



# **Beginner teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of pre-service teacher training for real-world Physical Education settings**

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## Declaration of own work

I, Tsholofelo Motlalepula Letseleha declare hereby that the dissertation, **Beginner teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of pre-service teacher training for real-world Physical Education settings** which I herewith submit to the North-West University is in compliance with the requirements set for the degree Master of Education with Physical Education is my own work, has been text-edited in accordance with the requirements and has not already been submitted to another university.

T.M Letseleha

11/26/2022

## **Preface acknowledgements**

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## Abstract

The induction into a real-world Physical Education (PE) setting can be challenging for a beginner PE teacher, and either detrimental or enriching to the teacher's career. Challenges experienced by beginner PE teachers can include the following: the support system from their employees and colleagues, available resources, the poor status of the subject and unmotivated learners. Studies in an international context show that PE preservice teacher training programs often do not prepare teachers adequately to cope with the challenges of their induction as PE teachers. As there is a gap in the literature regarding the experiences of beginner PE teachers in South Africa and the extent to which pre-service PE teacher training prepares these teachers for practice, this study aimed to investigate beginner PE teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of their preservice PE teacher training with regard to the unique challenges they face in teaching PE.

Grounded by the Self-determination Theory (SDT) of a qualitative research design was used in this study, which was conducted from an interpretivist perspective. The data collection process firstly entailed online open-ended questionnaires which were used to investigate the perceptions of purposively selected PE teachers in their first three years of teaching, and secondly an online focus-group interview. Eight beginner teachers that had recently attained their Baccalaureus Educationis (B.Ed.) degree or Post-Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) with a major in Physical Education at the North-West University in South Africa, completed the online questionnaire and four participated on the semi-structured focus group interview which was conducted online by means of the *Zoom* application. The data collected from this convenience and purposive sample were analysed using inductive, narrative, and thematic data-analysis.

The data analysis revealed the following themes: *The status of PE*, *Practical teaching challenges*, *Positive experiences*, and *Perceptions of and recommendations for PE teacher training*. The theme of *the status of PE* included the often-negative attitudes towards PE and the lack of support from the departments of education, the school management and colleagues which make it difficult for teachers to display a positive attitude and to show commitment towards PE. The second theme, *Practical teaching*

*challenges*, entailed challenges such as high teacher-to-learner ratios, too little time allocation to PE in the school timetable, a lack of equipment and facilities, and learner discipline and motivation. The third theme, *Positive experiences*, pointed to positive aspects of the participants' experiences of teaching PE, including learners' enjoyment of the PE classes, and the teachers being able to successfully apply what had been learnt during their teacher training. *Perceptions of and recommendations for PE teacher training* included recommendations from the participants that the following be integrated to a larger degree into PE pre-service teacher training: the improvisation of equipment; promoting the subject to parents, the school governing body (SGB) and learners; and the greater exposure to learners from low socio-economic backgrounds and learners with disabilities. Although some participants perceived their pre-service teacher training as sufficient, the majority felt that the training could be improved to better prepare new PE teachers for practice.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations for inclusion in pre-service PE teacher training are made teachers being trained to make their own equipment using recycled material, teaching strategies for large classes and small spaces, the promotion of PE in the school community, needs-support strategies to enhance learners' motivation, and exposure to schools of different socio-economic backgrounds.

**Keywords:** Physical Education, teacher training, induction, beginner teacher, perceptions.

## Opsomming

Die induksie in 'n werklike Liggaamlike Opvoeding-omgewing kan uitdagend wees vir 'n beginner Liggaamlike Opvoeding-onderwyser, en óf nadelig óf verrykend vir die onderwyser se loopbaan. Uitdagings wat beginner Liggaamlike Opvoeding-onderwysers ervaar kan die volgende insluit: die ondersteuningstelsel van hul werknemers en kollegas, beskikbare hulpbronne, die swak status van die vak en ongemotiveerde leerders. Studies in 'n internasionale konteks toon dat Liggaamlike Opvoeding voordiens-onderwyseropleidingsprogramme dikwels nie onderwysers voldoende voorberei om die uitdagings van hul inlywing as Liggaamlike Opvoeding-onderwysers die hoof te bied nie. Aangesien daar 'n leemte in die literatuur is rakende die ervarings van beginner Liggaamlike Opvoeding-onderwysers in Suid-Afrika en die mate waarin Liggaamlike Opvoeding voordiens-onderwysersopleiding hierdie onderwysers voorberei vir die praktyk, het hierdie studie ten doel gehad om beginner Liggaamlike Opvoeding-onderwysers se persepsies van die effektiwiteit van hul voordiens-onderwyseropleiding met betrekking tot die unieke uitdagings wat hulle in die gesig staar in die onderrig van Liggaamlike Opvoeding, te ondersoek.

Begronde deur die Selfdeterminasie-teorie (SDT) van Ryan en Deci (2020), is 'n kwalitatiewe navorsingsontwerp in hierdie studie gebruik, wat vanuit 'n interpretivistiese perspektief geïmplementeer is. Die data-insamelingsproses het eerstens aanlyn, oopgeide vraelyste behels wat gebruik is om die persepsies van doelgeriggeselekteerde Liggaamlike Opvoeding-onderwysers in hul eerste drie jaar van onderrig te ondersoek, en tweedens 'n aanlyn fokusgroep-onderhoud. Agt beginner-onderwysers wat onlangs hul Baccalaures Educationis (B.Ed.)-graad of Nagraadse Onderwysertifikaat (NGOS) met die hoofvak Liggaamlike Opvoeding aan die Noordwes-Universiteit in Suid-Afrika behaal het, het die aanlynvraelys voltooi en vier het deelgeneem aan die semigestruktureerde fokusgroep-onderhoud wat aanlyn deur middel van die *Zoom*-toepassing gevoer is. Die data wat uit hierdie gerieflikheids- en doelgerigte steekproef ingesamel is, is ontleed deur gebruik te maak van induktiewe, narratiewe en tematiese data-analise.

Die data-analise het die volgende temas aan die lig gebring: *Die status van Liggaamlike Opvoeding, Praktiese onderrig-uitdagings, Positiewe ervarings, en Persepsies van en aanbevelings vir Liggaamlike Opvoeding-onderwysersopleiding*. Die tema van *Die status van Liggaamlike Opvoeding* het die dikwels-negatiewe houdings teenoor Liggaamlike Opvoeding en die gebrek aan ondersteuning van die departemente van onderwys, die skoolbestuur en kollegas ingesluit, wat dit moeilik maak vir onderwysers om 'n positiewe houding en toewyding teenoor Liggaamlike Opvoeding te toon. Die tweede tema, *Praktiese onderrig-uitdagings*, het uitdagings behels soos hoë onderwyser-tot-leerder ratio's, te min tydstoedeling aan Liggaamlike Opvoeding in die skoolrooster, 'n gebrek aan apparaat en fasiliteite, en leerderdisipline en -motivering. Die derde tema, *Positiewe ervarings*, het gedui op positiewe aspekte van die deelnemers se ervarings in die onderrig van Liggaamlike Opvoeding, insluitend leerders wat die Liggaamlike Opvoedingsklas geniet, en die vermoë om dit wat geleer is tydens hul onderwysopleiding, suksesvol toe te pas. *Persepsies van en aanbevelings vir Liggaamlike Opvoeding-onderwysersopleiding* het ingesluit dat die volgende tot 'n groter mate by Liggaamlike Opvoeding voordiens-onderwysersopleiding geïntegreer moet word: die improvisasie van apparaat, die promosie van die vak aan ouers, die skoolbeheerliggaam (SBL) en leerders, en die groter blootstelling aan leerders van lae sosio-ekonomiese agtergronde en leerders met gestremdhede. Hoewel sommige deelnemers hul voordiens-onderwyseropleiding as voldoende beskou het, het die meerderheid gevoel dat die opleiding verbeter kan word om nuwe Liggaamlike Opvoeding-onderwysers beter vir die praktyk voor te berei.

Gebaseer op die bevindinge, word die volgende aanbevelings gemaak vir die insluiting in Liggaamlike Opvoeding voordiens-onderwyseropleiding: die maak van hul eie apparaat met behulp van herwinde materiaal, onderrigstrategieë vir groot klasse en klein ruimtes, die bevordering van Liggaamlike Opvoeding in die skoolgemeenskap, behoefte-

ondersteuningstrategieë om leerders se motivering te verbeter, en blootstelling aan skole van verskillende sosio-ekonomiese agtergronde.

**Sleutelwoorde:** Liggaamlike Opvoeding, onderwysersopleiding, induksie, beginner-onderwyser, persepsies

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction, problem statement and aims

### 1.1 Introduction

The induction into a real-world Physical Education (PE) setting can be a challenge or even a critical time in a first year PE teacher's career. Researchers agree that this could be a time where careers are ended or developed (Gariglio 2021:1; González-Calvo *et al.*, 2020:544). Different factors influence the first-year teacher's perceptions that can be detrimental to their career like the salary they earn, support from their employees and colleagues, and working conditions (Gariglio, 2021:2). In this context, Burger *et al.* (2021:3) mention that teachers go through a transition phase from university training to a full teaching load, that they need to adjust to. Wallace *et al.* (2021:406) agree that teacher preparation and induction are inter-connected as a process of becoming a teacher. Being a PE teacher can be daunting, especially in an environment that does not promote physical activity or PE and where there are often negative perceptions about PE. As Gariglio (2021:1) points out, often there are subjects that are regarded as superior to others and PE is regarded as a "second-class" subject, which usually delays teachers' professional growth.

In addition to the mentioned challenges which PE teachers often face in the induction phase of their careers, they also face many of the well-documented implementation problems of PE, amongst others, a lack of facilities and equipment, and unmotivated learners (González-Calvo *et al.*, 2020:544). Pre-service teacher training should therefore not only equip PE teachers with the knowledge, skills, and values to teach PE, but also to be able to cope with these challenges of teaching PE in the real-world setting (Gonzalez-Calvo *et al.*, 2020:544). Strand *et al.* (2016:52) suggest that teacher preparation programs need to create an intentional learning environment where teachers can prepare themselves based on the contemporary issues that are relevant in today's school challenge.

This study therefore investigated the extent to which PE teacher training prepares PE teachers to manage and rise above real-world challenges of the profession so as to be successful teachers, according to the perceptions of beginner PE teachers.

## **1. 2 Theoretical and conceptual frameworks**

### **1.2.1 Self-determination Theory**

This study is grounded in Self-determination Theory (SDT), (Ryan & Deci, 2020), originally developed by Deci and Ryan (1985), which contributes to a better understanding of motivational factors in human behaviour. SDT postulates that an individual's self-determination is affected by the extent to which his or her psychological needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness are fulfilled or satisfied (Ryan & Deci, 2020). These needs signify different things. Competence reflects the effectiveness of a person as well as whether a person feels that he or she has sufficient ability, while autonomy is the extent to which people feel that they are in control of their behaviour and that they are the originators of that behaviour (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Relatedness is a feeling of belonging or connectedness to others and valuing an activity for its inherent worth (Ryan & Deci, 2020; Lauderdale *et al.*, 2015:155). If all these needs are met, then they have a positive impact on an individual's intrinsic motivation to continue with a specific behaviour (Deci & Ryan, 2012:88; Ryan & Deci, 2020). Framed by SDT (Deci & Ryan, 2012:88; Ryan & Deci, 2020), PE teachers must have these basic psychological needs satisfied to be intrinsically motivated to teach PE effectively.

In the context of teaching PE, intrinsic motivation is thus self-determination which emanates from sources within the self (for example, experiencing enjoyment and satisfaction from teaching PE) rather than sources outside of the self (for example, pressure from other colleagues or parents) and is supposed to lead to more positive cognitive, affective, and behavioural consequences in the PE class (Cox & Ullrich-French, 2010:337). Intrinsic motivation also plays a vital role in the way of accepting or doing things by both teachers and learners as well as their emotional engagement in teaching or participating in physical activities in PE (Van den Berghe *et al.*, 2015:353). It is therefore important to consider the extent to which a PE teacher's pre-service PE

teacher training supports and meets the psychological needs of the teacher, as this can have a significant effect on his or her intrinsic motivation and self-determination in the first year of teaching (Van den Berghe *et al.*, 2015:353).

### **1.2.2 Clarification of concepts**

For the purpose of clarity, it is necessary to define and explain some of the concepts and terms which are used in this study, within the framework of SDT.

#### **1.2.2.1 Induction**

Induction is seen “as the period of time in the first years of teaching, as a transition between the condition of being a student to that of being a teacher” (Gariglio, 2021:2), thus, this is a period where novice teachers get used to the process and procedures of working at a school. Mitchell *et al.* (2021:412) refer to induction as intentional support provided to help novice teachers learn skills and develop proper professional practices in the first year(s) of their career.

#### **1.2.2.2 Perceptions**

According to the Oxford Learner’s Dictionary (2021), “perception” is an idea, a belief, or an image you have because of how you see or understand something.

#### **1.2.2.3 Physical Education**

Physical Education (PE) is often equated with the teaching of games and sports with the aim of technique empowerment (Donnelly *et al.*, 2017:34). The South African Department of Basic Education (SADBE, 2011:10) defines PE as the development of learners’ physical well-being and knowledge of movement and safety. PE also promotes lifelong participation in physical activity by developing learners’ physical movement and sport skills (Brunton, 2015:2).

PE has specific, well-known subdivisions as set out in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (SADBE, 2011:24), namely physical fitness, sport and games and recreational movement activities, which will be elaborated on further.

### **1.2.2.3.1 Physical fitness**

Physical fitness is defined by O’Keeffe *et al.* (2014:59) as a complex and multi-faceted construct that includes performance-related and health-related components, and which enables a person to perform exercise, movements and activities of daily living. Health related components, if not taken care of, can be detrimental to one’s body and health, as one may suffer from diseases such as cardio-vascular diseases and high blood pressure (Du Toit *et al.*, 2012:160). Physical fitness includes five health-related components, which are cardio-respiratory endurance, flexibility, muscular endurance, strength, and body composition (O’Keeffe & MacDonncha, 2020:59). Cardio-respiratory endurance which is also referred to as aerobic fitness, entails the endurance of the heart and lung systems during exertion; examples of activities that can develop cardiorespiratory endurance are running, walking, and cycling (O’Keeffe & MacDonncha, 2020:59). Flexibility is the free movement range in a person’s joints (examples of activities that can develop flexibility are different stretches like the splits and touching the toes), and muscular endurance which is the measure in which a person can repeatedly apply maximal force, for example doing squats for a relatively long period of time (O’Keeffe & MacDonncha, 2020:59). Muscular strength is the maximal force that can be applied against resistance, for example, in bodybuilding, the amount of weight that a person can lift. Body composition is the amount of body-fat a person carries (O’Keeffe & MacDonncha, 2020:59).

### **1.2.2.3.2 Sport and games**

Sport is distinguished from PE and physical activity when referring to the competition aspect of sport, since sport is competitive whereas PE and physical activity do not necessarily include competition (Donnelly *et al.*, 2017:34). The games-aspect of PE includes educational and indigenous games (SADBE, 2011:24).

### **1.2.2.3.3 Recreational movement activities**

The Oxford dictionary defines “physical recreation” as physical activity pursued for enjoyment and to refresh health or spirits (Oxford Learner’s Dictionary, 2021), thus something intended more to gain refreshment than to compete. In the CAPS (SADBE, 2011:24), recreational movement activities included in PE, are educational dance, educational gymnastics, hiking, orienteering and self-defence.

#### **1.2.2.4 Physical activity**

Physical activity (PA) is defined as any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that require energy expenditure (WHO, 2021). Regular physical activity is necessary to maintain healthy levels of physical fitness, and physically inactive people often suffer from lifestyle-related diseases like high blood pressure, obesity, and diabetes (Leuciuc, 2019:137; WHO, 2021). Physical activity thus refers to all movement, for example walking, cycling, wheeling and sport done at any level of skill and enjoyment by everybody (WHO, 2021). Although PE is often used interchangeably with PA, these concepts are not the same, as PA can also include activities such as working, playing and doing household chores (WHO, 2021).

### **1.3 Literature review and problem statement**

#### **1.3.1 Introduction**

PE can play a pivotal role in learners' lives as it can contribute to their physical health as well as other aspects like their cognitive, social, and emotional development (Zeng *et al.*, 2017:1), and is therefore an important subject that should be presented by well-trained teachers (Stroebe *et al.*, 2018:34). Even though the teacher thus plays an important role in a child's development and in shaping children in being respectable and successful citizens, the teaching industry is a challenging one. Therefore, some of the challenges that beginner PE teachers face, as well as research pertaining to the experiences and perceptions of beginner PE teachers, will be discussed.

#### **1.3.2 Challenges facing PE teachers**

There are numerous challenges that teachers encounter such as unfairness in the running of and proceedings at schools, lack of teaching material, unfavourable teaching conditions and psychological impacts (Moumezie, 2018:vi). In South Africa, some of the challenges stem from the relatively low status of PE due to it not being a lone-standing subject, but only one part of the subject Life Orientation (Stroebe *et al.*, 2018:34). Due to the specific conditions that exist in PE classes (for example, physical demands, PE specific organisational circumstances, and disciplinary requirements), PE teachers often

face challenges that are unique to the subject field (Mäkelä *et al.*, 2015). A few of these unique challenges facing PE teachers, will consequently be investigated.

### **1.3.2.1 Unfavourable teaching conditions**

As in various developing countries, teachers in South Africa often experience unfavourable teaching conditions (Roux, 2020). Unfavourable teaching conditions include overcrowded classrooms, which are experienced by most teachers in South Africa where the learner-teacher ratio is often as high as 40:1 as opposed to the recommended 30:1 in primary schools and 35:1 in secondary schools (Motshekga, 2012). In the PE class, large numbers of learners are an even bigger problem, as it is more difficult to maintain discipline and to watch everyone at once in a practical setting which is often outdoors (Mustafa *et al.*, 2014:178). With good planning and organisational skills implemented by the PE teacher, however, large groups of learners can be managed orderly and taught effectively (Mustafa *et al.*, 2014:178). Unfavourable teaching conditions also include unsuitable facilities for PE, and research done in all nine provinces in South Africa by Roux (2020), shows that suitable facilities is often lacking for the delivery of PE in schools.

### **1.3.2.2 Insufficient and inappropriate teaching material**

Another factor is the lack of teaching material as well as inappropriate teaching materials, which could lead to inadequate teaching techniques as well as low performance rates of learners (Qasim & Arif, 2014:142). Various studies such as the ones conducted by Du Toit *et al.* (2007:241), Pule *et al.* (2014:1414) and Kubayi *et al.* (2014:1033) have reported a lack of and inappropriate PE equipment in South African schools which contribute to the inadequate presentation of PE.

### **1.3.2.3 PE teacher training**

PE teacher training needs to prepare PE teachers for the role that they need to play towards the learners and the school. They need to design effective learning tasks in preparation, and also to make sure that these tasks develop the ability to perform skills, the ability to use tactics and how to improve them as well as making sure that learners enjoy what they are doing (Praxedes *et al.*, 2021:503). Furthermore, PE teachers in South Africa need to be able to handle a large group of learners by using effective group work

and other organisational strategies (Mustafa *et al.*, 2014:178). Teachers also need to provide appropriate feedback to learners during PE for them to be aware of their learners' shortcomings and improvements, and to plan time spent on task, participation, motivation as well as on skill acquisition (Spittle *et al.*, 2020:356). In South Africa, research (Van Deventer, 2009:128; Stroebel *et al.*, 2016:220; Stroebel *et al.*, 2018:34) shows that teachers presenting PE in schools are often not trained or qualified to do so, which leads to a lack of quality PE or even no PE in some schools.

According to Stroebel *et al.* (2018:34), PE is not always seen as a subject that needs specialists, so that in many schools the subject is often given to any available teacher to teach, even when they are inadequately trained. In support of this statement, Kruger (2021:9) emphasises that PE teacher training in South Africa is not a priority as not all universities offer formal training that focuses on PE.

PE teacher training has received increased attention in recent literature in various countries, amongst others, the United States of America (USA) (Ensign *et al.*, 2020:115; Ensign *et al.*, 2018:68), Canada (Rivard *et al.*, 2020:3), Chili (Torres *et al.*, 2020:399) and Australia (Mäkelä *et al.*, 2015:681). Among the afore-mentioned studies (Ensign *et al.*, 2020:115; Ensign *et al.*, 2018:68; Rivard *et al.*, 2020:3; Mäkelä *et al.*, 2015:681; Torres *et al.*, 2020:399), the experiences of PE teachers in their first year of teaching are investigated with the focus on providing recommendations and guidelines for preservice PE teacher training to support these teachers entering the workplace. Some of these studies will be discussed next, as well as research pertaining to the experiences and perceptions of South African PE teachers.

### **1.3.3 Studies on the experiences and perceptions of beginner PE teachers, in an international context**

Ensign *et al.* (2020:118) investigated the influences enhancing or constraining the development of efficacy of ten induction physical educators who had graduated from five different universities in the USA. The results of this study showed that, although the efficacy levels in beginner PE teachers are highly context-specific, the presence of high levels of perceived support, both personally and organisationally, can enhance the efficacy of beginner-teachers to manage demands both inside and outside the classroom

(Ensign *et al.*, 2020:118). The authors highlighted the necessity for thorough pre-service training in preparation for the challenges during PE teachers' induction, as well as continued support from the training institute upon employment (Ensign *et al.*, 2020:125).

Beginner PE teachers in Chili in the study of Torres *et al.* (2020:399), reported similar perceptions of their teaching efficacy related to the management skills needed to handle all the new challenges in their first years of teaching PE. Torres *et al.* (2020:399) concluded that PE pre-service teacher training should include problem solving and management skills related to administrative and technical aspects involved in teaching PE. In concurrence, the results of Gentry *et al.* (2018:13) showed that beginner PE teachers in the Midwestern USA struggled with the classroom management aspects of their teaching positions, and also that the relationships with their colleagues had either a positive or negative influence on their perceptions of their own teaching effectiveness. Based on the findings in a study among beginner PE teachers in Quebec, Rivard *et al.* (2020:7) agree that the most important factor influencing the efficacy and satisfaction of beginner PE teachers, is the relationships with colleagues and learners.

Von Haaren-Mack *et al.* (2020:279), in a systematic review involving 47 studies regarding sources and moderators of stress among PE teachers, found that the major stressors in PE teachers' careers are the curriculum, inadequate facilities or equipment, the low status of PE and the discipline of learners. These researchers recommend that PE teachers should receive adequate pre-service training aimed at the awareness of and coping strategies for the main sources of stress in PE teachers, in order to prevent burnout, poor health and absenteeism of teachers at schools (Von Haaren-Mack *et al.*, 2020:279).

#### **1.3.4 Studies on the experiences and perceptions of PE teachers, in a South African context**

No studies could be found regarding beginner PE teachers' experiences in South Africa. One study (Van der Westhuizen, 2021:73), however, did investigate the perceptions of

in-service PE-teachers regarding the challenges that PE teachers face, and the participants in this study were of the opinion that both PE pre-service and in-service teacher training should include strategies regarding class organisation, planning and assessment, and continuing support related to implementation challenges such as time allocation and large classes. In another study involving in-service training of PE teachers in the North-West Province, Zeller *et al.* (2020:224) conclude that PE teacher training should not only include the concepts associated with PE as a subject, but also pedagogic knowledge and insight to adapt their teaching strategies to the instructional settings in which they find themselves. Stroebel *et al.* (2018) agree that both pre-service and in-service PE teachers should receive training to manage the challenges of PE, as one part of Life Orientation, in South Africa.

The above literature review shows that there is a gap in the literature regarding beginner PE teachers' experiences and perceptions of the challenges of teaching PE in South Africa, and the extent to which South African PE teacher training prepares them for these challenges. In light of the risks associated with beginner teachers struggling to cope with the challenges they face in teaching PE, like burnout, poor health and absenteeism of teachers at schools (Von Haaren-Mack *et al.*, 2020:279), it is important to investigate and make recommendations regarding the extent to which pre-service PE teacher training can prepare these teachers for the real-world challenges they will face in the induction phase of their careers.

#### **1.4. Research questions aim and objectives of the study**

##### **1.4.1 Research questions**

The primary research question which emerges from the literature review is: What are beginner PE teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of pre-service teacher training for real-world PE settings in South Africa? This research question can be sub-divided into the following questions:

###### **1.4.1.1 What are the challenges experienced by beginner teachers in teaching PE?**

1.4.1.2 What do beginner teachers perceive as positive experiences in teaching PE?

1.4.1.3 To what extent do beginner teachers perceive their pre-service teacher training to have equipped them for real-world PE teaching.

#### **1.4.2 Aim and objectives**

The aim of this study was to investigate beginner PE teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of pre-service teacher training for real-world PE settings in South Africa. The following objectives were identified:

1.4.2.1 To investigate the challenges experienced by beginner teachers in teaching PE.

1.4.2.2 To investigate which experiences in teaching PE, are perceived as positive by beginner teachers

1.4.2.3 To investigate beginner teachers' perceptions of the extent to which pre-service teacher training prepared them for real-world PE settings.

### **1.5. Methodology**

#### **1.5.1 Research design**

A qualitative research design was used for this study. According to Maree (2019:50), qualitative research can be defined as an interdisciplinary landscape consisting of different views and practices of gathering information. However, Miles and Gilbert (2007:25) argue that qualitative research can be observed as a diverse set of ideas covering different approaches such as empirical phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, protocol analysis and discourse analysis. Furthermore, "qualitative research relies on words rather than numerical ideas, and employs meaning-based rather than statistical forms of data-analysis" (Maree, 2019:53). Qualitative research is thus concerned with non-numerical data and aims to discover the deeper meaning of people's experiences or understanding of their circumstances or of a phenomenon (Belotto, 2018:2622). In this study, beginner PE teachers' perceptions of challenges and positive experiences, and of the extent to which pre-service teacher training prepared them for these experiences, were investigated by means of non-numerical data and within an interpretivist paradigm.

The study was thus conducted from an interpretivist perspective, which is based on the following assumptions: human life can only be understood from within; social life is a human product; the human mind is the deliberate source or origin of meaning; human behaviour is influenced by knowledge of the social world; and the social world “does not exist” independently of human knowledge (Maree *et al.*, 2019: 61; Thanh & Thanh, 2015: 24).

### **1.5.2 Participants and recruitment**

The participants that were used in this research were eight female and male beginner teachers (within their first three years of teaching PE) who attained a Baccalaurius Educationis (B.Ed.) degree or Post-Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) with Physical Education as a major, at the North-West University in South Africa. The participants thus represented a purposive and convenience sample, as all the former students who were teaching PE in their first three years in the field (who were also present in the social media [*WhatsApp*] groups usually created for students in their final year of study in the subject), were invited to participate.

The recruitment of these participants entailed that the question whether the participants were teaching PE at a school, was placed on the social media (*WhatsApp*) groups that had been created in the participants' final year of study in the Physical Education subject, and which were still active. Thereafter, an e-mail was sent by an independent person to the individuals that responded positively to the social media message. The invitation was e-mailed to the participants using the subject group's contact list of old students that graduated at the NWU. The independent person sent an e-mail individually to each of these old students, explaining the research study, inviting them to participate, and including a consent form for the teachers who were willing to participate. The inclusion and exclusion criteria are provided in Chapter 3 (p.50).

### **1.5.3 Data collection**

Data were collected as follows: firstly, by means of online open-ended questionnaires (Addendum A); secondly, to enhance an in-depth understanding of the participants'

experiences as well as sufficient data saturation, an online, semi-structured focus-group interview conducted *via* the *Zoom* application.

The open-ended questionnaires were uploaded using the *QuestionPro* program, and the link to the questionnaire was included in the e-mail with the informed consent form that was sent to participants. The participants were able to read all the information regarding the research project in the e-mail, complete the informed consent form (Addendum B) and then click on the link to provide to access the questionnaire. By clicking on the link, the participants automatically provided consent for a second time, and were then taken to the next page with the questionnaire where the information was kept anonymous, thus ensuring total anonymity to the participants. If the participants did not give informed consent, they were not taken to the questionnaire and immediately left the program. Participants were asked to complete the questionnaire in their free time at home, not at the school.

The questionnaire focused on the participants' experiences in teaching PE in the school and the extent to which they perceive their pre-service training to have prepared them for these experiences.

The findings from the open-ended questionnaires informed the questions in the focus group interview (Addendum C) in order to allow the researcher to have a clear and thorough understanding of the participants' experiences and for the purpose of data saturation, and this was also part of triangulation. According to Barriball and While (1994:330), the semi-structured focus-group interview is considered as a data collection method during research whereby participants' perceptions and opinions are explored regarding complex and sometimes sensitive issues. The semi-structured focus-group interview by means of a *Zoom*-call was chosen as an additional method of data collection for this study, not only with the aim of the enhancement of the comprehensiveness of data, but also for the practical reason that the interviewer has the advantage of synchronous communication even if the interviewees are in different locations (Opdenakker, 2006:4). The interview was transcribed for the aim of dataanalysis (Maree *et al.*, 2019:85).

#### **1.5.4 Data analysis**

Data analysis, according to Morrison (2012:24), is a process that involves deduction from data obtained. Schwandt (2007:6) evaluates data analysis as the activity of making sense of interpreting and theorising data that signifies a search for general statements among categories of data.

In this study, narrative, inductive data-analysis was used to analyse and interpret data collected from participants. Narrative data analysis refers to a variety of procedures for interpreting the stories or narratives of participants gathered in research and includes analyses of the formal and structural means of the stories concerned with understanding how and why people talk about their lives as a story (Maree, 2019:104). The data from the questionnaires and the transcript from the focus-group interview were also analysed inductively (interpreting raw data to derive concepts, categories and themes), and answers were compared to identify common answers, thus, to identify trends, patterns, categories and themes (Younas *et al.*, 2021:2).

#### **1.5.5 Validity and trustworthiness**

To ensure that the data is valid and reliable there are steps that need to be followed, as the researcher's views and assumptions should not be imposed on the data (Merriam & Grenier, 2019:26).

Triangulation, as one of the strategies that can enhance internal validity and credibility (Merriam & Grenier, 2019:26), was employed in this research by comparing the data from the questionnaires with the data from the focus-group interview. The researcher also made use of member checking by presenting the identified themes and categories to the participants to validate (Merriam & Grenier, 2019:26; Taylor *et al.*, 2016:182). The identified themes were presented to participants individually *via* e-mail, as well as a general report of the identified themes during the focus group interview. To ensure confirmability and dependability, peer debriefing was conducted by asking an independent qualitative researcher to examine the collected data and to confirm the interpretation thereof (Merriam & Grenier, 2019:27; Taylor *et al.*, 2016:184).

## **1.6. Ethical considerations**

### **1.6.1 Informed consent**

Detailed information regarding the research study was be e-mailed to the participants who responded positively to the invitation on the social media groups, and they were also asked to complete the informed consent form (Addendum B). Participants were then asked to follow the *QuestionPro*-link which was provided at the end of the consent form. By clicking on the link, the participants automatically provided consent again, and they were taken to a new page with the questionnaire where the information was kept anonymous.

Participants were also offered the optional opportunity to attend an online *Zoom* meeting with the researcher, to ask questions or acquire more information regarding the research study before making a decision to participate in the study.

For the interview, the participants were asked to connect on the *Zoom*-application and, in addition to the consent provided in the consent form *via* e-mail, each participant was asked to verbally confirm his/her consent for participating in and for the recording of the interview before the interview were conducted. Participants in the focus-group interview were requested to keep all discussions in the interview confidential.

### **1.6.2 Ethical clearance to conduct the research**

Ethical clearance to conduct the study was provided by the North-West University's Faculty of Education Ethics Committee (EDU-REC) (NWU-00261-22-A2). Participants completed the questionnaires and participated in the interview in their free time at their homes and did not name any schools in their responses.

### **1.6.3 Experiences of the participants**

When collecting data from participants they presumably all have unique experiences. When it came to the open-ended questionnaires, no discomfort was expected to be experienced as the participants completed the online questionnaires anonymously. In the case of the focus-group interview, participants may have experienced slight feelings of discomfort as they were probed about their experiences of teaching PE in their schools and their perceptions regarding their pre-service PE teacher training. This was managed

by assuring the participants that they were not under pressure to answer any questions that they were not comfortable with, and they were able to withdraw from the interviews at any time when they no longer felt comfortable to take part.

The participants were assured that they participated out of their own free will, that they were able to withdraw at any time and that their data would be kept anonymous and confidential in reporting the data.

### **1.7 Structure of the dissertation**

The structure of the dissertation is as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction, problem statement and aims

Chapter 2: Theoretical framework and literature review

Chapter 3: Methodology

Chapter 4: Findings

Chapter 5: Summary, conclusion, and recommendations

Following, the theoretical and conceptual framework, and an in-depth literature review is presented in Chapter 2.

## Chapter 2

### Theoretical and conceptual framework: challenges faced by beginner Physical Education teachers

#### 2.1 Introduction

When beginner teachers enter the education profession, they are often filled with optimism, energy, new ideas and a desire to bring positive change into the school (Du Plessis, 2020:1). The shock of the reality that some beginner teachers face, though, causes a lot of anxiety, as they are expected to take on the same load of responsibilities as colleagues who have more experience in teaching (Richards *et al.*, 2014:29; Ensign & Woods, 2017:84). In addition, Shoval *et al.* (2010:96) also state that beginner teachers frequently experience “transition shock”, which is the shock of coming from training to the reality of being an actual teacher at a school.

According to Rullestad *et al.* (2021:1), regular physical activity (PA) is associated with the enhancement of physical, psychological and cognitive health, hence, being physically active is imperative to learners in schools. School Physical Education (PE) is recognized as the key opportunity for learners to be involved in physical activities (Rullestad *et al.*, 2021:2). Therefore, the retention of PE teachers that are knowledgeable and passionate about teaching the subject, is absolutely essential in our schools.

Pre-service PE teacher training should thus prepare and motivate beginner PE teachers to be able to manage the challenges of induction, and to persist and continue teaching PE in the school. One theory that focuses on human motivation to persist in an activity, is that of Self-determination Theory (SDT; Ryan & Deci, 2020), which is why this study was conducted through the lens of this theoretical framework.

Consequently, SDT as the theoretical grounding for this study, will be discussed in more detail, as well as the challenging environments that beginner PE teachers often experience, in order to best understand the difficulties, they face in adjusting to the “reality” of a classroom life or of being a teacher.

Two challenges that generally affect all new teachers, viz the teacher's support network and workload, will be discussed; along with that, though, the following will also bear scrutiny, namely, the other specific challenges that are also experienced by PE teachers, such as the status of PE, lack of facilities, equipment and funding for PE, teacher learner-ratio, learner discipline in the PE class, the support network of PE teachers, and teacher training – the latter entails PE teacher training practices as executed in South Africa. Recommendations for improved preparation of beginner PE teachers within the theoretical framework, will then also be discussed.

## **2.2 Theoretical and conceptual framework**

Some discrepancies exist in literature with regards to the use of the terms “theoretical” and “conceptual” frameworks (Imenda, 2014:185). For the purpose of this study, the “theoretical and conceptual framework” constitutes the application of a theory and a set of concepts drawn from that theory to guide the researcher in her study, but also the integration of the findings with other views and concepts in the literature in this field (Imenda, 2014:189),

### **2.2.1 The Self-determination Theory**

This study is grounded by Self-determination Theory (SDT) (Ryan & Deci, 2020) which is the original work of Deci and Ryan (1985), and a theory that helps to better understand factors around motivation as part of human behaviour. According to Wissing *et al.* (2014:131), “in psychology, motivation is the central concept due to the link between motivation and human behaviour.” SDT postulates that every human being has three basic psychological needs, namely the needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness. The satisfaction or support of these three needs is a pre-requisite for intrinsic motivation to continue with a specific behaviour, and for one to flourish (Ryan & Deci, 2020:2; Wissing *et al.*, 2014:234).

*Autonomy*, which plays a pivotal role in intrinsic motivation, implies the need for a sense of choice and personal endorsement in one's actions (Ryan & Deci, 2020:2). According to Tessier *et al.* (2010:243), autonomy support refers to a leader or person in authority

that shows respect and allows subordinates to be able to freely express themselves as well as encourage them to accept their inner-being. When a PE teacher's need for autonomy is supported, the teacher will be more intrinsically motivated to commit to every aspect of teaching PE, and it will also become easier for him or her to motivate and support learners (Sparks *et al.*, 2015:219). Teachers that are autonomously motivated, will naturally and spontaneously do activities whenever they feel free to do so (Deci & Ryan, 2020:3). Stenling and Tafveling (2016:495) agree that teachers that are autonomously motivated tend to put in greater efforts in applying new skills after training. Since autonomous motivation is the satisfaction of the need for a sense of choice and personal endorsement, it also facilitates the willingness of teachers to continue using new skills that have been personally acquired after a training program (Stenling & Tafveling, 2016:495), as in the case of beginner PE teachers. Beginner teachers enter the world of education with the mission to bring change into society (Kaplan, 2021:2), so therefore it is imperative for them to have autonomous motivation which will enable them to have profound fulfilment from the teaching of learners. For teachers who have autonomous motivation, teaching is a part of their identity as they experience a connection between engaging in teaching and their personal values, goals, and abilities (Kaplan, 2021:2). In contrast, teachers that are non-autonomously motivated often act out of fear, which leads to frustration and has a negative impact on their work (Kaplan, 2021:2; Vansteekiste & Ryan, 2013:3). Aelterman *et al.* (2014: 597) further point out that PE teachers who receive training and are autonomously motivated, are also more likely to be autonomy-supportive. Autonomy-supportive teachers show interest in and welcome learners' perspectives, offer them meaningful choices, and invest their time, energy and other resources in learners (Aelterman *et al.*,2014: 596).

*Competence* is defined by Wissing *et al.* (2014:132) as being a master of your own experience and being able to deal effectively with the environment, while Ryan and Deci (2020:2) define it as a reflection of the effectiveness of a person as well as how a person feels about his or her abilities. Split *et al.* (2011:462) further explain competence as being able to effectively cope with challenges while feeling skilled to reach outcomes. Thus, PE teachers also need to feel that they are capable of coping with the challenges of teaching PE, and to know how they feel about their teaching, skills and abilities, to be able to

provide learners with skilful sequences rather than what they are not sure of (Deci & Ryan, 2000:229). When teachers feel confident about what they are doing, it becomes easier for them to share and teach learners efficiently because they feel competent in the skills they offer (Deci & Ryan, 2000:229).

The third psychological need described by SDT, is *relatedness*, which is defined by Wissing *et al.* (2014:235) as the innate need of an individual to have a sense of connection to others, to feel loved and cared for, just as much as to love and care for others. Sparks *et al.* (2011:221) elaborate by referring to relatedness as “a sense of connection to, and experiencing close, caring and mutually-supportive relationships with significant others”. SDT further claims that all humans have a basic need of feeling accepted and trusted by others, which is the feeling that learners need to have towards their teachers: being accepted while teachers need to feel trusted by the system as well as by the learners (Deci & Ryan, 2020:3). In this regard, teachers may display a need to belong to a group of teachers or the staff at school, to be accepted and respected by the staff of the school as well as by the learners and the parents. PE teachers play a pivotal role in promoting health-related behaviours among the youth, and thus they play a lucrative role in the society in general (Abós *et al.*, 2019:2). However, PE often occupies an inferior position in schools, and hence PE teachers often feel neglected by other staff members as well as parents, due to the subject they teach since it is a subject that is less recognised and learners often do not take the subject seriously (Abós *et al.*, 2019:2).

When the three basic needs are not satisfied, individuals tend to experience failure and feelings of inferiority in activities (competence frustration), feel pressure from external and internal forces regarding their activities (autonomy frustration) and tend to experience loneliness and alienation in their surrounding environments (relatedness frustration) (Behzadnia, 2021: 615; Ryan & Deci, 2020:3).

SDT further postulates that there are different forms of motivation, of which intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation are the main categories. The satisfaction of the three basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness will encourage an increase in intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2020:3). Intrinsic motivation is the autonomous type defined by Abós *et al.* (2019:2) as “the inherent enjoyment of

conducting an activity.” Intrinsically motivated teachers are teachers that love what they do; they love teaching PE to learners. However, extrinsic motivation is less autonomous and more controlling (Ryan & Deci, 2020:4). Controlling motivation consists of external regulation, meaning that it is driven by external forces (Stenling & Tafveling, 2016:495).

For example, a teacher may love PE and have a passion for it, but due to continued negative comments from other staff members about the subject, the passion and drive weakens.

According to SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2020:2), extrinsic motivation is categorised in four different sub-types. Firstly, *external regulation* implies behaviour that is driven by external rewards or demands, which is the least self-determined form of behaviour. An example of external regulation would be when teachers put effort into their work just to be recognised by the school (Toth-Kiraly *et al.*, 2020:898). Secondly, *introjected regulation* concerns actions to avoid shame, anxiety and guilt, in order to maintain selfworth (Ryan & Deci, 2020:2). Tulyakul *et al.* (2019:215) describe an example of introjected regulation when they refer to a teacher trying to find interesting subjects and new ways of teaching, doing so because the teacher thinks it is a shame to keep on teaching in the same way all the time. Thirdly, in the case of *identified regulation* (where the task is aligned with personal values that drive the person’s behaviour) Tulyakul *et al.* (2019:215) mention the example of a teacher who enthusiastically facilitates the training of basic movements in the PE class, as he values the importance of well-developed basic movements as an essential means to becoming a successful sports player. Lastly, *integrated regulation* concerns activities which are assimilated with one’s sense of self and other core values, for example when a teacher finds pleasure during the teaching process and does not desire any reward (Talyakul *et al.*, 2019:215).

Considering the above discussion of the SDT framework, therefore, the experiences and perceptions of beginner PE-teachers can be related to the satisfaction or frustration of the three psychological needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness, as well as the measure to which this affects their levels of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, in the environments where they start their PE teaching career.

## **2.2.2 General challenges facing beginner teachers**

### **2.2.2.1 Support network**

The support structure that a teacher should receive from a school is vital, as this can impact the teachers in a positive or negative way. Cardina and Seymour (2021:563) point out that teachers who feel unsupported and devalued can burn out or leave the profession altogether. Conversely, when teachers are well-supported or are in a positive school environment, this can contribute to teacher satisfaction, commitment to teaching, collaboration among colleagues and overall job satisfaction (Cardina & Seymour, 2021:563). Research by Beauchamp *et al.* (2014:9) report that a school that has collective efficacy, collaboration amongst colleagues, and better teacher development offered by the school, enhances better professional practice and teacher effectiveness. In this regard, Price (2012:40) states that principals are central figures in schools, whose actions directly influence teachers' attitudes and shape their schools' climate. In contrast, according to Colognesi *et al.* (2020:270), novice teachers prefer support from their fellow colleagues who are teaching the same course in the same year over that of their mentor, to be superior (like principals). In addition, Banville (2015:260) points out that novice teachers not only require support from the administration regarding disciplinary procedures, but also need support from parents especially regarding the academically challenged learners. Cochran-Smith *et al.* (2012:34) emphasise that every new teacher in a school needs support to succeed in the classroom and to remain at the schools, since teacher retention is a problem in most schools due to lack of support. Similarly, Banville (2015:261) states that teachers who have proper resources and support are more likely to remain in the profession than those with little or no support at all. Also, Gariglio *et al.* (2021:736) mention that teachers are faced with challenges that arise every day from their classrooms that may add to the lack of support from parents, peers, learners and the school community.

### **2.2.2.2 Workload**

Swabey *et al.* (2010:32) state that beginner teachers often start with more responsibilities than experienced teachers yet are expected to yield the same results. Cardina and Seymour (2021:566) support the notion that PE teachers often have a higher workload

than teachers of other subjects, as they often are assigned the additional job responsibility of coaching sports. Other additional responsibilities that PE teachers are often asked to take on, are to organise sport competitions and other related activities, and duties such as lunch duties and supervision in study-halls (Laureano *et al.*, 2021:30; Shoval *et al.*, 2010:88). In a study involving 21 beginner teachers in 18 schools in the United States of America (USA), the participants reported that they felt overwhelmed by the workload given to them which included a variety of duties, which they were expected to master while doing them (Banville, 2015:261). These findings of Banville (2015:261) concur with those of McMullen *et al.* (2014:513) regarding conditions among elementary and high school USA teachers, where the teachers were willing to learn and implement new physical activities in their classrooms, but the challenge of inexperience and additional work commitments negatively affected their teaching thereof. Rainer *et al.* (2012:439) report that some schools even did not offer PE due to high work demands placed upon PE teachers in other areas. In another study of Zhang (2021b:937) in the USA, teachers stated that they were faced with various responsibilities that were unrelated to teaching PE, for example, supporting instruction for other subject areas, organising school-wide events unrelated to PE and athletics, and responding to disruptive learner behaviour across the school.

### **2.2.3 Specific challenges facing beginner PE teachers**

#### **2.2.3.1 Status of PE**

Burnett (2021:181) refers to the relatively low status of PE in comparison to other “academic” subjects, by saying that “the value ascribed to PE by the school leadership, teachers and parents is evident in the insufficient time allocation and implementation practices” of PE. Gaudreault *et al.* (2021:14) and Cruickshan *et al.* (2021:24) agree that PE as a subject at schools is not taken into much consideration, to a point where PE teaching hours are often either reduced or even eliminated from the school curriculum. Because of this devaluation of the subject, teachers who teach PE are often marginalised in schools which can lead to feelings of isolation and low self-esteem (Cruickshan *et al.*, 2021:25; Gariglio *et al.*, 2021:2). According to Gariglio *et al.* (2021:2), this marginalisation is sometimes so bad that the PE period is seen as a play period and the subject as a

“second-class” subject. In a study in which PE teachers reported that they were often asked to teach mathematics and science in the PE lesson time, Zhang (2021:937b) agrees that PE is often seen as inferior to subjects like Mathematics and languages,

The lack of knowledge and understanding of the subject is one of the reasons PE has low status at schools (Gaudreault *et al.*, 2021:15). Kul *et al.* (2018:27) investigated the perceptions of 41 PE teachers in Bartin, Turkey, regarding the status of PE, and reported that PE and other sport-focused subjects at schools are sometimes deemed to be unnecessary by the school, since the subject on its own is perceived to be of no value to the learners. These researchers also conclude that, when schools do not endorse and support the value of PE, learners tend to see this as a free-time course for them and are not willing to adhere to the curriculum regulations (Kul *et al.*, 2018:27). In the systematic review study conducted by Silva *et al.* (2021:810) on the challenges experienced by PE teachers in student-centred teaching, one of the challenges that was reported by most of the novice teachers was that of the low status attributed to PE in schools. Duncombe *et al.* (2016:76) also expressed their concerns in their study among primary schools in England which showed that PE, together with other foundation subjects in the primary school, suffers a low status that leads to shortfalls in terms of time allocation, teacher training, funding, and continuous professional development which means that primary school learners do not experience the PE curriculum in the broad and balanced way in which it was intended.

Loughlin *et al.* (2020:274) refer to the discrepancy of many school-based health promotion programs being implemented as interventions due to increasing overweight and obesity numbers in developed countries, yet the issue of quality PE within the school environment is often being neglected. These researchers mention the example of the *Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program (CSPAP)* which has been implemented in several states of the USA to assist in increasing physical activity opportunities for

learners, but state that there is little knowledge on how the PE teachers in the school conduct their lessons (Loughlin *et al.*, 2020:274).

Various authors from different countries (Kougioumtzis *et al.*, 2011:113; Gariglio *et al.*, 2021:737, Wenner *et al.*, 2019:4, Banville, 2015:260, Rainer *et al.*,2010:430), agree that the public often has a perception of PE as a non-academic, less important subject, which also affects public perceptions of the role of a PE teacher and seems to jeopardize PE teachers' power in the curriculum dissemination process. Similarly, in South Africa, PE is often seen as an unimportant (Burnett, 2012:181; Van der Westhuizen *et al.*, 2021:103), even a so-called “filler” subject (Stroebe *et al.*, 2019:7), which can negatively affect PE teachers' work experiences.

### **2.2.3.2 Lack of facilities, equipment and funding**

The purpose of PE in schools is to provide learners with skills, knowledge, values and opportunities of choosing healthy behaviour and lifelong physical activity (Warren & Brin, 2017:372), as well as opportunities for physical, personal and social development (Kougioumtzis *et al.*, 2011:112). However, it becomes a struggle for teachers to provide these opportunities to learners when there is a lack of facilities and equipment at schools (Kougioumtzis *et al.*, 2011:112). In their systematic review, Silva *et al.* (2021:810) report that the lack of adequate PE equipment as well as shortage of space in the gym is a common challenge to novice PE teachers, and similar findings are reported in studies from developed countries like the USA (Richards *et al.*, 2022:318) and Sweden (Westerlund & Eliasson, 2022:312). Zhang (2021:19a) states that when PE resources are sufficient, additional motivation and the usage of resources among novice PE teachers increase, and *vice versa*. Laureano *et al.* (2014:30) state that, because of the lower status of PE in relation to other subjects in the USA, more funds are spent on subject areas of need, for example, English Language, Art and Maths, than on PE where a cut of funds is often experienced, similar to what often happens in other countries. Rainer *et al.* (2014:440) agree that subjects such as numeracy and literacy are often considered as priority subjects, therefore, funding is allocated to those subject areas as they are “prominent”.

In developing countries like China (Liang *et al.*, 2018:82) and South Africa (Stroebe *et al.*, 2019:7), one of the common challenges faced by new PE teachers is a lack of facilities and equipment. In this regard, one third of the teachers in the national study of Burnett (2021:191) on the state and status of PE in South Africa, considered the availability and quality of available equipment and facilities, as well as budget constraints, a major problem in their delivery of quality PE. In research conducted by Roux and Sakala (2020:134) in the Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces, teachers state that their PE equipment is inadequate and poor and that they also do not have playgrounds where they can do their activities, which has led to teachers just allowing learners to “stretch and run around” in PE classes.

Having to deal with a lack of equipment as a beginner PE teacher, can also influence the level of teacher motivation to prioritise learners’ learning in PE (Tan, 2016:22, Zhang, 2021:5a). In the study of Du Toit and Van der Merwe (2020:121) in the North-West Province, South Africa, PE teachers have reported that the lack of equipment to present PE even demotivated learners to participate, and the demotivated learners constitute another challenge for teachers. The lack of equipment and facilities has been shown to have a negative effect on the motivation of learners to participate in PE, in several other studies as well (Aelterman *et al.*, 2014:597; Cardina & Seymour, 2021:563; Tan, 2016:22, Zhang, 2021:5a).

### **2.2.3.3 Teacher-learner ratio**

A school is a place to learn and interact, but this becomes impossible if the classes are overcrowded and teachers find it difficult to engage learners in the teaching-learning process. This statement was supported by Khan and Iqbal (2012:10162) in their study involving 20 government schools in Pakistan, where the average number of learners in a class ranged from 70 to 120, and teachers reported serious physical, disciplinary, instructional and assessment problems. Gross and Buchanan (2014:77) investigated the perceptions of 28 PE specialists who taught large PE classes in the USA and came to the conclusion that PE teachers find it difficult to deliver quality PE to overcrowded classes, which is also mentally and physically draining to the teachers.

In agreement, in the research conducted by Du Plessis (2020:8) among 38 pre-service teachers in schools across South Africa, the conclusion was made that teaching in overcrowded classrooms was not conducive to good sound learning for teachers and learners, as the teachers experienced disciplinary problems due to minimum learner support and negative assessment practices. Barney and Christenson (2022:190) add by stating that small classes allow teachers to provide more individual attention to each learner resulting in increased learning. These authors also point out, however, that PE is one of the subjects that can handle large groups effectively by means of good class organisation and management, which are aspects in which PE teachers should be thoroughly trained to prepare them for the practice (Barney & Christenson 2022:193). Large classes can, for example, be divided into groups to do activities at workstations which are carefully planned and laid out before the lesson starts (Barney & Christenson, 2022:194).

In South Africa overcrowded classrooms are unfortunately part of the education system (Marais, 2016:1). Although the nation-wide average teacher-learner ratio in 2020 was said to be 29.2 to one teacher (Motshekga, 2020), it was also noted in a statement released by the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) (Botha, 2020) that classrooms in the Western Cape were overcrowded and that the teacher ratio was 1:37; meanwhile Mthethwa (2020) confirmed that the national learner-teacher ratio for primary schools is 35.2 learners for 1 teacher, and 27.7 learners for one teacher in secondary schools. In recent studies involving South African PE teachers (Burnett, 2021:181; Stroebel *et al.*, 2019:99; Van der Westhuizen *et al.*, 2021:69), the management of large classes of learners was repeatedly mentioned as one of the challenges impeding the implementation of quality PE. According to Hurley (2018:24), large class sizes is one of the primary factors making the induction of novice PE teachers challenging, as they have often not had time or opportunities to hone their teaching and assessment skills in such circumstances.

#### **2.2.3.4 Learner discipline in the PE class**

Poor learner discipline, which is often associated with overcrowded classrooms, remains a constant problem in various South African schools where learners rebel against

teachers, making it difficult for teachers to give tasks and do assessments in classrooms (Du Plessis, 2020:7). According to Ensign and Woods (2017:85), beginner teachers face two broad categories of challenges, *viz* knowledge transfer, and classroom management which includes learner discipline as a primary challenge. In this regard, McMullen *et al.* (2014:517) recommend that PE teacher training should include physical activities that are easy to manage, in order to promote good discipline in the class. In the study of Gross and Buchanan (2014:77) among American PE specialists, discipline related to off-task behaviour or learners, and class management related to control of the class during the PE lesson presentation, were identified as the biggest issues facing PE teachers who teach large classes.

Drawing from the literature in their study regarding the enhancement of social-emotional skills by incorporating the development of life skills in the PE class, Winn *et al.* (2022:46) recommend strategies to improve class management and discipline in PE. These strategies include the following: laying out clear routines and expectations for the PE class so that learners understand what is expected of them and can make responsible decisions, teaching with enthusiasm, and creating a positive class climate using specific, positive language which will promote ownership and positive behaviours (Winn *et al.*, 2022:46).

In the study of Oelofse (2020:74), learner discipline was strongly linked to the intrinsic motivation levels of the learners to participate in the PE class. The PE teachers who participated in the study, of which several were beginner teachers, reported that the learners in their PE classes, who did not understand the value of PE, were not intrinsically motivated to participate, which made the control and management of the classes difficult (Oelofse, 2022:75). After a teacher training program in autonomy supportive strategies to enhance the intrinsic motivation of the learners, the teachers reported that the discipline in their PE classes had improved considerably (Oelofse, 2022:80).

#### **2.2.3.5 Support network for PE teachers**

PE teachers require a lot of support from colleagues and parents as well as from learners, as it is imperative for “physical education teachers to be a catalyst to a positive school climate that enhances the teachers’ overall job satisfaction, commitment to teaching, and

attitudes and enthusiasm for teaching” (Cardina & Seymour, 2021:563). A challenge that PE teachers often face, is that of not being supported by their fellow colleagues due to the poor status of the subject, which leads to the PE teachers being degraded by their colleagues (Laureano *et al.*, 2014:30). Gariglio *et al.* (2021:737) agree that PE teachers are in a constant struggle for recognition because, even though PE is part of the curriculum, school administrators and teachers of other subjects tend to refer to PE class as an entertainment space for learners, where they escape and compensate for tension created by the intellectual effort made in the classroom.

PE is also one of the subjects that are sometimes marginalized, with PE teachers feeling isolated in schools (Pennington *et al.*, 2021:265). In their review study of the marginalisation of school PE programs, Laureano *et al.* (2014:30) concluded that many PE teachers suffered from burnout and feeling washed out due to a lack of support from colleagues, as they felt that they were not needed which led to most of them leaving the profession within the first five years. Studies (Ensign & Woods, 2017:83; Shoval *et al.*, 2010:97) have also shown that PE teachers tend to feel isolated as the PE class or gym-areas are usually on the outskirts of the school, so PE teachers do not have much chance to interact and receive support from their colleagues. Also, since PE teachers are often the only ones teaching PE in their school and PE is not a full-time subject, the teacher often feels isolated on a social and professional level from the colleagues and the school context (Shoval *et al.*, 2010:88, Wenner *et al.*, 2019:5). In this regard André (2012:116) made a proposal, which is supported by Westerlund and Eliasson (2022:318), that teacher support programs must be made available to beginner PE teachers to assist with the transition from students to teachers as it is a very difficult one. The support program should help individuals to integrate with teaching cultures, school culture and learning codes and standards of the profession (André, 2012:116; Westerlund & Eliasson, 2022:318). Similarly, Banville (2015:274) recommends effective mentoring and continuous support through the induction years to help novice PE teachers become more familiar with the teaching context, to expand the beginning repertoire and help with the development of professional identity that most novice teachers lack at the beginning of their teaching careers. In the study of Nkambule and Amsterdam (2018:5), principals from

various schools in the Limpopo Province indicated that subject advisors need to increase the amount of time spent in providing support to primary school teachers.

Teachers also require support from their employers in terms of continuous professional training (Cardina & Seymour, 2021:563; Stroebel *et al.*, 2019:8). Banville (2015:261), in a study in the United Kingdom which investigated PE teachers' experiences of professional development during their first years of teaching, found that the PE departments were supportive in the first two years, but after that the teachers had to find support in other departments.

In South Africa, according to Nkambule and Amsterdam (2018:1) teacher support from their schools and districts has also been inadequate since the implementation of the new education system in 1997, leaving teachers feeling unsupported and ill-equipped. Van der Westhuizen (2020:139), in a study that involved the in-service training of PE teachers in South Africa, recommends that in-service PE training for new PE teachers be followed by a few months' support program implemented by the instructors, including virtual communication (forums, questions and answers, physical activity ideas, lesson ideas, and more), e-mails, and telephonic interaction.

#### **2.2.3.6 Teacher training**

In the study of Ingersoll *et al.* (2014:1) in which data from the US National Schools and Staffing Survey were analysed, it was shown that the type of pre-service training of beginner teachers played a significant role in the attrition of beginner teachers at schools. Teachers with more training in teaching methods and pedagogy, especially practical teaching, experiences of other teachers' practice and feedback on their own teaching, were significantly less likely to leave the profession after their first year (Ingersoll *et al.*, 2014:30). In contrast, Kahts-Kramer and Baard (2020:144) state that pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) plays a crucial role in the well-being and success of teachers, as they need to have knowledge of the subject, they teach to have confidence in what they teach.

Teacher attrition in schools often occurs in teachers' novice years, especially in the first year of teaching (André, 2012:115). The first year of teaching is, therefore, considered a crucial time as this is when beginner teachers learn to teach while they are already

teaching, as well as getting to know learners, the curriculum, and the school-setting, thus developing a teaching repertoire that enables them to survive as teachers (André, 2012:115). In this regard, Cochran-Smith *et al.* (2012:33), in their longitudinal investigation of the first five years of a group of teachers in the profession, concluded that not all teachers were found competent and showing high quality teaching in practice, and recommended that university pre-service teacher training programs should incorporate more practical (professional training and fieldwork) and less “academic” training. Novice teachers, according to Cochran-Smith *et al.* (2012:34), also need to be given opportunities for ongoing and intensive development after their induction. Banville (2015:259) refers to under-developed teaching skills such as classroom management skills, management of learners’ behaviours, and inadequate lesson preparation which cause beginner teachers to feel overwhelmed in their first year of teaching, but which can be addressed by quality pre-service teacher training.

In South Africa, Van Deventer (2012:154) and Stroebel *et al.* (2019:8) noted that, after curriculum change was implemented in 1997, the challenge of specific subject training was not addressed properly. The consequences included that about 60% of Life Orientation (LO) teachers in the Western Cape primary and secondary schools in the study of Van Deventer (2012:154), and 73% of the Foundation Phase teachers involved in the study of Stroebel *et al.* (2017:165) were not qualified to teach PE. According to Steyn *et al.* (2012:164) and Du Toit and Van der Merwe (2020:121), due to a lack of training on the subject, teachers tend to utilise the time allocated to PE within Life Skills or Life Orientation on the timetable for other things to keep learners occupied. Adversely so, higher education institutes do not adequately prepare teachers for teaching the subject, which leads to the subject being delivered by non-specialist teachers in the form of generalists and non-qualified external PE program facilitators (Du Toit & Van der Merwe, 2020:121; Steyn *et al.*, 2012:160; Zeller & Roux, 2020:213). Roux and Sakala (2020:134) recommend that PE teacher training should address the challenges experienced by PE teachers in their study in the Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces, where teachers struggled with assessment within PE, as well as fitting in all the prescribed physical activities of PE within the allotted time in the school timetable.

### 2.2.3 PE teacher training in South Africa

PE was left out of the South African national school curriculum for more than ten years, before being reimplemented as part of the subject, Life Skills / Life Orientation in 1997 (Du Toit, 2019:13; SADBE, 2011:i; Stroebel *et al.*, 2018:32). Universities in South Africa offered teaching degree courses with specialisation in PE in the past, but during the period of the omission of PE from the curriculum, few higher education institutions offered PE teacher training, which in turn led to a lack of qualified and trained PE teachers (Du Toit, 2019:13). After the 1997 reform in the national curriculum, which included the cessation of teacher training colleges and restructuring at Higher Education Institutions, and the transition of PE as a stand-alone subject to one part of the generalised subject of Life Skills / Life Orientation (Burnett, 2021:188), the South African Department of Education (SADBE) authorised provincial departments of education to be responsible for the training of Life Orientation teachers (Stroebel *et al.*, 2019:1). Consequently, provincial departments of education offered five-day training workshops for in-service teachers regarding the content and pedagogy of Life Skills and Life Orientation, which included one afternoon of training in PE (Crouse, 2018). In this regard, Du Toit (2019:14) and Stroebel *et al.* (2019:3) are of the opinion that this governmental training in PE was not sufficient for in-service teachers to be able to teach PE effectively. Also, in South Africa, studies have shown that between 40% and 58% of Life Orientation teachers who also teach PE in different provinces are not qualified PE teachers (Van Der Westhuizen *et al.*, 2020:9). In 2016, South Africa was chosen as a pilot country by the United Nations Educational Cultural and Scientific Organization (UNESCO) and United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF) for a research project to investigate what PE policies, strategies and practices exist in SA public schools with the aim of policy reform (a project that is still ongoing) (Burnett, 2021:181). In the national study as part of this project, Burnett (2021:194) concludes that curriculum reforms should prioritise preservice and in-service PE teacher training to improve the competency and knowledge levels of PE teachers.

Currently, some universities in South Africa (among others, the University of the Witwatersrand, University of Fort-Hare and Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University) offer

a B.Ed. degree or a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) in which PE training as part of Life skills and Life Orientation teacher training, is included (Kruger, 2021:7). Some universities (including the University of the Western Cape, and the University of the Free-State) only offer teacher training with Life Skills or Life Orientation as specialisation, and others (including the University of South Africa and the University of Johannesburg) offer PE as one module in their teacher training program, from a Life Orientation perspective (Kruger, 2021:7). At the North-West University, PE is offered as a specialisation in the B.Ed. and PCCE programs, and this training includes theoretical, practical and pedagogical training related to all the content themes of PE i.e., physical fitness, games, sports, educational dance, educational gymnastics, athletics and other recreational movement activities (NWU, 2022:33).

Against this background of PE teacher training, several researchers (Du Toit & Van der Merwe, 2021:121; Stroebel *et al.*, 2019:3; Van der Westhuizen, 2021:139; Van Deventer, 2012:153) suggest that in general, PE pre-service teacher training in South Africa may not be sufficiently comprehensive for PE teachers to manage the challenges that they have to face in implementing the subject in schools. This is concerning, as the above research shows that teachers who feel overwhelmed by challenges when entering the teaching profession, often feel unmotivated to continue, and then leave the school or even the profession altogether.

#### **2.4 PE teacher training recommendations for improved preparation of beginner PE teachers, within the SDT framework**

One recommendation for PE teacher training to improve the motivation and retention of beginner PE teachers that has been discussed in this chapter, is continued support from the instructors of the PE teacher training course during the first year of teaching (André, 2012:116; Banville, 2015:274; Cardina & Seymour, 2021:563; Westerlund & Eliasson, 2022:318). In the context of the SDT framework, continued support of beginner PE teachers will satisfy the need for relatedness of these teachers in their first year of teaching (Van der Westhuizen *et al.*, 2020:108). Furthermore, within the SDT framework, Van der Westhuizen *et al.* (2020:108) recommend that PE teacher training should incorporate needs-supportive strategies to also meet the psychological needs of autonomy and

competence (by providing comprehensive PE teaching, knowledge and skills), so that the PE teachers will be more intrinsically motivated to continue teaching PE in school. Also, Oelofse (2020:85) recommends that PE teacher training programs should include the training of teachers to provide autonomy support to their learners, as this will improve the intrinsic motivation of the learners to participate, which will in turn facilitate learner discipline and class management. Zeller and Roux (2020:214) agree that offering proper training to the teachers that will be responsible for PE in our schools, could promote teacher retention and development.

Van der Berg *et al.* (2016:28) point out that accountability also plays a pivotal role in making sure that PE teachers are well-equipped for their induction, as numerous teachers lack accountability and blame every problematic thing on the school or the Department. Emphasising accountability for one's own actions and work in the classroom within pre-service teacher training, will support the need for autonomy among beginner teachers (Van der Berg *et al.*, 2016:28). In this regard, De Beer and Barnard (2021:250) state that beginner teachers are the future of teaching and allowing them to give input and suggestions on what they think could work for the school and learners, would be a benefit to the school. Similarly, Tulyakul *et al.* (2019:214) state that beginner PE teachers who feel that their input in improving the school is recognised, will also be more motivated to be better teachers to the learners as well as better colleagues, as motivation intensifies perseverance. Tulyakul *et al.* (2019:214) go on to emphasise that allowing beginner PE teachers to give input, will also fulfil them internally with not so much a desire of being rewarded but contentment at finding joy and happiness in what they do, thus contributing to the satisfaction of the need for autonomy.

González-Valero *et al.* (2022:1) point out that teaching is considered a difficult profession where teachers succumb easily to diseases such as chronic stress, anxiety, exhaustion or depression that could also lead to burnout. For this reason, González-Valero *et al.* (2022:1), supported by Barnard *et al.* (2022), are of the opinion that PE teachers should be involved in physical activity themselves, as they will be able to handle the physical and mental pressures of teaching better, realise the pleasure and benefits of physical activity for their own health, and even join the learners in their ventures. Within the framework of

the SDT, this would enhance the satisfaction of the need for competence, as the teachers would feel better equipped to handle the challenges they face as beginner teachers in the PE class.

### **2.2.5 Summary**

The literature shows that beginner PE teachers across the world and also in South Africa, face various challenges that are specific to teaching PE in schools. These challenges include the relatively low status of the subject, a lack of facilities, equipment and funding, overcrowded classrooms which often contribute to learner discipline problems and a lack of support from previous instructors and the school community. Currently, pre-service PE teacher training and post-training support from universities in South Africa, could be inadequate to equip beginner PE teachers to manage the abovementioned challenges successfully, and be motivated to continue in the profession. However, no studies on the experiences of beginner PE teachers in South Africa, or the effect of their pre-service teacher training on their experiences, could be found. Therefore, this study aimed to contribute to the literature by investigating these questions.

The methodology of the study will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

In this chapter the research design, participants and recruitment, data-collection methods and procedures, data analysis, validity and trustworthiness, as well as ethical issues are discussed in more detail.

#### **3.2 Research design**

For the aim of this study, to investigate beginner PE teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of pre-service teacher training for real-world PE settings in South Africa, a qualitative research design was used which was conducted from an interpretivist perspective. Qualitative research explores attitudes, behaviour, and experiences by means of methods such as open-ended questionnaires, interviews, focus groups or observation (Grundy, 2018:14). Qualitative research further includes a range of textual and visual data that should be informative so that patterns may be identified, and inferences traced from them (Brooks *et al.*, 2018:108). Brooks *et al.* (2018:98) point out the suitability of qualitative research for studying mental health, given "the ability to explore personal perspectives on illness, and individual experiences of health services and treatments". In the current study, qualitative research will be used amongst others to understand beginner PE teachers' perceptions of challenges and positive experiences that they undergo, as well as to establish whether the training provided by pre-service teacher training programs has prepared them well enough for these experiences.

According to Mattimoe *et al.* (2021:1), qualitative studies comprise of the collection of rich data that are understood within context and are therefore associated with the interpretivist philosophy. The interpretivism paradigm will be used in this study as nonnumerical data will be collected. Interpretivism seeks to build knowledge from understanding individuals' unique viewpoints (Melegati & Wang, 2021:43). According to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017:33), the interpretivist paradigm is about understanding and interpreting what the subject is thinking about, from his/her viewpoint. Chowdhury (2014:433) refers to

interpretivism as an approach which emphasizes the meaningful nature of people's character and participation in their social and cultural life. In this study, the data collected by means of the interviews and questionnaires will be interpreted to understand the teachers' viewpoints and experiences of the challenges they faced in schools when it came to delivering PE to learners in their first year of teaching.

### **3.3 Participants and recruitment**

The participants in this research were eight beginner teachers that had recently (within the previous three years) attained their Baccalaureus Educationis (B.Ed.) degree or Post-Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), with a major in Physical Education, at the North-West University in South Africa. The sample thus constituted a convenience and purposive sample (Etikan *et al.*, 2015:2; Palinkas *et al.*, 2013:2). Convenience sampling refers to sampling that targets a population which meets certain criteria such as easy accessibility, geographical proximity, availability or willingness to participate (Etikan *et al.*, 2015:2; Palinkas *et al.*, 2013:2). As Andrade (2021:86) states, a convenience sample is thus a source that is conveniently accessible. Purposive sampling is a technique used to identify and select information-rich cases for the most effective use of limited resources (Etikan *et al.*, 2015:2; Palinkas *et al.*, 2013:2). According to Etikan *et al.* (2015:2), purposive sampling is a non-random technique that is often used by the researcher to gather data from participants without any underlying theories or a set number of participants. Andrade (2021:87) adds that a purposive sample is one where the participants' characteristics are defined for a purpose that is relevant to the study. A convenience and purposive sample were chosen for this study as this study targets participants with specific experiences and characteristics, *viz* that of beginner PE teachers.

To recruit the participants, the following question - whether the participants were teaching PE at a school - was placed on still active, social media (*WhatsApp*) groups created in the participants' final year of study in the Physical Education subject. Thereafter, an e-mail was sent by an independent person to the individuals that responded positively to the social media message, explaining the research study, inviting them to participate and asking them to provide informed consent if they agreed to participate.

Participants were included in the study if they were:

- teachers who had received their PE teacher training at NWU within the previous three years.
- teachers in their first three years of teaching
- teaching PE as one of their subjects in the Senior and/or FET-phase.
- willing to participate in the research project; and
- willing to sign the informed consent form to participate in this study.

Participants were excluded from the study if they:

- had not received their PE teacher training at NWU.
- we're not teaching PE as one of their subjects in the Senior and/or FET-phase; and
- were neither willing to participate nor willing to sign the informed consent form to participate in this study.

A total of 17 beginner PE teachers confirmed on the social media groups that they were teaching PE at a school and that they were in their first three years of teaching. All 17 teachers who responded, were invited to participate. These 17 teachers constituted 10 female and seven male teachers, who were all between the ages of 22 and 28 years. Of the 17 teachers who were invited, eight provided consent and completed the questionnaire anonymously. Four of the 17 teachers also consented to the focus group interview. As the questionnaires were completed completely anonymously, the characteristics of the eight respondents were not known. However, the characteristics of the four interviewees were made known during the interviews, and these are presented in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1: Characteristics of participants in the focus group interview**

<b>Participant number</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>School's socio-economic status</b>	<b>In year of teaching PE</b>
1	Female	23	Middle	1 <sup>st</sup>
2	Female	26	Low to middle	3 <sup>rd</sup>
3	Male	26	Low	3 <sup>rd</sup>
4	Male	27	Middle to high	1 <sup>st</sup>

### **3.4 Data collection**

Data were collected by means of firstly, online open-ended questionnaires (Addendum A). An open-ended questionnaire is defined as a collection of questions that allows participants to express their opinions without the influence of the researcher (Reja *et al.*, 2003:161) and is similar to essay-type or short answer questions (Hyman & Sierra, 2016:1). The open-ended questionnaire was uploaded on the *QuestionPro* program. The link to the questionnaire was included in the information letter that was e-mailed to the participants, so that they were able to read the information regarding the research project and then click on the link to provide informed consent and to access the questionnaire. The questionnaire focused on the participants' experiences in teaching PE in the school and the extent to which they perceived their pre-service training to have prepared them for these challenges.

Secondly, an online, semi-structured focus-group interview was conducted by means of a *Zoom* application. A focus-group interview allows participants to influence one another with comments and experiences and to form opinions of the issue that is discussed (Pivač *et al.*, 2021:3). Berg *et al.* (2017:494) mention that focus-group interviews encourage interaction amongst the group of participants. The findings from the open-ended questionnaires informed the questions in the focus- group interview (Addendum C) in

order to allow the researcher to have a clear and thorough understanding of the participants' experiences and for the purpose of data saturation.

### **3.5 Data analysis**

Qualitative data analysis, according to Flick (2014:5), is defined as “the classification and interpretation of linguistic (or visual) material to make statements about implicit and explicit dimensions and structures of meaning-making in the material and what is represented in it.” The researcher thus has to interpret the data in the context of the participants' experiences and perceptions and derive the deeper meaning from their responses (Flick, 2014:5; Maree *et al.*, 2019:177).

Narrative and thematic data-analysis was used in this study to inductively analyse and interpret data collected from participants within the interpretivist framework (Klem *et al.*, 2022:9). According to McAllum *et al.* (2019:367), narrative analysis is seen as a way of reporting how humans communicatively experience and make sense of their social worlds and identities. In this research participants (teachers) shared their experiences in the teaching environment as beginner PE teachers in their schools, and the researcher, from the information given, narrated the participants' responses by means of the data from the questionnaires and the transcript from the focus-group interview.

The steps in thematically analysing and reporting the data (Maree *et al.*, 2019:118) included the following: Firstly, the researcher used the answers from the open-ended questionnaires and also created a detailed and high-quality transcription of the verbal material; secondly, coding, clustering and comparison of individual trajectories were done, and lastly, the information was synthesised to establish similarities put into context (Maree *et al.*, 2019:118). Once categories had been developed, sufficient examples of each category had to be identified to create a rich and in-depth description of its characteristics and subcategories (Boudah, 2011:230). Once the categories were fully described, they were integrated into sub-themes and themes (Boudah, 2011:231).

Coding as described by Belotto (2018:2624) and Bazeley (2021:132) allows the interpretation of large segments of data in new ways, assessing how the information is linked to identify different themes from the participants' responses. Coding can be done

by labelling words or passages from the participants' responses that appear multiple times and/or that are related to the research questions. For the purpose of this study, colour-coding was used as a form of labelling words or passages, adapted from the guidelines of Bazeley (2021:133) and McMillan and Schumacher (2001:477) as indicated in Figure 3.1. Words and passages from the participants' responses that occurred regularly, or that fit into similar categories, were thus colour-coded with the same colour, and from these categories, sub-themes and themes were derived (Bazeley, 2021:133).

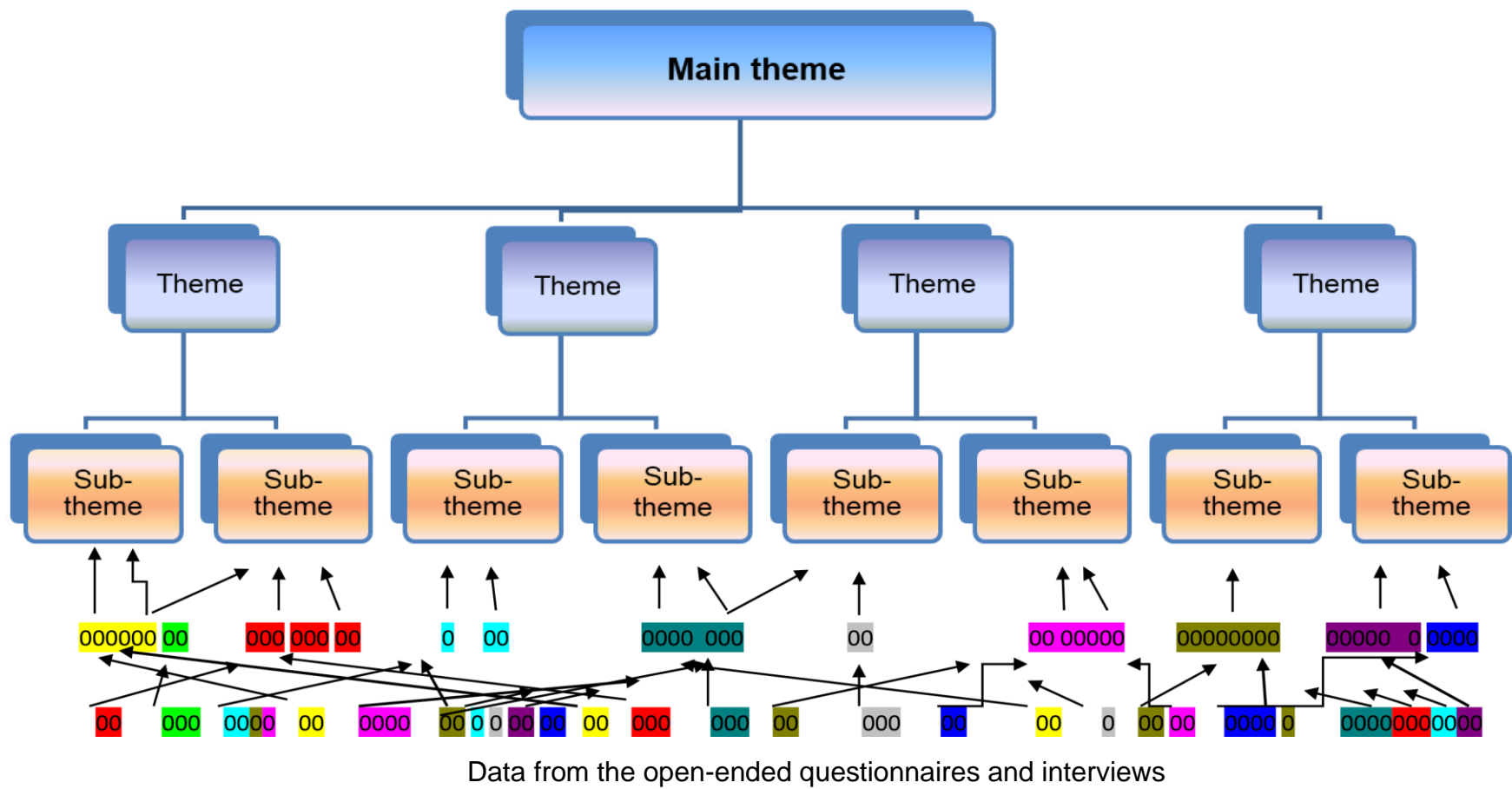
### **3.6 Validity and trustworthiness**

Deciding on how to compile a questionnaire can be challenging, as one needs to make sure that the respondents will be able to respond in such a way that it will be easy for readers and the researcher to analyse (Maree *et al.*, 2019:200). Maree *et al.* (2019:200) point out that the question content of a questionnaire should be relevant to the research topic, the questions should be well-aligned, and the questions need to be suitable for the target market or respondents. To develop the questionnaire in the current study, the questions were firstly presented to experts in the field of PE teacher training (lecturers) for evaluation and recommendations. After the recommended changes had been made, the questionnaire was presented to a small group of PE teachers to complete and provide their recommendations and comments. Thereafter, the questionnaire was finalized.

In the data analysis, to enhance validity and credibility, triangulation was employed by comparing data from the questionnaires with the data from the focus-group interview. Farquhar *et al.* (2020:161) state that the purpose of triangulation is to establish the distance between two points or the relative position of two or more points in the findings of research. Triangulation, which involves multiple sources of obtaining data, is considered to be a powerful strategy for increasing credibility (Patnaik & Pandey, 2019:175). Triangulation has also been asserted as a means of achieving a degree of validity in the findings of a study (Farquhar *et al.*, 2020:161).

Furthermore, as part of the process of member-checking, the researcher presented the transcribed data and the themes to the participants to confirm the correctness of the transcripts and the accuracy of the interpretation of the data (Taylor *et al.*, 2016:183). To enhance transferability, a rich description of the research process was provided. For

confirmability and dependability, the processes of an audit-trail and peer-debriefing were implemented, which included asking an independent, qualitative research specialist to evaluate and confirm the researcher's findings (Taylor *et al.*, 2016:183).



**Figure 3.1: Colour-coding scheme, adapted from Bazeley (2021:133) and McMillan and Schumacher (2001:477) which was used for the coding of the data**

### **3.7 Ethical considerations**

#### **3.7.1 Informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality of the data**

When acquiring data from participants, they need comprehensive information with regards to the aims and the data-collection methods of the research, and should participate voluntarily (Cohen *et al.*, 2011:78). The researcher thus needs to obtain informed consent from the participants, which is defined as “the procedures in which individuals choose whether to participate in an investigation after being informed of facts that would be likely to influence their decisions” (Cohen *et al.*, 2011:78). The participants in this study received comprehensive information as part of the informed consent letters (Addendum B) by e-mail, which they were asked to complete and return to the researcher. In addition to the participants’ consent provided in the informed consent and invitation letter *via* e-mail, the participants automatically provided consent again by clicking on the link to the questionnaire which was provided at the end of the invitation and informed consent letter. Before deciding whether they wanted to participate in the study, participants were offered the optional opportunity to attend an online *Zoom*-meeting with the researcher, to ask questions or acquire more information regarding the research study. With reference to the focus-group interview, the participants were asked again to provide informed consent for the recording of the interview and the anonymous use of their answers, just after they connected on the *Zoom*-application.

Other principles of research ethics that were employed in this study, are those of anonymity and confidentiality. Anonymity refers to participants not being linked to the data provided and their responses containing no identifiable information (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:122; Merriam & Grenier, 2019:29). After clicking on the link at the end of the informed consent letter, the participants were taken to a new page of the questionnaire where the information was kept anonymous. Total anonymity of the participants in the questionnaire was thus maintained. If the participants decided not to

participate and did not give informed consent, they were not taken to the questionnaire and were allowed to leave the program.

Confidentiality involves making sure that no-one has access to data provided by participants or their names, except for the researcher, and this is done by collecting the questionnaire data anonymously, asking the focus group interview participants to keep the discussions in the interview confidential, and reporting group- and not individual results (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:122; Merriam & Grenier, 2019:29). The details of the interviews were not discussed anywhere other than for the purposes relating to this study, and at the onset of the study, the researcher, supervisors, and independent person signed a confidentiality agreement.

The participants were assured that they were participating out of their own free will and that their data would be kept anonymous and confidential in reporting the data. No schools were identified or named in the responses in the questionnaires or interview.

The electronically completed questionnaires and recordings and transcripts of the interviews are stored on the researcher's computer and only the researcher has access to the data. Data are also stored on an external hard drive and a USB stick for backup in a locked cupboard in the researcher's office, and only the researcher has access to it. These electronic devices are password-protected and encrypted. All stored data will be kept for at least five years, after which it will be destroyed. After transcribing the interviews, all original audio recordings were deleted from the recording device.

### **3.7.2 Permission to conduct the research**

Ethical clearance (Addendum F) to conduct this study was obtained from the North-West University's Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee (EDU-REC) (NWU-00261-22-A2). Participants completed the questionnaires and participated in the interview in their free time at their homes and were requested not to name any schools in their responses.

### **3.7.3 Experiences of the participants**

Participants in questionnaires and interviews presumably all have unique experiences, and a researcher should always ensure that the participants feel comfortable by respecting them and assuring them of their rights (Dennis, 2014:400).

With regards to the open-ended questionnaires, no discomfort seemed to be experienced as the participants completed the online questionnaires anonymously. In the interview, the researcher assured the participants that they were not under pressure to answer any questions that they were not comfortable with, and that they could withdraw from the interview at any time if they felt uncomfortable to take part. This assurance by the researcher was given to manage the possible feelings of slight discomfort that could be expected among participants when probed about their experiences of teaching PE in their schools and their perceptions regarding their preservice PE teacher training.

### **3.7.4 Report of the findings of the study to participants**

After the completion of the study, the findings of the study will be communicated to the participants by means of the completed dissertation. The findings will be in the form of the anonymously processed data (themes and categories) and will be e-mailed to all participants who were invited to participate.

## **3.8 Summary**

The research methodology for the study has been discussed in detail in this chapter. The researcher elaborated on the research design, recruitment and characteristics of participants, data- collection, data analysis and ethical issues.

Forthwith, the findings of the study are presented in Chapter 4.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Findings and discussion**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, data collected by means of the questionnaires and interviews are presented, grouped into the different themes as identified by the data analysis. Furthermore, each of the themes is discussed in the light of the relevant literature, and finally, the findings are contemplated in the context of the SDT framework.

#### **4.2 Findings**

Figure 4.1 shows how the themes were derived from the sub-themes and categories identified in the data analysis to finalise the themes and sub-themes as shown in Table 4.1.

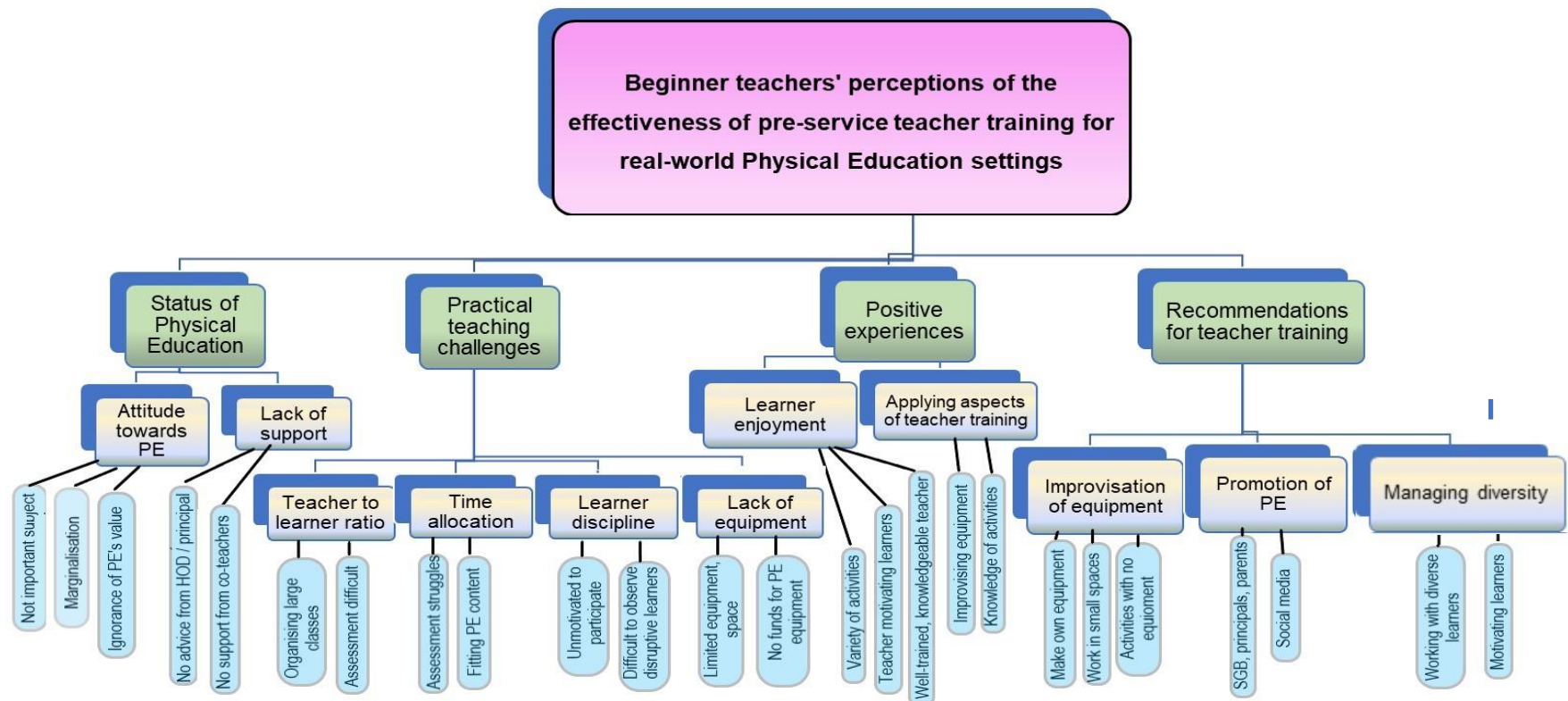


Figure 4.1: Categories, sub-themes and themes identified in the data analysis

**Table 4.1: Themes and sub-themes identified in the data analysis**

<b>Theme 1</b>	<b>Status of Physical Education</b>
Sub-theme 1	Attitude towards Physical Education
Sub-theme 2	Lack of support from the Department, SGB and colleagues
<b>Theme 2</b>	<b>Practical teaching challenges</b>
Sub-theme 1	Teacher-to-learner ratio
Sub-theme 2	Time allocation
Sub-theme 3	Lack of equipment and facilities
Sub-theme 4	Learner discipline
<b>Theme 3</b>	<b>Positive experiences</b>
Sub-theme 1	Learner enjoyment
Sub-theme 2	Applying aspects of teacher training
<b>Theme 4</b>	<b>Perceptions of and recommendations for PE teacher training</b>
Sub-theme 1	Improvisation of equipment
Sub-theme 2	Promotion of the value of PE in the school
Sub-theme 3	Management of diversity and large classes

The main themes that were identified in the data analysis thus were the following: the status of PE, practical teaching challenges, positive experiences, and recommendations for PE teacher training. Subsequently, the findings pertaining to these themes, will be elaborated on in more detail, and each theme will be discussed in the context of relevant literature.

## 4.2.1 The status of Physical Education

### 4.2.1.1 Attitude towards Physical Education

It was evident from the responses of most of the participants, that PE was disregarded in their schools in many ways and that it was not a priority subject. Some participants even stated that PE was regarded as a waste of time, while learners and the management or other educators had no respect for the subject. Two of the respondents from the questionnaire stated that:

*“Some teachers and learners don’t regard PE as an important subject... they don’t regard it as a ‘real’ subject.”*

*“Most schools do not see the subject as important...”*

Two participants pointed out that the low status of PE sometimes even led to parents and colleagues also marginalising the PE teacher and the subject:

*“Parents don’t think a PE teacher is important, not like the Math teacher.”*

*“...other teachers make it clear in front of the students that they find it unimportant and see it as wasting other subjects’ time for class...”*

Because of parents’ low opinion of the subject, they often do not encourage their children to participate. In the interview conducted, one of the participants stated that parents tend to make excuses too easily for their children:

*“Learners come with a doctor’s note that says that they should not participate in PE or parents call to say their kids should not participate in PE.”*

One participant claims in the questionnaire that parents from poor households, tend to be less positive about PE because they prioritise basic survival.

*“...poorer households ...don’t really consider sport or PE as important.”*

According to several of the participants, the low status of PE can be attributed to teachers and learners not knowing and understanding the value and importance of PE. Two participants emphasised that, while qualified and trained PE teachers understood the importance of PE, *“unqualified teachers and teenagers view it as just another subject that needs to be passed that is irrelevant in their minds.”* One interviewee remarked that teachers

and learners would be more positive about PE *“if they only knew how PE can boost your marks”*.

#### **4.2.1.2 Lack of support**

One of the consequences of the low status of PE, according to several of the participants, is a lack of support to new PE teachers. Participants with regards to both the questionnaire and interview were of the opinion that there was no support given to educators from the Department, the principal, and the colleagues. Participants mentioned that:

*“Little to no support is being given to equipment or new resources for the teacher to be used.”*

*“... there has been no support from my HOD or deputy principal in giving advice...”*

*“Support is not given. The principal sees it as something that must be done, and the other teachers see it as a waste of time.”*

One participant indicated in the questionnaire that, even co-teachers that were teaching PE when the beginner teachers started at the school, showed no interest- or even gave support to the teacher or the subject itself:

*“Co-teachers had no connection to PE classes ... so no support from their side.”*

Literature shows that the attitude of the teacher towards the subject plays a pivotal role in the commitment of the teacher and the quality of instruction (Ellison *et al.*, 2021:663; Mudekanye & Sithole, 2012:711). According to Mudekanye and Sithole (2012:711), a positive attitude towards the teaching of the subject results in a deep conviction of the value of the subject. Conversely, Ellison *et al.* (2021:663), in their study on PE teacher sustainability in the USA, found that teachers who deeply believed that what they were teaching was worthwhile, and that they could make a difference in learners' lives, were more positive and committed in their subject. Knowledgeable teachers who believe that PE is an important subject that could assist in the improvement of other areas of learner development, such as cognitive function and academic achievement, will thus be more positive and committed to teaching PE.

The low status and marginalization of PE are unfortunately challenges reported by PE teachers in various studies in international contexts (Barwood *et al.*, 2021:418; GonzálezRivas *et al.*, 2022:654; Peralta *et al.*, 2022:3; Qruickshank *et al.*, 2021:25; Graber *et al.*, 2020:392). González-Rivas *et al.* (2022:654) attribute constant curricular reforms,

administrative inconsistencies and dependence on the school organisations to the low status of PE in Mexico. Qruickshank *et al.* (2021:25) confirm that PE is often a marginalised subject in Australia, resulting in various unique challenges for PE teachers, especially teachers in the beginning of their teaching careers. In the study of Graber *et al.* (2020:392), PE teacher educators at higher education institutes in the USA report concern regarding the declining status of PE in their relevant states, as confirmed by decreasing numbers of students signing up to become PE teachers at their institutions. In the systematic review of Von Haaren-Mack *et al.* (2020:279) regarding sources and moderators of stress among PE teachers, one of the major stressors in PE teachers' careers was found to be the low status and marginalization of PE. Mudekunya and Sithole (2012:710) report that in Zimbabwe, PE was marginalized and not taken seriously by teachers, until the National Sport and Recreation policy made the teaching of PE compulsory, thereby raising it to the same status level as other school subjects in the national curriculum. Richards and Templin (2011:341) also confirm that being a beginner PE teacher is more problematic because of issues that stem from the marginalizing of their subject.

In South Africa, Burnett (2021:181) refers to the relatively low status of PE in comparison to other "academic" subjects, by suggesting that "the value ascribed to PE by the school leadership, teachers and parents is evident in the insufficient time allocation and implementation practices" of PE. Similar to the challenges experienced by the participants in the current study, Burnett (2021:191) found teachers' lack of content and didactic knowledge, limited resources, over-emphasis on "academic" subjects in schools, and a lack of parental support, to be the major contributors to the low status of PE in the country.

With regard to support for beginner PE teachers, Laureano *et al.* (2014:30) indicate that PE teachers often face the challenge of not being supported by their colleagues due to the poor status of the subject. Ensign *et al.* (2020:118) and Whipp and Salin (2018:909) have found that sufficient perceived support, related to governance and administration (school governing body, principals and administrative colleagues), and work atmosphere (coteachers, learners and parents) contribute to the ability of beginner-teachers of managing the new and unexpected demands of induction. Support from colleagues and the principal is imperative and usually results in teachers settling in better and being more comfortable to teach and interact with others, thus contributing to being a successful teacher (Richards & Templing, 2011:352). Cardina and Seymour (2021:563) agree that support in the workplace is vital as this can contribute to teacher satisfaction, commitment, collaboration, and overall job satisfaction. In addition, Ferry & Westerlund (2022:13), in their study investigating the

support networks of Swedish PE teachers, concluded that structural support from a formal, assigned mentor is essential to support a PE teacher in the first year of teaching.

Support from learners' parents for PE programs and for PE teachers, according to Paulson *et al.* (2022:443), is dependent on the parents' knowledge and understanding of the value of PE, as well as their own previous experiences in PE. In their study among parents of primary school learners in the Southwestern United States, efforts by the PE teachers to communicate with and engage parents in the PE programs, improved the parents' perceptions of PE and their understanding of the value of the subject (Paulson *et al.*, 2022:443). Kovács *et al.* (2022:2) agree that a parent's role is critical in shaping a child by encouraging and allowing him or her to participate in PE, but this could only happen if parents understand the importance of PE in schools.

## **4.2.2 Practical teaching challenges**

### **4.2.2.1 Teacher-to-learner ratio**

All but one of the participants reported that they had a high ratio of teacher-to-learners in their classes, where the ratio was higher than 1:35.

The participants agreed that, with such great numbers of learners per class, it made it almost impossible to teach PE effectively, as learners easily get disruptive and unsettled.

One participant from the interview stated that:

*“Forty-one learners in class that have to do PE! and it is difficult as there is no space, and it disrupts the class.”*

The participants in the interview all agreed that high teacher-to-learner ratios made class organisation as well as assessment within PE, difficult. One participant from the interview expressed the challenge of large classes as it made it difficult for them to assess or even observe all learners at the same time:

*“I have about 40 learners in class, and it is a big challenge as it makes it difficult to observe all learners at the same time, plus other learners show no interest.”*

The challenge of large classes was aggravated by another challenge – that of insufficient time allocation to PE in the school timetable. Several of the participants and interviewees indicated that the time allocated to PE was not enough. In most of the participants' schools, the PE period was 30 minutes, and they felt that this was too short to assess learners

according to curriculum prescriptions, and also to fit in all the recommended content as prescribed in the CAPS document.

*“There is one period per week, per class.... Each period contains only 30 minutes of PE....”*

*“My challenge is to get enough time to do and assess all the physical exercises with the students...”*

*“...it takes most of the time just for them to do warm-up exercises and then there is no time left for the rest of the presentation.”*

Another challenge that came with the overcrowded classes and insufficient time allocation, according to several participants, was learner discipline. As two participants in the questionnaires stated:

*“Discipline in a big group of students is a big challenge when you only have a certain amount of time.”*

*“Learners’ discipline becomes a concern to PE teachers as learners tend to do as they please while teachers are giving lessons.”*

Participants in both the questionnaires and the interview, related the lack of discipline to learners’ motivation to participate in the PE lessons, as two participants stated:

*“The main problem is that learners want to do something else instead of doing PE.”*

*“...most of the learners find that they can use the PE period as an ‘off period’ and that means it’s hard to get every learner involved in the activity.”*

Some participants also referred to the role of the learners’ socio-economic background, the general approach of the school, and of their parents, in their motivation to participate in PE.

*“Parents also play a big role in encouraging their kids to participate in PE ...”*

*“The schooling system has unfortunately decided that the bare minimum of work and practical are needed to pass.”*

*“The students can’t afford clothing to exercise in and the learners steal each other’s things which causes that the learners don’t want to bring anything and do PE even if they have it....”*

A further major challenge that was evident from the responses in the questionnaires and interviews, was that most schools lack equipment, and sometimes facilities for PE with no or limited funds available to buy necessary resources. All the participants agreed that a lack of equipment made it difficult for them to reach the outcomes stipulated in the curriculum.

*“There is limited number of resources available, and it makes it hard to teach sports in PE if you don’t have balls and bats.”*

*“There is not enough equipment though we have fields”*

Most of the participants stated that PE is not well-funded and most of the time, the funds are allocated to “important” subjects. One of the questionnaire participants pointed out that:

*“Currently the support of PE is very low, due to insufficient funds for PE equipment.”*

From the data analysis it is thus evident that the major challenges that beginner PE teachers in this study faced, were high teacher-to-learner ratios, insufficient time allocation, learner discipline and a lack of equipment and facilities.

Most government schools in South Africa have overcrowded classrooms with between 50 and 60 learners (Buso, 2019). The challenge of large class sizes in teaching PE is similar to findings in other studies. For example, in the national study of Burnett (2021:182) involving primary and secondary schools in South Africa, more than 40% of the teachers and learners indicated that large class sizes contributed to negative experiences of PE. In the study of Truelove *et al.* (2021:203), which investigated the practices of PE teachers in primary schools in Canada, teachers also reported that overcrowded PE classes had a negative effect on their abilities to reach the outcomes set in the curriculum.

With reference to insufficient time allocation to PE in the school timetable, most of the teachers in the study of Burnett (2021:181) indicated that the allocated time in the school timetable was not enough for assessment in PE, and that learner motivation to participate was a challenge to implement quality PE. Limited time allocation and learner discipline were also reported as challenges to PE programs in studies in Saudi Arabia (Almutairi *et al.*, 2022:4), Greece (Sympas *et al.*, 2017:189), Australia (Wanyama & Quay, 2014:745) and the USA and England (Bann *et al.*, 209:148).

The lack of facilities, equipment and funding puts a lot of strain on PE teachers as it becomes difficult for them to meet their curricular outcomes. PE teachers in South Africa have also reported the lack of equipment and insufficient facilities as challenges in the studies of Du

Toit (2019:14), Stroebel *et al.* (2019:7) and Burnett (2021:191). According to Du Toit (2019: 26) and Stroebel *et al.* (2019:3), teachers should be guided on how to overcome a lack of resources. This can be part of the training they receive while studying to become a PE teacher, on how to create their own apparatus and to effectively use them, in in-service training programs (Stroebel *et al.*, 2019:3).

### **4.2.3 Positive experiences**

#### **4.2.3.1 Learner enjoyment**

Three of the participants in the questionnaires and three interviewees mentioned that, even with limited equipment and time, their learners enjoyed the PE lessons, as some of them stated:

*“...the learners always enjoyed it.”*

*“I am lucky to say that the learner’s in my class likes the Idea of PE and always participate.”*

Two participants who completed the questionnaire, referred to the role of well-structured and goal-orientated PE lessons in learners’ experiences of the subject. Some participants in the interview supported this view that well-structured PE lessons contribute to the positive experiences of learners, and in this regard, two participants emphasized the importance of a well-trained, knowledgeable teacher who can offer a variety of activities and motivate learners to participate:

*“In my personal experience the PE classes are nice because students (learners) love PE when there is structure and a goal in mind.”*

*“A well-trained Phys Ed teacher creates the environment in which learners will learn, participate in activities and motivate them to try new activities, but then it needs to be structured and learners must know what the goal of this specific activity is.”*

Other participants in the interview agreed that learners were more enthusiastic in their PE lessons when the teacher offered new and exciting activities, and emphasised the benefits of physical activities, as two interviewees mentioned:

*“My learners love it when I encourage them to try new and cool activities, not just the old fitness and sport stuff...”*

*“When I remind them of the good things of exercise, like improving their marks, and I give them nice activities, they like it.”*

#### 4.2.3.2 Successfully applying aspects of teacher training

Being able to apply successfully what was learnt in their pre-service PE teacher training was perceived as positive experiences by respondents. Most of the teachers who were interviewed, concurred that if a teacher has a passion for PE, he or she will find a way to overcome the challenges and create a positive class atmosphere. One of the interviewees relayed how she convinced her principal to allow more time for PE classes, stating that “*the teacher should always be innovative when it comes to PE*”, while another described the equipment, she had made in order to present PE so that learners could achieve the outcomes of PE. Both questionnaire and interview respondents referred to the making of equipment from waste material, which had formed a part of their pre-service training, as a solution to the problem of a lack of equipment in schools:

*“...equipment can be self-made, or objects can be used that is suitable and safe.*

*Sometimes you need to think out of the box for needed resources.”*

*“You can also use different objects as cones and can create new equipment that can be used for multiple purposes for PE classes.”*

Another positive aspect of some participants’ experiences was that they felt well-equipped in the different content themes of PE and could offer the learners a wide variety of activities within the prescribed content of the subject, as reflected in the words of one teacher:

*“...students enjoyed it when I gave them many different things to do so there would always be something for everyone, like dance and traditional games...”*

The positive experiences of the participants in the current study, correlate with findings reported in literature where the role of a structured PE learning environment with regards to learner enjoyment and motivation, has been widely acknowledged (Beni *et al.*, 2017:307; Griffin *et al.*, 2017:600; Krijgsman *et al.*, 2021:484). In the systematic reviews of Beni *et al.* (2017:307) and Curran and Standage (2017:268), fun, challenge and personally relevant learning were shown as important factors that a PE teacher had to facilitate by means of well-structured lessons, to make PE meaningful for learners and the teacher. Similarly, Griffin *et al.* (2017:603), in a study involving American learners, and Behzadnia *et al.* (2017:16) among Iranian learners, found that learners were more intrinsically motivated to participate if PE lessons were structured in such a way that they had fun, were challenged, improved their motor skills, felt connected and understood the worth of what they were doing in the PE class. The previously mentioned studies thus also support the notion that a PE

teacher should construct and present PE classes to meet the psychological needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness of learners, as postulated by SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2020), which will also improve their own experience of teaching PE.

In a South African study on the effect of a PE teacher training program on teachers' perceptions of PE, Van der Westhuizen *et al.* (2020:106) found that PE teachers had positive perceptions of teaching PE after they had implemented need-support strategies in their PE classes for six months. In this study (Van der Westhuizen *et al.*; 2020:106), PE teachers also reported that implementing aspects of the teacher training program such as applying knowledge of the value of PE, offering a variety of ideas for physical activities, and improvising their own equipment for PE lessons, contributed to their positive experiences of teaching PE.

#### **4.2.4 Perceptions of and recommendations for Physical Education teacher training**

##### **4.2.4.1 Improvisation of equipment and facilities**

Although some of the participants had incorporated what they had learnt in their undergraduate training regarding the improvisation and making of equipment into their PE programs, the majority recommended that PE pre-service training should incorporate more ways to make and improvise equipment for PE lessons, as reflected in the words of one questionnaire respondent:

*"I think more training should be given about what to do if you don't have any equipment."*

Two interviewees also mentioned that teachers could receive more training to present PE activities in small spaces and with no equipment.

##### **4.2.4.2 Promotion of Physical Education**

Participants in the interview mentioned that finding ways of motivating and proclaiming the value of PE in front of an audience or on social media, should form part of the training of PE teachers. One participant suggested that pre-service PE teacher training should include an assignment for students to develop strategies to "market" PE, including promotional methods such as Power Point presentations for SGB and parental meetings, and the use of social media.

*"The educator can use social media as a resource with millions of videos on the internet."*

The majority of the interviewees were of the opinion that pre-service PE teachers should be encouraged to make a stand for PE in the school, even in the case of little support from school management or co-teachers.

#### **4.2.4.3 Management of diversity and large classes**

One of the questions in the questionnaire asked whether the teachers felt that their preservice PE teacher training had prepared them well enough for the teaching practice. Although more than half of the participants responded that it had, several of them indicated that the teacher training should include more information, exposure to, and management strategies of teaching at schools from low socio-economic backgrounds. In this regard, three respondents stated:

*“...because of our diversity in South Africa some schools are not as fortunate and privileged as others and students aren't exposed or prepared sufficiently for such cases.”*

*“Student training includes more the ideal situations and focus on how it is supposed to work in a class environment, but don't prepare you for example for low socio-economic school environments.”*

*“Introduce, inform and expose where possible, the students to some of the terrible conditions that await them just to prepare them in case they have to teach at a disadvantaged school.”*

Another questionnaire participant recommended that more training should be incorporated regarding PE for learners with disabilities:

*“We do learn how to include learners with physical disabilities, but I think we should incorporate more material about how to work with the learners that have a mental disability. For example, one of the learners in my class is autistic and I never learned how to include them in every activity.”*

Some participants saw the diversity among learners as a contributing factor to the challenge to keep them engaged and motivated to participate, as noted by one:

*“A challenge is finding an activity that suits every learner in the class and keeping their attention to explain the activity.”*

More training with reference to the motivation of learners to participate was recommended by several participants, as well as teaching strategies for large classes.

*“Train PE teachers to teach large and unmotivated classes”*

*“...the training can be more specific regarding teaching large classes and unmotivated learners.”*

Teachers need proper and concise training to fulfil their duties to their outmost best. Without proper training they face challenges that are difficult to overcome as they are not fully equipped to do so. According to Granero-Gallegos *et al.* (2022:1), teacher training is important since it is during this training process that teachers could be assisted in acquiring the skills, capabilities, and competencies necessary to address their professional development. In their study on pre-service PE teacher training at different higher education institutions in Australia, Barwood *et al.* (2021:418) came to the conclusion that PE teachers' experiences of PE in their first few years, are dependent on the type and content of pre-service training.

In South Africa, many schools are faced with the absence of appropriate equipment and a shortage of well-trained PE teachers (Burnett, 2021:191; Stroebel *et al.*, 2019:7)., Du Toit *et al.* (2007:25) point out that teacher training should include apparatus improvisation and facilitation for creative skills when it comes to space and insufficient apparatus.

To be exposed and trained to manage the challenges of schools in all types of socioeconomic backgrounds PE teacher training should include several field experiences. This statement is supported by Adamakis and Dania (2022:641), who investigated Greek preservice teachers' experiences in their school practicums, and Lynch (2015:3), who investigated the effects of a university-school partnership where student teachers gained field experiences in various modules of their PE teacher course over the period of four years. The findings of Adamakis and Dania (2022:641) concur with those of Du Toit (2019:23) in a study investigating the experiences of pre-service PE teachers in a service-learning program, that PE pre-service teachers gained hands-on knowledge and experience regarding the teaching of learners from diverse backgrounds. Du Toit (2019:2) further states that service-learning programs have some other benefits to them such as enhanced self-competence, gains of content knowledge, enhanced ability to use different instructional strategies, and cultural awareness.

Since teachers are faced with the challenge of large PE classes that contain unmotivated learners, their provided training should prepare them for a variety of circumstances. In a study involving 1256 middle school learners in the USA, Zhang *et al.* (2020:698) found that the prior knowledge of the learners and the PE teacher overrode all other factors that were

considered to impact on learning (lesson frequency and length, equipment, facilities, and class size), suggesting that a well-trained and skilled PE teacher could overcome the relevant challenges facing new PE teachers. One teaching strategy that is recommended by León *et al.* (2021:665) and Silva *et al.* (2021:806) for PE teacher training for large groups of learners, is cooperative learning. In the study of León *et al.* (2021:665) among more than 1000 Spanish learners, it was found that cooperative learning strategies improved learners' academic performance in PE, on the condition that the PE lessons were structured so that group processing, promotive interaction, and individual accountability were facilitated. Other teaching strategies that are recommended for large classes, are task (traditional) teaching (where the teacher demonstrates specific movement activities to the learners who then do the activities at different stations, before applying the skills in a modified game), peer teaching (where learners teach one another according to specific instructions) and tactical games (where the learners play a series of modified games to learn about the tactics and skills of the sport) (Metzler & Colquitt, 2021).

Another recommendation by the participants in this study is that PE teacher training should incorporate teaching strategies to motivate learners to participate. Recent literature, focusing on teaching strategies to improve the motivation of learners to participate in PE, has shown that needs-support strategies employed by PE teachers have improved the intrinsic motivation of learners (Griffin *et al.*, 2017:601; Kleitsh & Kulinna, 2022:495; Oelofse, 2019:85; Van der Westhuizen *et al.*, 2021:110). In this regard, learners' need for autonomy can be met when teachers involve learners in planning and deciding about the activities that they can do, as well as incidents that they could present to learners with a range of activities to choose from (Kleitsh & Kulinna, 2022:495; Oelofse, 2019:85). The need for competence can be met when teachers apply organisational and improvisation strategies that they have learnt to provide learners with sufficient opportunities to learn and practice movement skills; in this way the need for relatedness can be met when teachers present new and exciting ideas, challenging learners to fun activities, and effective cooperative learning (Kleitsh & Kulinna, 2022:495; Oelofse, 2019:85).

### **4.3 Findings in the context of the Self-Determination Theory (SDT)**

From the viewpoint of SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2020:228), the experiences of the participants regarding the low status of PE, and the accompanying marginalisation of the subject, with themselves as PE teachers, indicate that their psychological need for relatedness has not been met yet. PE is not seen by others as a “real subject”, but rather a period for passing

the time, which may negatively impact upon PE teachers as they could feel less respected and less connected to the teaching family.

A lack of support from colleagues, the school management, the principal, and parents also imply frustration of the psychological need for relatedness, as relatedness is seen as “a sense of connection to, and experiencing close, caring and mutually supportive relationships to significant others” within the context of SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2020:229). With the lack of support that some PE teachers experience at their schools, they tend to feel isolated, not accepted and not part of a team, and thus experience feelings of frustration.

The practical teaching challenges experienced by the participants in the current study, including overcrowded classes, limited time, a lack of equipment and poor learner discipline, imply that the teachers’ need for competence has not been satisfied, for these challenges make it difficult to present lessons effectively. The need for competence is satisfied when a person feels that he or she is effective and has sufficient ability in what he or she is doing (Ryan & Deci, 2020:229), but these practical challenges can impede the teacher’s intrinsic motivation to stay committed to teach quality PE. Deci and Ryan (2020:229) state that when a teacher feels confident about what he or she is doing, it becomes easier for him/her to share and teach learners efficiently because of the competence felt in the skills offered.

Conversely, the positive experiences of some of the participants in their PE classes, indicate that their psychological needs for autonomy and competence have been met. The need for autonomy for teachers is satisfied when they are innovative in making their own equipment, and able to use their acquired skills and knowledge to provide knowledge and a variety of PE activities to learners. Being able to successfully implement what they have learnt in their pre-service teacher training, further contributes to meeting their need for competence.

The principles of SDT further come to the fore in the participants’ recommendations for PE teacher training. The improvisation of equipment, the promotion of PE among the school fraternity and parents, and the management of diversity within the PE class, all imply that the teacher training should be such that the teachers’ needs for autonomy and competence can be met in practice. Also, in motivating learners to participate, needs-support strategies as suggested with the framework of SDT, are recommended.

## **4.5 Summary**

In summary, the findings show that the participants in the study experienced several of the same challenges as reported in previous studies involving beginner PE teachers, amongst others the low status of the subject and practical teaching challenges like large classes, limited time allocation, a lack of equipment and learner discipline problems. Participants also had positive experiences, including learners' enjoyment of their classes and the teachers' implementation of their knowledge and skills. The experiences of the teachers in this study led them to recommend improvements of PE teacher training programs, including the improvisation of equipment, the promotion of PE and management strategies for diverse PE classrooms.

These findings can lead to important recommendations that could better prepare preservice teachers for real-world PE settings, to help them cope with challenges they might face.

Based on these findings, the next chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Summary, conclusion and recommendations**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The primary aim of this study was to investigate the perceptions of beginner PE teachers of the effectiveness of their pre-service teacher training for real-world PE settings, as they experienced them. In this chapter, a summary of the problem statement, theoretical and conceptual framework, methodology, and the findings and discussion are done. Thereafter, the conclusion and recommendations, based on the findings and taking the aims of the study into consideration, are presented.

#### **5.2 Summary**

The aim of this study was to investigate beginner PE teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of pre-service teacher training for real-world PE settings in South Africa, including the challenges and positive experiences experienced by beginner teachers in teaching PE, and the extent to which pre-service teacher training prepared them for real-world PE settings.

In Chapter 1, the theoretical and conceptual framework was briefly discussed, including a short discussion of relevant literature on challenges facing PE teachers, and experiences and perceptions of beginner PE teachers in an international and local context. Thereafter, the problem statement, primary and secondary aims, research methodology, ethical issues and the lay-out of the dissertation were presented.

In Chapter 2, the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study was elaborated on in more depth. SDT, the theory that the study was grounded in, is a theory that helps us to better understand what motivates people, in this case the teachers, to continue with certain behaviour, in this case teaching PE (Ryan & Deci, 2020). The general challenges that all beginner teachers experience in their first year of induction, including the support they receive and the workload they are expected to carry and master like experienced teachers, were discussed next. Then, the specific challenges that face beginner PE teachers, including the status of PE which is generally poor in South Africa and across the world, and the marginalization of the subject was discussed. Another challenge shown in the literature, is a lack of facilities, equipment and funding that hinder the presentation of lessons to learners across the world. Furthermore, the ratio of teacher to learners makes it difficult for teachers

to deliver quality PE. Although PE teachers can handle large classes through proper planning, this is one of the factors that make the induction of beginner teachers a challenge as they had not yet had a chance to refine their teaching and assessment skills. Larger classes also lead to poor learner discipline, that is difficult for beginner teachers to handle. Discipline is further linked to the intrinsic motivation levels of learners to participate in PE - if learners are intrinsically motivated to participate, then the control and management of the class is easier. Teachers need to be supported by their colleagues, parents, and the management of the school, but as shown in several studies, that is not what PE teachers receive due to the marginalization of the subject. A last challenge which is discussed in this section, is that the teacher training of PE teachers is often insufficient to prepare beginner teachers for the challenges they must face in practice. Inadequate training for PE teachers is detrimental, as this could also be a determining factor of teacher attrition. Sufficient subject knowledge and understanding are crucial as it makes it less likely for teachers to leave the profession after their first year. Following the discussed challenges facing beginner PE teachers, PE teacher training in South Africa is investigated. After the curriculum changes in South Africa, many teachers teaching PE are not qualified to do so, which often results in the improper utilization of the PE period in schools and learners not receiving PE. Currently only a few Universities in South Africa offer PE teacher training, and mostly as part of Life Skills or Life Orientation teacher training, which has led to the current lack of well-trained PE teachers as reported in literature. Without sufficient training PE teachers find it difficult to manage the challenges they face, which often leads to being overwhelmed, unmotivated, and leaving the school or even the profession altogether.

Studies offering recommendations for teacher support, include effective mentoring and support during the induction process of beginner teachers. A program of support from the Department of Education and from the pre-service teacher training program's lecturers for PE teachers in their first few months, is recommended to avoid teachers leaving the career within the first five years. Recommendations for PE teacher training also include that universities should concentrate more on the practical side of teacher training rather than academic work, because it seems that most PE teachers are not well-skilled when it comes to classroom management, learner behaviour management and lesson preparation. Another recommendation was that PE teacher training should incorporate needssupportive strategies for teachers to meet their psychological needs of autonomy and competence so that teachers can be more intrinsically motivated to continue teaching PE in school and more able to handle the challenges they might face. Also, PE teacher training programs should

include the training of teachers to provide autonomy support to their learners, as this will improve the intrinsic motivation of the learners to participate.

In Chapter 3, the methodology of the study is discussed in more detail. Qualitative research was conducted through the lens of the interpretivist paradigm, and data were collected by means of open-ended questionnaires and a focus group interview. From the 17 invited PE teachers that have recently obtained their B.Ed. degree or PGCE.

Education with the major subject of Physical Education at the North-West University in South Africa, eight completed the questionnaire and four participated in the focus-group interview. The data collected from this convenience and purposive sample were analysed using inductive, narrative and thematic data-analysis. To enhance the validity and trustworthiness of the data, the processes of triangulation, member checking, rich descriptions, an audit trail and peer debriefing were implemented. Research ethics principles that were employed, included informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality of the data, permission to conduct the study, strategies to manage the experiences of the participants, and the report of the findings to participants.

In Chapter 4, the different themes that were identified in the data analysis were reported and discussed. The following themes emerged: *The status of PE*, *Practical teaching challenges*, *Positive experiences*, and *Perceptions of and recommendations for PE teacher training*. Looking at the different themes and sub-themes one can understand the positions of or challenges that novice teachers face in their beginner years. The theme of *the status of PE* included the often-negative attitudes towards PE and the lack of support from the departments of education, SGB and colleagues which make it close to impossible for teachers to display a positive attitude and show commitment towards PE. For teachers to remain positive and motivated and willing to give their outmost best in the subject, they need to receive full support and for the subject to be considered as an important subject. The second theme, *Practical teaching challenges*, entailed challenges such as high teacher-to-learner ratios, too little time allocation to PE in the school timetable, a lack of equipment and facilities, and learner discipline and motivation, which all made it difficult for beginner PE teachers to teach effectively. The third theme, *Positive experiences*, referred to positive aspects of the participants' PE teaching, which included that learner's enjoyed the subject and were willing to participate regardless of the challenges that were faced. The participating PE teachers also reported being able to successfully apply what was taught during their teacher training, as a positive experience. *Perceptions of and recommendations for PE teacher training* entailed recommendations from the participants that the improvisation of

equipment and facilities, promoting the subject to parents, the SGB, SMT and learners, and more exposure to and strategies to teach learners from low socio-economic backgrounds and learners with disabilities. With relevant skills, capabilities and competency, beginner teachers will give their utmost in teaching PE.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

The following conclusions can be made considering the set aim and objectives of the study. The conclusions with regards to the secondary aims will be presented first, and these conclusions will thereafter be consolidated in the conclusion with regards to the primary aim.

#### **5.3.1 Challenges experienced by beginner teachers in teaching PE**

As shown by the findings, the challenges that beginner PE teachers experience are those of the low status of PE and the subject being marginalized, insufficient support from school management, parents and teachers, and practical teaching challenges like a lack of equipment high teacher-learner ratios, and ill-disciplined and unmotivated learners. The conclusion can thus be made that beginner PE teachers experience various challenges in teaching PE, and they are often left to self-induct in schools as they are left to fend for themselves but are expected to yield the same results as those of an experienced teacher.

#### **5.3.2 Experiences in teaching PE, which are perceived as positive by beginner teachers**

The positive experiences that the beginner teachers in this study reported were PE classes that learners enjoyed, and the abilities and opportunities to successfully apply what they have learnt in their pre-service PE teacher training. Based on this finding, it can be concluded that beginner PE teachers can have positive experiences when they are allowed the right circumstances in schools, and opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills.

#### **5.3.3 Teachers' perceptions on the extent to which pre-service teacher training prepared them for real world PE settings**

Some beginner teachers stated that their pre-service training did prepare them well to teach PE, but the training did not provide sufficiently for some of the "real-world" challenges they had met, like the marginalization of the subject, the lack of support and how to deal with unmotivated and diverse learners. The conclusion can thus be made that beginner PE teachers in this study felt that their teacher training prepared them to teach PE to some extent, but that the training could be improved.

Based on the above conclusions, the conclusion can be made with reference to the primary aim of the study (to investigate beginner PE teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of pre-service teacher training for real-world PE settings in South Africa), that beginner PE teachers perceived their pre-service training to be partially effective for real-world PE settings.

## **5.4 Recommendations**

Several recommendations arise from the findings of this study. Firstly, recommendations regarding pre-service teacher training can be made to enhance the preparation of beginner PE teachers for the challenges they will probably experience in practice. Secondly, in view of a few limitations of this study, recommendations can be made with reference to future research.

### **5.4.1 Recommendations for pre-service PE teacher training**

- 5.4.1.1 Based on the lack of equipment and funding for PE that many schools face, preservice teachers can be trained to make their own PE material, using recycled material and other material that can be found and not necessarily bought. Proper training needs to be done at university level as well as in schools.
- 5.4.1.2 A methodology module can be added to PE teacher training on the management, organization and assessment of large classes and the use of small spaces in PE.
- 5.4.1.3 Drawing from the findings regarding the low status of PE, pre-service teachers should be trained on how to promote PE in schools, to the SGB, SMT, learners and parents. Pre-service students can, for example, be given an assignment to develop a *Power Point* presentation which highlights the value of PE and the importance of having PE well-supported and funded in schools. This can be used by the pre-service teacher to present to all relevant parties during school or parents' meetings to show and make them understand why learners should participate fully in PE lessons.
- 5.4.1.4 To enhance the intrinsic motivation of learners to participate in PE classes, it is recommended that pre-service PE teacher training include needs-support strategies for PE teachers to use in their PE classrooms. Teaching strategies for PE teachers to support the need of learners for autonomy, for example, could include providing learners with choices regarding physical activities and roles that they play in PE classes, allowing learners to help plan PE activities, and facilitating

enjoyable, creative, different and fun activities. Teaching strategies for competence support could include the offering of achievable but challenging activities, and teaching movements and new skills that are applicable in life outside school. Teaching strategies for relatedness could include helping learners internalize the value of PE for themselves, being supportive, positive and caring during activities, and facilitating group activities which develop feelings of inclusivity, integration, trust and respect among peers.

- 5.4.1.5 The Department of Basic Education should introduce in-service training programs, such as short courses in PE, that are funded by them, so that PE teachers can be qualified, and existing teachers can also understand the importance of having PE in schools. These in-service training programs will equip PE teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills so that they can present proper, conducive PE to learners.
- 5.4.1.6 PE teachers should be trained to integrate some other subjects with PE, for example in Creative Arts, where learners can make their own equipment that can be used in PE throughout the year.
- 5.1.4.7 As new PE teachers start their journey in schools, they need support from different role players. Mentors could be appointed at their schools and continuing support from their lecturers can be recommended so that they can guide, encourage, and support the beginner teachers through the daunting transition to real-world teaching.
- 5.4.1.8 As part of pre-service teacher training, it is recommended that PE service-learning programs be introduced where student-teachers can gain experience and exposure to schools of different socio-economic backgrounds. This will better prepare them for different circumstances they might find themselves faced with, and it can serve as community service where the needs of communities with regards to PE can be addressed.
- 5.4.1.9 The provincial Departments of Education should also support PE programs by appointing subject advisors that are qualified in PE, to make sure that learners receive proper PE by trained teachers.

## **5.5 Limitations of the study and recommendations for future research**

The findings of this study should be considered in view of certain limitations, which lead to recommendations for similar future research., Firstly, only eight participants were used for this study, which resulted in findings that are relevant, but which cannot be generalized to all beginner PE teachers. Therefore, future research should include more participants, who teach at schools of different socio-economic backgrounds, to be able to better understand what beginner PE teachers need in their pre-service training to improve their teaching experience. Secondly, only participants from one university in one area of the country were used. Future research should include beginner PE teachers who studied at other universities, and who are teaching in other areas across the country.

Overall, this study shows that PE pre-service programs should incorporate various aspects aimed at preparing teachers for the various challenges that they may experience in their first few years in practice. The findings of this study further imply that existing PE teacher training programs can be improved by implementing the recommendations discussed in this chapter.

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**(Addendum A)**



**QUESTIONNAIRE TO BEGINNER PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS**

Dear Physical Education teacher

Thank you in advance for spending time to complete this questionnaire. We are fully aware that you have a tight time schedule and thus appreciate your co-operation. It will, however, not require more than 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

The aim of this questionnaire is to provide the facilitator with information regarding the experiences that beginning teachers have in teaching PE in schools, as well as their perceptions of the extent to which their pre-service teacher training has prepared them for these experiences and challenges. Recommendations towards the improvement of the pre-service teacher training can also be included.

The information you provide will be treated as strictly confidential and will be utilised for the improvement of PE teacher training, as well as research purposes. I would also like to ask that no names of schools be mentioned by you when completing this questionnaire, as this research is anonymous and confidential. If you feel uncomfortable completing the questionnaire, you can withdraw and not complete the questionnaire. No answer is regarded as correct or incorrect; thus, do not see this questionnaire as a test of any kind. Please formulate your reply to the questions as honestly as possible.

Your co-operation and professional input will be highly appreciated.

Thank you again.

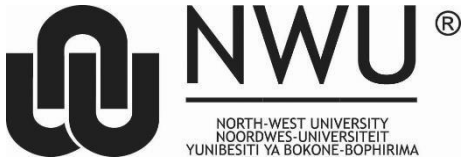
Tsholo Letseleha  
Subject Group Movement Education  
North-West University  
(Potchefstroom Campus)

### **Teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of pre-service teacher training for real-world Physical Education settings**

1. Please describe the general set-up of how PE presented in schools (number of learners in a class, time allocated for PE in the time table, where and by whom each class is presented).
2. Please elaborate on the support you receive from your school's principal and co-teachers for the PE classes you teach. According to your experience, please explain the support that you receive as a PE teacher in presenting PE classes.

3. How would you describe teachers' and learners' perceptions of the importance of PE as a subject? Why do you think these are their perceptions regarding PE?
4. What challenges do you face as a PE teacher?
5. Regarding available resources to teach PE, are there alternative methods or resources that can be used if the PE resources are not sufficient?
6. To what extent does the discipline of the learners in your PE classes influence the effectiveness of your presentation of PE? Please elaborate.
7. What influence does the social-economic environment of a school have regarding the effectiveness of your teaching of PE at school? What, in your opinion, are the reasons for this mentioned influence?
8. What is the role played by your learners' parents towards the learners' performance in the PE class?
9. In your opinion, is sufficient training provided to students training to be PE teachers, to prepare them for the challenges of the real-world teaching of PE? Please elaborate.
10. Please make recommendations for the training of students to become PE teachers, to improve their preparation for the real-world challenges of a PE teacher.

**(Addendum B)**



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Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

**Faculty of Education**

**Research Out of Entities (ROE)**

**Ms R van Staden**

**Email: [Ronelle.VanStaden@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Ronelle.VanStaden@nwu.ac.za) Tel: +27 18 285210 1**

**M.Ed. researcher:**

Mrs. Tsholo Letseleha – [Tsholothori@gmail.com](mailto:Tsholothori@gmail.com)

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:**

Prof D du Toit - [dorita.dutoit@nwu.ac.za](mailto:dorita.dutoit@nwu.ac.za)

**CO-SUPERVISOR:**

[Dr Niekie van der Merwe -](#)

[Niekie.vandermerwe@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Niekie.vandermerwe@nwu.ac.za)

**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM**

Dear Physical Education teacher

I herewith wish to invite you to participate in this research, which involves the following.

The induction into a real-world Physical Education (PE) setting can bring challenges that can make this a critical time in a first year PE teacher's career, and research shows that the pre-service teacher training of PE teachers do not always prepare them sufficiently for these challenges. This research project aims to investigate beginner PE teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of preservice teacher training for real-world PE settings in South Africa. You have been invited by a researcher at the Faculty of Education, North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus, South Africa, to participate in this research. It will be expected of participants to complete an online questionnaire, and participate in an online focus group interview, regarding their experiences in teaching PE as a beginner teacher. You were selected as a participant because you are a beginner teacher teaching PE in your school. Please read the following information before you decide whether or not to participate in this study. **By signing this form and by clicking on the link at the bottom of this document you automatically give consent to participate in this study.**

If you would like more information regarding the study before deciding whether or not to participate, you are welcome to request a *Zoom* meeting with the researcher, which she will then arrange. During the *Zoom* meeting you may ask the researcher any questions about this project if anything is unclear. It is very important that you are satisfied and that you clearly understand what this research entails and how you could be involved. Please note that your participation should be entirely voluntary and that you are free to decline to participate. If you do decline, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any stage, even if you do agree to take part.

This study has been approved by the **Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education of the North-West University (N W U - \*\*\*\*\*)** and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of the international Declaration of Helsinki and the ethical guidelines of the National Health Research Ethics Council. The research ethics committee members or relevant authorities might therefore inspect the research records.

Before you give consent, please acquaint yourself with the information below

The details of the research are as follows:

**TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT:**

BEGINNER TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PRE-SERVICE  
TEACHER TRAINING FOR REAL-WORLD PHYSICAL EDUCATION SETTINGS

**ETHICS APPLICATION NUMBER**

**NWU - \*\*\*\*\***

PROJECT SUPERVISOR: Prof. D. du Toit

CO-SUPERVISOR: Dr. N. van der Merwe

ASSISTANT SUPERVISOR: MR F. WILLEMSE

ADDRESS: Subject Group Movement Education, School for Psychosocial Education,  
Faculty of Education, North-West University, Potchefstroom 2520, South Africa

CONTACT NUMBER: 018 299 1716

MEMBER OF PROJECT TEAM M.Ed. student: Mrs. Tsholo Letsehela

ADDRESS: Cle du Cap 3, Potchefstroom, South Africa

CONTACT NUMBER: (+27) 73 990 1996

**FACULTY OF EDUCATION RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**

Contact person: Ms Erna Greyling, E-mail: Erna.Greyling@nwu.ac.za, Tel. (018) 299 4656

This study has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education of the North-West University and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines of this committee.

**What is this research about?**

The aim of this research is:

To investigate the challenges faced by and positive experiences of beginner PE teachers in the educational field in South Africa and these teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of their preservice teacher training for the real-world PE setting.

**Participants**

You have been chosen, because you are a first year PE teacher who has received your teacher training at the North-West University, and who is experiencing the real-world setting of teaching PE in the school. You are, therefore, in a position to formulate an opinion regarding the extent to which your training has prepared you for the real-world teaching practice of PE.

### **What is expected of you as participant?**

If you volunteer to participate in the study, you will be required to answer an online, open-ended questionnaire. The questionnaire will consist of 10 questions and will take about 20 minutes to complete. You will also be invited to participate in an online, focus group interview by means of a *Zoom* meeting with the researcher and other participants, in which the general answers of participants to the questions in the questionnaire, will be discussed further.

### **Benefits to you as a participant**

The study may contribute to your understanding of the experiences of other beginner PE teachers in practice. Furthermore, the findings and your recommendations may contribute to the improvement of pre-service PE teacher training at the NWU and other Universities.

### **Risks involved for participants**

The study to be undertaken will not have any potential risks to you.

### **Confidentiality and protection of identity**

Any information that is obtained through the questionnaire will be anonymous, as the questionnaire will be uploaded in an online programme that keeps answers anonymous. Information obtained in the interview will be kept confidential and will not be released to any other party for any reason. Transcriptions will be anonymous and when data is published it will not be possible to identify who the individual participants are. No information regarding the identity of any school will be asked.

## Dissemination of findings

Themes will be identified to assist to formulate recommendations for the improvement of preservice PE teacher training. Challenges and positive experiences in the presentation of PE in the first year of teaching, and recommendations for the improvement of pre-service PE teacher training will be investigated. The findings of the study will be e-mailed to every participant.

If you have any further questions or enquiries regarding your participation in this research, please contact the researchers for more information.

Yours sincerely,  
Tsholo Letsehela

---

### **DECLARATION BY PARTICIPANT:**

By signing **and** clicking on the “link” below, I ..... agree to take part in a research study entitled:

**Beginner teachers’ perceptions of the effectiveness of pre-service teacher training for realworld Physical Education settings I declare that:**

I have read this information and consent form and understand what is expected of me in the research.

I have had a chance to ask questions to the researcher and all my questions have been adequately answered.

I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary and I have not been pressured to take part.

I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.

I may be asked to leave the research process before it has finished, if the researcher feels it is in my best interests, or if I do not follow the research procedures, as agreed to.

Signed at (place) \_\_\_\_\_ on (date) \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/2022\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of participant**

**Signature of researcher (Mrs T M Letseleha)**

**PLEASE email the signed consent form to: [Tsholothori@gmail.com](mailto:Tsholothori@gmail.com)**

**PLEASE CLICK ON THE LINK BELOW TO GIVE CONSENT AND TO COMPLETE THE QUESTIONNAIRE:**

**[https://www.questionpro.com/\\*\\*\\*\\*\\*](https://www.questionpro.com/*****)**

## (Addendum D)

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ORIGINALITY REPORT

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<b>9</b> %	<b>7</b> %	<b>2</b> %	<b>3</b> %
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

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PRIMARY SOURCES

<b>1</b>	vital.seals.ac.za:8080 Internet Source	1%
<b>2</b>	repository.nwu.ac.za Internet Source	1%
<b>3</b>	www.researchgate.net Internet Source	1%
<b>4</b>	Dominique Banville, "Novice Physical Education Teachers Learning to Teach", Journal of Teaching in Physical Education, 2015 Publication	<1%
<b>5</b>	Birte von Haaren-Mack, Alina Schaefer, Fabian Pels, Jens Kleinert, "Stress in Physical Education Teachers: A Systematic Review of Sources, Consequences, and Moderators of Stress", Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport, 2019 Publication	<1%
<b>6</b>	Submitted to North West University Student Paper	<1%

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**(Addendum E) Declaration of language editing**

This is to declare that I, Elma van Wyk, translator, language editor and interpreter, member no.

1002646 of the South African Translators' Institute (SATI), have language edited the dissertation

by

**Ms Tsholofelo Motlalepula Letseleha** with

the title

**Beginner teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of pre-service teacher training for real-world Physical Education settings**

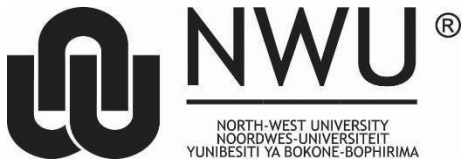
(A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the MEd degree in Movement Education in the Faculty of Education at the North-West University.)

**Signature:** 

**Date:** 2022/11/23

Elma van Wyk( ms), SATI- member no. 1002646

**(Addendum F)**



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**Senate Committee for Research Ethics**

Tel: 018 299-4849

Email: [nkosinathi.machine@nwu.ac.za](mailto:nkosinathi.machine@nwu.ac.za)

**ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY**

Based on approval by the **Education Sciences Research Ethics Committee (EduREC)** on 28 April 2022, the Education Sciences Research Ethics Committee hereby **approves** your study as indicated below. This implies that the North-West University Senate Committee for Research Ethics (NWU-SCRE) grants its permission that, provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the study may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

**Study title:**

Student /

Team: TM

N W U - 0 0 2 6 1 - 2 2 - A 2

Letseleha

N van der Merwe, Mr F Willemse Ethics number:

(MEd student – 20422806), Dr

Study Number

Year

Status

Institution

-Submission; P = Provisional Authorisation; A

Status: S = Submissic

= Authorisation

App  
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Low

**Beginner teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of pre-service teacher training for real-world Physical Education settings**

**Study Leader/Supervisor (Principal Investigator)/Researcher: Prof D du Toit**

**Type: Single study**

**Risk:**

**Commencement date: 29/04/2022**

**Expiry date: 29/04/2023 dependent on receipt and review of the annual Approval of the study is initially provided for concomitant issuing of a letter of continuatio**

**(or as other a year, after wise stipulated) monitoring report and which continuation of the**

**the study is**

**Special in process conditions of the research for approval (if applicable):**

**General conditions:**

*While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, the following general terms and conditions will apply:*

- *The study leader/supervisor (principle investigator)/researcher must report in the prescribed format to the ES-REC:*

- *annually (or as otherwise requested) on the monitoring of the study, whereby a letter of continuation will be provided, and upon completion of the study; and*
- *without any delay in case of any adverse event or incident (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the study.*
- *The approval applies strictly to the proposal as stipulated in the application form. Should any amendments to the proposal be deemed necessary during the course of the study, the study leader/researcher must apply for approval of these amendments at the ES-REC, prior to implementation. Should there be any deviations from the study proposal without the necessary approval of such amendments, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.*
- *Annually a number of studies may be randomly selected for an external audit.*
- *The date of approval indicates the first date that the study may be started.*
- *In the interest of ethical responsibility, the NWU-SCRC and ES-REC reserves the right to:*

1

- *request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the study;*
- *to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process; - withdraw or postpone approval if:*
  - *any unethical principles or practices of the study are revealed or suspected;*
  - *it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the ES-REC or that information has been false or misrepresented;*
  - *submission of the annual (or otherwise stipulated) monitoring report, the required amendments, or reporting of adverse events or incidents was not done in a timely manner and accurately; and / or*
  - *new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.*

The ES-REC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your study. Please do not hesitate to contact the ES-REC or the NWU-SCRE for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely



Prof Jako Olivier

Chairperson NWU Education Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Original details: (22351930) C:\Users\22351930\Desktop\ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY.docm

8 November 2018

Current details: (22351930) M:\DSS1\8533\Monitoring and Reporting Cluster\Ethics\Certificates\Templates\Research Ethics Approval Letters\9.1.5.4.1 ES-REC Ethical Approval

Letter.docm 5 December 2018

File reference: 9.1.5.4.2