specifically in Chapter 6, guided me to argue that school leaders have to be closely connected to staff members in order to be aware of their truths before they can make a proper needs analysis. Only when they are connected or engaged can an open and honest negotiation of needs take place and then the appropriate action can be taken. Again I argue that school leaders who are concerned for their staff will ensure that they add a “follow through” strategy to their leadership action and ensure continuous support from various sources. Emphasis on effective teaching and a stable academic climate in their schools while supporting the development of successful pedagogical strategies has a positive impact on the out-of-field situation (Barlow, 2002).
This chapter revealed that leadership styles play a significant role in the development of a positive and effective teaching and learning environment, especially in relation to out-of-field teaching. This is supported by interview information shared in the previous chapter (see Figure 5.2). These teachers often feel neglected by school leaders and tend to draw more from colleagues and their established interrelationships with other staff members. A supportive, nurturing and caring teaching environment supports these teachers to be confident and creative.

My argument is that novice graduate teachers often find themselves in out-of-field positions because of school management’s decisions about timetable allocations, the impact on their budget and the unwillingness of senior staff to move into “uncomfortable” teaching positions; a leader (E3) shared his view about their reluctance to leave their “feathered nests”. The more experienced teachers are better at coping with an out-of-field position although it remains a complicated situation. Schools and school leaders will greatly benefit from listening to the needs of out-of-field teachers in order to construct an effective learning and teaching environment in spite of out-of-field teaching. Chapter 7 explores the meaning of out-of-field teaching for effective classrooms in order to develop a better understanding of the interrelation between the out-of-field experience and the students, their parents and teachers.
Chapter 7

The Lived Meaning of Out-of-Field Teaching for Effective Classroom Management

“We can sense a weakness. Like sharks [intense], they sense any insecurity and they see that as opportunity ...”

Principal

7.1 Introduction

Teaching outside one’s field of expertise or qualifications is like swimming outside the flags. It is a practice with implications for everyone involved in the experience while the situation poses all sorts of dilemmas. Some might experience severe problems signalling for help to survive, some might be strong enough to survive on their own, while for others the experience might be more serious. The first signs of concern appear in the out-of-field teacher’s classroom management strategies. Jones and Jones (2007) presented the basic requirements of an effective classroom as comprehensive classroom management, pedagogies to develop the best possible learning, and responding to the academic desires of the students. Out-of-field teachers often find themselves in unfamiliar territory where they have to deal with multiple new and unknown circumstances. Teacher quality plays a significant role in the development of students as effective and successful students; teachers’ roles are seen as more influential than students’ home background (Hattie, 2003).

A supportive classroom environment provides students with deep learning opportunities through academic commitment and social support (Jones & Jones, 2007). In order to fully appreciate the implications of out-of-field teaching for effective classrooms, an understanding of expectations about the ideal teacher and the ideal classroom is necessary. Hattie’s (2003) description of expert teachers as practitioners involves a responsibility to provide a clear demonstration of their subject knowledge while they successfully organise and apply that subject knowledge.

This chapter focuses on the expectations of principals, teachers and parents for effective classrooms, followed by their perceptions and lived experiences of classrooms taught by teachers...
who are out-of-field. An in-depth investigation at the implications of out-of-field teaching for effective classrooms, quality teaching and learning through the different lenses of the embedded perceptions of participants fills the gap in the existing knowledge about the out-of-field experience. Insight is offered about the effect out-of-field teaching has on teachers as the “more knowledgeable other” and draws from Nias’ (1996) focal point that the classroom forms the core base of teachers’ self-esteem and fulfilment, putting out-of-field teachers in a vulnerable position of continuous critical self-reflection.

Through the lenses of the 48 participants (educational directors, principals, specialist and out-of-field teachers and parents), this chapter moves into a deeper reflection and understanding of the out-of-field experience inside classrooms. This chapter explores educational leaders’ understanding of the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching to develop a deeper realisation of what it means for the learning environment. Through deeper understanding, effective and evidence informed leadership decisions are possible. Chapter 6 showed leaders often misunderstand the out-of-field experience (see section 6.4.3 and 6.4.4). This chapter investigates the classroom environment and, within this learning “space”, focuses on what out-of-field teaching means for a healthy classroom atmosphere, perceptions about effective teachers and quality teaching — highlighting the lived experiences in an out-of-field classroom “space”. It explores the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching for pedagogies, teacher approaches, relationships and cooperative learning.

7.2 Results: Effective Teaching or Keeping Parents Happy?

The results are offered in three sections. First, the results provide a report on the expectations participants have for a healthy classroom atmosphere. Second, the results report on the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching for effectiveness of teachers and quality teaching in classrooms. Finally, the results offer an in-depth report of the lived experiences in classrooms. This chapter concludes with an exploration of clear differences between the classrooms of specialist teachers and out-of-field teachers and of when the out-of-field teaching becomes a positive experience. There is an expectation that the ideal teacher in the ideal classroom will be managing a learning space that provides students with academic challenges. A parent in school F shared her perceptions of the out-of-field teaching experience: “It must be so overwhelming for a teacher”. The effective classroom as a learning space involves various aspects including the physical space. A parent (C3) agreed that the magnitude of an effective learning environment is: “The physical environment and teaching environment are all factors – the teacher and how she goes about it, the environment as she sets it up ....” A mother (C3) expects her child’s classroom to be well organised in order to support students in reaching their goals and potential.
7.2.1 Expectation: An effective, healthy classroom atmosphere

During interviews, out-of-field teachers and specialist teachers discussed how unsuitably qualified teachers struggle to stay in charge of their classes, which then becomes a problem for neighbouring colleagues. The classroom as a microcosm of the wider community is perceived through different lenses and embedded experiences. A parent (D3) explained: “An effective classroom would be one that’s got lots of different ways in which individuals are treated”.

Teachers’ attitudes and practices direct the atmosphere in classrooms, as a parent (E6) contributed: “The teacher put her love – she’d put a lot of herself into it. The atmosphere was calm”. A parent (C3) explained the importance of pedagogies that cater for students’ needs: “They are being challenged and pushed, and that the kids who are struggling are getting enough supplementary help”. An out-of-field teacher in (D7) agreed: “… the boundaries are set, the routines are habitual, the kids work with a sort of autonomy, independence – feel like they are in charge of things. They are more willing to comply because they’ve had their chance …” A parent (C3) underscored this view: “An ordered environment equals an ordered brain …”. A parent (E4) explains: “Someone teaching in their specialty area will be comfortable – able to make knowledge transmission a lot more interesting, keep the kids engaged”, further underlining the role of the teacher: “He [the teacher] wanted to have a good time. He loved his job … making sure these kids become the best they can be … not going to have any disengaged, troubled kids”.

7.2.2 Perceptions about effective teachers and quality teaching

Perceptions about effective teachers and quality teaching emphasized the significance of a suitably qualified teacher in the classroom. An effective teacher is described as: “The person knows their subject area really well. They work with the highest ability class and the lowest ability class as comfortably as the other. They teach very explicitly” through the lens of the principal in school G. He added: “… they use all of the pedagogies that engage students, they are to the point and honest about their expectations.” An out-of-field teacher (C1) expressed how she perceived an effective teacher to be: “You kind-of are superwoman...” This expressed the effort out-of-field teachers put in to achieve success in the classroom, however interview data showed that the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching affects teacher characteristic that are needed to be effective in the classroom.

The teacher is seen as the creator of the learning environment through adapting appropriate positive practices and interventions (Lyons, Ford, & Arthur-Kelly, 2011). As one parent commented (F2): “Control without screaming – I think they actually need to listen and hear what the children are saying”. Teachers’ beliefs, values and attitudes will influence their teaching characteristics. A parent (B3) explained: “It is all about your ‘heart’ – you need to have a passion or you will lose the
battle”. Dean of Staff (E3) described the school’s most effective teacher: “She’s passionate, she’s really well organised, she’s really enthusiastic. She doesn’t complain; she just gets on with it –.” An awareness of the characteristics that identify an effective teacher facilitates a deeper understanding of the pressure out-of-field teachers experience to reach the same effectiveness or to improve their competence. A principal (F3) shared: “There’s a barrier, the chalk-and-talk teacher don’t know the children in their class – they wouldn’t have a relationship with them”. Out-of-field teachers often fall back on textbook teaching because of the gaps in their subject knowledge, as one out-of-field teacher (A7) noted: “Uncertainty, she develops into this extreme strict teacher. She is so unsure of herself that she doesn’t allow any question out of line … just in case she can’t answer …” Out-of-field teachers find it hard to achieve a balance in their approach to relationships, unfamiliar content knowledge and teaching strategies. Hattie (2009) underlined the important contributions of teachers and mentioned teacher subject matter knowledge, relationships with students and quality teaching as specific contributions. An out-of-field teacher (C1) reflected on personal concerns: “I am probably not firm enough with the kids. I need to be better organised”.

Consistency in the learning and teaching environment provides security and stability. Darling-Hammond (2010b) explained that high turnover rates among unsuitably qualified teachers are not uncommon. She highlighted that the constant replacement of teachers in hard-to-staff schools poses a challenge for students and their achievement, and underlined that consistent learning environments develop students’ confidence to take risks with their learning. A parent (C5) explains: “The kids know they do this and this and this … [gesture with hands] there is security in that for the kids”. Another parent (C3) added: “Definite rules and routine work well. It has to be a comfortable environment for learning”. Once students feel comfortable they develop trust and willingly engage in the classroom and subject content.

7.2.2.1 Due respect …

A parent (C5) shared her different experiences after her son was moved from an out-of-field teacher’s classroom to a specialist teacher’s classroom: “I noticed a big difference, the structure and the way with the kids – they love him and Derrick1 got this respect …” Another parent noted: “The geography teacher receives the most respect because she knows her subject even with the difficult students”. A specialist teacher (E2) shared her beliefs about the role respect plays in the learning environment: “Command respect by being respectful and the way you conduct yourself in a classroom”. Respect supports the successful development of structures necessary for an effective learning environment. Hattie (2009) underlined that in classes where there is more respect for others and self, higher achievement outcomes are possible. Close classroom observations of specialist

1 Pseudonym
experienced teachers and out-of-field teachers in school B highlighted the fact that students respect teachers who project expertise and experience.

Experienced teachers assigned to out-of-field positions cope better with the challenges of these positions than inexperienced out-of-field teachers. One of the out-of-field teachers (A7) explains: “Next year will be better, next year I will be more comfortable with it [the subject].” Another out-of-field teacher (C1) added: “Next year there are lots of things I will do very differently. I struggle to keep up – things that don’t get done”. A participant, seen as a specialist teacher (D1), explained that it took him five years in his current position to move from seeing himself as out-of-field to the point where he perceives himself now as having expertise in the field.

7.2.2.2 Focus on students: Connect, engage and support

The expectations of an ideal classroom with the ideal teacher focus on how students actively engage in the subject content. There is an expectation for productive pedagogies and practices (Lingard et al., 2003) in classrooms. However, most students need their teacher to ignite these active-engagement attitudes. The principal (C6) described how he perceives one of his specialist teachers successfully engaging her students:

“She has that lovely [intense voice] connection with the students and she won’t let them go, she won’t let them wiggle out of their commitment. She got them all on the bus [intense voice] travelling along. There is nobody still sitting at the shelter; everybody is part of the class. The respect for each other... it is just a lovely room to walk into any day”.

During classroom observations, I became aware of the number of disengaged students, the unnecessary talk as well as the unclear instructions from one of the out-of-field teachers (B6). The classroom was dysfunctional because disengaged students started to misbehave and talk over the teacher. He then found it hard to get order and carry on with the lesson. A parent (G1) explained how complex the out-of-field situation becomes, especially with challenging students: “They were a difficult bunch of kids ... she could never capture them ... and it is difficult to judge whether it is because of who they were or maybe they were aggravated by the fact she wasn’t a science teacher”. This is further highlighted by the confession of an out-of-field teacher (E5) about the difficulties she experiences in managing the different needs in the classroom: “... all the needs of the kids and get them to understand things – be engaged. I do struggle with them being engaged the whole time”. A principal (C6) shared her view about the problems developing in an out-of-field teacher’s classroom: “It has a negative impact because of the lack of confidence the students have with their teacher, the lack of engagement they have, the quality or the shape of the lessons”. This suggests a gap between what is expected of effective teachers in the classroom and the realities of the out-of-field experience.
7.2.3 The lived experience in the classroom

The purpose of this section is to explore the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching for productive teaching pedagogies, effective learning and teacher approaches. It reveals commonalities that develop because of the out-of-field lived experiences, for example, feelings of insecurity, disempowerment of at-risk students, strained relationships and feelings of lost opportunities in the classroom were explored. It takes an in-depth look at out-of-field teachers’ approaches within classrooms and what it means for relationships, strategies and dispositions such as confidence within these classrooms. Hattie (2009) underlined the importance of knowing that what the students “do” in the classroom “matters” (p. 37).

7.2.3.1 Meaning for pedagogies and effective learning

The pedagogies teachers practice determine effective classrooms. Hattie (2009) mentioned that “teachers make a difference” (p. 34). This section reports on the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching for pedagogies and effective learning. An out-of-field teacher (G4) explained that her interest and passion for literature made the lived meaning of this out-of-field subject positive and provided her with opportunities to develop the curriculum as well as her love for English. However, the realities the out-of-field teacher has to deal with are explained by an out-of-field teacher (A2) focusing on how she struggled to survive in the classroom: “I was unorganised. I was doing only what was expected because of the various different fields I had to teach. I scratch like a hen, I was like a headless chicken – scratching around all the time”. The Dean of Staff (E3) added what he sees as influential factors: “Teacher confidence. Teachers have got to have a passion for the job”. A specialist teacher (D2) described what is most needed in the class and the additional pressure that teachers face:

Some days – I probably haven’t spoken to some of the kids in the class and that’s really horrible, you haven’t taken that time to stop, spend time with the kids, connect because if they’re not connected they’re not going to achieve”.

During classroom observations (C1), I saw how the teacher comfortably engaged with the well-behaved students but stayed away from three challenging year seven boys. This resulted in the boys not being challenged to engage more in the lesson or to provide higher quality work.

However, in spite of being assigned to out-of-field positions these teachers are still answerable for the success of all the students in the classroom. The focus to have calm and happy students is understandable for developing a healthy learning culture in the school. Darling-Hammond (2010b) stated that students “have little to connect to” (p. 63) in a dysfunctional classroom. But the reality in the out-of-field teacher’s classroom is described by a parent (C5) who shared: “That teacher had a huge, negative impact, kids had issues in her class. A couple of kids
actually ran away ...” The out-of-field classroom puts extra pressure on students. A parent (B2) explained: “The kid who really wants to learn needs to spend more time after school on homework ...” Another parent (E4) added: “The thing that affects my child, and that is why I am upset, he doesn’t feel valued”. The classroom with an out-of-field teacher becomes a challenge as far as time management and unnecessary teacher talk are concerned as a parent (C4) explained: “Six hours at school – SO MUCH [accentuate] time is spent saying, sit down, get your pencils, everybody does this. If you’ve got structure in the class you can use your time to actually do math or writing”. Students are responsive to teachers and are clearly aware when the teacher struggles to manage the classroom structure and the content of the subject, as a parent (B3) explained: “They [students] assess the teacher real quick...real quick”. The students’ perceptions of the teacher influence effective learning. Darling-Hammond (2010b) explained that noncaring school environments impact dropout rates.

7.2.3.1.1 Students perceive teacher insecurities

This section explores how honesty and open communication enhance connectedness and respect between students and teachers. Out-of-field positions put these teachers in complex circumstances where teacher insecurities influence students’ learning. Through interview data displayed in Table 7.1 it seems that the teacher is expected to understand, empower students and react according to the needs of specific students in their classroom in spite of out-of-field assignments. Table 7.1 displays the impact of teacher insecurities through the lenses of principals, out-of-field teachers and parents.

Table 7.1. The lived meaning of out-of-field teaching for teacher insecurities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>How students perceive teacher insecurities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Principals**         | Students can sense a weakness. Like sharks [intense], they sense any insecurity and they see that as opportunity... (School C)  
                       | There’s a definite relationship between your confidence and your ability to manage the classroom. They [students] feel a sense of safety in your classroom, there’s respect when you have the specialisation and the subject knowledge. They see that they are cared for and they enjoy their learning. (School G) |
| **Out-of-field teachers** | Just like this [clicks fingers], they will calculate a situation and they will take over. (A7)  
                           | Kids cotton onto it very quickly – that the teacher is not as bright in that field ... If kids know that a teacher doesn’t really know the stuff, they lose respect and they don’t perform their best either. (F4) |
Feelings of disempowerment: At-risk students

Hattie (2009) discussed the important contribution of teacher openness and fostering of efforts. This section takes a reflective look at the out-of-field classroom and what it means for students with specific needs, the at-risk students in the classroom. The section explores experiences of misconceptions, misunderstood dispositions, development of negative feelings towards learning and the school in relation to out-of-field teachers in classrooms. The term “at-risk” students in general refers to students who are in danger of not completing their schooling successfully; Jones and Jones (2007) explained it involves students who struggle to make successful transitions to becoming productive adults. It is a concern that teachers who are teaching outside their field of qualifications often compound these students’ situations because of their lack of skills and knowledge. Principal (F3) shared a complex situation of an at-risk boy in an out-of-field teacher’s classroom where the teacher was not equipped to handle the situation:

One boy was disrespectful – he was saying things like, ‘I don’t want to be at school, I’m going to do things so that you will expel me. I don’t want to live anymore’. We decided that the best way to handle him would for him to come in the office here and sit down with me. That created something positive in the classroom.

School leadership decided to take a quick-fix approach by removing the boy from the classroom as soon as a classroom management and behaviour concern developed that the teacher could not manage. The impact of out-of-field teachers on students with specific needs is obvious, these teachers often miss cues that would make them aware of specific needs in their classrooms. A parent (F5) shared her experience with her son in an out-of-field teacher’s classroom: “He cries before he goes to school. The environment is not secure, he is slammed. It gets him down because he realizes what needs to be done …” She further explained: “Seeing a classroom do that – he feels isolated. The sub-side of this – this little boy, the classroom bully, a few of the boys now look at him as a martyr – he got away with – where will that end?” A parent (C5) of a boy who has ADHD and who was placed in an out-of-field teacher’s classroom, shared their journey: “There were other dynamics involved in this – something has got to change … They were due to go on a school visit and the teacher said she wouldn’t take him because she said she couldn’t control him”. The truth of the experience was that the at-risk boy suffers because of the out-of-field teacher’s lack of skills and knowledge to manage his behaviour, he was about to be punished, not being allowed to go on a school excursion, because of a situation out of his control. A parent (C5) further explained: “He would be sent out, he spent a lot of time outside the principal’s office”. In addition, a parent (C3) shared her experience with her daughter in an out-of-field teacher’s classroom where things got out of control: “It is really starting to bother her and she is sad not getting the rewards for good classroom behaviour or whatever”. The same parent witnessed the suffering of an autistic girl in
this out-of-field teacher’s classroom (C3) and the change that took place with the girl’s progress when a new specialist teacher arrived:

*It is harder for kids who already have difficulties if the teacher is unsure of what needs to be done. One in particular [mild autistic girl] was sent out of the classroom several times, she wasn’t learning to deal with the classroom situation.*

It is not an easy job to deal with all the needs in the classroom, but out-of-field teachers find it more difficult to deal with complex learning needs which increase when the class size is bigger. I observed two classes at (C7). In one the class size increased, and I observed how an out-of-field teacher (B6) with 35 year 10 students was unable to pay immediate attention to disengaged students with specific needs. This resulted in classroom management concerns. However, I observed another out-of-field teacher in (C7) with a smaller year 7 class who managed to pay attention to most of the students’ needs before problems developed, which resulted in a more content classroom. In the larger student groups the out-of-field teacher experiences mounting pressure to manage students with specific needs in an effective way.

### 7.2.3.2 Meaning for teachers’ approaches

A teacher’s personal approach is influenced by their self-esteem and confidence in the quality of their teaching. Corbett and Norwich (1999) noted that teacher’s “connection” (p.133) reveals an inclusive approach while Hattie (2009) made it clear that students evaluate teachers’ connectedness and effectiveness on the kind of expectations teachers have for their students. A parent (G1) explains her experiences with confident teachers: “*If they can capture kids’ imagination they can get away with murder... kids will listen*”. The focus again turns to the teacher as the one who is responsible for stimulating and engaging students in the lesson, which seems not to be an easy task for out-of-field teachers. This section unpacks the implications the out-of-field teaching practice has for teacher/student relationships with specific focus on what happens inside the classroom when an out-of-field teacher falters. The section then takes a deep look at the tension and stress that develops inside the classroom because of the dysfunctional environment that develops. The loss of learning opportunities inside these classrooms becomes a concern as was clarified by interviews and classroom observations.

#### 7.2.3.2.1 Sacrificed relationships?

Specialist teachers have to assist out-of-field teachers with their classroom management skills. Once teachers establish a reputation about their classroom management and how in charge they are of their subjects, students act upon this reputation. Table 7.2 displayed the impact out-of-field
teaching has on teacher/student relationships through the lenses of parents, specialist and out-of-field teachers.

Table 7.2. The lived meaning of out-of-field teaching for classroom relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Out-of-field experience and relationships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Specialist teachers</strong></td>
<td>If they’re not suitably qualified they are not confident in handling a whole class. (D2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The management issue is huge, because they don’t have the resources that they might have in their own subject area, and knowledge of what you can do with those lower ability kids. (E2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Out-of-field teachers</strong></td>
<td>Uncertainty about your subject – when it is a struggle you get a difficult teacher … (A3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Next door to my classroom we have the music teacher who takes maths – he’s just at the front, a kid writes the example and does an answer on the board. The kids were disruptive. (G5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parents</strong></td>
<td>The teacher was not coping. She sat at her table. She never moved around the classroom. She was teaching a class of boys and they just ran amuck in the class. There was just no control. (D7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It just didn’t seem as if she had control over the class. My son needs guidelines, boundaries. I noticed the kids were milling around, they were shouting at each other. She couldn’t get the control … (C5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Classroom observations of seven out-of-field teachers revealed that these teachers do not have relaxed and natural teacher/student relationships, especially with students who display specific needs. During close observations it became clear that out-of-field teachers either were extremely strict (D7) or decided not to confront difficult students (C1 and B6). They are inconsistent in how they react to students and do not move around in their classes, they often stay behind their desk or in the front of the classroom. A parent with an at-risk boy in such a class explained how this sacrificed relationships, where the teacher loses control of the students and the subject, because all the participants in the specific classroom suffer, relationships disintegrate and not a lot of effective learning takes place.

7.2.3.2.2 Losing the grip: “... the cart before the horse ...”

The lack of connectedness, skills, content knowledge and restricted knowledge of the subject curriculum has an influence on productive teaching strategies (Lingard et al., 2003). An out-of-field teacher (D7) explained how she struggled to manage an already complex classroom situation without the necessary knowledge: “There was violence, spitting and biting. They were a pretty full on lot – it really felt like the cart was before the horse ...” Insecurities within the teacher/student relations develop because of the out-of-field experience. The correlation between the quality of
instruction and student achievements is widely recognised (Hattie, 2009). Obidah and Howard (2005) mentioned that there is a growing need for well-qualified teachers who are self-assured to invest in the academic interests of their students. A parent (G1) explained: “Her lack of ability was impacting negatively on my child, he wanted to learn and he couldn’t.” The parent added: “It manifested itself as an academic problem. Her classroom management was non-existent.” Out-of-field teachers tend to leave difficult sections of subjects uncovered or without in-depth explanations of concepts and theories. A parent (A5) explained: “They don’t teach. They do not explain the work thoroughly. You can’t point a finger, their files and administration are perfect”. A parent (A6) added: “My child said, “This lady struggles to complete the exercises”” while a parent (A5) supported the statement: “They are not competent, they struggle to cover the work in the time available.”

Students in out-of-field teachers’ classrooms often deal with multifaceted distractions and content issues, adding pressure to an already full workload and challenging circumstances. An out-of-field teacher (G5) explained the reason why these teachers find it easier to stay focused on textbook teaching: “I would explain something and they’ll go, ‘Miss, that’s wrong’. I’ll stumble and then they’ll all sort-of like gang up and like ‘How can you teach math if you’re not even a math teacher’”. An out-of-field teacher (G5) explained how difficult it is to maintain control: “It does boil over if you are not comfortable with the content, you’re not confident and they’ll [students] muck up.” The workload of out-of-field teachers increases in an effort to keep up with what is expected from them according to the subject curriculum, an out-of-field teacher (C7) claimed that she spent Sundays at school in an effort to get control over the subject. Out-of-field teachers try to prepare better, plan more thoroughly, and work harder in order to feel confident in delivering the subject knowledge.

7.2.3.2.3 Dysfunctional classrooms: Embodied experiences, uncertainty tension and stress

Confidence impacts effective teaching and the quality of learning. Teacher confidence creates a relaxed atmosphere in the classroom. The principal (F3) shared: “Someone who’s not confident in what and how they’re teaching, have a regimented classroom.” A specialist teacher (B5) explained the out-of-field experience: “They don’t cope, they don’t like the subject, and they don’t want to be in the situation, they don’t have confidence. The kids just carry on with their own work and immediately a discipline crisis develops”. An out-of-field teacher (B6) shared his experiences about maintaining confidence in the classroom: “It can be a problem for teachers who do not have confidence in their subject skills to interact with the learners in any way that concerns the subject – their lack of subject knowledge might be exposed or scrutinized.” It is clear that out-of-field teachers’ confidence levels are related to their background knowledge of their subject (Hobbs,
It empowers teachers to effectively manage the subject content and their classroom. A specialist teacher (B4) described the experience:

*You are not afraid that the students will ask tricky questions, you are comfortable to admit that you need to find out and come back with an answer. But an out-of-field teacher is so focused just on what he had prepared for today – ‘Please don’t ask me anything that I don’t know’.*

Teaching a subject outside their field appears to influence the out-of-field teacher’s attitude towards these subjects; in addition these teachers often lose interest in these subjects. Assigning teachers in positions outside their interest, passion and qualifications influences their teaching experience, as Dean of Staff (E3) explained: “They’re just not happy. They’re not happy at school and they start to have problems in the classroom.” An out-of-field teacher (D1) shared his experience: “... the teacher is frustrated and it impacts on the kids’ learning, they switch off and they are going to play up –”. An out-of-field teacher (E5), described how the students add tension and stress in the classroom: “At first they were – ‘let’s see how far we can push her’. And I was screaming, ‘ALL RIGHT, SIT DOWN. WE ARE NOT LEAVING UNTIL YOU GUYS CAN SORT IT OUT’ [loud voice] ‘...’” Parents often have compassion for an out-of-field teacher’s struggle but their children’s learning is their priority, as a parent (E4) explained:

*I feel sorry for the teacher. If a teacher is screaming at the kids, it breaks my heart for the teacher, it’s just so sad. They’ve [students] got a de-incentive to do any more work, it is just too hard, ‘The teacher doesn’t like me [the student] anyway, whatever’.*

Once students experience disconnectedness with their teacher it becomes hard to develop an effective teaching and learning environment and capture their attention during these lessons.

The classroom climate is closely connected to the quality of teacher/student and peer relationships (Jones & Jones, 2007). Interview data showed that out-of-field teachers often do not have the confidence to invest in building special relations with students, as explained by an out-of-field teacher (G5): “It does boil over if you are not comfortable with the content, I’ll stumble and then they’ll all sort-of like gang up and like “How can you teach maths if you’re not even a maths teacher”. Classroom observations (D7 and C6) indicated that unsure out-of-field teachers keep a distance between themselves and the students. These out-of-field teachers (D7) were not confident to move around and “own” the entire classroom space. They stayed behind their desks and mostly at one spot in the front of the classroom, while students in the back of the classroom were disengaged and not following their instructions. They did not walk toward students who asked questions and sometimes looked away when answering questions. Table 7.3 displayed the embodied experiences in out-of-field teachers’ classrooms. A dysfunctional classroom with strained relationships influences students’ realisation of their learning potential and the internalisation of new knowledge (Darling-Hammond, 2010b).
### Table 7.3. The embodied experience in dysfunctional classrooms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>The embodied experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Principals** | *Often there are three or four kids dictating the class instead of the teacher.* *(E3)*  
*A classroom that is rioting, not rioting but you know, the children are not learning, they [teachers] don’t know that that’s happening, so you have to actually help them to understand that, that’s not really what should be happening...”* “People [teachers] are scared, they’re not confident enough to be able to manage their classroom effectively by catering to the two ends and they just go straight to the middle.” *(School F)* |
| **Specialist teachers** | *There is a problem with interacting in the classroom, just not an understanding of how to relate to a different age ... A pretty disturbed class, it harmed children. They were a difficult class, some of the children had been taken out but it didn’t seem to calm ... it seemed to escalate ... unfortunately* *(C2)*  
*You feel for the students because they need a positive classroom experience to learn – to their full potential.* *(D2)*  
*There is a problem with interacting in the classroom, just not an understanding of how to relate to a different age ... A pretty disturbed class, it harmed children. They were a difficult class, some of the children had been taken out but it didn’t seem to calm ... it seemed to escalate ... unfortunately* *(C2)*  
*You feel for the students because they need a positive classroom experience to learn – to their full potential.* *(D2)*  
*There is a problem with interacting in the classroom, just not an understanding of how to relate to a different age ... A pretty disturbed class, it harmed children. They were a difficult class, some of the children had been taken out but it didn’t seem to calm ... it seemed to escalate ... unfortunately* *(C2)*  
*You feel for the students because they need a positive classroom experience to learn – to their full potential.* *(D2)* |
| **Parents** | *When they play up they get sent out ... they don’t really deal with the issue in the class because it disrupts everybody else, how long can you carry on sending kids out of your class?* *(G1)*  
*In the first term I witnessed the disconnectedness in the classroom – nobody listened and everybody shouted.* *(C5)*  
*The most prominent problem is children’s attentiveness and lack of self-controlled behaviour – the children tend to come across ... unfocussed.* *(E6)*  
*There is a problem with interacting in the classroom, just not an understanding of how to relate to a different age ... A pretty disturbed class, it harmed children. They were a difficult class, some of the children had been taken out but it didn’t seem to calm ... it seemed to escalate ... unfortunately* *(C2)*  
*You feel for the students because they need a positive classroom experience to learn – to their full potential.* *(D2)*  
*When they play up they get sent out ... they don’t really deal with the issue in the class because it disrupts everybody else, how long can you carry on sending kids out of your class?* *(G1)*  
*In the first term I witnessed the disconnectedness in the classroom – nobody listened and everybody shouted.* *(C5)*  
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*There is a problem with interacting in the classroom, just not an understanding of how to relate to a different age ... A pretty disturbed class, it harmed children. They were a difficult class, some of the children had been taken out but it didn’t seem to calm ... it seemed to escalate ... unfortunately* *(C2)*  
*You feel for the students because they need a positive classroom experience to learn – to their full potential.* *(D2)*  
*When they play up they get sent out ... they don’t really deal with the issue in the class because it disrupts everybody else, how long can you carry on sending kids out of your class?* *(G1)*  
*In the first term I witnessed the disconnectedness in the classroom – nobody listened and everybody shouted.* *(C5)*  
*The most prominent problem is children’s attentiveness and lack of self-controlled behaviour – the children tend to come across ... unfocussed.* *(E6)* |

The classroom as a learning space has an important effect on students’ understanding and construction of what learning spaces are and should be, especially in younger age students.

#### 7.2.3.2.4 Opportunities lost in space ...

A principal (G2) explained how valuable teaching and learning opportunities were lost because of the out-of-field experience: *“There’s so many things that they don’t have. The most frustrating thing is the teacher can’t deal with the difficult children...”* Students who pose the most challenges for out-of-field teachers are often the students who urgently need effective intervention and support, but the out-of-field teaching situation causes lost opportunities. A school’s effectiveness is compromised when they have a couple of teachers teaching outside their field of expertise. Dean of Staff (E3) explained: *“A couple of teachers – they’re not handling it. They allow the kids to see that they’re getting upset and kids are quite ruthless, they are allowing their emotions to come in and the kids feed off it.”* He further explained how the school lost students because parents were unhappy with the situation in classrooms. An out-of-field teacher (A2) added: *“You are uncertain, you don’t really know what you are supposed to accomplish and you struggle to control the situation and it is then when your ‘personality’ changes.”* An out-of-field teacher
(A7) explained: “You don’t want them to ask too many questions, maybe they will ask something I don’t know.” During classroom observation I experienced a novice out-of-field teacher (B6), not knowing exactly what to do during the lesson. I witnessed how a lesson transformed into chaos, with the out-of-field teacher unable to bring order back. I left the room saddened by the lost opportunity for learning, the level of dysfunction and the damaged relationships. The students demonstrated no respect for the teacher or his attempts to get control over the lesson again.

Dysfunctional classrooms cause valuable learning opportunities to be overlooked because the focus and energy are directed into classroom management challenges. Darling-Hammond (2010b) described it as environments where teachers and students find it hard to get to know each other. A parent (C4) explained how students who are not demanding attention are often overlooked by unsuitably qualified teachers: “She wouldn’t have time to even nearly ... because my son ... he doesn’t distract other kids but he just doesn’t concentrate ... he perhaps just got ignored ...” A worried parent (F5) added: “My son is a very quiet and conscientious boy. He tends to get under the radar...he needs to be challenged and stimulated ...” This situation is clarified by a parent (C3): “An average performer doesn’t really ... they cope ... they just coast along ...” The implications of lost opportunities in the classroom are underlined by a parent (F5): “She wasn’t confident to tackle problems. She leaves them. Kids in ‘Extension’ are teaching the kids that don’t understand – I don’t trust those kids to teach my child ... it is not fair ....” A parent (G1) explained the concept that out-of-field teachers try to get appreciation from the students in different ways: “Maybe they are trying to be friends with the kids rather than teachers ...” I have observed a number of lessons presented by out-of-field teachers, young inexperienced teachers want to compensate for the lack of control they have over the subject through familiarity and over friendliness with their students. Classroom observations confirm that of out-of-field teachers lack assertive mannerisms because of their self-doubt and lack of confidence, with implications for different, effective pedagogies in the classroom.

7.2.4 Cooperative learning: A fatality – the black sheep?

The benefits of cooperative learning are vested in the social interaction of students as they actively engage in asking and answering questions while they move to deeper learning (Gillies & Boyle, 2008). Out-of-field teachers admit they do not feel confident enough to incorporate cooperative learning strategies. Darling-Hammond (2010b) pointed out that not only are students impacted by unsuitably qualified teachers but that these teachers also “fall behind”. This section explores the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching for cooperative learning opportunities.
The principal (F3) explained how out-of-field teachers are scared to take risks in their classrooms: “They use worksheets as an easy way out, these teachers are too scared that children talk to each other, to let the children discuss things and come up with group ideas, they’d rather have a nice quiet classroom”. Out-of-field teachers tend to avoid learning activities that include cooperative learning strategies and they struggle to manage group work in an out-of-field subject. While they acknowledge that cooperative learning activities benefit learning, their lack of pedagogical content knowledge makes it difficult to manage. Gillies (2002) underlined the benefits of small-group activities such as learning skills like helpfulness, learning to listen to peers and spending more time on the learning activity. Out-of-field teachers find it hard or even impossible to manage small groups in unfamiliar subjects. An out-of-field teacher (A2) explained: “It feels as if everything is rumbling. While I try to settle the one group, the rest of the groups get out of hand, I just couldn’t handle it. I just couldn’t, I still can’t do it!”

Out-of-field teachers do not have the subject confidence to challenge students appropriately and they lack skills to involve students in constructive interaction during these lessons. An out-of-field teacher (A7) shared her experiences: “It can be a lot of chaos if you don’t know what you are doing with the groups. It can be a major, major chaotic situation”. Cooperative learning involves teachers demonstrating skills that challenge students’ thinking, reasoning and learning (Gillies & Boyle, 2005) which seems to be problematic for out-of-field teachers. In some situations these teachers developed an adverse attitude towards cooperative learning, making it the least favourite or “black sheep” of classroom pedagogies out-of-field teachers explore and incorporate in their teaching. An out-of-field teacher (A2) explains: “I am totally against it – I can’t do it! We are supposed to do a lot of cooperative learning in this subject but I don’t do it!” She was adamant: “When I go back to my own field again ... I would know exactly –.” She admitted: “I have tried but more than one day I felt that I could burst into tears, I didn’t know how to do groups ...” Awareness of these concerns gives school leaders an opportunity to provide support to avoid dysfunctional and stressful learning environments.

7.2.5 The difference: An out-of-field teacher and a specialist teacher

I observed the classrooms of seven out-of-field teachers and five specialist teachers. I observed the same group of year 10 students with a specialist science teacher and then a language lesson with an out-of-field teacher in School B. The students were content to be challenged by the specialist teacher. She gave clear instructions and engaged all the students during question and answer time; she was in control of the subject, the students, and the classroom and made optimal use of the lesson and instruction time. In the out-of-field teacher’s classroom a huge amount of instruction time was spent on unnecessary talk and trying to get the students to follow instructions. I
was amazed by how different these students’ responses were with these two teachers. Their behaviour underwent a radical transformation while walking from a specialist teacher’s classroom towards a struggling out-of-field teacher’s classroom. I observed the same teacher in a “hallway” conversation with the deputy head of the school, in tears. Afterwards the deputy turned to me and said: “This guy is not going to make it”. The differences in specialist teachers’ classrooms in comparison with out-of-field teachers’ classrooms are also clear through the experiences and perceptions of participants shared through interviews. A teacher (A3) who teaches one subject in her field of expertise and one subject outside her field of qualification shared: “You handle the students in your own subject much better than the students in the subject outside your field, because you have more patience in your own subject.” She added: “The management of the other subject is not so good, you struggle to do preparation, because it is not you … it is not what you really want to do …” She clarified factors that intensify her lived experience: “You don’t feel 100% prepared for that class and then you have 60 students in front of you. I don’t know – it is a complicated situation …” A specialist teacher (B4) highlighted an apparent difference: “He appears uncertain, there is a lot of disciplinary issues in his classroom. There is an ‘I don’t care’ attitude.” An out-of-field teacher (A3) underlined these teachers’ concerns:

*My accounting class is small, I do the teaching, they do their work, we complete the assignments together… there’s no problem, but when it comes to Life Orientation [out-of-field subject] it is just chaos … absolute chaos. There are 50 desks in the room and they fill it up …*

It is clear that school leaders’ decisions about the class size and the space exacerbate the out-of-field situation for this teacher. A parent (C5) who had experience of her ADHD son in an out-of-field class and then being moved to a specialist teacher’s classroom shared: “I came in for groups [volunteer support], the kids were shouting, chanting almost a football chant – she [out-of-field teacher] didn’t do anything. She was marking something, the kids were running around in the room doing whatever they like.” The parent explained the difference when her child was moved to a specialist teacher’s classroom. A parent (E6) shared: “The difference is the class is more settled. Often with your out-of-field teacher the class is less secure whereas a class with an in-field teacher thrives. A class that doesn’t have a teacher within their field seems to digress”. The principal (B1) declared: “A huge difference in discipline.” A concerned parent (C5) shared: “Screaming, high pitch raised voice – Derrick made a comment because he noticed the difference between Mr. S and that class, he said Mr. S never shouts, he is calm, he just gives us a look …” Out-of-field teachers’ teaching characteristics change because of their out-of-field position. A parent (E6) explained the difference in pedagogies adopted by specialist and out-of-field teachers: “Within their field, they can push the subject, and teach what’s got to be taught. If they’re out of their field it’s hard to push the kids, especially at the beginning because they might not know what is – [long silence]”.

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Although the out-of-field experience puts constraints on teachers in these positions, some of them manage effective teaching and healthy classroom practices in spite of the out-of-field experience.

7.2.6 Out-of-field teaching: Can it be a positive lived experience?

The thesis discloses complex lived experiences in relation to out-of-field teaching but it also searches for the rewarding lived experiences out-of-field teachers discussed, as it reveals valuable information towards a better understanding. Three out-of-field teachers shared their successes and positive lived experiences in school A. An out-of-field teacher (A7) is adamant that her personality type, positive outlook, love for students and resilience are the reasons for her success. An out-of-field teacher in school C (C1) mentioned that she copes because she respects the students’ needs, she knows the parents and she works really hard on her trust-relationship with the students while another out-of-field teacher (G4) mentioned that although she is not suitably qualified to teach English, she has a passion for language and a real interest in literature. She further explains that she makes an effort to know her students’ personal interests and their personal journey while she focuses on interpersonal relationships and a good rapport with her students. A principal (B1) shared: “A teacher who comes prepared, who has control in the classroom – teaching can take place.” An out-of-field teacher (G4) further shared her positive strategies: “I don’t yell, I don’t shout. I try not to overly dominate them, pretty soft and sincere, pretty caring. I get to know them well”. An out-of-field teacher (G4) shared the impact of a positive environment: “I love it here. It’s a small school, they like having caring teachers and you can be successful here.” She explained: “I’ve seen people that haven’t been but I think if you’re generally interested in helping the kids, assisting them and invest more into them, they pick up on it”. An out-of-field teacher (A4) adds: “When they see you work hard, you are in control and you do your thing with the subject ... kids are aware, they realise that you are the one that helps them to successfully complete the year ...”

7.3 Discussion

The interview data indicated clear expectations for healthy classroom environments while it also showed misunderstandings of the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching and what it means for these expectations. The interpretation of the data helps to explain how expectations of the ideal teacher in the ideal classroom are influenced by the out-of-field experience. Lingard et al. (2003) highlighted that a sense of efficacy is demonstrated when teachers manage to construct a space in which others want to be. They underlined the need for teachers to be fully engaged and to be connected to the students. The discussion highlights the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching in relation to being the knowledgeable other, incorporating classroom pedagogies and collaboration in the learning space.
7.3.1 “The more knowledgeable other”: “I let them decide the rules”

An out-of-field teacher (E5) explained how she allowed the students to decide what the rules in a specific out-of-field subject are because it is not her area of expertise. The out-of-field experience transforms the knowledgeable adult into an uncertain classroom leader struggling to create a healthy learning atmosphere however, Lyons et al. (2011) claimed that the classroom atmosphere depends on the effectiveness of teachers to satisfy students’ needs. Lingard et al. (2003) highlighted the teacher’s role and practices in the prospect of effective schooling and students’ learning. Fulfilling this role appears to get more complicated when teachers are assigned to out-of-field positions with the problem being to develop it to its full potential. Teachers are perceived as fulfilling a dispersed leadership role, recognising that teacher practices impact quality education (Lingard et al.). Developing effective classrooms demands commitment from teachers, while it sets the stage for effective teaching and learning to take place (Lyons et al.). Out-of-field teachers feel out-of-place and out-of-depth, with implications for their effective classroom management strategies. Jones and Jones (2007) claimed that teachers who model self-control, respectful interaction and clear requests with students and their parents successfully prompt students to make the proper choices.

7.3.2 Classroom pedagogies: “I can’t connect it all”

The out-of-field experience has an impact on the confidence of teachers and how they control the teaching space. Gillies and Boyle (2006) emphasised that teachers need to construct classroom environments where students are challenged and they constructively interact during these learning activities. Out-of-field teachers tend to restrict discussions about the out-of-field subject because they fear questions for which they do not know the answers. Lingard et al. (2003) suggested that school leaders need to give attention to teacher support in order to enhance productive pedagogies. This becomes an even bigger need when teachers are in out-of-field positions. Lyons et al. (2011) highlighted that structured classrooms provide an opportunity for quality learning to take place, since such an environment creates a sense of belonging, respectful relationships and freedom to take risks. Lingard et al. refer to productive pedagogies employed by teachers as a link to human capital development with a vision for the future and not only what happens presently in the classroom. An out-of-field teacher in school C managed her classroom by sending an attention seeking boy out. My argument is that this approach resulted in the boy losing teaching and learning opportunities on a continuous basis while the real problem, the teacher’s expertise, was not addressed. The out-of-field experience influences productive pedagogies because of the gap in “knowing” how and what needs to be done. Lingard et al. claimed that school leaders experience teachers’ practices as the most significant school level variable in students’ outcome and in developing good, effective
schools. This perception gives them then the responsibility to develop strategies around the out-of-field experience to provide options for support and collaboration.

7.3.3 Collaboration: “I would not have survived without them”

Out-of-field teachers rely on the support of colleagues to develop strategies for effective classrooms, but these teachers discussed collaboration inside the classroom as a concern. The intellectual performance and motivation to engage students is entrenched in teacher/student relationships (Jones & Jones, 2007). Out-of-field teachers find it hard to build a positive rapport with students. A fear of losing control develops because of fragile teacher/student trust relationships and results in a hesitance to take risks with cooperative learning opportunities. Gillies and Boyle (2005) emphasised the influential role teachers play in effective cooperative learning; their explicit suggestions about the types of thinking they want students to use in their groups directs the success of the experience. Out-of-field teachers shy away from “noisy” learning activities and try to be safe with textbook exercises or worksheets and this hampers effective classrooms. A study by Gillies (2002) claims that cooperative learning provides students with learning benefits such as successfully working cooperatively together, enhancing emotional well-being and the ability to adjust according to different needs in the group. Turning focus towards teachers, Gillies and Boyle acknowledged that teachers have the capacity to create learning opportunities where students can collaborate, share and learn new ways of interpretation. Teachers have the capacity to stimulate expression of opinions within the cooperative learning environment, which puts the meaning of the out-of-field experience in the spotlight.

7.4 Summary

The chapter offered different perspectives on the implications of the out-of-field experience for meaningful teaching and learning, while it addressed misconceptions about the experience in primary and secondary schools. Social changes in communities pose more challenges for the teacher’s responsibilities in the classroom, with research underlining the important role schools and teachers play in making a significant difference in the lives of students (Jones & Jones, 2007). The chapter acknowledged that some out-of-field teachers experience a sense of accomplishment while they manage the challenges of unfamiliar subjects and year levels. While the thesis explores a deeper understanding of the lived experiences, the ability of some teachers to cope better in out-of-field positions adds understanding and insight to the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching. The interview data and close observations showed that interest and passion for an out-of-field subject or year level with additional teaching experience can make a difference in the lived experiences.
In addition to the above, the chapter developed an awareness of the repercussions and misconceptions of out-of-field teaching practices and what it means for effective classrooms. In order to move to an in-depth understanding of the influence unsuitably qualified teachers have on quality teaching and learning, the thesis investigates what the out-of-field experience means for the behaviour of teachers and their students. The next chapter offers new information about teacher and student behaviour from inside classrooms through three case studies.
Chapter 8

The Lived Meaning of Out-of-Field Teaching for Teacher and Student Behaviour

It’s hard being next door – I’m not sure how things got off to such a bad start from a behavioural view. I’m glad that they are not my kids. I wanted to keep my children away from them –.

Specialist teacher

8.1 Introduction

Teachers influence the atmosphere in classrooms. Carroll, Forlin and Jobling (2003) noted that teachers’ thinking and an attitude that values each individual, while attending to specific needs, influence the atmosphere and social culture of classrooms. Behavioural issues in classrooms influence effective teaching and learning (Huberty, 2013; Rogers, 2011a). Rogers (2011a) noted that in an average class 10–15 per cent of students present with attention-distracting behaviours. Students with specific learning needs are dependent on skilled teachers to effectively manage and guide these behavioural needs. A specific classroom atmosphere can cause anxiety in students (Huberty, 2013) and teachers. Neer (1990) noted that anxiety is evident in several kinds of behaviour. Teachers leave the teaching profession because of working conditions, their unpreparedness for high demanding fields like maths and science and their experiences with student behaviour (Darling-Hammond, 2010b; Ingersoll 2001c; Zepeda, 2006). I argue that out-of-field teachers are less confident to deal with complicated behaviour issues than their suitably qualified colleagues with implications for effective teaching and learning environments.

The previous chapter explored the influence of out-of-field experiences on classroom management strategies. This chapter investigates and unpacks a deeper layer of the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching regarding behaviour in out-of-field teachers’ classrooms. In this chapter I further argue that the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching poses behaviour management challenges for these teachers for behaviour in relation to dysfunctional learning spaces, disruptive behaviour in classrooms and the influence it has on at-risk students in out-of-field teachers’ classrooms. Aware of Darling-Hammond’s (2010b) statement that there is a culture of teaching behind closed doors I decided to do close classroom observations with voluntary participants in
additions to interviews. In the present chapter, I move inside the classrooms of out-of-field teachers to obtain a deeper understanding of the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching in relation to student and teacher behaviour.

This chapter draws on the classroom observations of twelve teachers, five specialist teachers and seven out-of-field teachers as well as interviews with principals, specialist and out-of-field teachers and parents. This broad base provides substantial information on behaviour management as a specific unit of meaning in the thesis. Detailed close observation data from three specific case studies are offered to illustrate the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching for behaviour in classrooms. The case studies were chosen because they can represent out-of-field teachers in high, primary and pre-primary schools (two public and one independent school). They include a novice male teacher, a novice female and an experienced teacher currently in an out-of-field position. Additionally the cases represent one teacher from South Africa, and two from Australia (from two different states).

Smith et al. (2010) noted that bolder phenomenological designs offer case studies which “generates rich and particular accounts” (p. 52) of real life experiences while they prompt a new appreciation of problematic experiences. The ontological stance of close classroom observation enables the thesis to move to the next layer of understanding. The phenomenological approach provides the researcher with the opportunity to closely observe the reality in out-of-field and specialist teachers’ classrooms while the ontological stance supports a close observation of the real-life world of out-of-field teachers’ classrooms. These case studies focus on out-of-field teachers’ behaviour and their students’ behaviour and what it means for classrooms. The transnational investigation provides opportunities to visit schools in very different school environments with very different leadership models that support a fuller understanding of the lived experience. This chapter adopts an ontological approach to offer the real-life experiences which were revealed through close classroom observations. The ontological approach supported my engagement in classroom observations as part of exploring the real-life experiences in classrooms across cultures. I incorporate a wide array of information, for example, classroom observation of specialist teachers, to ensure that interpretations are cross-validated and triangulated through a diversity of methods (Dall’Alba, 2009; Moustakas, 1994). As suggested by Smith et al. (2010) the chapter triangulated the Case Study information with data from interview responses of different participants. Looking at the behaviour issues through different lenses validated the information offered.

This chapter developed in response to the overwhelming data that emerged about specific behaviour concerns while exploring the research question, what is the impact of the out-of-field experience on classroom management and interaction between teachers and students and ‘meaning
making in classrooms? Darling-Hammond (2010b) commented that schools have a responsibility to provide “good teaching” and support “powerful learning” (p. 324); dysfunctional learning environments are stressors causing anxiety (Huberty, 2013) and teachers should reduce anxiety in classrooms as it creates barriers to learning (Hattie, 2009). Teachers’ behaviours in classrooms influence students’ emotions and attitudes. Unsuitably qualified teachers find it difficult to manage unfamiliar subjects and the students’ needs. Carroll, Baglioni, Houghton, and Bramston (1999) suggest that principals, teachers and support staff go to great lengths to manage and overcome troublesome behaviour with their management strategies, but less attention is paid to pro-active interventions and attention to what might trigger these behavioural issues. I argue that out-of-field experiences aggravate tension and behavioural incidents in classrooms.

8.2 Revisit Literature: First, Put your own Oxygen Mask on and then …

Roffey (2004) suggests that teachers need to put their own “oxygen” masks on first by critically reflecting on their own values, motivations, perceptions and emotional literacy, and then focussing on the students in their class. According to Curtiss Williams (2009), when out-of-field teachers understand their own needs and concerns, they can relate to expectations in the teaching environment. Hobbs (2012) discussed the dilemma out-of-field teachers are faced with in reconstructing their identity and practice in an out-of-field position. Uncertainties about their identity develop into confidence and anxiety concerns which are discussed in full in this chapter. Although teachers often experience anxiety (Keavney & Sinclair, 1978), it is important to project an image of control and clear expectations of cooperation while their classroom leadership demands respect, self-control and humanity towards the students (Rogers, 2011a). Sato (2006) proposed that emotional support for teachers who experience difficulties in classrooms should not be ignored during the development of their practice.

Shulman (2006) regards teacher support as a “social contract” (p. 187); I argue in this chapter that the out-of-field teaching practice influences teacher and student behaviour and puts pressure on effective teaching and learning environments. I reflect on unsuitably qualified teachers being left to “sink or swim” while they spend valuable instruction time on behaviour management issues. Darling-Hammond (2010b) noted that well-qualified teachers make a difference, especially when students fail to achieve aims. Carroll et al. (1999) highlight concerns about individual student development, comparing at-risk and not at-risk students with a specific focus on young students. My argument is that out-of-field teachers find it hard to control and manage an unfamiliar subject; this dilemma raises specific concerns about the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching for at-risk students with specific behavioural needs.
Rogers’ (2011a) noted that students are able to sum up how confident and able teachers are by how teachers conduct themselves while managing behaviour and their teaching. This chapter explores the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching for the confidence with which teachers address behaviour within classrooms. Teacher confidence develops when teachers are well-prepared for lessons and know what they are going to teach (Rogers). Students sense specific characteristics of teachers, such as relaxed body language and a true concern with students’ welfare and their learning (Rogers). A confident, composed teacher influences students’ compliance during sensitive interactions, including students who are sometimes indirectly part of the underlying tension in the class (Rogers, 2011a). The three case studies offered in this chapter reveal the interrelationship between out-of-field lived experiences and behavioural concerns.

8.3 Results

The following case studies include one from South Africa, and two from Australia. The two case studies in Australia were taken from different states. Each case study provides a detailed biographical history of the participant, interview responses as well as responses from their principals. The case studies are followed by interview responses about the lived experiences of parents in relation to behaviour concerns in out-of-field teachers’ classrooms.

8.3.1 Case studies

The first case introduces Coby, a novice male teacher from South Africa who stated that he wants to make a difference through teaching. In the second case Amani, a mature experienced female teacher from Australia in an out-of-field position shared her lived experiences. The third case tells about the lived experiences of Casyla, a novice ambitious female teacher from Australia who was assessed by her school leaders as an effective teacher and, as a result of her competence, was asked to teach pre-primary students although she was unsuitably qualified for the position.
8.3.1.1 Case Study 1: Coby\textsuperscript{2} in a secondary school position

Biographical history

Coby is a novice, male out-of-field teacher in his second year of teaching in South Africa. He was assigned to out-of-field subjects in his first and second year of teaching. It is his first year at school B, a multicultural public secondary school. He is qualified as a science and biology teacher but is currently teaching languages, Afrikaans, English and Physical Education. The school underwent major transformations, from a school with a single language as instruction language to a dual medium, multi-cultural school. Coby lacks confidence and verbalised his doubt about being a teacher. Coby has to teach year 8 and year 10 students in a language other than his mother tongue. Class sizes hover between 35 and 40 multi-cultural students. Interview detail (B6) of one-on-one close discussions on more than one occasion, email contact and a reflection Coby wrote about his lived experience in out-of-field positions at two schools. Close classroom observations on more than one occasion, with different student cohorts (B6, observation 1 and 2) with year 10 and year 8 students, provide a deeper understanding of Coby’s lived experiences.

Classroom observation 1

I was accompanied by the deputy principal to Coby’s classroom. On our way to this class, I met Coby for the first time in the hallway just as he emerged from the gents’ rest room. His eyes were red and filled with tears. He approached the deputy and I moved away to allow them a private conversation. After a quick discussion between them, in which he nodded his head several times, he left for his classes. The deputy turned to me with the words “This guy is not going to make it”.

Coby allowed the year 10 students to stand outside the classroom for a long time while he tried to organise himself inside. It looked as if he was reluctant to start with the lesson. He left them standing outside his classroom until a lot of noise erupted. He then opened the door, turned around, without greeting the students and walked back to his table. He kept his back towards the students. They entered the classroom in a disorderly fashion. His presence during the first quarter of the lesson was apathetic most of the time.

During the second quarter of the lesson he displayed empathy toward a certain student. Many students showed no respect, they talked while he was speaking. The students dictated the incidents that took place. He found it impossible to regulate or manage their behaviour and only responded to it. There was a lot of noise, some of the boys deliberately made extremely loud noises with the chairs, pulling and pushing and stamping them on the floor ... Coby ignored it. The first attempt to start teaching happened at the end of the second quarter of the lesson period.

During the third quarter, Coby stayed at his table, he asked general questions about their well-being in a soft and kind voice. He projected a familiarity with students. He spoke to students about his massive workload and some students told him to “chill”. He portrayed no authority or control over students. He tried hard to project a “nice teacher” image. Students walked around in Coby’s classroom while he was talking and explaining concepts. The same student cohort behaved quite differently during my close observation of a specialist science teacher’s classroom. In the specialist teacher’s classroom they listened attentively to explanations and instructions and asked for permission to use any apparatus in the classroom. Coby seems to be disengaged with the students. They act in disregard of his efforts to explain the lesson content while Coby ignored their dispositions of disrespect. He seemed to be unprepared for the lesson and asked the students: “Did you see my language textbook laying around somewhere?”

In the final quarter of the lesson, the students cleverly managed to draw him into conversations about in-class fighting among friends. As soon as he became part of the conversation they turned to each other, teasing each other and effectively disrupting the lesson (some students spoke to each other in their native language which he could not

\textsuperscript{2} Pseudonym
understand). One girl never stopped talking. Coby ignored her although her behaviour was loud and disrespectful. The classroom behaviour was chaotic. Coby was unsuccessful in his attempts to minimize unruly conversations in a third language (some of the students’ mother tongue) which he does not understand. These conversations developed into arguments, it was loud and aggravated him and fellow students. Coby projected no confidence that he could gain control and manage the subject and the students’ behaviour for the remainder of the lesson. Coby stayed around his table for the entire lesson. Some teaching took place during the third and fourth quarter of the lesson but continuous interruptions and behaviour issues made it an unpleasant environment. Towards the end of the lesson Coby became irritated and sounded angry – he started to shout at the students. He asked the students to keep quiet. He directly then asked unprepared questions that stimulated negative remarks and communication that developed into unnecessary conversation among students. He allowed the noise to escalate and then shouted “Hey!” “Hey!” in an angry voice. The students’ behaviour towards Coby was disrespectful and rude; they ignored him while a lot of unnecessary talk was going on in the classroom.

The end of the lesson was announced and the students packed up while Coby tried to give them instructions for homework. They left the room in disarray, chairs, tables and papers scattered around. I left the room exhausted …

I had the opportunity to observe two specialist teachers with the same group of students (Classroom observations B/1 and B/6); the difference in the students’ behaviour in the specialist teachers’ classrooms and in the out-of-field teacher’s classroom was astonishing. These observations provide an in-depth look into what out-of-field teaching practices means for novice teachers in these positions and their students.

**Classroom observation 2**

I asked Coby if I could observe his class again as I had to make sure that the behaviour of Coby and his students that I had observed was a typical experience and not one that was the result of a difficult morning experience by Coby. I observed him with 35+ students in year 8 teaching a LOTE subject (Language other than English).

This time he left the class outside for five minutes while he tried to get himself organised. Disruptive behaviour developed outside with a lot of noise. He sighed and walk to the door. His presence was negative. He asked the students to enter. They entered in a noisy manner, the students stood around after they entered the room. Coby shouted “Hey all of you!” He portrayed an irritated presence which became more aggressive and negative. “Okay, I am going to ask you randomly who completed homework”. His voice was highly pitched and he seemed to be anxious. “Okay, shhh …” “Hey I am talking!” “Okay listen!” – The disorderly behaviour lasted for almost five minutes. Coby acted in an apathetic manner most of this time. It was as if he did not really care if they responded to his commands or not. Students told him that three boys who should be in the class were not there. He left the classroom to look for the students. Students were very noisy. He entered the room and tried to create order to resume with the lesson. The first two quarters of instruction time went by without any teaching and learning taking place. Coby was only dealing with behaviour issues. He did not look comfortable in the classroom. There was continuous discussion going on in the left side of the classroom among four boys – it was loud and distracting. Coby allowed the discussion; he ignored the boys. One girl swore out loud and Coby still just ignored the incident. The noise escalated and Coby shouted: “I am going to send you out … NOW!” Nothing happened. The relationship between Coby and the students was negative; they acted as if they had no respect for him. A lot of unnecessary talk was taking place; Coby did not make eye contact with the students. He tried to send one of the boys that was misbehaving out, but the boy refused. Coby then said “Would you promise to keep quiet now?” The boy agreed and just carried on talking to his friends.

He gave the students an incorrect explanation of a phrase, “There is freedom in my home” while it should have been “There is peace in my home.” One of the students asked him about the content knowledge. He couldn’t provide a clear answer. He did not know what was required in the specific worksheet. He acted in a confused manner and mayhem erupted in the class. During this incident he suddenly looked at me and made an excuse that he was not a language person; he looked embarrassed. The students were not happy with him. Then
he explained: “I want to write it on the board but I don’t have chalk.” He was not prepared for the lesson at all. The students were confused and tried to get the answer from their friends. The teacher followed this incident with a couple of unclear instructions. Firstly “Do the questions on your own” followed by “You can work together” and again “No, work on your own”. The bell went and he asked “Are you here for another period?” Noise exploded. I decided to leave; I tried to thank him for the opportunity to observe his lesson. He couldn’t hear me above the noise in the classroom, I had to lift my voice to make myself audible to him …I felt disturbed by observing such disruptive behaviour which developed into a very dysfunctional learning space. The behaviour not only influenced Coby and his students but the rest of the school. A specialist teacher who is Coby’s neighbour shared during an interview how his dysfunctional classrooms affect her year 11 and 12 students. She further explains how restless students are when they arrive in her class after a period with Coby.

The experiment

I allowed myself to do an experiment. While I was sitting in a corner at the back of the classroom observing the students’ disruptive behaviour, I made eye contact with the girl who was constantly talking. I non-verbally communicated my concern and disagreement with my eyes. She immediately stopped her talking and for the rest of the lesson looked at me sporadically whenever she wanted to enter into a conversation with her friend. She was less disruptive for the remainder of the lesson.

Interview responses

Questions about experiences and perceptions about out-of-field teachers and lived experiences stimulated the following interview responses:

Coby

Coby’s two years in out-of-field positions at two different schools is influencing his well-being: “I feel negative, depressed, desperate, and sometimes angry.” His lived experiences influence his development as a teacher. He feels stuck in an undesirable situation without the support he really needs. He explained: “The whole approach towards the subject can be negative, they [out-of-field teachers] complain, are confused, fall behind on the curriculum, do the bare minimum that is required of them etc.” He explained why the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching made him contemplate leaving the teaching profession: “Teachers who have no knowledge, training or interests towards a subject, are not be able to effectively manage behaviour and their classrooms. Students notice when a teacher is not fully concerned with the subject that is given. They follow their teacher’s example and misbehave or will not pay attention.” He added: “A suitable teacher gives his all in the subject and will go the extra mile in transferring knowledge, whereas an unsuitably qualified teacher will only do the minimum that is required of him/her. Children can tell if a teacher is not 100% behind the subject that is being taught.” He explained the doubts and lived experiences that he had to deal with for the last two years: “I fear that I am letting them down because of my lack of knowledge on the specific subject that I am not qualified for. Teaching a subject, which you sometimes don’t understand yourself. The large amount of subjects that I am currently teaching is also causing a huge amount of stress, with all the preparation and administrative work that they require.” He admitted his problem with confidence after two years of out-of-field teaching without professional development opportunities: “It can be a problem for teachers who do not have confidence in their subject skills to interact with the learners in any way that concerns the subject. The teacher might be afraid that his lack of subject knowledge might be exposed or scrutinised”. It is interesting that Coby talked about his lived experiences in the third person.

Coby’s principal

Coby’s principal admitted that out-of-field teachers influence behaviour: “… behaviour problems are not the students … Yeah, I would say 30%, but it is the teacher …” He added: “You know basic things … don’t allow the students to do it to you…teach them to behave…that’s how they would develop. The problem starts in primary schools …”
Document analyses

On receiving a request to look at minutes and agendas in which the out-of-field teachers’ behaviour management concerns were discussed, the principal mentioned that they just do it informally. There are no official records of specific discussion of out-of-field teachers and behaviour concerns in subject or staff meetings.

I argue that Coby, as a novice teacher, still needed to develop competence and experience but did not receive focussed support and professional development in the areas where he urgently needed guidance because of misconceptions and misunderstandings of his leaders. After two years of teaching outside his field of qualification in two different school environments, his confidence and classroom strategies need urgent attention. His lived experiences portray a complex situation that seems to influence his whole “being” as he noted feelings of anger and depression.

8.3.1.2 Case Study 2: Amani\(^2\) in an upper primary school position

Biographical history

Amani is an out-of-field female, mature teacher with a New Zealand teaching qualification. She taught in New Zealand but has worked as a teacher assistant since she arrived in Australia ten years ago. She worked as a teacher assistant for almost three years at her current school. She recently went through a divorce and financial responsibilities urged her to take up a full time teaching position. During the year and a half I spent time at the school as volunteer it was clear that the students know her well, feel comfortable with her and respect her as a person. She was just newly appointed as a year 7 classroom teacher in a public primary school in Queensland (Australia). Her current principal was also newly appointed as principal with no experience in primary schools. He was a secondary school science teacher. I had several informal close conversations with Amani and a one-on-one recorded interview (C1) after which I requested close classroom observations according to observation protocol (see appendix B). She was relaxed during the start of the classroom observation but acted nervously when some of the students became restless.

Classroom observation

Amani was conducting an art lesson for year seven students during my classroom observation. She created a relaxed atmosphere and the students portrayed a contented and happy attitude. Amani had a soft approach towards the students, although the effect of her presence in the class deteriorated after the first ten minutes while she continuously and gently asked them: “Please keep quiet” adding “Wait, wait please” and then relied on “shhhh...” The students got noisier as the lesson progressed. Amani managed a positive communication and interaction process in the class. Although she seemed relaxed, she became uncomfortable with the behaviour of some of the boys (loud and disrupting other groups) but did not take action against it. It looked as if she avoided conflict with this group of boys. She moved around in the class but paid less attention to the “difficult and noisy” groups than to the other groups. Her approach towards their behaviour was to ignore bad behaviour, or sometimes she seemed to act only as facilitator. She had a good rapport with the girls in the classroom. She made an effort to engage and connect with students, although she seemed less confident with the “three noisy boys”. The classroom observation showed that the students had the opportunity to decide how and with whom they want to do their projects. Amani came to my table several times during the observation to make excuses for the noise in the classroom. Although there was a relaxed atmosphere in the classroom, she sometimes portrayed a lack of confidence to confront any student who displayed challenging behaviour. She was reluctant to address unruly behaviour. She made eye contact with the students then put her finger on her mouth and said: “Shhhh......shhhh” and smiled. She did not challenge the students who finished early with their projects to do more although they became disruptive. She gave the students a lot of praise for the art work they created.

\(^2\) Pseudonym
Interview responses

Questions about experiences and perceptions about out-of-field teachers and lived experiences stimulated the following interview responses:

**Amani**

Amani enjoyed her relationship with the students but admitted that she was not qualified to teach year 7 science and maths: “… to begin with that was a weird feeling like you walk into the classroom and you think I am their teacher … whereas before I would be working around the school as a teacher aide …” She further explained how difficult her adjustment was: “I didn’t have the experience so I had to be really careful what I said and when I said it … I thought I would get there [behaviour management] … but I don’t know … it is really hard to get kids to engage in the things …” She admitted that she became self-critical and doubted her own competencies to manage students’ behaviour: “… she [specialist neighbouring colleague] is so experienced, she has very good discipline with her class, she knows how to … [I find] it hard to get a class to all be quiet quickly … but she can … she just says something and straight away her class is quiet.” She shared her lived experiences: “At the beginning of the year my biggest fear was that I would not be able to control the kids, that they would not behave properly and not listen when I was speaking and things like that …” The lived meaning of out-of-field teaching for her confidence became clear in her response: “I am probably not firm enough with the kids … I haven’t actually seen … I don’t … I just kind of establish some kind of rapport with them … it is very different.”

**Amani’s principal**

Amani’s principal admitted that out-of-field teaching influences what happens in the classroom: “… a negative impact … hm … because of the lack of confidence … the lack of engagement that they have … hm … the quality of the shape of the lessons …”

**Document analyses**

No official records of specific discussion of out-of-field teachers and behaviour concerns in subject or staff meetings were evident.

8.3.1.3  **Case Study 3: Casyla* in a pre-primary position**

**Biographical detail**

Casyla has upper primary teaching qualifications. She prefers to teach year seven students. She is a second year novice teacher. She volunteered at School C in Western Australia (Independent school) after which she was assigned to an upper primary class. A pre-primary teacher left at the end of term two because of behaviour issues in her class. Casyla was seen as an effective teacher and as a result was asked by school management to move to this pre-primary class. She is dynamic, and proud she mentioned that she was always confident in her skills but currently find it very hard to deal with colleagues who seem to look down on her because of her out-of-field position. Close informal interactions and an invitation to keep email contact supported the one-on-one recorded interview (D7). Casyla agreed that I could visit her classroom for close observation according to the observation protocol (See appendix B).

**Classroom observation**

This is a report of my close classroom observation of Casyla’s classroom just after their lunch break. I met Casyla the first time in her class for the observation. My first impressions when I entered the room were that this is “a teacher with an unfriendly, unhappy disposition” who was introduced to me by the principal. However, during my interview sessions with her later she was warm, friendly and eager to discuss her lived experiences. It

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* Pseudonyms
did not take her long to trust me with her personal experiences in relation to her out-of-field position and the influence of colleagues on her teaching. She did not look overly enthusiastic about my presence in the classroom. I felt unwelcome. Her pre-primary students lined up outside. She gave them clear instructions with a strict face. No smiles, no informal talk. During the first five minutes of lesson Casyla portrayed a very strict presence almost apathetic to negative. She gave rigid and staccato-like instructions; the students responded immediately. After the sixth minute some positive remarks surfaced “That is a good answer”. Casyla’s non-verbal communication was loaded with tension, no smiling and a lot of finger pointing took place. It almost seemed as if she was angry with the students but did not verbalise it. The students sat on the mat around the white board, legs folded, arms folded. They knew exactly what was expected from them. One boy was restless and tried to tell his friend something during the 12th and 13th minute, and she spoke to them in an angry voice. She set clear boundaries. She acted in an overly strict manner and followed rigid rules, constantly reminding the students about the rules. She never smiled at the students during my classroom observation. She pointed her finger at students without talking. Her voice had an assertive tone. At the end of the instruction time she stood and waited for the students at the door without saying anything; they knew exactly what to do.

Interview responses

Questions about experiences and perceptions about out-of-field teachers and lived experiences stimulated the following interview responses:

**Casyla**

Casyla admitted that behaviour management of students at a year level for which she was not qualified became a major challenge: “Behaviourally they were behind what you would expect ... because they learnt bad habits ... we actually – we had to go back farther than the beginning and unbreak ...” She explained: “... there were a lot of spitting, biting and stealing stuff going on ...” She acknowledged that it took her almost a year to get on top of these students’ behaviour concerns because she was not suitably qualified for the age group: “... we were just starting to turn some corners...but behaviourally ... and it is finally ...you can see that the effort was worth the time and the energy...” She shared: “There has been ... there has been a lot of times... where I sat and gone ... I don’t know if I am going to make it ...” Her response claimed that she managed her out-of-field position with the support of school leaders: “... they just had such a bumpy start and so as a school we had to push really hard to make sure that the year got turned around for them ... because otherwise there is a cohort going forward ... they were going be in a challenging place ...”

**Casyla’s principal**

The principal sketched the complex situation of student security and teacher confidence in an out-of-field teacher’s classroom: “They [students] won’t learn if they don’t feel safe. They won’t learn if they don’t feel cared for and secure.” She added: “... they [out-of-field teachers] feel like they...I think they’re on the defensive, I think they’re on the defence the whole time.”

**Document analyses**

The principal mentioned that she talked individually with these teachers. No official records of specific discussion of out-of-field teachers and behaviour concerns in subject or staff meetings were found.

8.3.2 Lived meaning of out-of-field cases through a different lens

The impact of out-of-field teachers on students with specific needs becomes obvious as these teachers often miss cues that should make them aware of these students’ specific needs in their classrooms. A parent in school F, participant 5 shared her experience with her son in an out-of-field teacher’s classroom: “He cries before he goes to school. The environment is not secure, he is
slammed. It gets him down because he realizes what needs to be done ...” She further explained. “Seeing a classroom do that – he feels isolated. The sub-side of this – this little boy, the classroom bully, a few of the boys now look at him as a martyr – he got away with – where will that end?” A parent (C5) described the ripple effect of cases like the three described; she explained what happens on the receiving side of out-of-field cases: “I [was amazed] that this boy who loves school could go from loving school to not wanting to go in mornings ...” The mother explained that her son was diagnosed with ADHD the previous year, but that they had it under control and he was doing well until he was placed in an out-of-field teacher’s classroom. She shared their journey: “There were other dynamics involved in this – something has got to change ... They were due to go on a school visit and the teacher said she wouldn’t take him because she said she couldn’t control him”. The truth of the experience was that the at-risk boy suffers because of the out-of-field teacher’s lack of skills and knowledge to manage his behaviour. He was not welcome on the school excursion, singled out as unmanageable because the teacher did not have the skills, qualification and knowledge to manage his specific needs. He developed a reputation and image because of his specific learning needs while the teacher was unable to deal with his needs. The mother further explained: “He would be sent out, he spent a lot of time outside the principal’s office”. She explained how her son’s behavioural problems escalated: “... it got to the stage where he was standing on tables, he picked up a chair at one stage and see if he can throw it across the room.

Ignorance of specific needs of students develop into complex behaviour management situations; the parent (C5) explained further: “Derrick\(^5\) has a hearing problem ... she was giving him instructions and he wasn’t responding or hearing it ... she was raising her voice, she was shouting at him which made him unravel completely ...” The mum added how the out-of-field classroom situations lead to social isolation of a student: “He was labelled ... which is a big concern of mine ... people didn’t want to do play dates with him ... [shook her head, looking down] ... he was so sad.” And as if this experience was not enough, the mother shared: “... it just seemed to escalate and one day he has been bullied on the playground ... year 6 boys ... had decided that he was a good target and had picked on him ... and they taunted him every single break time so he started retaliating ...”

The mother explained further how their son’s experiences in the classroom affected the whole family: “Because of what was happening in the classroom he was angry at home, he was cross with the family. We did see a psychologist during the first term; she gave us techniques helping with his anxiety ...” In the end, because of severe behaviour concerns, this boy was moved to an experienced, suitably qualified teacher’s classroom; the mother shared: “You know what Mr.

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\(^5\) Pseudonym
Samcon\textsuperscript{6} told me the other day, he said ‘I have never seen Derrick misbehave’”. She added: “His [child] response to Mr. Samcon was unbelievable, you could just see – even in two days ... that his [mis]behaviour... really stopped ...” A teacher has a remarkable influence on how students and parents experience the learning environment.

A parent (C5) shared the stressful experiences they had to go through because of her special needs boy being in an unsuitably qualified teacher’s classroom: “He defied the teacher. It started spiralling, the teacher kept telling me he is tearing the classroom apart, he is full of anger, he says horrible things, he shouted at the other kids.” The parent was actively involved: “I told the principal when he gets dressed in the mornings he is cooperative, he does his jobs and then we dropped him off .... and literally by ten o’clock in the morning I would get a call saying he is out of control.”

There seems to be a difference in the success out-of-field teachers’ experience with behaviour management when they have some prior teaching experience. A parent (D3) made the following comment about teacher and student relationships: “Motivated teachers [who are] within their field will be able to build better relationships with their students and cater better for their needs and that will encourage them.” Carroll et al. (2006) suggest that social factors add to complexities of emotional and behaviour responses in classrooms and describe how to manage these responses effectively. An out-of-field teacher not aware of or understanding this unknowingly stimulates disruptive behaviour.

An autistic year two girl struggled with controlling her behaviour in an out-of-field teacher’s classroom. A parent (C3) with a child in the same class explained: “It was difficult for the teacher [out-of-field teacher] because the girl was becoming physical and very verbal ... I guess that is frightening too, if you don’t know how to deal with that, it would be extremely difficult.” This girl who was diagnosed with autism was sent out to sit outside the classroom most of the time. Teachers with a lack of confidence tend to overlook behaviour issues in order to prevent confrontation; a parent (E4) explained: “My boy is in year ten now ... [long silence] ... another boy in the class tipped a bottle of water over him in front of a teacher ... the teacher who saw it happen just ignored it ...”

Another out-of-field teacher (E5) shared her experiences: “My classes were horrible ... [bursts into tears, emotional] ... the kids were just off the walls.” Misunderstanding and disconnection between an out-of-field teacher and students have far-reaching implications for both parties, as an out-field teacher (F4), described: “Ah, this year it’s one particular person and I am

\textsuperscript{6} Pseudonym
actually on medication now because of it. My doctor didn’t want me actually coming back this term.”

8.4 Discussion

The case studies presented in this chapter inform the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching for behaviour in classrooms. It highlighted the lived experiences through the lenses of out-of-field teachers, their principals, parents of students in out-of-field classrooms and my lens in close classroom observations. The lived meaning of out-of-field teaching is clear, for example, in relation to dysfunctional learning spaces, disruptive behaviour, at-risk students’ development and challenges for teachers in these positions.

8.4.1 Behaviour and dysfunctional learning spaces

During classroom observations it became clear that out-of-field teachers found it hard, if not impossible, to answer to the needs of students with obvious emotional requirements. Rogers and McPherson (2009) explain that students’ struggle with behaviour is related to self-concept and how they understand difficult, challenging and stressful incidents. In Case Study 1 and 2 the teachers avoided confrontation with demanding students, while Case Study 3 portrayed a teacher who applied extreme behaviour management strategies. The response of the principal in school B indicated that the strategies out-of-field teachers rely on, for example, a lot of unnecessary talk, screaming, ignoring and negative dispositions have an influence on teacher/student trust-relationships with further implications for behaviour management in these teachers’ classrooms.

According to Curtiss Williams (2009), the teacher has a responsibility to make the classroom an environment where there is mutual respect between the teacher and students. In all three cases underlying tensions in the classrooms were observed. Effective behaviour strategies call on the teachers to avoid unnecessary tension from the learning and teaching environment (Rogers, 2011a). Carroll et al. (2003) further underscores that teachers will need confidence in their ability, knowledge and skills to provide inclusive education and meet the challenges of managing effective classroom environments. Coby and Amani struggled to project confidence in their classrooms.

Rogers (2011a) noted the impact disruptive behaviour and a dysfunctional classroom have on students, observing situations with shouting teachers and uncooperative students. Coby’s final strategy was to start shouting in an effort to change the behaviour of the students. They just ignored him. It is of vital importance to understand developmental processes in order to create suitable and effective interventions through which behaviour of at-risk students can be directed before it disintegrates into dysfunctional social behaviour (Carroll et al., 1999). Parents and principals are
clearly aware of the struggle of out-of-field teachers to answer to the needs of students with specific emotional needs. The parent in school C (Participant 5) knew straight away that her son’s behaviour changed, that something was going extremely wrong and she reached out for a partnership with the school to “fix” the problem. She trusted the principal to intervene.

Rogers (2011a) explains that teachers’ instructive style and working beliefs add to how they manage stressful behaviour situations. Coby in Case Study 1 showed how his unpreparedness aggravated students to such a degree that they displayed misbehaviour and disrespect. Teachers are aware of the growing percentage of students in their classrooms with special needs and express concerns about the availability of support; they reflect on their inability to provide necessary programmes because of a deficiency in teacher training (Carroll et al., 2003). The students asked questions for which Coby had no answers and this made him uncomfortable. Teacher stress is directly connected to their perceptions and understanding of students’ display of rude, arrogant and disruptive behaviour (Roger, 2011a). Roger further suggests that teacher confidence is vested in being well prepared and knowing what you intend to teach. Lack of awareness of these requirements contributes to the learning environment becoming dysfunctional, disordered and disruptive. Rogers and McPherson (2009) point out that schools are accountable for providing a pleasant and safe emotional climate with opportunities and direct modelling to assist students to overcome negative self-concepts and support a positive emerging self-esteem. Coby could not provide the students with the knowledge they needed, it aggravated them and they started to misbehave. Coby struggled to fulfil the role as the knowledgeable other and effectively guide student through the zone of proximal development where prior knowledge supports the successful connection of old concepts with new unfamiliar concepts. Hattie (2009) stressed the importance for teachers to create a “bridge” between prior knowledge and new concepts in order for students to comfortably move to deep and “long-term” learning (p.167). However, interview information indicated that out-of-field teachers find it hard to create such an environment because of their inexperience and lack of knowledge in out-of-field subjects.

8.4.2 Disruptive behaviour and at-risk students

Interview data revealed that the most vulnerable students in out-of-field teachers’ classrooms are the already at-risk students. The interviews with parents illustrated that unsuitably qualified teachers find it hard to attend to students with specific needs; for example, the specific needs of at-risk students’ get overlooked and students seen as demanding and “disruptive” are sent out while “uncontrollable” students are referred to the principal. Carroll et al. (2003) notes the probability that every classroom includes a student with special needs. Students with special needs, for example, the boy in school C with a hearing problem and the autistic girl, create even more challenges for
unsuitably qualified teachers to meet their individual needs. Darling-Hammond (2010b) outlined the benefits of having teachers with extensive knowledge in classrooms to attend to students with special learning needs because when students perceive that their needs are not being met, they demand attention in various ways.

Rogers and McPherson (2009) state that teachers need to actively engage in teaching attention-seeking students alternative patterns of effective behaviour and social skills. Interview responses and classroom observations showed that out-of-field teachers find it difficult to act appropriately towards students with specific needs because of their lack of knowledge and confidence; for example, sending a student diagnosed with autism to sit outside. There are differences in the goal trends and social identity of at-risk students and students not at-risk (Carroll et al., 1999). Interview data showed how an at-risk boy displaying severe behavioural needs gained a bad reputation, was bullied on the playground and was not invited anymore to friends’ birthday parties because of what happened inside the classroom. It is necessary to be aware of the individual needs of the students in the class. Darling-Hammond (2010b) claimed “... we’re letting the students down” (p. 87) mentioning that at-risk students in lower socioeconomic environments are often taught by unsuitably qualified teachers.

Carroll et al. (1999) underlined that circumstances cause students to progress from not at-risk to at-risk status. Students with learning difficulties are severely influenced by out-of-field teachers, especially when the teacher struggles to master the subject and the classroom. Carroll et al. (2006) state that environmental distractions trigger interactional off-task behaviours, while teacher behaviour is responsible for the majority (25%) of challenging student behaviour. The experiences of disruptive behaviour in dysfunctional classrooms of out-of-field teachers touch parents, students, teachers, and as interview data showed, made students reluctant to go to those classes. Rogers (2011a) maintains that frustration, anger and constant feelings of anxiety develop into negative self-talk because of powerlessness in such circumstances. Carroll et al. (1999) explain further that at-risk primary school students perceive physical goals as of higher importance than intellectual goals. In Case Study 1, Coby’s students lost their respect for him which had an influence on their behaviour towards him. Once students in an out-of-field teacher’s care lose their respect for and trust in the teacher, the learning environment becomes difficult to manage; Curtiss Williams (2009) asserts that teachers perceived as caring, engaged and compassionate about learning and teaching develop confidence and self-determination in students. Curtiss Williams further underlines the importance of a teacher/student relationship that is genuine, honest and caring.
8.4.3 Behaviour management challenges for out-of-field teachers

An absence of open communication between leadership and out-of-field teachers makes behaviour issues worse. Students displaying disruptive behaviour may experience boredom, difficulty understanding content or what is required inside the classroom (Rogers, 2011b). Amani, in Case Study 2 failed to challenge the “gifted and fast” students to do more because she did not have broader content knowledge than what she had prepared according to the curriculum. Carroll et al. (1999) suggest that social-psychological factors such as goal direction have major implications for primary school students’ behaviour. Behaviour management strategies are often detrimental to the classroom climate.

Hattie (2009) reported that leaders who create a safe environment for teachers to interact, question and support affect students’ outcomes. Teachers should not have to manage complex behaviour situations in their teaching environment on their own (Rogers, 2003). The three teachers in the case studies struggled to find the balance between their control over the content and controlling the behaviour of students in their classrooms. A specific support option is not an end in itself but should be supported by reflection and careful need analysis to develop the teacher and student to take ownership of behaviour in the classroom (Rogers, 2011b). Carroll et al. (1999) mention that some male secondary school students have a specific goal to deliberately create conflict incidents with teachers to develop their non-conforming image. Coby’s lack of confidence, which had developed over two years in out-of-field positions, was seen as a weakness by his students and they cleverly manipulated the classroom situation to get what they wanted. It is clear that Coby, as a novice and inexperienced teacher, did not receive the support he needed to develop his teaching skills. It seems as if he is now seen as an incompetent teacher.

Creating a safe environment for students, as part of their responsibility, means that leaders should assign teachers according to their passion, interest and qualifications. Darling-Hammond (2010b) observed that schools become increasingly effective when teachers are collaborating in “communitarian” environments (p. 239). Out-of-field teachers tend to shy away from acknowledging that their lack of skills, experience and knowledge might influence student behaviour; they rather put the blame on individual students as having behaviour problems ignoring their own lack of knowledge. In the case of Casyla her lack of pedagogical content knowledge resulted in complex behaviour management concerns and in some instances unsuitable strategies. Her principal mentioned how she could have performed better in her own field. Carroll et al. (1999) provide research that implies that administrators, teachers and psychologists working with children should acknowledge the needs of students who are at-risk of leaving the education system. Needs analysis might assist the school with prevention and intervention programmes which can
assist teachers teaching outside their field of expertise to have a positive rather than negative influence on already vulnerable students.

An out-of-field teacher (G4) shared how she purposefully worked hard to develop healthy trust-relationships with her students, especially those who are vulnerable. She always speaks in a soft voice, she makes an effort to get to know them, their interests and passion and she develops a rapport with each of her students. She claimed that she never experiences behaviour problems, even though she teaches in an out-of-field position. Rogers and McPherson (2009) maintained that the skills of behaviour management and leadership are vested in quality communication, organisation and thorough planning, which are skills that can be learned, with support from colleagues (Rogers, 2011b). Interview data showed that parents are disappointed about the amount of time school leaders wait before they intervene in an out-of-field situation where major concerns develop. It seems that school leadership often waits until behaviour concerns in a particular class become an issue for the school environment before they act upon it. Rogers and McPherson (2009) suggest that the kind of support leadership offers for struggling teachers needs to be non-judgemental, non-comparative and not allow the teacher to feel they are failing the students.

8.5 Summary

How students are expected to behave might differ from class to class or school to school; participants in this investigation made their concerns and experiences about the out-of-field experience and behaviour management clear during interviews. Being involved in the classroom culture takes the form of a search to find the truth, and starts with the development of a specific behaviour and situation within the classroom (Joyce et al., 2000). Teachers in out-of-field positions experience self-doubt and a lack of confidence. Lack of confidence and support that specifically focuses on their individual needs make it hard for teachers to effectively manage behaviour issues in their classrooms. The professional image of the teaching profession and respect for teachers suffer because of out-of-field teaching.

The chapter described the primary implications of out-of-field teaching for at-risk students and students with very specific needs. Out-of-field teaching initiates a ripple effect of implications when teachers teaching outside their field of expertise struggle to effectively manage behaviour in their classrooms. These implications include development of negative self-esteem in students and teachers, reluctance to attend school, labeling, and negative feelings in the school community while it becomes a high-maintenance issue for school leadership with implications for the effectiveness of the school as a sound learning environment. The chapter offered three case studies from very different school environments, the transnational case studies showed that the lived meaning of out-
of-field teaching reached across public and independent schools as well as across countries with different human development indexes. The chapter underlines circumstances that intensify the lived experiences of out-of-field teachers while it offers information to develop a better understanding and awareness of out-of-field teaching as a complex, multi-layered international concern with major implications for effective behaviour management. This chapter underlined that behaviour management is a concern for parents across cultures and Chapter 9 discusses how what happens in out-of-field teachers’ classrooms reaches beyond the classroom walls with a major influence on the wider school community.
Chapter 9

The Out-of-Field Lived Experience and the Wider School Community

‘She [out-of-field teacher] didn’t seem to be coping and I am friends with a lot of the mothers, so we got together and we gossiped about her – that was our first strategy ...’

Parent

9.1 Introduction

Schools are rated as either good or not good by society and the culture within school communities is influenced by these perceptions. The level of effectiveness inside schools involves more than “good” or “not good” as they are complex communities full of shared emotions, strategies and experiences. Research about the existence of certain sentiments within school communities and the influence they have on school environments is inadequate (Furman, 2002a). I argue that the caring and nurturing role of the schools and teachers gets lost within out-of-field teaching practices. I agree with Noddings (1995) that education, and as such teachers, should recognise the “multiplicity of human capacities and interests” (p. 367). Paying attention to Holroyd’s (2001) study of “being-in-community” this chapter takes an in-depth look at the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching for the development of healthy school communities.

The chapter focuses on the research question, what do out-of-field teachers do to manage their out-of-field lived experience in the wider school community, with the question directing the discussions of school leaders, teachers and parents during interviews. The purpose is to explore the multi-layered lived meaning of out-of-field teaching practices through the lenses of participants, to understand the meaning for the wider school community. Discussions were analysed relying on the social cultural constructivist theories of Vygotsky (1978), to identify sets of meanings that emerged from the data. I argue that the effective functioning of school communities is influenced by out-of-field teaching practices. Hattie (2009) discussed the effect of healthy relations between the home and school on effective learning. Unsuitably qualified teachers influence relationships within the school community (Darling-Hammond, 2010b). The importance of collaboration between school and home is underlined by Berthelsen and Walker (2008) in a study that involves a global rating based on teachers’ perceptions about the involvement of parents in school communities. The study
indicated that about two-thirds of parents are closely involved in their children’s education. This illustrates the general attitude of parents to actively engage in the school community. I argue that the out-of-field teaching practice constrains teacher/parent relationships within the school community because of misunderstanding and misconceptions about the lived experiences in relation to out-of-field teaching. I further argue that these constraints have a follow-on effect on the students, colleagues and leaders. The chapter conceptualises and defines a school community while it offers an in-depth look into the responses shared by principals, specialist and out-of-field teachers and parents through interviews, observations and document analysis.

9.2 Defining a School Community

School communities function effectively when all the different components in the community work together as a unit. Redding (1996) quantified the different components as social capital which involves human relationships, the “home” curriculum which involves student behaviour and a school community which is seen as people who share a specific goal. Developing shared understanding through shared perceptions and experiences define a school community (Shields, 2002). Being part of a community means that people are aware of a sense of belonging, trust, safety and the existence of common connections and goals within a specific group (Furman, 2002b). Parent groups assist schools to reach goals in relation to effective learning. This is underlined by Sergiovanni’s (1992) explanation that communities rotate around a centre of norms, values, sentiments, beliefs and structures. These norms and values give a school a specific climate and culture which Rosenblatt and Peled (2002) viewed as playing an influential part in the confidence parents display by getting involved in the school community. Rosenblatt and Peled (2002) claimed that the active involvement of parents affects the attitudes of teachers. Teachers are encouraged by positive parent involvement while negative criticism from parents let them put their “guards up”. Involvement of parents influences the teaching and learning culture and in school communities with lower socio-economic status, parents tend to perceive teachers as experts while they as parents lack confidence to engage with teachers or struggle with previous negative experiences (Berthelsen & Walker, 2008). The significance of an awareness of social inter-relationships and social interdependence in a school community are illustrated by Berthelsen and Walker’s (2008) research about parents’ involvement in their children’s education as displayed in Figure 9.1. Comprehensive schools rely on actively engaged school communities. There are differences in how parents and teachers understand and view parents’ involvement in the school community as displayed in Figure 9.1.
Figure 9.1. Parent’s connectedness as experienced by teachers and parents
(Berthelsen & Walker, 2008)

My argument, that unsuitably qualified teachers and their real life experiences are misunderstood and those misconceptions about out-of-field teaching not only impact these teachers but the wider school community, is supported by interview responses from principals, teachers and parents. Parents discuss their concerns about an unsuitably qualified teacher with fellow parents because they perceive it as a strategy of involvement in their children’s schooling, while teachers do not perceive it in the same way. These differences among participants’ lived experiences are also seen in Figure 9.2. Interview data showed that the out-of-field situation influences communication and interaction between parents and the school.

Teachers with a lack of knowledge about the school community tend to know less about parents who are culturally different and view these parents as uninterested in what is happening in the classroom (Berthelsen & Walker, 2008). I argue that the social experiences which accompany out-of-field teaching play an important role within the school community because of the effect they have on teacher/parent, teacher/student and teacher/colleague relationships. Furman (2002c) comments that school communities are about how members of a specific school community experience social justice in their daily lives. Social interaction forms part of the basis of learning and as Vygotsky (1978) suggests social interdependence facilitates the development of new ideas, feelings of trust, respect and appreciation.

Parents understand their discussions with other parents as involvement in their children’s education while teachers do not acknowledge it as involvement. The results in this chapter explore
school communities’ understanding of the out-of-field experience and its meaning for the communities’ partnership in quality education. The data offered in this chapter was collected through interviews, classroom observations and document analyses. The data provided insight on out-of-field experiences and its meaning for school communities, which include those who share a common goal and vision for the school. The chapter sheds light on what these lived experiences mean for teachers, students and parents as members of the school community. The results take an in-depth look at the various challenges the out-of-field experience poses for school communities through the lenses of principals, specialist and out-of-field teachers and parents. Although focus in this chapter is placed on interview data, classroom observations provide insight into the concerns parents shared about unsuitably qualified teachers.

9.3 Results

The results offer the lived experiences of the out-of-field teaching practices through the lenses of Educational Directors, school leaders such as principals, deputy principals, and Heads of Department and Deans of Staff, specialist and out-of-field teachers and parents. Figure 9.2 displays a summary of the intensity with which the participants shared their views during interviews about their lived experiences in relation to the out-of-field teaching practice. The interview data revealed that although educational leaders are responsible for decision-making and policies surrounding out-of-field teaching their experiences of the lived experience are less intense. The intensity of the interviews with specialist teachers, out-of-field teachers and parents changed dramatically while sharing their lived experiences in relation to out-of-field teaching situations.

The different perceptions, awareness, outcomes and influences of the out-of-field teaching experience as summarised in Figure 9.2 play an important role in understanding these experiences. The results in this chapter offer an opportunity to investigate the intensity and meaning of the out-of-field experience in connection with trust relationships, communication and respect within the wider school community. The chapter offers views from interviews with 48 participants while it investigates perceptions through the different lenses of these participants in order to move to a deeper understanding of the lived experiences in relation to the out-of-field teaching practice within the wider school community.
Figure 9.2. Intensity of lived experiences displayed during interviews and observations

Figure 9.2 underlines the significance of the thesis because it explores one experience through the different lenses of participants. As it is the first study of its kind that looks at the out-of-field experience from different angles, the experiences shared by participants are thought provocative and challenge us to reflect on our pre-understandings.

9.3.1 Underpinning out-of-field lived experiences in school communities

Parents or colleagues who share the same concerns, for example, concerns about an unsuitably qualified teacher, often form sub-communities within the larger school community. These sub-communities influence the culture and climate within the wider school community. This section focuses on sub-communities of parents, and sometimes colleagues, which are embedded in the out-of-field experience. The shared concerns of teachers as well as parents and the subsequent distress have decisive repercussions for the effective functioning of schools communities. Darling-Hammond (2010b) underlined the important role of “communal” (p. 65) approaches with focus on coherence between the school, students, teachers and parents.

Key points that stood out during interviews as having central meaning for the school community in relation to the out-of-field experiences were trust relationships, respect, and open communication. These key points emerged through the interview data and were summarised in Tables 9.1, 9.2 and 9.3 and shared an understanding of the needs that underpin a healthy school community. The interview data showed a need for in-depth discussion about out-of-field teaching practices. However, unsatisfying contact develops into avoidance of open discussions about specific
concerns which becomes a “major barrier” in the learning environment (Hattie, 2009). Table 9.1 describes the implications of the out-of-field experiences on relationships within school communities while Table 9.2 shows how the school community perceives and respects the role and work ethics of unsuitably qualified teachers within the school community. Table 9.3 explores what the out-of-field experience means for open communication within the wider school community.

Table 9.1. The meaning of out-of-field teaching for relationships within school communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Effect of the lived experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education Director</strong></td>
<td><em>You don’t leave these teachers struggling but you give them a critical friend and buddy. We offer a lot of powerful support ... when you’ve got all of those things rubbing together and you’ve got a true partnership with your parents and your community, that’s when you start approaching a higher achieving school.</em> (Director 1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Principals**        | *I have parents coming in saying I don’t want my child going to that person’s class. The trust relations are way gone. If the child is continually complaining about a teacher, parents are going to come in with an attitude.* (D4)  
                       | *They see the principal as someone who can fix things and they expected me to make the issue [out-of-field situation] to go away.* (F3)  
                       | *It is not easy to get them to collaborate because they still bring to their meetings some entrenched assumptions. You still hear in conversations, ‘us [leaders and specialist teachers] and them [out-of-field teachers].’* (G2) |
| **Specialist teachers**| *– it is the parents who are the problem, who complain about work that is not correct – they are critical.* (A1)  
                         | *They [out-of-field teachers] exhaust senior teachers – you have to take them step by step through preparation. I would be busy with my year 12 class ... and then she comes running in with questions ...* (B4) |
| **Out-of-field teachers**| *If you are well-known in the school community it has an influence on parents’ perceptions, but a new teacher assigned to an out-of-field position will experience problems in certain communities.* (A7)  
                          | *I worry when parents want to speak to me – what have I done wrong? I don’t think that they will say something nice – that the parents will criticize.* (C1)  
                          | *You are totally out of your depth – the kids say ‘We hated that day’ – teachers yelling and screaming.* (D1) |
| **Parents**           | *It caused a huge amount of stress at home and tension. Because of the situation, the teacher didn’t actually end up liking me – she knew that I knew what was going on, it is tricky with these teachers because, they’re nervous of you walking into their classroom because they think you’re going to criticize them.* (D7)  
                          | *I actually feel quite angry because my children go to school for academics, the rest I do at home.* (G1)  
                          | *There is a huge trust problem.* (G1) |

The “lenses” through which school communities view unsuitably qualified teachers and form perceptions of these teachers’ background and experiences influence the respect they receive. Interview data showed that misunderstandings and misconceptions about their work ethics and roles within a healthy school community exist.
### Table 9.2. The lived meaning of out-of-field teaching for respect and within school communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>The lived experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education Directors</strong></td>
<td>In many respects high levels of content knowledge are actually not the prime prerequisite for teaching in remote schools. It’s about capacity to adapt to living in a remote community, it’s about empathy and ability to relate to students and switch them on to education. So while I don’t say we have a hundred percent success rate, we have a success rate well into the 90% of being able to provide the source of teachers that schools are looking for. (Director 3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Principals**       | Senior staff members have to do his work for him – they [out-of-field teachers] will ride you to the rims – see if they can get away with it. (B5)  
Their [out-of-field teachers] social interaction … is being inappropriate with a parent or uncaring with the students’ needs. (G2) |
| **Specialist teacher** | I worked with people that do the very minimum work – I am always feeding them – diplomatically because you don’t want to offend people – and if you are not supported by leadership, they are not going to get any better … [sounds irritated]. (F1) |
| **Out-of-field teacher** | Frustration, because I want to do a lot for the students…(G5)  
My biggest challenge is to be open to the parents. (D1) |
| **Parents**          | It escalates, when it is their final year 12 exam – and the teacher did not cover a specific chapter – parents talk … I would not make an issue, it’s not the solution. I would rather tell my kid to do extra classes outside school hours. The costs! [Extra classes] But it doesn’t matter – then I know my kid understands and can improve especially with university in mind. It is difficult, I am afraid of intimidation, they [out-of-field teachers] will target my child. (B2)  
Parents do not approach him with respect because he is not coping with his job. (B3) |

Interview data showed that unsuitably qualified teachers feel left out and isolated. Teachers’ sense of efficacy through the eyes of the community affects their confidence, as shown through interview data. School communities become critical of practices in schools when they perceive deficiencies in the academic opportunities their children receive, interview data indicated, because out-of-field teachers tend to omit sections from the curriculum for which they do not have the relevant core knowledge.

Parents want effective teaching opportunities for their children and are concerned about the impact of unsuitably qualified teachers. Once parents become aware of learning and teaching deficiencies, they support their children by providing extra lessons through specialist teachers with expertise in the subject, with vast financial implications. Interview data in Table 9.4 showed that the role parents play in the school community is influenced by the out-of-field experience. Parents feel caught up in and powerless against the implications this out-of-field situation has for their children’s development.
Although specialist teachers mentioned during interviews that unsuitably qualified teachers entail extra pressure and workload, teachers in these out-of-field positions experience the support of positive colleagues as valuable. Support from within their school community influences these teachers’ attitudes towards their own teaching situation. These positive sub-communities form within the wider school community and effectively work together to reach common goals, which benefits students and out-of-field teachers. Supportive relationships in spite of the out-of-field experience add to the social capital of school communities. The key points that stood out involving effective functioning in school communities shared during interviews were trust, honesty, respect, understanding specific needs and support. This overview about the influence of the out-of-field situation on these attributes and relationships within school communities calls for a more in-depth exploration of how members of school communities understand the meaning of out-of-field teaching practices. The following section takes an in-depth look at the meaning of out-of-field teaching for the school community with specific focus on communication, collaboration and cooperation within the wider school community, partnership and its challenges embedded in the out-of-field experience.

The out-of-field experience influences open communication within the school community; Beck (2002) emphasised communication between colleagues benefits teachers and their students. The key points on communication highlighted during interviews are the influences that out-of-field experience has on openness and honesty in interactions, the confidence to share issues which influence collaboration. Key points about communication and interaction in relation to the out-of-field situation were clarified through the interview data, for example, constrained interaction, principals’ reliance on feedback from parents and the reliance of out-of-field teachers on interaction with expert colleagues. Table 9.3 demonstrates the perceptions parents, colleagues and principals have of unsuitably qualified teachers that are embedded in communication and interaction experiences. Unsuitably qualified teachers do not have the “subject language” which affects their confidence and self-esteem.
Open and honest communication develops understanding. The interview data in Table 9.3 show the influence the out-of-field experience has on interaction. There is reluctance among school leaders to engage in openness within school communities about the out-of-field teaching practice and unsuitably qualified teachers. The out-of-field teaching practice is a sensitive topic and principals find it hard to admit they have out-of-field teachers on their staff while parents are, most of the time, soon aware of problems in the classroom through their children or other parents. Parents are uneasy communicating about the out-of-field experience, as participant 3 in school C (parent) asserted, “I probably wouldn’t directly go to the teacher – it might offend.” The fine line between open, honest communication and the risk of offending already vulnerable out-of-field teachers causes parents to think twice before they approach the school. Trust relationships (Table 9.1), respect (Table 9.2) and open communication (Table 9.3) have further meaning for cooperation and management of the challenges the out-of-field teaching situation poses for an effective school community. The challenges the out-of-field experiences pose for a healthy school community calls for skilful management strategies.

Table 9.3. Understanding the meaning of the out-of-field experience for open communication and interaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Looking through different lenses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education Director</strong></td>
<td>We’re only dealing with the proportion of teachers who are seeking a movement from their current location. So in the context of that I think that we actually deal with the teachers very well. (Director 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Principals</strong></td>
<td>They are less confident – one of the issues that I deal with as a principal is the type of interaction these teachers have with parents. I’ve got a teacher – interaction with parents was causing parents to feel uncomfortable. It was causing them to not trust the school … [and] question why their child was in that classroom –. (School G) We know how they’re going, generally, by the feedback that we get from the parents. (School F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Specialist teacher</strong></td>
<td>They don’t have the language of the topic content to pass onto the parents. (School D, participant 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Out-of-field teachers</strong></td>
<td>It is always helpful to talk to other people in the same situation … If I hadn’t had colleagues teaching along with me … I don’t know how I would have coped. … (C1) [I hold] discussion groups with colleagues to say I need help with these elements, how can I improve on these things – get feedback. (D1) I was honest with them. I said, “Look, it isn’t my subject but I am doing it to the best of my ability”. (G5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parents</strong></td>
<td>I feel powerless – and unfortunately you can’t go to talk … I spoke to the teacher, she was hysterically angry, at first we were speaking but ended up screaming at each other. (A5) I didn’t go again; to be honest with you – I didn’t go again because there was a ‘block’. (A6) I don’t think management realises, it doesn’t just impact on the children and the parents; it impacts on the entire community of the staff. I’d like to work with the school and management in trying to support the teacher. I would just like the teacher to be aware of my concerns before we address it and I’d like to do that as a team. (D3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9.3.2 Understanding the influence and managing the challenges

Parents are concerned about the impact the out-of-field teaching practice has beyond the walls of the classroom, a parent (C5), with a child in an out-of-field teachers’ classroom explained, “The classroom dynamics [sounds distraught], it affects your relationships with other parents”. She added, “I worried about what parents think of me – what do they think of Derrick?” (her son). She reflected, “– all these other kids are having issues I mean we didn’t have a cohesive time at all [nervous laughing]. I was stressed … [high-pitched voice]”. Her response underlines the different components of the challenges that develop because of the out-of-field experience.

9.3.2.1 Components that pose the challenge

Elements of vulnerability and defencelessness among unsuitably qualified teachers are consistently hovering just underneath the image that they are coping. This image emerged through the interview data and classroom observations. Small incidents of concern about the out-of-field experience cause them to feel distressed. These incidents influence their adjustment to the school community’s expectations about their teaching, as a specialist teacher (G3) revealed, “In the first week she was crying but we just sort-of got behind and propped her up and now she’s going fine”. The principal (G2) underlined the importance of managing the challenges that develop in such a way that it leads the community to positive social construction by paying attention to parents’ perceptions, “you can have your smoke and mirrors but parents aren’t silly. They very quickly work out if that’s a lie or not”. Parents construct perceptions about incidents that occur in the unsuitably qualified teacher’s classroom; these perceptions have implications for teachers, students and school communities, the deputy principal in school B (Participant 5) stated, “Parents immediately known, parents believe what their kids tell them”. Research which stated that schools in lower socio-economic environments have higher numbers of unsuitably qualified teachers (see Chapter 3) is underlined by an out-of-field teacher (A7), discussing the challenges of the out-of-field experience in different communities,

The rich suburbs – the pressure is a lot more if you are out-of-field there. The parents are more engaged, they watch you – but here in the township the parents are just ‘Oh thank you, there is someone to teach my kid at school – there is someone in the class’.

The challenges within the out-of-field experience lie in a combination of insecure and negative emotions (see Chapter 5) which affect school communities, as a principal (D4) commented, “they’re feeling insecure – they’re on the defensive the whole time. Caylen [out-of-field teacher] took a long time to win parents back because a lot of the parents were offended.”

7 Pseudonym
8 Pseudonym
9.3.2.2 Remote and small school communities

Out-of-field teaching is widespread in “hard to staff”, rural, small school communities. Darling-Hammond (2010b) noted that inequality develops in some schools because of unsuitably qualified teachers. She further explained that students’ perceptions are that they “have been identified as not deserving a high-quality” (p. 65) education. Schools in lower socio-economic and rural areas experience difficulties in recruiting and retaining well qualified teachers in their classrooms (Darling-Hammond). Sergiovanni (1995) explained that in these school communities extra challenges are faced to develop an effective school environment. In a rural school (school E) with a high number of unsuitably qualified teachers, the Dean of Staff explained the complex situation, “– the school could be wonderful, it’s not wonderful at the moment, and staff are miserable”. Transformation within a school community is a complex and long process and depends on the school leaders’ understanding and awareness, as a principal (G2) of a “difficult to staff school”, pointed out, “we’ve been very focused that teachers must work together. A solo practice is not acceptable”. The principal further explained that it was a strategy to support unsuitably qualified teachers in these schools. A parent (F2) explained how perceptions of parents in the school community drive their actions and why it is important to know more about the out-of-field experience,

*I would like to know because then I know what I need to reinforce in that field for my child. I understand that living in a remote area – it’s difficult to come by the teachers who would be qualified.*

It would appear that parents are careful not to be identified as unhappy parents because of various sensitivities within the social structure of the small town school communities.

9.3.2.3 The challenges stretch beyond the school fence

The challenges and influences of out-of-field teaching practices stretch beyond the fences on school grounds. This statement, made by a parent (A6), further expanded on how they as a family still dealt with the implications an out-of-field high school teacher had on their eldest son, now in his third year at University, “To be honest – the language teacher, she was a qualified BCom teacher – when you tried to discuss concerns she felt attacked”. The out-of-field language teacher had influenced this student’s subject choices at university and he is still dealing with the implications of it on his career choices. In an effective school community members work together to reach goals on the students’ developmental journey but, as a parent (G1) argued about her year 11 son, the out-of-field experience creates stumbling blocks for partnerships supporting students to reach certain goals:
He’s got to get the ATAR-marks to go to Uni and if the teachers can’t support him through that and he doesn’t get it – his whole future basically is in the hands of those teachers – my son is lucky in that I will be supportive, but what happens to the kid whose parents are totally disinterested?

Effective management of the out-of-field experience strengthens the school community’s partnership and commitment to the students’ future. A parent (B3) explained: “Parents are aware when things do not add up between their children’s results and what they hear at home.” What happens in the classroom or school influences partnerships within the school community (Sergiovanni, 1998). The socially embedded understanding of the out-of-field experience was further explained by the principal (F3):

They [out-of-field teacher] have a negative impact on the school environment, the children are suffering in that class. It affects the parent body of the school because parents can be very upset, complain and that permeates out to other people as well – rumours start, all those negative things ...

Education environments are influenced by the role parents and teachers play within these school communities, developing “education for whole persons” involves social, emotional, ethical and academic contribution (Noddings, 2006, p. 238). Parents are concerned about the development in totality of their children in an out-of-field classroom. A parent (E4), highlights the discussions parents get involved in and the comparisons they draw between specialist and unsuitably qualified teachers outside their children’s classroom, “The other class is getting more opportunities, they are doing more interesting work, grades are better – if you hear that from your own child –“. Critical school communities make it harder for out-of-field teachers to take risks with new subject areas; an out-of-field teacher (A7) shared, “you are not comfortable with your subject but maybe you have something else with which you are comfortable – parents start to critique even that, the parents, the school community can make it very difficult for you ...” Unsuitably qualified teachers are exposed to social perceptions and expectations of parents which lead to indirect scrutiny of these teachers, as a parent (C3) maintained, “More indirectly – things like parents being unhappy and talking amongst themselves ... in different year levels and a teacher gets a reputation”. Once a teacher has a reputation, it stretches outside the school fence.

9.4 Discussion

School leaders who display empathy, awareness and understanding through transformational leadership styles (Hattie, 2009) encourage commitment and collaboration. Concerns about unsuitably qualified teachers pose challenges for school communities but Hattie (2009) noted that leaders who focus on moral purpose and collaboration overcome challenges. Schools play a significant role in supporting parents to encourage their children’s learning (Hattie); this is a two way trust relationship that enhances the social capital of the school community. The interview data
showed that schools D and G focus on social and interpersonal relationships and in these schools the school community displayed positive attitudes and understanding of the lived experiences connected to out-of-field teaching. Attention to the feedback from parents develops active school community involvement. Prew (2009) maintains that effective school community involvement has positive knock-on effects for all the members involved. Involvement in support and awareness of the vulnerable situations of unsuitably qualified teachers and their principals are a step towards managing the out-of-field experience.

Educational leadership plays a significant role in the development of positive relationships among community members, which increases the social capital of a school community. Development of social capital also has implications for academic and career development as it affects both students and teachers (Preston, 2011). The interview data and classroom observations showed that in schools where unsuitably qualified teachers receive support and focused attention, their out-of-field experience was seen as an opportunity for career development and change. The data showed that these teachers were willing to take risks with their subjects in order to develop. Parents who perceive teachers as professionals who are in control of their teaching position show appreciation and respect. The school shares the responsibility “in helping parents to understand the language of schooling” (Hattie, 2009, p. 33). This understanding enhances not only learning effectiveness but provides a positive learning environment to benefit the well-being of all the children in the school community (Preston).

9.4.1 Open Communication: Trust relationships

Open and honest communication among school community members builds trust relationships. Schutz (2006) highlighted how some schools try to keep parents “at arm’s length”, the reason for this is that the teachers do not share or are not comfortable with the interests, culture or race of the school community. Social health improves when attention is paid to active relationships rather than to structures (Mawhinney, 2002). The interview data in Table 9.1 showed how the out-of-field experience influences communication and trust relationships. Leaders wait for parents to mention concerns while parents expect school leaders to act sooner when unsuitably qualified teachers struggle to cope. Actively involved school communities sustain schools that endorse openness and act in a responsive manner to school communities’ efforts to support the development and production of a competent future workforce (Sanders, 2003).

Closely connected to trust is the quality of open communication. Table 9.3 summarised the tension that develops within communication because of the out-of-field experiences. Schutz (2006) explained that some parents with a history of negative experiences are hesitant to share their
perceptions. The trust culture within a school community influences social relationships within the community, and understanding the social interdependence of a school and its community culture develops awareness of how unsuitably qualified teachers influence the harmony and positive attitudes, as the deputy principal in school B underlined “... the right people surrounding you ...”. Vygotsky (1978) accentuates learning as a social process and this forms the fundamental background for the discussion about the implications of out-of-field experiences for the social interdependence in the school environment. Parents place high value on the trust relationships within learning environments, and “friendly, caring, nurturing” are expectations for these environments. In caring environments teachers have skills to “listen to students” while an “insurmountable accumulation of ignorance” (Noddings, 2006, p. 239) by teachers causes anxiety in students and as interview data showed, also in parents.

Unsuitably qualified teachers do not have the pedagogical content knowledge to pick up on specific needs before they develop into major concerns and often should be made aware of subject issues by parents. Parental involvement at home and school improves learning outcomes for students (Berthelsen & Walker, 2008), but parents need to feel comfortable in the school environment to fully engage. Parents in school A indicated that they would not approach an unsuitably qualified teacher again after previous negative interaction developed a “block”. Frustrations and misunderstandings in the school community influence trust relationships and perceptions, Furman (2002a) claims that constructing an effective school community calls on the loyalty and dedication of teachers. Parents in school C declared that they do not want their children in a certain unsuitably qualified teacher’s classroom and in school E students were moved to another school because of perceptions in the school community about out-of-field teachers.

Engagement within the school community is influenced by socio-economic environments (Redding, 1998). Leaman (2006) noted that teaching experiences in the first five years of being a teacher influence the future of teachers, especially novice teachers who need extra support during this period. I argue that this already fragile situation easily gets out of control when novice teachers are assigned to out-of-field positions. The concerns of a deputy principal in school B about what happens in a novice out-of-field teacher’s classroom were confirmed during my classroom observations. I observed two lessons and both developed into dysfunctional learning environments stimulating social and behavioural issues. This particular school underwent major transformation in relation to instruction languages, the social environment and its multicultural ethos. In socially restrictive school communities the teacher’s role becomes particularly important. However support from educational leadership for unsuitably qualified teachers to successfully cope with these situations is a concern, as a school community needs the support of educational leaders to develop
their full potential. Furman (2002c) described these communities as multidimensional, involving actions, structures and specific ethics; these aspects influence the dynamics of the community and need to be developed.

9.4.2 Out-of-field teaching: The meaning for school communities

A school community ties people with a central purpose together while they aim to reach shared goals, values and ideas (Redding, 1996). The interview data showed that unsuitably qualified teachers tend to be more self-focused on their out-of-field teaching situation and often misunderstand the needs of students and parents. Darling-Hammond (2010b) stated that “untrained, inexperienced and temporary teachers” influence the teaching and learning while they create an environment where “students do not experience a right to learn” (p. 22). Teachers’ attitudes and views about parent involvement, as well as their understanding of the culture within the school community, influence the support parents offer (Berthelsen & Walker, 2008). Interview data showed that teachers teaching outside their field of expertise often deal with feelings of disengagement from the school community circle; participants shared feelings of isolation causing them to question the understanding there is within the community for their situation. Zedan (2011) found that parental involvement in school communities is likely to improve the quality of education through criticism and supervision as clients of the school.

However, interview data showed that the out-of-field classroom is a fragile environment (see Chapter 7) where criticism from parents can lead to conflict, especially when teachers lack confidence in the subject they teach. Rosenblatt and Peled (2002) highlighted the risk of conflict-based involvement that co-exists with cooperation-based involvement of parents. The interview data showed that unsuitably qualified teachers often feel threatened by parents’ inquiries and questioning. Berthelsen and Walker (2008) suggested that teachers need professional development programmes to assist them in effectively involving parents, even more so if they teach in out-of-field positions. The impact of out-of-field teaching practices on teacher/parent relationships is a concern. Redding (1996) claimed that school communities are built around shared values and he described parents as “powerful contributors” (p. 134) which indicates the importance of parents’ attitudes and roles in the school community.

9.4.3 Collaboration within the school community: Equal partners?

School leaders place a high value on collaboration, however interview data showed that they viewed out-of-field teachers as temporary; the question then is do they look upon them as equal partners in their collaboration effort? Cooperation between the members of a school community makes the attainment of goals easier (Redding, 1996).
Preston (2011) explains the importance of nourishing trusting relationships to unlock the available resources within the school community to benefit schools. Engagement with what happens at school is a strategy parents appreciate. Parents, students and colleagues do not construct theories individually; goals and aims within the school community are decided upon through discussion and an awareness of different entities which influence decisions and actions (Mawhinney, 2002). Shields (2002) highlighted that communities who respect and explore their differences develop a better understanding of one another. It influences the stability in classrooms where teachers experience difficulties reaching the goals and fulfilling the vision set by the school communities. Interview data showed that parental partnership with unsuitably qualified teachers depends on the specific teacher’s attitudes; unsuitably qualified teachers add to an already complex social experience within schools and classrooms and their attitudes impact on the school culture.

Development of practices to cope with the out-of-field experience means that school communities have to explore the depth of skills and knowledge they have available. Principals in schools A and G claimed that they received no assistance from their particular education departments in relation to unsuitably qualified teachers on their staff. They further shared that they rely on experts within their school communities to support and help these teachers. Expertise within the school community can provide out-of-field teachers with the required support. Redding (1996) explained how shared educational values bind students, parents and teachers together. In school G, a qualified science parent ran the lab session for an unsuitably qualified teacher with positive outcomes for the students. Linking the interview data showed that unsuitably qualified teachers need collaboration with members of their school community to be effective. As the principal in school G declared, she built her school community up on her view of “growing people” with specific focus on the support of unsuitably qualified teachers in her “care” and stresses the importance that out-of-field teachers should feel valued.

Valuing out-of-field teachers is the main focus in school D, one of the two schools where the out-of-field experience was looked upon by school community members with empathy and understanding. However, in school B (a low socio-economic school community) the principal felt discouraged by uninvolved parents freely critiquing the school and out-of-field teachers for problems their children experienced in specific subjects while a small group of parents “carry” the school and these teachers. In all seven schools included in this investigation parents’ trust, relationships and respect for teachers and the school influenced their level of involvement.

Engagement within the school community is influenced by socio-economic environments (Redding, 1998). In socially restrictive school communities the teachers’ role becomes particularly important, however support from educational leadership for unsuitably qualified teachers to
successfully manage these situations is a concern. The combination of an out-of-field teacher in a complex school community culture without support from educational leaders hampers the development of equal partnerships. Interview data showed how the out-of-field experience hampers collaboration. Furman (2002c) explained communities as multidimensional, involving actions, structures and specific ethics; these aspects influence the dynamics of the community and need to be developed.

The construction of a healthy school community, regardless of the out-of-field experience, lies heavily on the shoulders of school leadership and their skills to unlock the commitment of teachers and parents. Furman (2002b) claimed that the sense of an effective school community is rooted in partnership which develops through trust, feelings of belonging and finding safety within honest communication. Loyal and dedicated engagement within school communities change a schools’ perception of the role it plays in developing a democratic society with equal opportunities as the focus (Schutz, 2006). Out-of-field teachers indicated during interviews that they shy away from sharing questions or ideas in open meetings, while leaders in schools E and G discussed the sometimes hostile teaching environments these teachers have to face. Out-of-field teaching practices influence trust among community members. Rosenblatt and Peled (2002) underlined the ripple effect of trust among community members. Rosenblatt and Peled (2002) underlined the ripple effect of trust among community members through its influence on the ethical climate of the entire school.

9.4.4 Social capital of the school community: Is out-of-field teaching a risky investment?

Interview data and classroom observations indicate that unsuitably qualified teachers have complex and often unsatisfying relationships with parents, students and sometimes colleagues. Hattie (2009) described how the relationship between parents and the school influence students’ learning while Furman (2002b) further underlined that the sense of effectiveness in a school community depends on the relationships within the community. Out-of-field teaching impacts relationships which direct the social climate in the school. Mazyck (2009) highlighted that the school climate not only influences student learning but also influences teachers’ health and their wellness. She focuses on three influential components when discussing the social climate of schools: the sense of community; positive environments; and a shared vision. Parents’ social perceptions about schools as effective communities are vested in how supportive schools are towards ensuring quality teaching in classrooms. Redding (1996) highlighted this commitment and expectation as “an interdependency in pursuit of the common purpose” (p. 133) of students’ development within a positive learning environment.
9.4.5 Small communities, small schools ... huge concerns

Interview data showed that small and remote schools experience major difficulties recruiting suitably qualified teachers and most often have to assign unsuitably qualified teachers, which is a concern for parents. Parents with shared concerns group together and form a powerful influence on a healthy school environment. Sergiovanni (1995; 1998) highlighted the role leaders play in maintaining harmony within small school communities while building a consensual understanding about concerns. The principal directs community building in his school; he is the campaigner for trust and respect among the school community members (Schaps, 2009). Redding (1998) underlined that learning within a “community context” can be enhanced when schools are aware of “alterable behaviours” (p. 13) of parents, teachers and students. The interview data further showed that these small and remote schools struggle and some find it impossible to provide professional development opportunities for unsuitably qualified teachers. Participants in school A explained how small schools function within small close-knitted communities, concerned parents within these school communities often form their own “communities” within the larger school community discussing issues and concerns. It became clear in interview responses that these parent groups influence the healthy climate and culture of the school community (see Figure 5.2).

9.4.6 A balancing act: Curriculum of home, curriculum of school ...

Teachers outside their field of expertise struggle to find the balance between the curriculum of home (behaviours) and curriculum of school (academic development). Schutz (2006) explains that teachers struggle to integrate effective teaching pedagogies in their classrooms when they have inaccurate images of their students and families. The out-of-field teaching situation creates unnecessary tension within school communities and Darling-Hammond (2010b) commented that unsuitably qualified teachers in certain classrooms create “inequalities” (p. 328). Inequalities hamper the partnership between the school and home while respect for the specific needs of members enhances the partnership. Rosenblatt and Peled (2002) viewed schools as ethical environments that focus on parent involvement while they sustain professional relationships, structures and caring values. Schools rely on the help of parents to provide students with supportive learning environments (Sheldon & Van Voorhis, 2004), but interview data showed that parents are, most of the time, left in the dark about the occurrence of the out-of-field situation.

Interview data further showed that unsuitably qualified teachers doubt their value within school communities and partnerships because of their lack of knowledge. The responses of unsuitably qualified teachers indicate they feel responsible for the well-being of their students. Schaps (2009) explained that teachers have to nurture and educate the students in their care while
playing a supportive role in students’ personal decision-making. Schaps further explains how teachers and school leaders experiencing difficulties in doing this are quickly seen as unmotivated and incompetent by the school community. Interdependence of schools and parents through positive relationships benefits the learning and teaching environment, but teachers and education leaders continue to focus on what happens inside the school while neglecting to explore the possibilities that stretch outside of the school community (Schutz, 2006).

9.5 Summary

The data and discussion offered in this chapter focused on the lived experiences in relation to out-of-field teaching and what it means for the functioning of effective school communities. The purpose of the chapter was to develop awareness about the influence unsuitably qualified teachers have on positive partnerships within school communities. Awareness and in-depth understanding of the experiences that develop because of out-of-field teaching practices enhance development of relationships while supporting evidence informed decisions by school leaders, for example, informing parents and supporting unsuitably qualified teachers to build trust relationships within the school community. The breadth of concepts and actions that influence the effectiveness of the school community were highlighted through the lenses of principals, specialist teachers, out-of-field teachers and parents. The chapter underlined the significant effect out-of-field teaching has on the whole school community in relation to influences it has on the quality of the partnership between schools and parents. The results discussed in this chapter apply to schools across cultures and educational institutions while they underline the importance of an informed parent community through intentions to build on trust and honesty.

Awareness and understanding of the deficiencies in the teachers’ content knowledge influences parents’ experience of their children’s education. Parents are aware when the learning environment is not running smoothly. Hattie (2009) explained that parents who “know the language of schooling” (p. 71) are able to provide the support their children need while their perceptions and expectations enhance learning. The discussion focuses on concerns in school communities about the quality of education children receive and how it is influenced by out-of-field teaching – which brings us to the next research question, what are the pedagogical implications for primary and high schools as effective academic environments across cultures, with specific focus on pedagogical content knowledge. Chapter 10 offers a close look at the interrelation between the out-of-field experience and subject knowledge.
10.1 Introduction

Knowledge is power (Schieman & Plickert, 2008). Pedagogical content knowledge is a tool to accomplish effective teaching appreciation. Effective pedagogical content knowledge in classrooms involves understanding the need of knowledge for practice, the need of knowledge in practice, and the need of knowledge of practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999). Knowledge to teach particular subject matter in a specific way for a specific reason is seen as pedagogical content knowledge (Loughran, 2010). The alignment of content knowledge and pedagogies with content standards within specific education departments impacts the view of stakeholders about the effectiveness of teachers (Shulman, 2006). The constructivist learning theory of Vygotsky (1978), which places focus on offering supportive learning environments, puts teachers and the level of content knowledge they have in the centre of learning, as the knowledgeable other. Effective learning entails productive classroom pedagogies, which include intellectual quality, connectedness, supportiveness and engagement with difference (Lingard et al., 2003). Bourdieu and Passeron (1994) suggest that not only knowledge, but the specific milieu in which knowledge is relayed, affects the success of learning which occurs. In addition, Loughran (2010) defined pedagogical content knowledge as the knowledge a teacher needs to teach a specific subject matter in a unique way to improve students’ understanding and learning which, in other words, is specialised teacher knowledge.

The argument proposed in this chapter is centred on the lack of pedagogical content knowledge of out-of-field teachers and what it means for the teaching and learning environment. This chapter offers data from interviews and observations which support the argument that the out-of-field experience impacts specialised pedagogical content knowledge with implications for quality teaching and deep learning. The chapter revisits the research question, what are the pedagogical implications of out-of-field teaching in order to understand the interrelationship between the out-of-field experience and quality teaching and learning. The chapter explores the impact through
different lenses of participants such as parents, educational directors, principals, specialist teachers and out-of-field teachers. My argument is that teachers teaching in subjects outside their field of qualifications face various challenges because of the gap in their pedagogical content knowledge as demonstrated in the data shared by participants.

10.2 Results

Knowledge becomes applicable when it is owned. Teachers need to own knowledge before they can share it. Loughran (2010) stated that learning and teaching involve intellectual challenges, linking and highlighting the relevance of subject matter. An out-of-field teacher (D7) shared her dilemma: “I don’t know what I don’t know...” The lack of pedagogical content knowledge causes teachers to rely on their own, and sometimes restricted, understanding or previous encounters with specific subject content. Interview data showed that out-of-field teachers find themselves in teaching positions without the necessary content knowledge because of leadership decisions. The results found in the field about the out-of-field experience in relation to pedagogical content knowledge are discussed through focussing on five main key areas, namely, educational leaders’ view of content knowledge, unsuitably qualified teachers’ lived experiences in relation to their lack of content knowledge, the experiences of students in connection to the teacher’s lack of content knowledge, professional development issues information that prompt the rethinking of policies.

10.2.1 Educational leaders’ view of content knowledge

I am presenting evidence that the lack of pedagogical content knowledge of out-of-field teachers and the impact it has on lived experiences are often overlooked by leaders. Loughran (2010) comments: “Sadly, even within the profession, professional knowledge tends to be undervalued and seen as having a lower status than public/codified research knowledge” (p. 42). Lack of knowledge creates situations of frustration for the teacher as well as school leaders. A specialist teacher (F1) explained the implications: “It is sort of like a web, it is all entwined to that person [out-of-field teacher] then feeds out to children and their [teachers’] attitude is, ‘Ah, it should be all right you know... it would be next year’s problem’.” In this instance the current teacher’s lack of subject knowledge became the following teacher’s problem. In some schools, leadership assigns out-of-field teachers with the perception and view that less damage is done in lower classes. Misunderstandings and misconceptions lead to leadership decisions with far-reaching outcomes. Hirsch (2006) mentions that a lack of communication and the absence of trust among groups cause misconceptions and misunderstanding with implications for shared aims. A specialist teacher (F1) highlights shortcomings in leadership communication and understanding and the impact these factors have: “It is very bland that they have this notion that a teacher can teach
anything.” A specialist teacher (E2) further underlined: “A principal asked me to teach English. He said, ‘Anybody can teach English’. I said, ‘I’m sorry, I disagree and I’m not going to teach English’”. However, when school leaders focus on teachers and students’ needs it seems that out-of-field teachers succeed in spite of the deficiency in their content knowledge as the principal (D4) explained: “We want to grow them and we want to do it with excitement and passion – we want to help teachers achieve that through an intent and a purpose, not just because it’s the curriculum.” However, developing and growing teachers’ content knowledge put an extra strain on school budgets. Big decisions have to be made for small schools with small budgets for professional development of out-of-field teachers.

Schools in remote country areas carry additional financial burdens in their effort to secure suitably qualified teachers or to develop out-of-field teachers, for example, extra costs for professional development and incentives to lure teachers to their schools. Educational Director 1 in Australia explained: “When you get down to 500 or 600 students you’ll have a lot of teachers in a secondary school teaching out-of-field, especially if you want to keep offering the wide curriculum. So we’re in a bit of a conundrum.” The director explained further that small country town schools in remote areas try to cater for the needs of families who can’t afford or don’t want to send their children to boarding schools. He then clarified: “To keep themselves viable, they are taking on some year 11 and 12s. It’s a real challenge, you got essentially a year 8, 9 and 10 expertise teacher trying to teach, not just out-of-field but, out-of-their-scope, out-of-their-confidence.” The cost of professional development makes school leadership hesitant to send these out-of-field teachers on professional development seminars, especially if they are not sure the teacher will teach the specific subject the following year. Dean of Staff (E3) has doubts: “If you know it’s just for this year [shrugged shoulders], it just wouldn’t be economical.” Parents, however, have a different view; a parent (E6) explained: “You want to get your money’s worth and then you feel discouraged if you find that your children are getting substandard education”. Hirsch (2006) explained that a teacher’s lack of subject knowledge affects the quality of teaching and causes serious deficiencies in students’ learning. Different views exist about the necessity for teachers to have a sound pedagogical content knowledge. Education Director (3) in Australia added that specific environments pose specific challenges as far as content knowledge is concerned:

*The remotes are a very difficult context because certain states have very isolated schools. In many respects, high levels of content knowledge are actually not the prime prerequisite for teaching in those schools. It’s about understanding and working with aboriginal kids, it’s about capacity to adapt to living in a remote community, it’s about empathy and ability to relate to students and switch them on to education.*
The principal (G2) explains how quality teaching has economic considerations outside the boundaries of schools: “Employers are frustrated because the vocational students coming through TAFE are leaving school with math way below what they need for the trades.”

10.2.2 Teachers’ lived experiences: A fish out of water …

Lack of pedagogical content knowledge influences the effectiveness of teachers. It is however noteworthy to be aware of the positive experiences teachers in out-of-field positions have, as it develops a deeper understanding of the out-of-field situation. Experienced teachers tend to cope better in these positions than novice teachers, but gaps in the core subject knowledge still hamper their effectiveness. Johnson (2011) highlighted that covering the curriculum is not the same as meeting the students’ needs while they are carefully guided to construct new knowledge. An out-of-field teacher (C7) shared:

I have been teaching for 15 years – the challenge is to teach something that’s not familiar to you, understanding the curriculum. Year seven math, science, you can’t just walk in. The other issue is not knowing how much you go into it – how much the kids already know.

Teachers’ lived experiences while teaching out-of-field subjects resemble a rollercoaster ride of positive, negative and challenging experiences, an out-of-field teacher (G5) shared: “I feel confident but then I’ll get asked a question that I haven’t prepared for and then I sort-of shrink back.” Classroom observations (B/5 and B/8) revealed how an unsuitably qualified teacher floundered when questions were asked about subject knowledge and he was unable to provide students with a satisfactory answer. The classroom climate instantly changed to a more demanding learning environment. Another out-of-field teacher (E5) explained it took time to adjust to an out-of-field subject: “At least a term … [accentuates, soft voice, red flushes in neck]. I have settled in to it – when I told myself it wasn’t hard – but I do find it still hard.” She further explained: “I look at the other classes and go, wow that is a wicked activity! I wish I knew – I just wish I had the knowledge of those things to start with …” Not only do out-of-field subjects involve extra commitment time-wise but these teachers compare themselves to other more knowledgeable teachers. There are, however, teachers who view an out-of-field subject as an opportunity to acquire new content knowledge with benefits for their future teaching pathways; an out-of-field teacher (A2) noted: “It broadens my field, I am not solely and intensively focused on one area, I have a wider field now…” Although some out-of-field teachers see a new subject area as a challenge, unsuitably qualified teachers, on average, shared participant 1 in school C’s view, they often regard the specialist teachers as the “good” ones viewing themselves as not “good” or less.

Out-of-field teachers often encounter dissatisfaction and scrutiny from colleagues because of their lack of content knowledge, which impacts their confidence. Johnson (2011) highlighted that
effective teachers communicate their expectations and beliefs confidently, which are, accordingly, visible in their attitudes. The intense concern is mirrored by another parent’s (F2) viewpoint: “They just do the basics.” The attitudes of the teachers in out-of-field positions impact the way in which they manage their deficit of content knowledge, an out-of-field teacher (G5) teaching an environmental science subject outside her field, shared:

With the earth and environmental science it’s very hard because it’s a year 12 ATAR [Australian Tertiary Admission Rank] subject, and the first half of the course is all about rocks, I’ve had no experience in rocks before, I didn’t study it. So I’ve had to learn all this new content as well as figure out some good ways to teach it so that they’ll remember it.

Awareness of their lack of knowledge and the effect it has on their teaching is clarified through the lens of an out-of-field teacher (A2): “I had to adjust quickly, it is still not okay – I do my best, I read a lot about the subject, I don’t want to teach them incorrect concepts.”

10.2.2.1 Pedagogical content knowledge: The Achilles heel?

The combination of sound pedagogical content knowledge and passion is the Achilles heel of teaching. Johnson (2011) explained that intelligence, desire, passion and education are necessary for the effectiveness of teachers. Johnson underlined the value of communicating complex concepts and ideas effectively. Classroom observation of an expert science teacher (B1) with a year ten group of students showed how well directed content questions stimulated in-depth focussed discussions about the specific topic. Two classroom observations (B/5 and B/8) of the same group of students with one class taught by an unsuitably qualified teacher showed how a lack of content knowledge developed the learning space into a dysfunctional environment. An out-of-field teacher (D7) observed her colleague who possesses content knowledge suitably fitted for her job: “She is better! She fills the gaps better with little things that are suited – the transitions – she has BIG [accentuated] resources that I don’t have.” A principal (D4) described an effective classroom in his school: “The teacher can read her class, she sets this atmosphere, she knows her subject matter.” Effective teaching includes effective feedback to parents; however, teachers lacking content knowledge experience insecurities in this area. A specialist teacher (F1) explained: “They don’t have the experience to be able to give feedback to the parents effectively, their knowledge doesn’t allow them to give answers.”

Not only has content knowledge an effect on the strategies used in the classroom, but it has implications for the amount of time the teacher allows for specific activities and themes. Unqualified teachers’ lack of pedagogical content knowledge has an influence on their productivity. Teachers with insufficient content knowledge find it hard to guide and direct thinking processes and assist analysis of the subject matter. Johnson (2011) claimed that the unknown aspects of subjects
influence the productive use of class time. She further underlined the importance of focussing on thinking processes and analysing information rather than rushing through a curriculum. A parent (E6) noted experiences with an out-of-field teacher’s timing: “... pushed at the wrong time of the year and things like that.” Teachers lacking subject knowledge find it hard to effectively plan the amount of work that needs to be covered and the time allowed.

10.2.2.2 Decreasing content knowledge, increasing teacher’s self-critique

Out of-field teachers who struggle with the content knowledge of an out-of-field subject become increasingly critical of their own success in the classroom, an out-of-field teacher (G5) shared:

Not knowing the content and not being able to answer the kids’ questions if they throw you a curved ball. I’m having a real problem with connecting concepts because I’m learning the concepts separately. A ‘good’ teacher would connect it all, tell the kids how this relates to that but I can’t see it myself, so I can’t tell the kids. That’s another source of my frustration –.

An out-of-field teacher (A7) added: “– I am scared that I am not doing enough or it is too difficult, I have this feeling of stumbling in the dark ...” The interview data showed that out-of-field teachers experience feelings of inadequacy and need to stretch themselves more and need to do more and more.

Out-of-field teachers are caught between two fires, results and fairness to students and themselves. Pedagogical content knowledge is the teachers’ road map to guide students to their future. The teacher’s lack of subject knowledge manifests in students’ experiences of specific subjects as well as their accomplishments in these subjects; a parent (E6) shared:

My daughter’s expression was she sucked at English; I was rather surprised – I’ve changed schools – I notice now she’s getting very high marks in her English because she’s a very intelligent girl who can articulate well. The only thing I can put that down to was the way she was being taught or what she’s being taught.

Another parent (A5) added: “If you teach Art and Culture but you know nothing about art – it is unfair towards the students with special abilities for art. They receive ungrounded feedback because you don’t know the subject matter.” Loughran (2010) pointed out that student’s experiences of learning are directly connected to the pedagogical content knowledge of the teacher. These teachers are not confident enough to challenge students or invite the students to challenge them. A parent (F5) shared: “They don’t challenge the kids, that is my problem... they are really struggling.” Interview data revealed doubts develop about effective learning with a focus on results while classroom observations showed that out-of-field teachers struggle to act with assertiveness.
10.2.3 Pedagogical content knowledge and student experiences

Misconceptions about students’ experiences cause school leaders to make assumptions that teachers’ lack of subject knowledge can be hidden from students to a certain degree. A specialist teacher (G3) shared his view: “With year eights you’d be able to hide the fact that you haven’t taught that subject before, but as kids get older and they get more knowledge within that certain learning area, they’ll soon pick up problems ...” Interestingly a parent (F2) discussed her son’s view: “My son last night has been talking, and saying he maybe wants to move on because he thinks that in certain cases his teachers are not qualified enough. I mean that is from a 14 year-old.” The teacher influences students’ connectedness to the learning experience, which involves their love for learning and responsiveness to the special needs of at-risk students as displayed in Table 10.1 through the eyes of principals, specialist as well as out-of-field teachers, and parents.

Table 10.1. The lived meaning of out-of-field teaching for students’ love for learning, responsiveness and special needs of at-risk students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Experiences</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>Children will rebel, we had a situation in our music class where a kid said, ‘I’m not learning’. We had children leave school, saying, ‘I’m not learning in this person’s class’. (School D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist teacher</td>
<td>Somebody who is outside their field, they don’t know how to get that child to behave, to share – they need help and they are not getting it. (F1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out-of-field teacher</td>
<td>It is not fair that they are not learning from a qualified teacher, they are just learning from a person – they can have their mum or dad standing there and taking the class. (E3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>To see them [students] losing their love for a subject is so tragic, because of the way that they have been taught – to see your child lose interest is the saddest thing. (E6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They work at high speed without the correct answers. I can’t tell you how many days I have to get the correct information from another school; the teacher just does not have the knowledge .... other children didn’t choose geography as subject because of the teacher. (A5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>His reading went up two or three levels since he is at Mr. Samcon’s [specialist teacher] classroom – which is amazing. (C5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They just get lost. They really do just get lost in the whole swarm of the classroom. It’s a waste of a year for them because none of their needs are met. (D3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Pseudonym
10.2.4 Professional development: “Getting left behind ...”

Out-of-field teachers experience pressure to attain the same level of effectiveness as specialist teachers; an out-of-field teacher (C1), discussed her fears and perceptions: “I am getting left behind – I feel that I am not keeping up with the others.” The interview data showed that teachers are often assigned to positions without induction or the support of extra training while leaders and colleagues expect them to manage the subject effectively. The constant assessment and self-critique of out-of-field teachers’ pedagogical content knowledge develops into perceptions of not being good enough, as displayed in Table 10.2 through the lenses of educational directors, principals, specialists, as well as out-of-field teachers.

**Table 10.2. The meaning for pedagogical subject knowledge (PCK)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Understanding and perceptions about PCK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Director</strong></td>
<td>We’ve got teachers out-of-field – now formed a partnership to sit in the classrooms of experienced teachers and try and shadow the experienced teachers and pick their brains. I must say, that example is relatively isolated because we have a very good principal who is very innovative and made it happen. (Director 1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Specialist teachers** | You learn so much when visiting someone else’s room. (C2)  
If I had to teach metalwork – I’m not interested in and I’ve never done – I’d struggle. I could keep the kids busy to a certain extent but they’d soon realise that he doesn’t know what he’s talking about and that’s when the problems start. (G3) |
| **Out-of-field teachers** | Having little knowledge about the subject – they can’t integrate it with other subjects. (B6)  
In the beginning I just taught the lesson, told them to write the questions down and to answer them and I checked the answers. Now, I have started to discuss the work more ... (A2)  
I let the kids decide the rules – more than me being out there and being this is what we are going to do blah blah – that way I found it works best for me [shrugs shoulders] – ‘cause it is not my area [shrugs, pulls face, head to side] ... (E5) |

Through extraordinary commitment, teachers lacking the necessary content knowledge manage to keep one step ahead of the students and minimise the impact their lack of content knowledge has on students. Table 10.3 displays the commitment that is needed for out-of-field teachers in their endeavour to stay in control of their out-of-field subject. Interview data showed teachers do more preparation, more planning and commit more time in an effort to gain control over the pedagogical content knowledge. A view from the different angles for example, educational
directors, principals, specialist as well as out-of-field teachers and parents enhances understanding of the commitment that is involved.

Table 10.3. Looking at commitment through different lenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>View of commitment that is needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Principals**      | *One of our science teachers taught physics but physics wasn’t her field. She sat for hours making sure she worked out every problem and every scenario; she knew what to teach the next day – she’s been teaching physics for five years now and she is brilliant.* (School D)  
*You can have an out-of-field teacher who makes it their business to learn what they need to know and for all intents and purposes are no different from the specialist teacher. I have a science teacher – we trained her in an area of science that she’s a passion for. She’s worked really hard and has now achieved the highest results we’ve had for our year 12s in that area because she has that natural connection with students and she has a love for learning.* (School G) |
| **Out-of-field teachers** | *You challenge yourself with out-of-field subjects. It is really a nice feeling, it is liberating, it boosts you.* (A7)  
*With this job I have been working EVERY [accentuated] weekend, I have my laptop with me every night just in case – I am thinking of things as I fall asleep – and in the shower in the morning. I need to – I should have – I could try or maybe this will work ...* (D7)  
*An extra 7 hours during the week and then the weekend time. I come to work on a Sunday afternoon – [head hangs]. I end up staying after school talking and planning next week – I sat most of Saturday doing year 7 work whether it is marking, planning, preparation.* (C7) |
| **Parents**         | ... A lack of planning, she couldn’t look at a situation and think ahead of what she had to do or meet the children’s needs. She’d had no foresight to extend them, they just did their own thing. (D5)  
*A teacher who’s not equipped, just caters for the middle of the road students.* (D3) |

Interview responses showed that teachers in out-of-field positions need professional development opportunities to support them in making the most of the curriculum. The curriculum is meant to be a tool assisting teachers in guiding students’ learning ensuring detailed construction and laddering of new knowledge. Johnson (2011) pointed out that covering the curriculum doesn’t mean effective teaching takes place. Parents experience the implications of insufficient pedagogical knowledge through their children. A parent (D3), mentioned how the curriculum can be misinterpreted: “It comes down to the implementation of it. A person who’s been trained in that area will interpret it differently, and depth is vital.” A parent (A6) shared: “She can’t distinguish between the important and less important information, what are the major outcomes or what they are supposed to be. She just doesn’t know.” Teachers’ lack of subject knowledge influences their understanding of curricula. A specialist teacher (C2) discussed her experience: “I was surprised, we were talking about how we are going to teach something, I witnessed things – I sometimes thought
[laugh] are we really reading the same curriculum document? It was very different." A specialist teacher (F5), further explained the impact of insufficient knowledge of an out-of-field teacher on teaching and learning:

The young lass who broke down, she teaches the same math subject as I do. She was teaching from the course outline lesson by lesson. I said, “You don’t have to stick to that. If you can think of something that’s interesting that you’ve been involved with, put that in. Chuck that other bit out. Put something in”.

Teachers who lack content knowledge do not know what to add or what needs to be accentuated. Educational Director (2) in South Africa said the following:

Effective teaching requires a broad content knowledge of the subject. Not just what is in the lesson plan but the background knowledge? These teachers have a very narrow field as far as understanding how this subject links to the real world, and how it links to other subjects. They see these subjects in silos and “We’re at this particular lesson this day”. This teacher is unable to bring the real world into the classroom, to inspire and make the children enthusiastic. It becomes a case of “Open your textbook on this page and we’re doing this work today”.

An out-of-field teacher (A3) is very aware of concerns about the execution of the curriculum: “… neglecting to cover work in a previous year because the teacher lacked the knowledge or incorrectly conveyed it, [means that] fundamental building blocks are lacking and the child needs to do extra work or encounter repetitive problems in the specific area.”

Professional development opportunities to enhance the use of the curriculum are not always available to out-of-field teachers as these positions are often seen as temporary. Education Director (3) in Australia experienced:

We need to make a distinction here. In secondary schools out-of-area teaching only occurs in years 8 to 10. In year 11 and 12 we have specialist teachers teaching specialist subjects. In years 8 to 10 many teachers are willing to do the necessary work to build their skills. We tend not to put people into areas where they’ve had absolutely no experience. We don’t put people to teach science, for example, who’ve never had anything to do with it. It’s not that serious of an issue for us.

There is some misconception among stakeholders about the experiences surrounding teaching in fields outside of one’s qualification. In this directors’ department, a young out-of-field teacher (G5), is currently teaching two out-of-field subjects at year twelve level. One of the subjects she didn’t even realise existed. Inadequacy in teachers’ content knowledge means inadequacy in students’ understanding of concepts. Teachers are worried that their insufficient knowledge will later catch up with their students; an unsuitably qualified teacher (C1) mentioned her concern: “I worry that the kids get to high school and I haven’t taught them enough, I haven’t taught it properly”. A parent (D5) shared: “My fear – came true, was that my child had a huge gap in his learning. They were not engaged with and they were neglected as such and he [student] never improved at all. He never grew academically ...”
The poor academic development of students because of a teacher’s restricted knowledge is a concern for parents; a parent (F2), claimed that ignorance is not always bliss: “If you only have limited knowledge of something, you don’t know more than that, but you think you know it all.” The principal (D4) explained: “She is an effective teacher and a good art writer but she doesn’t know what she doesn’t know. I said to her you don’t know that the children are supposed to be doing this so it’s not your fault.” An out-of-field teacher (D1) explained concerns that develop because of the gaps in content knowledge: “I need to change this subject but you just do what you know and what you know is insufficient and you go without any knowledge or prior experience.” Another out-of-field teacher (E5) explained experiences about having insufficient knowledge and teaching without a curriculum: “I have to make stuff up, that is kind of stressful.” An experienced teacher teaching out-of-field (A7) added: “It makes you anxious, the possibility that you are teaching incorrect information.” Interview data showed that although experienced teachers in out-of-field positions seem to cope better, lived experiences of out-of-field teachers are closely connected to the fact that they have insufficient pedagogical content knowledge. The interview data displayed in Table 10.3 showed that experienced teachers managed out-of-field subject more effectively than novice out-of-field teachers which softens the outcome of the experience.

Table 10.4. Understanding misconceptions about the lived experience: Development of PCK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Different views</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Director</td>
<td>There is some mentoring support. If you have to generalise - it’s patchy. It’s patchy in this state. (Director 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>Our Kindergarten teachers, if they don’t work and play in the area of language development you’re robbing a child really, We’re not setting them [students] up for good education. (School D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist teachers</td>
<td>There are more and more teachers for example who don’t have strong early childhood knowledge now teaching Prep - they don’t have the scope of ideas and resources and knowledge and skills that children need at that age. Children are being pushed to do things that they’re not ready for…(C2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning is like a ladder. If you miss a rung and try to aim for the top one they’re just not going to make the connection. (D2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out-of-Field teacher</td>
<td>It was hard in the beginning, it is getting better and easier. After teaching the subjects for more than one year I realised the level of work I used to offer was not good enough to challenge strong students...I have adjusted it now. (A2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>During the year 12 record [mock] exams parents became aware that the teacher left a whole chapter out, it was not covered at all – it was just too difficult. (B2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>She is a ‘good’ teacher, but she was not science qualified. She was the kind of teacher who would actually study it. She could then deliver that lesson but she could never take it any further. She did only tell the kids what she had taught herself in a very short space of time … (G1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interview data and classroom observations (C1/D7/B6) showed that unsuitably qualified teachers often have to rely on their own understanding of the content knowledge, which I refer to as a DIY (do-it-yourself) approach to improve, upgrade and develop their content knowledge. The impact out-of-field teachers’ insufficient content knowledge has for students on different levels stretched beyond the classroom walls, and the interview response from a specialist teacher (C2) provided a deeper understanding:

I witnessed, as the year progressed, when they got out on the playground, their behaviour was just wild – that is because they had unrealistic expectations of them while they were in the room, they were not ready to do the formal learning they had to do, and being pushed to do things they were not ready for – they got out on the playground and it was just [gesture with hands above head].

It is not only students who experience the impact of insufficient content knowledge but also teachers in out-of-field situations and their colleagues. A parent (G1), (with a Science degree, doing volunteer work as an assistant in the science lab) explained: “I ran the Lab sessions for her... normally a technician would get everything ready and the teacher would run the experiments, but with this teacher I actually ran the Lab sessions because she was way [accentuated] out of her depth.” Principals expect that teachers will cope with out-of-field subjects without major disruptions but often have to “fix” issues that develop because of these placements. A principal (B1) shared: “This young male teacher, he is in the class but has no idea what is going on, he doesn’t know the subject – it is there that the trouble starts!” The young teacher shared during interview discussions that he was left to rely on do-it-yourself skills to survive his classroom and several out-of-field subjects. I had the privilege of being involved in two classroom observations with him. During these observations it was obvious that his pedagogical content knowledge was falling way short. For example, incorrect information was offered and when students questioned him he could not provide a satisfactory answer. In addition he was unsure about answers when a homework assignment was marked, when students questioned the memorandum he suggested that their answer options were not correct without any discussion. His uncertain behaviour in relation to the content knowledge aggravated students and developed into major behaviour issues and confidence concerns. However, interview responses from his principal and head of department showed that their main focus was on his files and administration as far as his content knowledge was concerned. As shown in Figure 10.4 targeted support efforts in relation to out-of-field teachers’ specific needs and PCK development are “patchy”. Different views exist about whose responsibility it is to ensure that teachers in out-of-field positions improve their content knowledge and skills; a specialist teacher (C2) expressed her opinion as follows: “It is the responsibility of the teachers themselves to improve their knowledge.”
The lack of pedagogical content knowledge of teachers in positions outside their field of expertise ripples through the learning and teaching space. The absence of content knowledge, especially in certain areas, has an impact on the entire school community; for example, an out-of-field IT teacher’s lack of content knowledge ripples through the whole school. Dean of Staff (E3) explained:

*It’s lagging, they will tend to not be given responsibility or autonomy over a subject if they’re out of their area. A lot of teachers don’t invest in IT as much as they probably should because, in their defence, the IT is not as good as it should be and, again, that’s becoming a staffing issue...*

In this particular school the information technology teacher’s lack of content knowledge caused the whole school to fall back and become stagnant in IT proficiency and made keeping up with the development in technology an issue.

### 10.2.5 Rethinking policies

Education policies are supposed to benefit all stakeholders. The emphasis on policies should not be under estimated. The absence of a clear distinction of the out-of-field teaching situation has major implications for teacher assessment, national standardised student assessments and teacher quality. For this reason educational leaders need to rethink policies in relation to out-of-field teaching practices and assessment procedures, teacher placements and targeted professional learning opportunities. Awareness of the impact restricted content knowledge has on knowledge construction in subjects, and the effect on students and teachers makes rethinking policies necessary. A specialist teacher (F1) was of the opinion that out-of-field teachers should “*get extra training; if they are an upper primary school teacher or middle school teacher wanting to do Junior, they should then have to go and learn more.*” The same teacher later added:

*Maybe it is the degrees that are failing more so than the schools picking their staff – if I am going to a Wonder Stepping course then how come I can go and sit in a Junior Primary? I haven’t been Junior Primary trained. I can go and sit along that continuum but I am not fully trained in that...*

The needs of these teachers highlight the importance of extra help and support to overcome the deficiency in their pedagogical content knowledge. Reflecting on policies means understanding the difference pedagogical content knowledge creates. The difference between a teacher who is in control of the subject knowledge and one who is not is experienced by the students, a parent (B3) explained: “*This teacher explains it totally different than the other teacher. She [child] recently said, ‘but how can she explain it like that? It is wrong, this is the correct way’. They confuse the children.*” Out-of-field teaching poses risks for the depth of content offered as an out-of-field teacher (C7) elaborated:
I DO [accentuates] worry that — [long silence] the kids aren’t getting enough out of what I am teaching them, compared to someone that is in their field of expertise - maybe I am not teaching it the best way – or they’re not doing it in a way that is probably helping them, there is much to learn [voice change] ...

A teacher’s lack of content knowledge inhibits students’ creativity, a parent (C3) noted after volunteering in the art classroom for a period of time: “There are some pretty artistic kids but without having an art teacher there – it is pretty stagnant.” A parent (B2) worried about concepts not being developed: “Concepts do not get tied down – students will struggle in the future, it is fundamental, the basis. Because the next step follows on from the previous content and so it continues …” Constructing knowledge while effectively engaged and “intriguing students” develops deeper reasoning among students (Hattie, 2009, p. 261); it makes a difference. A specialist teacher (E2) viewed the overall picture she has of the subject and its content as important to succeed in constructing knowledge systematically; the content knowledge of each year level helps to develop a firm basis to build on while the teacher focuses on the final stage they want the students to accomplish, as displayed in Table 10.5.

The decisions specialist teachers and out-of-field teachers make in relation to their subjects and strategies they follow are different as displayed in Table 10.5. Loughran (2010) explained that specific decisions teachers make form the foundation of their understanding, development and application of knowledge. Their pedagogical content knowledge affirms the disposition of their teaching.

Table 10.5. Compare specialist and out-of-field teachers: The difference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>The difference through different lenses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Director</td>
<td>The major difference – I’m talking about their content area here, not their teaching qualifications – is that the qualified teacher doesn’t have to think about the content. It comes naturally, that any question a student might ask, any track that the lesson might take, a teacher is able to take the students down the path. In the case of the unqualified teacher, as well as thinking about their classroom management they have to think about the actual content that they’re teaching. This creates stresses in relation to the amount of preparation they have to do, but it also puts the effective management of the class at greater risk. (Director 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>My current math teachers know their math deeply, they love their learning area, they bring ideas, quirks, resources and passion that our students haven’t had for many years. A previous situation – the teacher had no confidence, no passion for the area and the teaching strategies reflected it. There was no connection made to the real world, there was no ability to construct that relationship. It was very much “Open to page 25 and do exercises 1 to 100”. It was repetitive, it was boring, it was negative, and it showed in both the results and in the students’ responses to the subject. It was something they had to endure. (School G)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out-of-field teachers</td>
<td>I put hours and hours into preparing and worrying. she [specialist teacher] doesn’t spend ages preparing, she knows what she is doing. You are expected to be doing a better job, but I don’t think I am necessarily doing a better job [looks tired]. (C1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Secondary schools and primary schools have different pedagogical content needs, but that doesn’t mean that pedagogical content knowledge is more important in one environment than the other. The interview and observation data showed that the general perception that out-of-field teaching just happens at secondary school level or that it only has major implications at secondary school level, is a misconception. The impact of out-of-field teaching is experienced on different levels, as shown in Chapter 5, Figure 5.3. An out-of-field teacher (D1) explained the impact out-of-field teaching has in the primary school classroom:

*Relations with children, understanding where the kids are at socially, emotionally, physically – they [out-of-field teachers] don’t have that knowledge and that base that allows you to make qualified judgments as to say we need to extend this child or we need to then remediate this child or there are these outside factors that influence this individual –.*

A primary school parent (D3) further highlighted the level of impact out-of-field teaching has in primary schools: “*It really comes down to skills, whether you’re able to cope with that age group, whether you’re able to cope with that subject area –.*” A secondary school out-of-field teacher (A3), suggested that it is hard to manage a subject without the needed content knowledge: “*I can’t convey information I know nothing about, I asked a colleague to do certain areas. It is part of her field, but for me it is just a piece of work we need to read through.*” Out-of-field teachers’ lack of the necessary content knowledge causes students to stagnate and in some cases regress rather than progress; a parent (C5) shared experiences: “*Derrick lost a term worth of education – that is huge. He went backwards – from being ‘sound’ in his English and math to being put in the ‘developing’ category. I don’t think any learning [was] done in the classroom.*” The parent added: “*His progression goes so rapidly downhill [sigh] …*” Teachers lacking content knowledge struggle to overcome these obstacles, a parent (G1), a qualified scientist, shared:

*She [the out-of-field teacher] had never done anything like that before – when you suddenly working with lab equipment – you have Bunsen burners and chemicals – using that equipment is a bit nerve wrecking. She was not comfortable so she did as little lab work as she could and it was the same with the geology stuff – she couldn’t take it any further she could just basically say ‘Here are the rocks’. They were marked, the kids could look at the rock and read what it was. No fault of hers – she is NOT [accentuated] a science teacher. She tried really hard and she is a ‘good’ teacher but she couldn’t cope, if there was a kid that was really keen and interested – she was not able to answer queries that went outside what she read up the night before – that type of thing…*
An out-of-field teacher (C7) viewed the obstacles she experienced: “It is more just not knowing how to do it all, I think that’s a huge hurdle ...” The interview data showed out-of-field teachers experience their lack of knowledge as an obstacle to reaching effectiveness while it leaves them feeling exposed and isolated. The challenges and concerns about future learning as shared in Table 10.6 through the lenses of directors, principals, out-of-field teachers and parents turn the focus to existing policies.

Table 10.6. Pedagogical content knowledge: Challenges and concerns for future learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Challenges and concerns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Director</td>
<td>They [Universities] don’t think about what the needs of the employers are – we could be a lot more strategic about who gets placement into universities so that a lot of that angst doesn’t arise with young grads. (Director 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>There are holes in their learning, misinformation and the lack of clarity, which will be a foundation for further learning. If they don’t have that proper foundation they will have some significant issues along the way. (School C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out-of-field teacher</td>
<td>There are certain things that I’m not happy teaching. I have my pet subjects and there are the others. If something has to go, if I can’t do something in the week or the day or whatever, it’s always the area that I feel inadequate in. (F4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>My child is not being taught what they need to be taught to keep up. That is a frustration especially when you know your child is bright. The connectedness is not happening. (E6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My son is changing schools next year. He needs to be taught by teachers who understand. He still suffers because of his foundation phase, which was not as strong as it should have been. Now he is a reluctant reader and a notorious speller – apparently most of that year level is. (C3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I just said there is no way – you are not going to enrol in that subject, you can achieve the same results with the other subject. You don’t need to go to school having a bad experience every day. (A5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10.3 Discussion

The impact of teachers knowing what needs to be taught and how it should be taught are highlighted through the interview data, while classroom observations provide me with the opportunity to see and experience the differences between what happens in specialist teachers’ classrooms and out-of-field teachers’ classrooms. Although Shulman (1987) underlined the importance of pedagogical content knowledge for effective teaching, Hattie (2009) stated that “there is not a large corpus of evidence” (p. 113) to defend such statements. The interview data shared in this chapter suggest that the lack of pedagogical content knowledge plays a significant role in the lived experiences in relation to out-of-field teaching. The discussion explores how teachers cope without a sound pedagogical content knowledge base, understanding the curriculum
without the necessary pedagogical content knowledge, nurturing a love for the subject, and “one size fits all” professional development perceptions.

10.3.1 Coping: Without a sound pedagogical content knowledge base?

Teachers are expected to stay one step ahead of their students. The key point that stood out in unsuitably qualified teachers’ endeavour, as Sullivan (2008) explained, was that content knowledge involves the capacity to be comfortable with transformation that includes new ways of thinking. Interview data and classroom observations (C1 and D7) showed that prior teaching experience assists teachers when they are assigned to out-of-field positions. The interview responses of experienced teachers assigned to out-of-field positions showed that although it remains a challenge they maintain some level of control over an out-of-field subject. Loughran (2010) explained that teachers with experience recognise learning theories which can assist them in their teaching and how to transfer them into teaching strategies to benefit students’ learning. Interview data showed that out-of-field teachers’ interest in the specific subject or field plays a vital role in their success and effectiveness to apply the curriculum. Misinterpreting the curriculum, the level of difficulty and the amount of knowledge that needs to be imparted influences the impact an out-of-field teacher can have on the learning and teaching environment. Teachers’ confidence with the subject knowledge has implications for their attitudes towards the subject and how they capture students’ imagination and stimulate deep learning.

Close classroom observations and interview responses showed that out-of-field teachers find it hard to keep students engaged. Johnson (2011) underlined that if students believe that it is possible to succeed, they will engage in learning, which means subject matter and effective teaching pedagogies should support each other. Out-of-field teachers admit that they need to spend extended amounts of time on lesson preparation to acquire some level of control over the subject matter and present it with confidence. Loughran (2010) highlighted that teachers develop and adjust their professional knowledge against the background of their own experiences of teaching. However, interview statements shared by teachers indicated a timeline of up to five years before they see themselves as a specialist or expert in a subject that was once their out-of-field subject. The responses in school G indicated that an out-of-field teacher in a science subject was unable to guide students from surface learning to deep learning.

Loughran (2010) explained how the notion that learning is processes of absorbing information strengthens views that teaching can be constructed through activities and performances that support retelling and remembering knowledge. Interview data showed that some school leaders shared views that a “good” teacher can teach any subject if they are committed. It is however clear through
the data that out-of-field teachers’ commitment finds realisation in a lot of extra work, thorough planning and preparation, as supported by Johnson (2011) who stated that effective preparation is the ultimate strategy for success. The key points that stood out are that unsuitably qualified teachers tried to counteract their lack of pedagogical content knowledge with increased workloads. Concerns about the way in which out-of-field teachers cope with insufficient content knowledge exist, based on Lingard et al’s (2003) claim that understanding and knowledge of the content ensures connectedness with the subject and students while it supports internalising concepts to stimulate deep learning.

The interview data showed that out-of-field teachers’ sense of efficacy influences their confidence, self-esteem and self-critique which then influences the teaching and learning environment. Ireson, Mortimore, and Hallam (1999) claimed that teachers’ belief in their personal efficacy impacts the support they offer to develop their students’ academic self-determination. Interview data showed that out-of-field teachers struggle to see themselves as “effective” or “good” teachers, these dispositions impact the teaching and learning environment. Loughran (2010) underlined that learning moves ahead when students are supported to build on existing knowledge, link this knowledge to related ideas and re-organise knowledge while synthesising knowledge. The concern about the influence out-of-field teachers’ lack of pedagogical content knowledge has on learning are vested in data showing that out-of-field teachers avoid complex concepts and omit sections of the curriculum they feel unqualified to teach. A teacher in school F admitted that when there are time constrains in a day he tended to skip the out-of-field subject.

Interview data highlighted that unsuitably qualified teachers tend to aim their teaching to the middle group, heavily rely on the text book and are not comfortable in allowing in-depth concept discussions with students. There is a major difference in conveying information and decisively building students’ commitment with the content of a subject (Loughran); it is ultimately seen as the difference between surface learning and deep learning. The type of learning students experience in a specific subject taught by an unsuitably qualified teacher has implications for their future learning opportunities (Ireson et al., 1999). A better perception of the amount of work that needs to be covered in a certain time frame gives teachers the advantage of being in control of the subject.

The different experiences of an out-of-field teacher and a specialist teacher are vested in various incidents and situations such as extra time needed to get on top of the subject, extra planning and extra research about the content. An effective learning environment provides students with a secure space in which they can explore new concepts and construct new knowledge. Bourdieu and Passeron (1994) claimed that students who are interested in content anticipate a “total” teaching and learning experience, which will support them to reach their potential as a whole
person in life. If they experience insecurities within this environment they respond accordingly. Although teaching outside their field of expertise remains a challenge, experienced teachers manage an out-of-field subject with less severe implications. Gipps and MacGilchrist (1999) stated that teachers functioning as life-long learners with a sound knowledge of how students operate in addition to their subject knowledge impact the classroom climate.

10.3.2 Reading the curriculum: In-depth?

The curriculum influences the sound construction of new knowledge. Hattie (2009) mentioned that curricula direct the “balance of surface or deep understanding” (p. 35) while promoting clear concepts within subjects. The interview data showed how the same curricula are interpreted differently by out-of-field teachers and specialist teachers. Out-of-field teachers lack pedagogical content knowledge and in an effort to overcome the problem often learn concepts by heart. Gipps and MacGilchrist (1999) claimed that isolated facts learned by heart have restricted use and are quick to forget. Interview data showed that professional development opportunities for these teachers pose challenges, the principal in school E mentioned that professional development is expensive for schools and that they try to keep these opportunities for their permanent staff stating that young out-of-field teachers are not seen as permanent staff. Neil and Morgan (2003) however, underlined the principal’s responsibility to ensure that the school is a “learning community” (p. 156) for all. Out-of-field teachers mentioned during interviews that they heavily rely on senior and specialist teachers as a tool for professional development and to assist them in understanding concepts.

The strong culture of collaboration among some colleagues, especially one-on-one very specific mentoring in schools C and G made a difference for out-of-field teachers. Bell (1991) highlighted the fundamental role of professional development as the professional growth of teachers and which involves the whole staff. The lived meaning of out-of-field teaching for professional development assumes that an out-of-field teacher (C1) would be less comfortable discussing their lack of knowledge in a group than in a one-on-one situation with a trusted colleague. Professional development studies such as the Timperley, Wilson, Barrar, and Fung (2007) suggested that involvement of outside experts were more effective that internal sources with expertise. The interview data in this thesis however counteracts this statement by showing that out-of-field teachers heavily rely on colleagues with expertise and excel from trust relationships with these colleagues.

Groundwater-Smith and Campbell (2010) noted that knowledge is socially constructed, meaning that the environment and school community play a significant role in the professional
growth of out-of-field teachers. Two out-of-field teachers (C7 and G5) admitted that their successes in their current out-of-field positions are a reality because colleagues “pulled” them through. Hallam and Ireson (1999) stated that expert teachers are able to combine complex networks of curricula with specific subject knowledge, know how to teach it and how to manage the students while they possess deep knowledge to effectively deal with highly complex matters. Lack of an in-depth understanding of concepts and content knowledge hamper the broad view of subject goals, outcomes and where to aim. Sullivan (2008) shared that teachers need to identify specific concepts and problems in order to match them to curriculum documents. Interview data showed that not understanding content knowledge influences the depth to which teachers read and apply the curriculum, as well as the expectation teachers have for their students and how they challenge them towards quality education. Teachers influence students’ attitudes towards certain subjects and to learning in general. Loughran (2010) suggested that the knowledge required in teaching and learning should inform students’ “being in this world” experiences. He underlines how teachers’ use of theoretical frameworks based on their control of professional knowledge and public/codified knowledge impacts on learning. He differentiated between general knowledge and specific knowledge teachers possess, and the influences these differences have on deep learning.

Difficulties and concerns teachers experience because of their lack of knowledge are often misunderstood. Loughran (2010) explained how specialist teachers make teaching look easy and simple while this expertise in teaching often gets misinterpreted, for example, views develop that anyone can teach anything. Specialised teachers develop a specific way of thinking about teaching, while focusing on clarifying the what, how and the why of concepts as they develop knowledge of practice from tacit to explicit through their expertise in a specific subject-field. Zepeda (2006) highlights that timely professional development support, which places focus on specific needs, transforms teachers’ effectiveness and their professional development in a positive manner. Comprehensive teaching relies on professional knowledge about pedagogies and processes such as selecting a specific method for particular content aiming to link concepts and to reach outcomes (Loughran).

However, teachers in out-of-field positions are often left to themselves to work out the best way in order to cope with the out-of-field subject. The first strategy these teachers apply is critical reflection, while Loughran (2010) underlined open-mindedness as a preparedness to listen to all perspectives, to re-consider existing knowledge, beliefs and procedures. What stood out through the interview responses and classroom observations is that unsuitably qualified teachers need extra help and support to use the curriculum as an effective tool towards deeper learning. Their needs for development in relation to effective curriculum application call on colleagues with expertise to get
engaged as mentors. While these findings are in counter-position with some of Timperley et al’s (2007) statements it supports the view that school leadership influences the effectiveness of professional development.

10.3.3 Nurturing a love for the subject: Through knowing?

A knowledgeable teacher has the respect of students, with implications for teacher/student relationships which determine the classroom atmosphere. Classroom observation in an unsuitably qualified teacher’s classroom (B/8) and in a specialist science teacher’s classroom (B/1) showed that a teacher with expertise asked stimulating questions which effectively motivated students’ interest while the same group of students became aggravated in the out-of-field classroom because of confusion that developed surrounding the correct information. Hattie (2009) claimed that a healthy teacher/student relationship impacts classroom management.

From the evidence gathered in interviews and through observations, I would argue further that a teacher with sound pedagogical content knowledge feels confident to build close interpersonal relationships with students, challenge them and successfully get them engaged with the subject matter. The challenges posed by teachers having insufficient content knowledge not only influence how they inspire students, but also have implications for students’ future subject choices and how their potential is unlocked into learning opportunities. Out-of-field teachers influence students’ attitudes towards learning as Loughran (2010) stated, that a teacher with a sound and broad knowledge base, knowing what to teach, how and when to teach it successfully keeps students motivated. Pedagogical content knowledge provides teachers with the right tools to instil a love for the specific subject.

The loss of interest in subjects is interrelated to the learning experience. Students struggle to engage in deep learning when the teacher lacks subject knowledge. Hattie (2009) claimed that the teacher is the central resource of learning and elaborated that “what ‘some’ teachers do matters” (p. 22). He further explained that teaching is a “deliberate intervention” (p. 23) with the purpose of the cognitive development of students. Loughran (2010) mentioned that a teacher’s knowledge of practice is important in periods of transformation because it supports the development of an appreciative attitude for concerns and tribulations and changes which often take place in the learning environment.

Hattie (2009) mentioned that his meta-analyses “surprisingly” (p. 248) do not provide evidence to support the important role of pedagogical content knowledge. In this thesis 12 classroom observations including specialist teachers and out-of-field teachers clarify the importance of sound pedagogical content knowledge on visible teaching and learning. I claim that although
different factors are at play in classrooms, a teacher’s sound content knowledge hugely influences what happens inside the classroom and the dispositions students demonstrate towards the subject. A combination of a lack of content knowledge and an absence of a teacher’s interest in a specific subject field is enough to “destroy” a subject for students. Interview data shows that the perception that it is not their subject develops into non-engagement and non-connectedness. On the other hand, Hattie (2009) claimed that teachers with the necessary pedagogical content knowledge are flexible and are able to be innovative and can improvise during their instruction. They display an interest in the field, and it is this willingness to build up and research sufficient content knowledge which enables engagement and stimulation of students. Teachers’ teaching characteristics and comments have a long-lasting effect on their students, it exhilarates or harms (Johnson, 2011) their love for learning. Students with special needs rely on teachers with specialised knowledge to guide them through challenging learning experiences. The interview data showed that teachers without the professional knowledge to support at-risk students regard them as high maintenance and disruptive.

10.3.4 Professional development: “One size fits all?”

Professional development is the lifeline of out-of-field teachers. However, Hardy (2012) noted that professional development is complex and highlighted the “convoluted nature and unpredictability” of the actual practices (p. 181). Interview data (C1) showed that out-of-field teachers feel intimidated when they attend the same professional development programmes or workshops with specialist teachers. Darling-Hammond (2010b) stated that professional development programmes are most effective when they provide “hands on” (p. 227) options and develop their content knowledge. The interview data showed that professional development programmes are often not high on the priority list of school leaders for their out-of-field teachers, or considered worthwhile. Loughran (2010) is adamant that attention should be paid to how teachers’ skills, knowledge and abilities are developed, warning teachers against developing a false sense of confidence that might undermine the recognition and awareness they should have to move beyond skills alone. Political and educational leaders often talk about changes and transformation strategies to better the quality of education and teachers’ teaching circumstances, for example, using specialist teachers to provide more support and “questioning one another” (Hattie, 2009, p. 252). Interview data suggested that out-of-field teachers are often left to find their own way to gain control over an out-of-field subject.

10.4 Summary

Teachers are the main resource students have to guide them through effective learning (Hattie, 2009). Vygotsky’s (1978) notion of the Zone of Proximal Development implies that students make
the most of their learning when they have a knowledgeable person scaffolding and guiding them while they construct new knowledge. The space in which learning takes place is influenced by the quality and depth of out-of-field teachers’ pedagogical content knowledge. Out-of-field teachers find it hard to connect subject content and concepts to a broader knowledge construction across subject fields and to the real world applicability. Hattie (2009) argued that “it is essential to have visible teaching and visible learning” (p. 37). While I agree, I am concerned with what happens when visible teaching and visible learning in out-of-field teachers’ classrooms is under visible stress? This is in contrast to teachers with expertise in their subject field who have the needed terminology to develop a clear pedagogical communication with their students, paving the way for building concepts (laddering) as Vygotsky suggested, through collaboration. In the final chapter of the thesis I underline and discuss the overall findings of the thesis while the chapter concludes with three key implications and suggestions for future research projects.
Chapter 11

Conclusion

“It is what it is ...” Isn’t it?

Dean of Staff

11.1 Overall Findings of the Thesis

The aim throughout this investigation was to reveal the essence of real-life experiences in relation to out-of-field teaching. The thesis highlighted the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching practices for educational leaders, teachers, parents and students while it stimulated more questions about the effective management of out-of-field teaching practices. Interpretation of the text is an ongoing task and the information offered through the language of participants develops ongoing questions which need interpretation (Gadamer, 1976). I embraced Gadamer’s (1975) view that “The essence of the question is the opening up and keeping open, of possibilities” (p. 266). The main research question of this thesis, how fundamental, for teachers in their everyday concerns and practices, are their lived experiences and the meaning of out-of-field teaching, calls on Gadamer’s (1976) emphasis of interpersonal communication as a vehicle to reveal the true foundation of meaning and to stimulate the interpretation of new information. The interpretation of lived experiences develop into units of meaning within the framework of a hermeneutic circle of tradition, culture, and history “Acknowledging the past in its otherness – in such a way that it has something to say to me” (Gadamer, 1975, p. 324). The “language” in which each participant’s truth was shared stimulates reflections on the argument disclosed by the research questions and the answers generated. The thesis provides new information on “taken for granted” practices and cultures in schools which was directed and prompted through the following three sub-questions:

What is the pedagogical meaning of out-of-field teaching for primary and secondary schools?

What is the meaning of the out-of-field teaching for real-life experiences in relation to school leaders, classroom management, teacher and student behaviour?

What do out-of-field teachers do to manage their out-of-field lived experiences in the wider school community?

These questions stimulated the construction of meaning and development of an in-depth understanding of the different layers of meaning in connection to out-of-field teaching. Figure 11.1
displays the multilayered themes that the thesis discussed as units of meaning of the out-of-field experience.

Figure 11.1 Themes as units of meaning and layers of understanding

The information participants shared during interviews as well as the information obtained through close observations revealed critical insights into the meaning of out-of-field teaching for the learning and teaching environment. Chapter 11 provides a summary of the overall findings and then explains the implications; for example, the theoretical and methodological implications, the educational practice implications and the implications for policy development. The chapter also shares limitation of the investigation and the scope for further research.
The overall findings first, underscored the major influence effective support has on success and positive outcomes in relation to out-of-field teachers’ lived experiences. Focussing on and learning from schools and out-of-field teachers who were able to turn a dire situation into a positive learning experience revealed important facts about the way support is offered to these teachers. Zepeda (2006) however claimed that 50% of teachers in out-of-field position have to manage without proper support. The results and discussions clarify that it is necessary to reflect on the benefits current “one size fits all” professional development programmes have for out-of-field teachers who are not confident to attend, talk or ask questions in workshops they shared with specialist teachers (F1, C1 and C7). However, the literature revealed the important role up-skilling and professional development programmes have, because teachers can only utilise public prepositional knowledge in their classrooms when they have internalised the knowledge and it becomes part of their personal knowledge (Levacic & Glatter, 2001).

Second, the thesis highlighted that the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching is not less influential in primary schools than in secondary schools but lived experiences influence different areas of the students’ development. The thesis further illustrates how this is a harmful perception as students at pre-primary, upper primary, or secondary school level have specific needs which an unsuitably qualified teacher finds hard to identify and manage appropriately. The implications are vested in developing a love for learning from a young age as, according to Cooper and McIntyre (1994), the knowledgeable teacher plays a determining role in developing this love. The concerns are when teachers do not cope in their subject or year level and do not successfully portray a love for specific areas, with repercussions for young learners.

Third, the overall findings of the thesis turn the focus onto decisions by school leaders to place at-risk students with diagnosed ADHD and autism (School C and School F) in out-of-field teachers’ classrooms. Misconceptions and misunderstanding about the meaning of out-of-field teaching for at-risk students result in complex learning challenges for these students when they find themselves in the classroom of an out-of-field teacher who does not cope. Carroll et al. (2006) highlighted the influence of social factors on these students’ already fragile emotional and behaviour self-control. Education departments go to great lengths to provide financial and physical resources to support at-risk students’ specific learning needs. The thesis, however, revealed that because of misunderstanding and misconceptions the possible impact of out-of-field teaching practices is not considered for these students. The thesis further stimulated questions and reflections on the importance of understanding the meaning of out-of-field teaching for at-risk students’ effective development.
Fourth, the thesis revealed a pressing need for open communication and discussions between tertiary institutions and education departments (Director 1, Director 2), between education departments and schools (G2 and B1), and between schools and parents in relation to the out-of-field teaching practice (C3, C4, C5, B2, B3, A5, A6, F2 and F5). Zepeda (2006) especially noted the role open communication has in support and development of out-of-field teachers. Additional literature reviewed, for example, Dimmock and Walker (2005), noted that positive social interpersonal relationships between staff and leaders change dispositions while Wenger (2009) focused on the significance of social interactions within classrooms as fundamental for strengthening and providing motivational background for constructivism in education.

The fifth major overall finding highlighted the different layers of the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching for novice teachers and their leaders. Literature reviewed in Chapter 3 stated that a third of novice teachers leave within the first 3 years of their teaching career (Ingersoll, 2003a, 2003b, 2006; NCTAF, 2007). In this study three of the 13 out-of-field teachers opted to leave the teaching profession directly as a result of their unpleasant lived experiences in out-of-field positions.

The sixth overall finding stimulated questions about teacher assessment and evaluation while they are in out-of-field positions because of the influence it has on their job and career opportunities. Hobbs (2013a) highlighted the influence of out-of-field teaching on these teachers’ identity and self-efficacy, which develop pressing reflections about the appropriateness of assessing and evaluating teachers while they are in these positions and the effect it has for their career development. A principal (D4) admitted that the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching affected an out-of-field teacher’s performance in her school. The thesis stimulates questions whether it is fair to assess and evaluate teachers in these positions.

Seventh, the thesis confronted the need for school leaders to develop an in-depth understanding of the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching for teachers’ dispositions and, as a result, the influence it has on teacher behaviour and classroom management. Groundwater-Smith et al. (2011) discussed how complex circumstances in the classroom develop into anxieties and feelings of burnout. The data in the present thesis showed that it intensifies when leaders are unaware, unengaged and unempathetic. The thesis revealed that principals often focus on student behaviour while out-of-field teachers urgently need support and development in relation to behaviour in classrooms (School C, School E and School B).

Eighth, the lived experiences in relation to out-of-field teaching influence the healthy partnership between schools and parents. Preston (2011) claimed that schools often avoid close conversations with parents that might reveal shortcomings and problem areas. However, the thesis
brought to the forefront that school leaders with a vision for comprehensive schools and healthy school communities are eager to develop an in-depth understanding of the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching as an opportunity to open up possibilities to develop teachers and make positive adjustments and transformations possible for all the stakeholders involved.

Finally, the transnational research revealed the influence language of instruction (when the language of instruction is other than a teacher’s mother tongue), class sizes and the quality of textbooks (out-of-field teachers usually heavily rely on textbook teaching) can have on out-of-field teachers’ lived experiences. Lingard et al. (2003) noted that knowledge ensures connectedness with the subject and students while the transnational information revealed language of instruction, class size and quality of resources available for out-of-field teacher can make a difference to the success they have with an out-of-field subject. This information is important for countries such as South Africa, Australia and the UK who often employ immigrant teachers.

The overall findings are bound together through the in-depth attention the thesis paid to the undertones of participants’ language while sharing their lived experiences. The focus on language according to the Gadamerian philosophy opened each theme to reveal different layers of meaning. For example, teacher emotions and dispositions, leadership, classroom management, teacher and student behaviour, the school community and pedagogical content knowledge were themes that brought the complexities of lived experiences forward. This contributed towards developing a deeper understanding of the commonalities and essence of lived experiences that ran like a thread through all the themes.

11.2 Implications

The overall findings shared in the previous section have major theoretical and methodological implications as well as educational practice and policy implications. The thesis unveils positive and negative lived experiences while investigating the “different experiential qualities from the life-world” (Van Manen, 1990, p. 101) and perceptions of the different participants. This chapter, in addition to the overall findings, proceeds to discuss key implications of out-of-field teaching experiences as revealed through the thematic analysis. Quality and effectiveness in the learning and teaching environment is deeply rooted within theoretical and methodological approaches while supported by the educational practice implications and policy developments.

11.2.1 Theoretical and methodological implications

The implications of the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching for theoretical and methodological approaches lies in the content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge these
out-of-field teachers own or do not own. Each subject matter has its own “language” and each year level has its own social, cognitive and emotional development needs. Hobbs (2013b) noted that out-of-field teachers have to effectively manage “boundary crossing” between subjects in order to stay competent in subject areas for which they are not qualified. The thesis took an in-depth look in Chapter 7 at out-of-field teachers’ classrooms to develop an in-depth understanding of the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching for theoretical and methodological strategies. Although some out-of-field teachers effectively use the challenge to develop new strategies, the average out-of-field teacher finds it hard and this has implications for the development of new theories and methodology in unfamiliar subjects. The data showed that it is not a natural process for these teachers to cross these subject boundaries. They need support and guidance to cross subject boundaries, which means it also has significant implications for the awareness, engagement and support leaders and colleagues offer.

The thesis was able to dig deep into the needs of out-of-field teachers because the hermeneutic phenomenology allowed the data to speak for itself while I worked through a magnitude of data to offer the “facts” of lived experiences in the “language” participants had offered it (Van Manen, 1990, p. 181). The human experiences revealed were “making visible” the “nature and essence” of the out-of-field teaching experience and what it means for education. This chapter summarises the critical insights offered in the thesis according to Van Manen’s (1990) discussion about the lived world of everyday realities. The thesis confronted set viewpoints about the out-of-field teaching practices and experiences, for example, that out-of-field teaching is not a huge concern in primary schools and that “good” teachers can teach anything.

Looking through the different lenses brought the history and culture of “unnoticed” experiences to the forefront while a deeper understanding found anchor in Gadamer’s (1975) viewpoint that “… hermeneutics demonstrate the effectivity of history within understanding itself” (p. 267). The analysis, supported by Gadamer’s hermeneutic circle (1976) of tradition, culture and history, showed that out-of-field teaching developed into a “common” and acceptable practice that often goes “unnoticed” because it became part of a culture and tradition; it is not looked upon as an “unjust” practice. The truth for educational leaders and the teaching environment is that the “unjust” culture of out-of-field teaching has been part of education for a long period, as the literature review in Chapter 3 suggested, and might remain part of education in the future. It is, however, necessary to confront misconceptions and misunderstandings through a deeper understanding, which is made possible by the new knowledge offered in this thesis, to transform the way in which out-of-field teaching is managed while in agreement with Hattie (2009) keeping in mind that teachers are the most important resource in schools.
Principals in schools E and B as well as Director 2 claimed that a “good” teacher can teach “anything” up to Year 9/10 level. These views develop into unrealistic expectations about what out-of-field teachers have to offer. Out-of-field teaching is not perceived as inappropriate because it is part of a culture and practice. For example, the thesis showed that novice teachers are more likely to be assigned to an out-of-field position because senior teachers are not willing to take positions outside their comfort zone (School E and School B) or positions which are seen as degrading and complicated, or involving “hard yards” (E3). In some schools it is common practice to assign new or novice teachers to the less popular subjects, year levels or positions in spite of them being unsuitably qualified for the specific position (School D, B and A). The thesis revealed that the out-of-field experience has different meanings for different teachers, depending on the stages of their career, for example, novice teachers in these positions have more intense experiences (E5 and B6). Some participants revealed that the teaching profession was not what they expected it to be depending on their “lived space”, causing them to feel “angry and depressed” (B6) or disappointed and not “at home” in the teaching profession (G5, A3 and C1). These teachers found it hard to link their training, qualifications and understanding of theories to their current out-of-field subjects.

The thesis provided these out-of-field teachers, school leaders, educational leaders and parents with a platform from which to discuss personal needs, support and professional development needs and strategies. I experienced the positive and healing effect interaction and discussions about lived experiences have during interviews. The communication, sharing and interaction that occurred provided opportunities for all participants to reflect on their lived experience and to develop a deeper understanding while they discussed their pre-understanding and “life-world” in the out-of-field teaching situation. This aim was tied to Gadamer’s (1976) theory that open interaction and the use of one’s own “language” brings about deeper understanding. This became apparent in some instances where participants gave contradictory views and perceptions as the interview developed and their understanding of their own prejudice developed into a deeper understanding of the experience (G3, E3 and B1). The thesis discussed these contradicting perceptions as it supports a clearer understanding and awareness of the important role open communication plays in relation to out-of-field teaching experiences.

The thesis offers new perceptions, keeping Gadamer’s (1976) theory in mind which states that deeper understanding is not possible without some kind of “prejudice” or pre-understanding of a specific experience. The pre-understanding of school leaders, colleagues and parents in relation to the out-of-field experience plays a major role in how they manage the situation and provide support. The interview data, for example, revealed that principals with previous personal experience of out-of-field teaching applied leadership strategies based on their pre-understanding. These pre-
understandings proved to have a positive impact on the interpersonal relations between these principals (School D and G) and their out-of-field teachers “...we sat down with her...” (D4). The thesis also revealed the practice of principals assigning teachers to out-of-field positions, often without focused and continuing support (School A, B, E and F) stating “They can teach themselves it is not that hard” (E3) or “It is not my responsibility” (B1). School leaders expect that out-of-field teachers will cope and often do not pay extra attention to either novice or experienced, unsuitably qualified teachers until serious complaints reach their office (School C and F) “I know when parents complain” (F3).

Experienced teachers practising in out-of-field positions, as well as their school leaders, often see these out-of-field positions as a temporary, uncomfortable situation which they merely need to manage for a while just to help out in a crisis situation. This viewpoint has implications not only for the development of these teachers in this specific subject but also for the in-depth development of the curriculum. This embodied experience, that it is only a temporary experience, are revealed in their presence and interactions with each other: “I offered to help out” (C7), “There was no one else” (G5) and with their students “I let them decide the rules...it not my subject area” (E5). The individual teacher’s personality, teaching history and school environment influence how they experience their out-of-field teaching, which is closely tied to their “bodily” experience of being in the world (Van Manen, 1990, p. 102–104). Previous chapters discussed the out-of-field experience in detail, not only claiming fuller understanding through Gadamer’s theory (1976) of “fusion of horizons” (p. xix) but also keeping Vygotsky’s theory of the socio-interdependence in the learning environment in mind. Socio-interdependence in the learning environment closely binds out-of-field teachers’ personal experiences, their school leaders’ leadership skills, styles, strategies and support, and how the wider school community experiences the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching.

The different layers are further connected to each other through commonalities and clusters of meaning described by Smith et al. (2010) as “subsumption” (p. 97) in phenomenological analysis. These clusters of meaning include, for example, teacher confidence, self-esteem, self-critique, trust-relationships, respect and support, as was discussed throughout the results offered.

Confidence, self-esteem and self-critique concerns increase when teachers in out-of-field positions experience a discrepancy between expectations and what really happens in the classroom. The discord between what is expected, what is perceived and what really happens in an out-of-field classroom was revealed in the interview responses of school leaders (E3, B1, C1 and F3) and out-of-field teachers (E5, F4, D7, C1 and C7), specialist teachers (E1, C2, B4 and B5) as well as parents (E4, F5 and C5). This interview information showed that leaders often do not realise how intense the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching is inside classrooms. Out-of-field teachers assess and
compare themselves to specialist colleagues, with the misunderstandings that often develop influencing what happens in schools, leading to teachers in these positions either being supported or criticised. However, it is important to take note of the positive difference that was made when teachers in out-of-field positions were assigned to an out-of-field subject in which they have an interest (G4 and D1). Hobbs (2013a) noted that passion for a subject influences how an out-of-field teacher develops in an out-of-field subject. An out-of-field teacher (G5) described how she experiences one of her out-of-field subjects, maths, as a positive challenge and an opportunity to develop as a teacher but that she hates her other out-of-field subject which is earth science. Out-of-field teachers who felt they could control the subject content perceived the experience as less intimidating than teachers who had no interest in or passion for the subject.

The intensity of lived experiences in relation to out-of-field teaching practices is influenced by how connected and engaged participants were with the out-of-field teaching situation. For example, a disconnected principal did not perceive the out-of-field classroom with the same intensity as a mother with a child in an out-of-field teacher’s classroom. Education directors and school leaders are involved in the decision-making processes that place teachers in out-of-field positions. The thesis showed that principals who displayed misunderstandings of the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching would rely on out-of-field teaching as an instant problem-solving practice without putting extra support and development measures into place. However, their accounts of lived experiences as they experience and perceive it seem to be on a less intense level.

The difference in the intensity of lived experiences between leaders, teachers and parents was further confirmed by the initial denial of some leaders (School E and F) that their schools have teachers in out-of-field positions. The absence of attention paid to the out-of-field teaching situation in agendas and minutes of staff and subject meetings mirrored the level of importance it received in discussions. The concern is that educational leaders who are actively involved in decision making and policy making, which greatly influence the occurrence and experiences surrounding out-of-field teaching, do not experience the intensity of the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching. The intensity of lived experiences, however, interestingly changes during interviews with specialist teachers, especially when they were in the classroom right next to an out-of-field teacher. The depth of the lived experience dramatically changed in the responses of out-of-field teachers and parents during interviews.

In addition to the critical insight provided, the thesis concluded by highlighting the key points that stood out and bound the six themes, for example, out-of-field teachers’ “life-world” of dispositions and emotional experiences, their school leaders’ skills and leadership styles, their classroom management, teacher and student behaviour, how the wider school community
experiences out-of-field teaching, and the influence of pedagogical content knowledge discussed in the previous chapters as a “whole”, in-depth understanding of the out-of-field teaching experience.

At this point I came to two pressing questions, firstly: “We think we know but do we really understand these teachers’ lived experiences?” and secondly, “What have we learned through the lived experiences participants shared in this thesis”? The answers can be found in the sometimes upsetting and confrontational language participants used to describe what they “see” when they look at the “out-of-field thing” through their own lens to describe educational practice implications.

11.2.2 Educational practice implications

The overall findings highlight for example, the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching for novice teachers, at-risk students, teacher dispositions and how school leaders’ understanding of these teachers’ lived experience have implications for educational practices. Hattingh, Aldous, and Rogan (2007) underlined that the capacity to innovate and improve teaching and learning depends on teacher factors, student factors, school management and physical resources. I argue that if out-of-field teachers are placed in teaching and learning environments with challenging students, a lack of resources and school leaders with misconceptions about the out-of-teaching situation, then the outcome will be unenjoyable learning environments. Awareness and an in-depth understanding of the interrelation between these overall findings and educational practice implications lies in understanding the interconnection it has with emotional lived experiences, leaders and leadership skills, effective classroom management, teacher and student behaviour, the wider school community and pedagogical content knowledge.

11.2.2.1 The meaning of emotional experiences

Finding an out-of-field position “tricky”, “hard” and a teaching situation that develops “pressure” and “stress” have implication for educational practice. Out-of-field teachers define themselves as “not good” in comparison with suitably qualified teachers which showed their self-critique and emotional experiences. Out-of-field teacher dispositions affect how out-of-field teachers perceive themselves as teachers (Hobbs, 2013a) and how they are perceived within the school community as competent practitioners. Interview data showed that out-of-field teachers often do not receive specific and timely support to address concerns (C7, C1 and E5) because of misconceptions and misunderstandings about the out-of-field teaching experience. They work through emotional experiences in isolation with one teacher stating “I would be lying if I said I hadn’t gone home in tears” (C7). Other out-of-field teachers shared the same lived experiences (D7, E5 and G5) during interviews, claiming that they share their emotional out-of-field journey only with close friends or family, causing school leaders and colleagues to perceive them as coping
well enough. This results in a lack of awareness of these teachers’ real-life experiences, concerns and occasional dissatisfaction with leadership. The lack of sharing their true real-life experiences causes leadership to mistakenly perceive and regard out-of-field teaching as a concern that does not need their attention, which has implications for leaders’ approaches to manage the out-of-field situation.

11.2.2.2 The influence of leaders and leadership skills

The overall findings revealed the major role school leaders played in the lived experiences of participants, with significant implications and meaning for educational practice. School leaders who effectively focused on close interpersonal relationships with out-of-field teachers, and while following a philosophy of “growing people” (G2) and asking out-of-field teachers “...what do we need to equip you with...” (D2, D4), successfully turned the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching into a positive challenge. The discrepancy between perceptions and real-life experiences in relation to out-of-field teaching as expressed by practitioners differed in different school environments. School leaders contradicted themselves expecting “good” teachers to be able to teach any subject up to year 10 level, but in the same conversation underlining that passion and interest in a subject directs teacher effectiveness, and sharing perceptions that out-of-field teaching becomes a “disaster” when teachers do not know what they are doing (B1). A principal (F3) claimed that his school did not experience major incidents because of out-of-field teachers while an out-of-field teacher (F4) explained that he is on medication because of a “situation” in his classroom.

Some principals assign out-of-field subjects to teachers without first discussing the matter with them (School E). In three of the seven schools researched, the principals’ leadership skills, styles, decisions and choices affect teacher attrition (School B, C and E). In schools where leaders perceived out-of-field teachers as disengaged, not prepared and not committed, out-of-field teachers felt isolated, not supported and highly stressed (School A, B and E) (see Figure 5.2). However, interview data showed on average these teachers spend more time on out-of-field subjects than on subjects in their own field.

School leaders perceive out-of-field placements as temporary only and will not compromise the school budget in favour of these teachers receiving professional development in an out-of-field subject. On the other hand, out-of-field teachers tend to experience school leaders as unaware of their needs and concerns as far as their development as effective classroom practitioners is concerned. Delayed communication and school leaders holding back before they act (School A, C, E and F) influence trust relationships and stimulate more questions about school leaders’ understanding of what the experience means for the teaching and learning environments.
Educational leaders are aware of the importance of communication, for example, Directors 1 and 3 turned focus during the interviews to the gap in communication between education departments and tertiary institutions, with questions about the implications of tertiary recruitment of students and their preparation for the profession and classrooms.

11.2.2.3 The meaning for effective classrooms

The implications of out-of-field teaching for classrooms include the influence on classroom management styles. The overall findings showed that out-of-field teachers depend heavily on support, re-training and up-skilling opportunities from colleagues to survive their out-of-field teaching situation. The implications for educational practice and specifically managing effective classrooms become a major concern when these teachers have to cope without support or professional development opportunities. The overall findings revealed that novice out-of-field teachers struggle to develop into competent classroom managers without support. Lingard et al. (2003) noted the importance of teacher confidence and connectedness in the classroom. The interview (C7, B6, E5 and F4) and classroom observation (B6, C1) data showed that pedagogical insecurities cause out-of-field teachers to struggle with control over the subject content or year level. They omit learning activities or concepts they found too difficult or challenging, although the content formed part of the suggested curriculum. For example, out-of-field teachers tend to dismiss cooperative learning activities (A3), science laboratory work (G1) or in-depth content discussions (E5).

Rogers (2011a) suggested that teachers need to demonstrate a real interest in the topic, show enthusiasm and be keenly involved and concerned about the students’ progress in a specific area in order to keep them engaged. Out-of-field teachers in South Africa find it especially difficult because of huge class sizes (Schools A and B). The transnational research also underlined the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching in multicultural classrooms where the language of instruction was not the teacher’s mother tongue, and students held uncontrolled conversations in a third language which the out-of-field teacher did not understand (B6). These factors contributed to the development of complex and challenging classroom management situations (Case Study 1, Chapter 8). The positive implications of out-of-field teaching for classrooms are vested in turning it into a positive challenge to develop, although teachers previously seen as out-of-field teachers but who function now as experts admitted that it took them more or less five years to develop expertise in these subjects.
11.2.2.4  The meaning for teacher and student behaviour

The implications of leaders’ misunderstanding and misconceptions about behaviour in out-of-field teachers’ classrooms were briefly mentioned in the summary of the overall findings. It is, however, fundamental to understand the implications of these misunderstandings for educational practice. Complex behaviour experiences hamper the construction of trusting relationships between these teachers and their students. Behaviour displayed by out-of-field teachers who struggle to cope undermines their confidence, self-esteem and security, which often aggravates students (Classroom observations in school B). Interview data (C3, C4, C5 and E4) showed that the pastoral care role of the teacher is especially important for young students in primary schools as they spend “long hours with their teachers” (E4). Students start to “test” teachers’ content knowledge and effectiveness while out-of-field teachers feel that students “gang up” against them (G5 and B1).

Teachers in out-of-field positions tend not to act proactively in dealing with classroom behaviour. They may misinterpret, ignore or overlook indicators of specific behaviour needs, especially with at-risk students where students diagnosed with mild autism were sent to sit outside the classroom because of their “disruptive” behaviour (School C and F). Carroll et al. (2006) suggested that students who are regarded by teachers as impulsive tend to experience the classroom as a negative environment, which, in turn, focuses on the ability of the teacher to meet the needs of a student who displays behavioural and emotional challenges in the learning environment. This was clearly the case in Derrick’s classroom in school C (Chapter 8). Interview data showed these frustrations manifest in disruptive behaviour with implications for the school and home (C3, C4 and C5). Continuous behaviour incidents in these classrooms developed into dissatisfaction and distrust in the wider school community (School A, B, C and F). The behaviour complexities that develop in classrooms because of out-of-field teaching influences teaching and learning practices because of the impact it has on trust, respect, confidence and inter-personal relationships. These implications involve dysfunctional and disruptive learning and teaching spaces but it seems as if the main focus is more on the students’ behaviour than taking into account what role out-of-field teachers’ behaviour plays in these learning environments and the wider school community.

11.2.2.5  The meaning for the wider school community

One of the overall findings discussed the lack of open communication and honest discussions in relation to the out-of-field teaching situation at schools. Hattingh and Lillejord (2005) noted that change happens from within institutions such as schools, where ownership develops a deep engagement which then upholds sustainable change. The lack of open communication has

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\[11\] Pseudonym
implications for educational practices because it influences the effective and healthy involvement and engagement between school and home. The wider school community, for example, parents, school leaders, colleagues and students experience the meaning of out-of-field teaching with different intensity. The interview data offered in Chapter 9 showed that all members of the school community are affected when out-of-field teachers struggle to cope. However, parents displayed empathy for teachers in these positions and interview data showed that parents want to support the teacher and work in a team towards a positive outcome. They want to have open and honest discussions in relation to out-of-field teaching practices. Overlooking the impact of out-of-field teaching on open communication and interaction between parents and these teachers creates complex challenges in, for example, collaboration, trust and respect issues within the school community. These strained relationships and disappointment influence the healthy and smooth functioning of school communities. Although some school leaders try to downplay the fact that out-of-field teaching takes place among their staff, most parents and students are soon aware of the deficiencies in teachers’ content knowledge and pedagogical practices in the classroom. Darling-Hammond (2010b) noted “Young people are very observant” (p. 65) and highlighted the effect inexperienced and unsuitably qualified teachers have on learning environments. The implications of misunderstandings and misconceptions between school/education department or school/parents for the school involves restricted collaboration and teamwork. Parents shared that they wish to collaborate and work with the school to fill the gap in pedagogical content knowledge that might exist in an out-of-field teacher’s classroom but are often aware of a “block” (A5 and A6).

11.2.2.6 The meaning of insufficient pedagogical content knowledge

The overall findings highlighted misconceptions and misunderstandings about the implications a lack of pedagogical content knowledge has for out-of-field teachers in secondary and primary schools. The perception that a lack of pedagogical knowledge does not really matter in pre-primary and primary year levels has implications for educational practice. Interview data showed that leaders assume that there would not be a problem if they assign out-of-field teachers to teach lower year levels. Leaders are of the opinion that the damage in primary schools because of out-of-field teaching has fewer implications, however interview data highlighted the opposite. In agreement with Hobbs (2013a, 2013b), this investigation showed that out-of-field teachers with an interest and passion for their out-of-field subject or year level (A2, G4 and D1) effectively “cross subject boundaries” and develop into specialist teachers over time. The lack of pedagogical content knowledge is a significant concern for teachers in out-of-field positions. These teachers tend to learn content by heart in an effort to stay in control of the subject and lessons but admit that they only manage surface learning (A3), as they “...struggle to connect concepts...” (G5). These lived
experiences urge them to work harder, prepare more and plan better. They acknowledge that the depth of their pedagogical content knowledge remains a challenge.

Interview data (F4 and C7) and close classroom observations (C1 and B6) showed that out-of-field teachers tend to overcome these shortcomings using different strategies, for example, a lot of unnecessary talk, textbook teaching, omitting sections they are unable to teach (B3) or requesting colleagues to cover sections of the curriculum they find too difficult (D1) on their behalf. Hobbs (2013a) underlined the concerns about the adequate skills or knowledge these teachers have to teach specific subjects. Students find it hard to trust and respect a teacher they do not perceive as having the necessary expertise in a learning area. Curtiss Williams (2009) stated that a teacher’s content knowledge has a major impact on the explanation and acceptance of students’ personal methods and approaches to problem solving. Unfortunately, although unsuitably qualified teachers often “...don’t know what they don’t know...” (C7), they are expected to guide students to connect subject concepts and construct new knowledge while they themselves struggle to connect specific concepts.

Once an out-of-field teacher is assigned to a specific position, they are expected to fulfil all the responsibilities and requirements needed. The implications a lack of pedagogical knowledge has on education practice lie in the difference between surface and deep learning, effectively connecting concepts and in how much depth the curriculum is read and developed.

11.2.3 Policy Implications

The successes some out-of-field teachers experience made it possible to believe transformation is possible. The thesis supports and challenges educational and school leaders to review or develop policies that accommodate out-of-field teachers. Firstly, attention needs to be paid to support professional development policies in relation to out-of-field teachers. Interview responses showed that with effective support, specific leadership skills, commitment and hard work, out-of-field teachers can develop into teachers with expertise, although a period of more or less five years (A4 and D1) was mentioned.

Two out of the seven schools researched were coping effectively with the out-of-field experience, turning the experience into a challenge and a development opportunity. We learn from the positive experiences in these two schools, where leadership displayed a caring, nurturing and supportive strategy towards out-of-field teachers, especially towards novice teachers in out-of-field positions, “...we sat down with her...” (D4). Although there were still some misconceptions and misunderstandings, the out-of-field teachers in these schools enjoyed a close interpersonal relationship with their principals. They were confident that they would develop into teachers with expertise in these out-of-field subjects or year levels. In both schools the principals were females
who claim that they have a strategy of growing people, open communication and interpersonal relationships with their staff, especially with teachers in “challenging” out-of-field teaching positions.

In school G a novice, out-of-field teacher was assigned to Year 12 maths. Although admitting to a challenging out-of-field experience, the out-of-field teacher opted to fill the out-of-field position for a second year because “I love it” (G5). Out-of-field teachers in school D and G project a content disposition, and a positive climate and atmosphere was observed during informal staffroom interactions and discussions in these schools, with a loyalty displayed towards school leaders. Transformation of out-of-field teachers’ dispositions seems to be possible in environments that value these teachers’ experiences, understanding, awareness and communication needs and display supportive strategies.

The thesis prompted critical reflection on the absence of policies connected to focused and specific professional development of out-of-field teachers, recruitment and placement policies, as well as questions about the fairness of evaluating teachers while they are in out-of-field positions. Positive transformation in the five other schools researched in terms of the out-of-field situation proved to be a challenge for all the members involved. The out-of-field experience impacted the effectiveness of these schools as comprehensive learning environments while leaders’ styles and skills to manage the lived experience in relation to out-of-field teaching situations stimulated more questions about leadership development and policies.

Secondly, the thesis further raises questions about current national and school policies that do not reflect an in-depth understanding of out-of-field teaching experiences for quality learning environments. The investigation revealed deficiencies in existing policies in relation to fair labour practices for teachers in out-of-field positions, for example, novice teachers being allowed to teach outside their field of expertise. Additionally, misunderstandings and misconceptions about the lived experience of out-of-field teachers means that policies and structures are not agreed upon that would allow out-of-field teachers the extra time required (C7, D7, G5) for preparation, or exempt them from undergoing teacher evaluation and assessment processes (B6 and C1) while they are in these positions.

In addition, current practices in relation to standardised tests make no exceptions for students taught by an unsuitably qualified teacher. These students sit exactly the same standardised tests, such as the National Assessment Plan (Literacy and Numeracy – NAPLAN) currently used in Australia, as those students taught by specialist teachers in the field. These tests provide information for decision-making and for the ranking of schools, students and teachers but do not take into account the results of the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching. Assessment and evaluation of
teachers while assigned to out-of-field positions could be viewed as an unfair labour practice. Out-of-field teachers perceived that the level of their effectiveness will be exposed and compared to their suitably qualified colleagues through standardised tests like NAPLAN (C1), which then is made public knowledge; they feel anxious about the embarrassment it may cause. The teacher ratings that stem from standardised tests influence job offers and the decisions of school leaders in relation to future work contracts as most job opportunities are based on the teacher’s performance. Reflecting on the practice to evaluate teachers while they are assigned to out-of-field positions stimulates questions about policies and understanding of out-of-field teaching experiences at the national and school level.

Thirdly, the transnational research provided a fuller understanding of specific factors that intensify the complexities surrounding teachers’ experiences. For example, out-of-field teachers in South Africa might find themselves in a situation where they have to teach an unfamiliar subject to student cohorts of 40 students or even more in one class. Data further revealed the complexities that develop when out-of-field teachers have teach in a second or third language in which they are not fully fluent, or managing multiculturalism in classes without proper support. In Australia, interview data revealed (School C, E, F) that immigrant teachers often found themselves assigned to out-of-field positions in hard-to-staff, remote areas without specialist support available. The thesis revealed the need to protect, support and prepare out-of-field teachers, especially when teaching circumstances are challenging. Appropriate policies to protect novice teachers from being assigned to these extreme teaching situations, ensuring intensive professional development opportunities and continuous close conversation with leadership are needed to address the limitations that develop in classrooms as a result of out-of-field teaching.

11.3 Limitations of the Study

Out-of-field teaching is a global concern, as the literature discussed in Chapter 3 claimed. It is, however, a “thing” that is not openly discussed. My personal experience of out-of-field teaching in three countries urged me to do a bold transnational investigation. However, the transnational inquiry resulted in limited time spent in some schools, although these schools proved to have rich data which could be explored in more depth. Although the aim of the transnational study was not to compare but (see section 1.4) to form a deeper and fuller understanding of the lived meanings connected to out-of-field teaching, a chapter just focusing on a comparative case study would have enhanced a fuller understanding of the specific transnational factors that intensify the lived experiences. The magnitude of data I received provided an opportunity to dig deeper into the rich transnational data that was offered and pay more attention to comparative case studies. The limitation, however, although the data are available, this thesis could not explore the option of more
comparative cases because of the potential size of such a comparison. I aim to address this limitation and turn it into a positive outcome, with possible future research and publications.

Another limitation that emerged as the thesis developed was that the research sample offered overwhelming responses of concerns, difficulties and issues while a few participants had positive experiences, however there is much to learn from these positive responses. Reflecting on the sampling process, it is a limitation that not more attention was paid to purposively seek out-of-field teachers with positive lived experiences while teaching in out-of-field positions as it would have supported the development of a fuller understanding of what leaders need to be aware of.

11.4 Directions for Future Research

The new knowledge generated by this thesis has stimulated ongoing questions. The thesis revealed shortcomings and prompted areas for further research in this field. First, reflecting on leadership and policies, more research is needed on the out-of-field teaching practice and what it means for quality education. Further research is necessary into the common practice of assigning young, novice teachers to out-of-field subjects where, in addition, they are expected to manage larger groups of students, and are placed in the “hard yards” – the lower year levels in secondary schools, usually year eight or nine (E3). Further research about the culture and tradition of assigning novice teachers to teach the lower, larger and “difficult” year levels is needed in order to understand and develop policies surrounding this culture.

Second, more research is needed in relation to at-risk students in unsuitably qualified teachers’ classrooms. Governments allow for extensive physical and financial resources to support programmes for at-risk students; however, it appears that no policies are in place to protect these students from being placed in an unsuitably qualified teacher’s classroom which, as this thesis has revealed, can have a major influence on the well-being of these students. Further research about the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching for at-risk students and their development will assist to manage the situation more effectively.

Third, the interviews conducted with directors revealed discrepancies in the availability, surplus or shortages of qualified teachers in certain subjects and this raises questions around the records available on out-of-field teaching. Science and maths were identified by researchers (Hobbs, 2012) as subjects of concern. However, this investigation revealed situations where three novice science teachers (G2, E5 and B6) were assigned to subjects other than science. This situation stimulates questions for further research on this matter.

The denial by some leaders (Director 3) about the out-of-field situation raises questions and necessitates a quest for further research on record keeping for out-of-field teaching at a local level,
bearing in mind the secrecy surrounding out-of-field teaching in some schools. The thesis brought questions to the surface about the maintenance of records by education departments across cultures relating to the out-of-field situation in their schools. According to departmental statements, there is a surplus of teachers available to choose from, while in fact principals state that they struggle to find suitably qualified teachers for specific positions. Further research about record keeping of out-of-field teachers as well as the recruitment of student-teachers would assist future planning of the teaching workforce.

Fourth, the thesis revealed a need for greater collaboration between tertiary institutions, education departments and schools in relation to the out-of-field situation. Professional development opportunities specifically for out-of-field teachers need to be investigated. Future research to investigate the development of partnerships among the different educational institutions, for example, universities, education departments and schools, would enhance open discussions about the out-of-field situation.

Fifth, the thesis further unveiled a common practice by principals not to spend money on the professional development of out-of-field teachers as these positions are looked upon as temporary. Further research is needed about how professional development can be tailored to address the specific needs of teachers in out-of-field positions in order to offer timely and focussed development.

Sixth, interviews and discussions with parents, school leaders and teachers offered different interpretations of the openness surrounding the out-of-field teaching situation in school communities. The secrecy surrounding out-of-field situations within schools and by school leaders often frustrates parents as they are very soon aware of what really happens inside their child’s classroom in terms of deteriorating relationships and behaviour, while principals seem to ignore the fact until parents press for their attention. Further research on the secrecy surrounding the out-of-field situation might have benefits for developing supportive policies and potentially stimulating deeper understanding within the wider school community.

11.5 Conclusions

In conclusion, Arnold (2005) explains that competent teachers stimulate enthusiasm, demonstrate competence in engaging students, and have skills that are needed to understand how their learners function, claiming that effective learning and teaching happens in the “space” where the role-players, for example, educational directors, principals, teachers and parents are attuned to each other’s needs. Slabbert and Hattingh (2006) highlighted “There could be little that is more fundamental than caring in education.” (p. 706). This thesis firstly argued that the lived meaning of
out-of-field teaching influences the learning and teaching environment. It explored the multilayered lived experiences while it highlighted the “life-world” of out-of-field teachers. The thesis provided an “all-embracing” view and extensive perspectives of the out-of-field teaching experience through the lenses of educational directors, school leaders, specialist teachers, out-of-field teachers and parents. The thematic interpretation offered data toward an in-depth understanding of the complexities surrounding out-of-field teaching.

Secondly, the thesis revealed how school leaders influence out-of-field lived experiences through leadership styles and strategies as well as the awareness, understanding, perceptions and expectations they have about out-of-field teachers. Misconceptions and misunderstandings are confronted through the results and discussions in this thesis with the intent to enhance the effective management of the out-of-field teaching practice. A fuller understanding of the out-of-field lived experiences is a step towards better management and reflection on the culture, tradition and policies that portray a “taken for granted” approach about teachers in out-of-field positions. Thirdly, the thesis stimulated close conversations about the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching for teacher confidence, self-esteem, respect, and trust concerns and the implications it has for effective classrooms and school communities.

Concerns about the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching for teacher and student behaviour revealed an urgent need for further research about the significant influence out-of-field teachers have on students’ responses and behaviour, especially the at-risk students’ development. The thesis acknowledged that teaching and learning do not take place in a vacuum and highlighted the fundamental implications out-of-field teaching practices have for the wider school community and the implications an out-of-field teacher’s lack of pedagogical content knowledge has on the school community as a whole. The study concluded with a discussion on the lived experiences of these teachers in relation to the lack of pedagogical content knowledge.

In recalling the purpose of this thesis, which was to develop an in-depth understanding of lived experiences in relation to out-of-field teaching practices, the new information this thesis offers supports practitioners to interpret their own lived experiences, understanding, perceptions and expectations against this knowledge. The thesis supports the development and maintenance of effective classrooms in agreement with Gillies and Boyle’s (2008) notion of a classroom as a comprehensive “space” in which effective “meaning making” can freely happen and where students are able to construct new knowledge through their social activities and awareness.

Sharing practitioners’ “truths” through this thesis emphasises the urgency of ensuring that teachers in classrooms are well supported, valued, confident, and are the knowledgeable “others”. The prospect of developing a better understanding of the lived experiences surrounding out-of-field
teaching underlined the significance of this thesis. Hattie (2009) highlights how positive, resourceful learning and teaching environments support progress in comprehensive schools because they value teachers, students, efficient classroom environments and informed school leaders.

In an effort to draw attention to the “life-world” of out-of-field teachers, this thesis, through the information it revealed, advocates for the development of these teachers into specialists.

*Everything that we see is a shadow cast by that which we do not see.*

*Martin Luther King.*
References


Hare, S. (2002). We teach who we are: The intersection of teacher formation and educator dispositions. In M. Diez, & J. Raths (Eds.), *Dispositions in teacher education* (pp. 138–148). Charlotte, North Carolina: Information Age Publishing Inc.


Slabbert, J., & Hattingh, A. (2006). ‘Where is the post-modern truth we have lost in reductionist knowledge?’ A curriculum’s epitaph. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 38*(6), 701-718. doi: 0.1080/00220270600608023


Appendix A

Semi-structured guidelines used for close conversations and interviews. The same questions were rephrased to make provision for principals, teachers and parents

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDELINES
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Introduction
I’m interested in what the meaning of effective teaching and learning is for you.
Tell me more about your perceptions of teachers teaching outside their field of qualifications?
What are your personal understanding, feelings/perceptions and concerns as far as the out-of-field situation are concerned?
What do you think are the major concerns in an out-of-field teacher’s classroom?

Context
Tell me more about your current real-life experiences about out-of-field teaching in relation to the effectiveness of your school environment.

(a) What would you like to improve? Why?
(b) What is the meaning of effective teachers, classrooms and schools for you?
(c) How do you experience teaching strategies as successful?
(d) How do you understand out-of-field teaching? How would you try to manage a problem that exists or has developed because of out-of-field teaching?

Social practice: The teacher

Interdependent elements of the learning environment:

(a) What do you think are different experiences in classes of suitably and unsuitably qualified teachers?
(b) How do you know a teacher is out-of-field? What does it mean to you?
Meaningful learning:
(a) What are your expectations of a competent teacher? Why?
(b) What are your expectations/perceptions of unsuitably qualified teachers?

At-risk stakeholders:
(a) Tell me more about your views and experiences in relation to out-of-field teachers’ effectiveness to recognise the special needs of their students? (behaviour and classroom management)
(b) What does out-of-field teaching mean for remedial and support efforts of at-risk students? Tell me more about your real-life experiences in relation with this.

Impact sphere of teachers:
(a) Tell me more about the differences in teaching attitudes of suitably and unsuitably qualified teachers as you experienced it?

Emotional factors:
(a) How do you understand or would you describe the general teaching characteristics of out-of-field teachers in your school environment?
(b) Describe the meaning out-of-field teaching has for you? What are your personal concerns feelings/frustration/emotions and fears as far as out-of-field teaching are concerned?

Learning environment: The classroom
(What do you think is the meaning of out-of-field teaching for interaction, integration and cooperation in classroom?)

The classroom matters:
(a) How do you see/understand an effective classroom in your school/education environment. Can you describe a specific one? Why did you choose that specific one? Tell me more.
(b) Tell me more about what you see/understand as major concerns in an out-of-field teacher’s classroom?
(c) How do you understand out-of-field teachers’ influence on effective learning? Tell me more about the meaning it has for you.

Cooperation:
(a) How do you experience out of field teachers’ engagement in development/collaboration/integration of learning/classrooms? Tell me more.

Communication:
(a) What does out-of field teaching mean for interaction with parents/students/colleagues? Tell me more about your real-life experiences with out-of-field teaching and student/teacher interaction.

Learning environment: The school
(What is the meaning of the out-of-field teaching for the improvement of schools as effective learning and teaching environments?)

Inside the school:
(a) What does a school as an effective learning environment mean to you? Why? Tell me more
What would you describe as the understanding of principals, school management and parents about suitably and unsuitably qualified teachers? Tell me more.

What do you think is the meaning of leadership for out-of-field teaching? Tell me more?

How do you think/understand education leaders address the out-of-field situation?

What do you understand as the gap between what out-of-field teachers need and what educational leaders have to offer? Tell me more.

**The wider educational community: Implications of change/transformation**

Why do you think teachers are in out-of-field positions? Tell me more.

What is your understanding of the general report given on out-of-field teachers in your school or region?

What is the meaning of out-of-field teaching for relationships in school communities? Why? Tell me more.

**Professional development:**

What is the meaning of school leaders/educational leaders’ current support for out-of-field teachers to improve their effectiveness? Tell me more.

Why do you think the out-of-field teaching practice needs attention?

What would you want to see from school leaders and educational leaders in how they manage the situation? Why? Tell me more.

How do you deal with the out-of-field teaching situation in staff and subject meetings? (Decisions?) What does it mean for you? How do you think it influences decisions?

**Debriefing**

(Tell me more about what you think/experience out-of-field teachers do to cope with their out-of-field situation?)

Can you share your personal real-life experiences in relation to the out-of-field situations? What does out-of-field teaching mean for you? Tell me more about how do you manage your situation and the influence the out-of-field teaching practice has on it?
SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
(Central office: Educational Directors)

Introduction
I’m interested in how you manage teacher placements and teacher assignments to specific subjects and learning areas. What does out-of-field teaching mean for you?

Tell me more about your perceptions of teachers teaching outside their field of qualifications?

What are your personal feelings/perceptions and concerns as far as the out-of-field situation is concerned?

What do you think are the major concerns in an out-of-field teacher’s classroom?

Context
Tell me more about your current responsibilities/real-life experiences as far as out-of-field teaching is concerned?

(a) What are the concerns about teacher qualifications? What does it mean to you?
(b) How do you keep track of teacher qualifications and the specific subjects they teach?
(c) How do you experience teacher recruitment and placement? How do you keep record of out-of-field placements?
(d) What does effective teacher placement or recruitment mean to you?

Social practice: The teacher

Interdependent elements of learning environment:

(a) How would you describe the different experiences in classes of suitably and unsuitably qualified teachers? Why do you think so? Tell me more.
(b) How do you become aware of out-of-field teacher placements?

Meaningful learning:

(a) When would you describe a teacher placement as successful? How do you think out-of-field placements influence learning environments?
At-risk stakeholders:
(a) What is your understanding of what happens in out-of-field teachers’ classroom who are not coping?
(b) What is your understanding of the support that is offered to teachers placed in out-of-field positions?

Impact sphere of teachers:
(a) What is your understanding of the difference in teaching attitudes of suitably and unsuitably qualified teachers?

Emotional factors:
(a) How would you describe/understand the general attitudes of out-of-field teachers?
(b) What are your personal views as far as the out-of-field situation is concerned? What is your understanding? Tell me more.

The classroom:
(What do you think is the meaning of out-of-field teaching for collaborations and cooperation in the learning environment?)

The classroom matters:
(a) What is your understanding of the major concerns in an out-of-field teacher’s classroom?

Action:
(a) What does it mean for you to change the out-of-field situation in schools?

Cooperation/Communication:
(a) How closely do you work with principals to assign suitably qualified teachers to classrooms? What is your real-life experience working with school leaders in relation to out-of-field teachers?
(b) How do you collaborate with tertiary institutions in relation to the out-of-field situation?
(c) How do you collaborate with schools in relations to the out-of-field situations? What does it mean for your office?

Learning environment: The school
(What is the meaning of the out-of-field teaching for the improvement of schools as comprehensive effective learning and teaching environments?)
(a) When do you perceive/understand a school as an effective academic environment? Why?
(b) What is your understanding about the perceptions principals and school leaders have of suitably and unsuitably qualified teachers?
(c) How do you think educational leaders addresses the out-of-field situation?

Wider educational community:
(a) What is your understanding of the gap between what out-of-field teachers’ need and what educational leaders have to offer? Tell me more.
(b) Why do you think teachers are in out-of-field positions?
(c) What is your understanding of the general report given on out-of-field teachers in your region? Tell me more.
(d) Tell me more about personal understanding and concerns in relation to recording out-of-field teaching practices in schools. Tell me more.
**Professional development:**

(a) What is your understanding about how professional development programmes currently support out-of-field teachers to improve their effectiveness?

(b) Why does the out-of-field situation need attention? What is your understanding of specific needs? Tell me more.

(c) What would you want to see from school leaders and educational leaders in how they manage the out-of-field situation? Why? Tell me more.

**Debriefing**

(What is your understanding of what out-of-field teachers do to cope with their out-of-field situation?)

Tell me more about what out-of-field teaching practices mean for you in your current position? How do you see/understand unsuitably qualified teachers’ experiences within the wider school community? How do you see future manage/placement of teachers?)
### Appendix B

**A E du Plessis: Close observation: The teacher – instructional clarity checklist**

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**Attitude:** P=Positive  N=Negative  E=Empathy  A=Apathy

**Key:**
- 4 = All the time
- 3 = Most of the time
- 2 = Some of the time
- 1 = Never
- 0 = Does not apply
Appendix C

Information letter: With small variations according to the recipient: Directors, principals, teachers and parents

Researcher: Dr. Anna Elizabeth du Plessis
Registered Teacher and PhD student
School of Education
The University of Queensland

Advisors: Prof. Robyn Gillies, Deputy Head, School of Education, University of Queensland.
Ass. Prof. Annemaree Carroll, Senior Lecturer, School of Education, University of Queensland.

RESEARCH TITLE: UNDERSTANDING THE OUT-OF-FIELD TEACHING EXPERIENCE

I am writing to invite your school to participate in a research project that aims to develop an in-depth understanding of the impact that teaching outside one’s subject field (the out-of-field teaching situation) has on teachers, teaching strategies, and school management. Teachers’ views and reflections will support new knowledge and understanding about out-of-field teaching. Participants’ lived experiences and views about out-of-field teaching will inform effective management of the out-of-field situation. The potential benefits of the research project are better insights into complex teaching situations that develop because of out-of-field teaching and enhanced evidence informed decision-making procedures to provide better and more focused support. School leaders might be able to use the information to enhance teachers’ learning and professional development. The project is being conducted through the University of Queensland with Professor R. Gillies and Associate Professor A. Carroll as supervisors for this PhD project.

I would like to invite you to take part in this project by sharing your valuable experiences, perceptions, interpretations, and viewpoints on the out-of-field teaching practice.

What does participation in the research project involve?

(a) Semi-structured interviews according to guideline

Participation is voluntary. Teachers will be invited to take part in one semi-structured interview based on an interview guideline for forty five to fifty minutes. This interview will be tape-recorded, transcribed and will be available to the teacher to confirm that everything is recorded as was said during the interview. The participant can change, omit or add information at any time and may withdraw at any time if they wish to do so after which information offered will be destroyed.

(b) Teacher observation in classrooms according to observation protocol

Participation is voluntary. The researcher will appreciate an opportunity to observe teachers in their classrooms to develop an in-depth understanding of the lived meaning of out-of-field teaching for teachers and their pedagogical strategies.
To what extent is participation voluntary, and what are the implications of withdrawing that participation?

Participation in this research project is entirely voluntary. Data can be withdrawn from the study up to the final submission of thesis.

What will happen to the information collected, and is privacy and confidentiality assured?

Data collected will be de-identified by codes for example, school A, B or and participant A1, A2 or B4. The data is then stored securely, hard copies of interview transcripts will be stored in a locked filing cabinet while electronic copies will be protected by passwords and can only be accessed by the researcher and the supervisors of the research study. The data will be stored for a minimum period of 5 years, after which it will be destroyed. Shredding of the transcribed copies and deleting files of electronic nature will achieve this. Protection of participant’s privacy, and the confidentiality of information disclosed by participants, is assured. A summary of the research findings will be made available to the participants who indicated that they are interested in the results after the final thesis is accepted.

Is this research approved?

This study has been cleared in accordance with the ethical review guidelines and processes of The University of Queensland. These guidelines are endorsed by the University’s principal human ethics committee, the Human Experimentation Ethical Review Committee, and registered with the Australian Health Ethics Committee as complying with the National Statement. You are free to discuss your participation in this study with project staff (contactable on r.gillies@uq.edu.au or a.carroll@uq.edu.au). If you would like to speak to an officer of the University not involved in the study, you may contact the School Ethics Officer on 3365 6502.

Who do I contact if I wish to discuss the project further?

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this study with the researcher, please contact me on the number provided below. If you wish to speak with an independent person about the conduct of the project, please contact Professor Gillies at r.gillies@uq.edu.au or Associate Professor Carroll at a.carroll@uq.edu.au as representative of The University of Queensland.

Kind regards

Researcher: Dr. Anna Elizabeth du Plessis
PhD Student: University of Queensland
Registered teacher: Department of Education and Training, WA
Queensland College of Teachers
Anna.duplessis@uqconnect.edu.au
Mobile: +61448879496 / Home: +61738784334
CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF THE STUDY: UNDERSTANDING THE OUT-OF-FIELD TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Researcher: Dr. Anna Elizabeth du Plessis
Registered Teacher and PhD student
School of Education
The University of Queensland

Advisors: Prof. Robyn Gillies, Deputy Head, School of Education, University of Queensland.
Assoc. Prof. Annemaree Carroll, Senior Lecturer, School of Education, University of Queensland.

Consent Form

This study has been cleared in accordance with the ethical review guidelines and processes of The University of Queensland. These guidelines are endorsed by the University’s principal human ethics committee, the Human Experimentation Ethical Review Committee, and registered with the Australian Health Ethics Committee as complying with the National Statement. You are free to discuss your participation in this study with project staff (contactable on r.gillies@uq.edu.au or a.carroll@uq.edu.au). If you would like to speak to an officer of the University not involved in the study, you may contact the School Ethics Officer on 3365 6502.

- I understand that participation in the project is entirely voluntarily.
- I understand that I am free to withdraw my participation from the research at any time or change, edit or omit parts of the data offered during the study up to publication of the thesis by contacting Anna du Plessis, anna.duplessis@uqconnect.edu.au or 0448879496.
- I give permission for my contribution to this project to be reported in the thesis in order to complete the research project, provided that the school or myself are not identified in any way.
- I understand that I can request a summary of findings once the research has been completed.
- I am aware that I may direct any inquiries and further questions to Anna du Plessis, anna.duplessis@uqconnect.edu.au or 0448879493. If you would like to speak to an officer not involved in the study, you may contact the Ethics Officer on 33365-3924.
- I have read the information document, and I understand the aims, procedures, benefits and any identified risks of this project, as described within it.

Name of Participant (printed):

________________________________________________________

Signature of Participant: ________________________________ Date: / /

If you want a copy of the results, please print your email address.

Email: ______________________________________________________
Appendix D

Papers presented relating to the study


Du Plessis, A. (2014). A transnational investigation of the lived meaning out-of-field teaching has for the interrelationship between school leadership and effective professional development. To be presented at the Annual EASA Conference, Golden Gate, South Africa from 12 – 15 January 2014.
Appendix E

Feedback on presentations

Wits School of Education

Dear Anna

Thank you for the presentation to the Gauteng Dean’s forum on May 28th, and subsequent letter. The message you brought to the forum resonated with me, since we have an increasing concern for recently qualified teachers who set off on their careers full of enthusiasm, only to have many harsh realities face them within a short while of commencing with teaching. We believe that our undergraduate Bachelor of Education and Post Graduate Certificate in Education curricula successfully addresses the subject knowledge and pedagogies component of a student teacher’s development, but are increasingly concerned that our students are perhaps lacking in their preparation for the sociological and psychological contexts within which they will function. Added to this is the difficulty that newly qualified teachers are most exploitable when it comes to being instructed to teach in out-of-field positions.

A pilot tracer study aimed at tracking maths and English primary school 4th year students into their first two years of teaching is currently being developed, which, it is hoped will be expanded later on. A further goal is to assess the progress of a particularly rare student – one who is qualified to teach in the foundation phase in a local indigenous language with a view to drastically increasing the numbers of entrants in this category to the profession, and retaining them in their foundation phase specialisation area.

It would be most interesting to explore possible areas of collaboration, and I look forward to talking more about this potential.

Kind regards,

Paul Goldschagg

Assistant Head: Undergraduate Programmes
Faculty of Psychology

Education Department

To
Dr Anna Elizabeth du Plessis
School of Education
The University of Queensland

Dear Dr. Anna Elizabeth du Plessis,

I am pleased to invite you to spend a period of up to 8 weeks (September-October, 2013) as a visiting doctoral student to the research group Professionalism in Teaching and Pedagogy.

During your stay you are welcome to join the activities of the research group and we will seek to support you in your own research on Teachers teaching in fields outside their qualifications.

You are also invited to present your work to members of the research group during your stay, and we are looking forward to mutually enriching meetings.

The Department of Education will offer you office space, most likely in a shared office with other doctoral students.

As regards your accommodation during the visit, I recommend you contact Toril Salen (toril.salen@uib.no). There are various options for accommodation of which she will inform you.

Regards

Kari Smith
Professor Kari Smith
Education Department
University of Bergen
Norway
Dear Dr Anna

A sincere THANK YOU for coming to South Africa and for your excellent presentation. On behalf of the GDE please also convey our sincere THANKS to the University of Queensland for making this trip possible.

I assure you, that we have benefitted from the presentation and you have given us lots to think about as far as “Out of Field” educators are concerned. Your topic was very relevant since MGSL&G as well as the Higher education Institutions have just embarked on up-skilling and re-skilling of educators.

Having alerted us to the “novice teacher” and the out-of-field, I believe that this aspect also needs to be taken into account.

Once more, many thanks.

Kind regards,

Diane Buntting
DCES: GDE Education Research and Knowledge management
(011 843 6503)